

THE "THINGS" AT YSSANDON

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Translated from the French by Gordon Creighton

THE task of the "ufologists" has two aspects, which are at the same time linked and yet distinct: namely the aspect of "popularization" and the aspect of "research." Due to this double necessity to inform others and also inform oneself, the publication of a particular sighting may be of interest in both directions. On the one hand, the eyewitnesses to a case may be numerous, held competent and trustworthy, and their description of the phenomenon and the circumstances of its appearance may be known with precision. Such a case can convince sceptical readers, or non-alerted readers, of the existence of the "flying saucer phenomenon," and may make them realize the serious nature of what we are trying to do and the solid foundations on which it stands. Examples of such cases are those of Antananarivo, of the Brazilian sightings over Trinidad Island, of Lakenheath, etc. On the other hand it may happen that, although a particular case does not fulfil the conditions required for the foregoing category, it nevertheless may contain certain elements of information that are rare or that invite comparison with other cases. But it will only interest those for whom the existence of the UFO phenomenon is already a foregone conclusion.

The Yssandon sighting with which I am now going to deal belongs to this second category.

While very brief, poorly dated, and confused, it is at the same time particularly strange and indeed almost sinister. It will convince no one of the respectability of our researches. But it is of considerable richness from the point of view of what Oscar Galindez terms Comparative Ufology. Much has been written (either in astonishment or because the writer finds it entirely natural) regarding the fact that almost all the "occupants" of flying saucers possess a physical appearance comparable with our own. The cases in which, as it seems, creatures of a radically different aspect have been seen are rare. Here is one such case:

The Sighting

The exact year is not known, and even a thoroughgoing investigation with the aid of eyewitnesses seems unable to elucidate it. It was somewhere around 1960. And what is certain is that it took place at about 11.00 p.m. on the last Sunday in August.

Monsieur and Madame Plumauzille were driving in their car along the secondary road that runs from La Prodelie to Ayen, in the *departement* of Correze. They had just made a detour around the Puy d'Yssandon (a peak). The road is winding, and

is bordered, down on the right, by a meadow with many walnut trees. Above the road, on the left hand side, are more meadows and cultivated fields and then, just as one comes to the left-hand turn where the sighting took place, there is a wooded slope.

Suddenly, M. Plumauzille notices a reddish-violet light, with no precise outlines, level with the trees on the right hand side of the road. At first he thinks it is quite far away, but then he sees it rise and he realizes that it is only about 100 metres from them. Almost directly after that, he sees, lit up by his headlights, and also on the right hand side of the road, a mass of the size of a big sack of potatoes which is rapidly contracting and seems to be collapsing inwardly upon itself. And then both he and his wife see a number of other masses similar to the first one, but smaller, of the size, say, of Rugby footballs, "humpy," misshapen, moving about in the grass in the ditch beside the road. At least two of them cross the road in front of the approaching car and disappear in the bracken in the ditch on the left. The car was not travelling very fast and the two witnesses feel no shock — at least not in the physical sense of the word — and they do not think that the car hit any of the objects. M. Plumauzille does not stop. The reddish-violet light in the sky has vanished. The sighting is over.

Description of the shapes

Madame Plumauzille did not see the reddish-violet light. She only saw three or four of the "things," one of them being larger than the other two. She compares their form to that type of big knobbly potatoes which have globular excrescences. The movements of the objects put her in mind of the movement of a sack with a person or an animal inside it. She thinks that it was this deformation that enabled the shapes to move, by contraction, by the inflation and deflation of their swellings. The bodies were not luminous in themselves, and were only visible because the car headlights lit them up. Their colour was a light brownish-grey, comparable to the colour of wrapping paper or a jute sack, but their surface looked smooth.

One would naturally have dearly loved to get many more precise details. But it must be borne in mind that the sighting dates from about fourteen or fifteen years ago, and that it lasted but a few seconds in conditions that are far from being excellent. And it is clear that the witnesses, surprised, indeed alarmed, had time neither to count the objects nor to measure them and take in their appearance and their movements in great detail.

Monsieur Plumauzille uses a great many com-

parisons in describing what he saw. He describes the objects as shapeless, vague, blurred...Their appearance reminds him of a transparent plastic bag, and their movement suggests to him the movement of an animal imprisoned in such a bag. He thinks the bodies were there in quite large numbers: "They were all over the place, down below the road...the place was just swarming with them...we might very easily have run over one of them..." Everything induces him to think that they had been put down there by the luminous red mass.

One is at a loss to say whether these were objects or creatures. The vaguest word is the best word for describing them. In any case it may be noted that these bodies, including the biggest "bag" (out of which the others may perhaps have come?) had a few instants in which — if they were in any fashion capable of observing their surroundings — to perceive the arrival of the car. Nevertheless several of them crossed the road in a manner that appears to have been imprudent. Madame Plumauzille had the impression that they were trying, perhaps awkwardly, to escape from the car and hide behind the bank on the left hand side of the road.

Comparison with other cases

Taken as a whole, the Yssandon case recalls in a striking fashion the case reported by Antonio Ribera

in *Phénomènes Spatiaux* No. 24 (June 1970) and which happened at San Marti de Tous in Spain.¹ The similitude is not total, but the possible resemblances are very numerous. On a lower level of resemblance we might also compare it with the Domsten case in Sweden,² and with cases given in the undermentioned sources:

Gaddis, V. *Mysterious Fires And Lights*, p.42.

Inforespace, No.5, p.23.

Phénomènes Spatiaux, No.1, p.13.

FSR, Vol.18, No.4 (July-August 1972), p.15.³

Phénomènes Spatiaux, No.25, p.26.⁴

Once again we observe that the possible comparisons between various cases are only partial. Certain features are common, while other features are absolutely different. And we find this same result, whichever aspect of the UFO phenomenon we examine. The sizes of the objects, their shapes, their movements, the traces they leave, their luminous emanations, the morphology and behaviour of the pilots, all present the same character.

We find that there are similarities which suffice to confer upon the global phenomenon a certain unity, but these similarities are always mixed with dissimilarities.

We would seek in vain for two cases presenting, if not a total resemblance, at least a very profound similarity, such as, say, the similarity that exists



Joël Mesnard's graphic reconstruction of the incident at Yssandon

between one airplane and another airplane of the same type, or between one horse and another horse. We have the impression that the phenomenon adopts a far more varied gamut of appearance than is shown by any terrestrial creatures or craft.

Notes on the testimony

I am personally convinced, as far as anyone can possibly be, of the good faith of the witnesses. However, it would be dishonest if one did not note that these friendly and affable people are endowed with an imagination and an interest in the unusual such as are but rarely encountered. And this fact invests their testimony with a less rigorous and more subjective character than we might have desired.

Madame Plumauzille, when trying to recall the year when the sighting occurred, employed a pendulum, an instrument which she uses quite frequently and one which is not generally recognized as possessing the qualities of the measuring instruments in current use, or of an ordinary calendar.

After she had given me her account of the sighting, she told me that a few years ago, somewhere in Auvergne or La Creuse, a farmer found himself obliged to cede to the advances of a creature of the feminine sex which had emerged from a flying saucer. The striking analogy between this story and a well known Brazilian case prompted me to secure from her all possible details, and in the end it turned out that Madame Plumauzille's memory had converted into one and the same episode the case of Antonio Villas Boas and the French case of Monsieur Mazaud at Mourieras.

In fact the Plumauzilles, following upon their experience, preserved a certain number of articles on flying saucers which they had found in newspapers and magazines. There is of course nothing surprising in that. Nothing is more natural than that the eyewitnesses to an apparition should thenceforth feel curiosity about the phenomenon in general. Indeed it is rather the absence of this reaction that strikes one as glaring when one encounters it in such cases.

Monsieur Plumauzille's interests, however, are not confined to flying saucers. He is also interested in Prehistory. This too is entirely natural if one lives in Correze. As he is a dealer in pottery-ware and himself manufactures a certain amount of pottery-ware and sculptures, his taste for the mysterious supplies him with themes of inspiration for his work. His imagination is powerful and lively, very developed, and involving such elements as the Sun and stars and the Universe, the ancient Gauls, sexuality, etc. It must however be emphasised that the fact that he possesses a lively imagination does not seem to me to furnish any reason why our confidence in the story told by himself and his wife should be impaired. Even a strong imagination of this kind and a liking for the fantastic do not imply that the person possessing them is given to visions or affabulation.

What is in any case certain is that, immediately after they had experienced their adventure, the Plumauzilles told their friends and their children about it. They never pass the spot now without

recalling the weird things they saw that night, and Madame Plumauzille never sees an oddly shaped potato without thinking of those strange forms.

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NOTES by Gordon Creighton

1 So far as I can recall, this very curious Spanish case has not yet been translated into English, and is merely one of the many hundreds that I would like to tackle one day if the span of human life here permits. The case is indeed rather similar. During the night of September 11, 1968, a Spanish gentleman, designated only by the pseudonym of "Miguel Costa," saw four weird shiny grey metallic objects shaped like the figure "8" moving up the side of a conical hill near Barcelona. Above the top of the hill, which was some 50-60 metres high, a huge orange-reddish oval object was hovering, and the "8"-shaped figures seem to have hastened up the hill, travelling in the expansion-retraction fashion used by worms and maggots, and to have entered the large craft which then moved off and was out of sight in a flash.

2 This is the terrifying case of the young Swedes, Rydberg and Gustavsson, who, late at night on December 20, 1958, were driving home from a dance when they stopped to observe a luminous object standing in a glade. They were then seized by four amorphous leaden-grey creatures about one metre high, "shaped like scones or skittles," which tried to drag them into the craft. Gustavsson was only able to resist the creatures (which concentrated on him) by clinging frantically to a signpost. Meanwhile Rydberg had fought free and got to the car and sounded the horn, whereupon the creatures fled back to their UFO which rose and vanished. Rydberg said that it was impossible to get a grip on the jellylike creatures, "which smelt like stale marsh," and that his right arm sank in one of them right up to the elbow.

This case (which for obvious reasons has never pleased the "Cosmic Brothers" school of thought) was mentioned briefly by Waveney Girvan on page 5 of FSR for November/December 1959 (the first issue of his editorship) and had, I think, also been noted previously in FSR, but I have failed to turn up the reference. It seems that the Swedish Defence authorities who questioned Gustavsson and Rydberg took the case only too seriously and therefore killed it promptly with ridicule. (As I do not think we have ever seen the full story, will any of our Swedish readers who see this kindly get and translate for us the full account, so that we can print it?)

3 This is Hubert Malthaner's fascinating account of the spherical object seen bowling along a German road in April 1970, but I hardly see any relation between it and the very rare category of "shapeless creatures" or sack-like, maggot-like, creatures.

4 This is the excellent *Catalogue of Extraterrestrial Humanoid Types* by our Brazilian friend Jader U. Pereira of Porto Alegre. It has appeared in full in *Phénomènes Spatiaux*, and is another of the important articles which, to my great regret, I have not yet been able to tackle. I have it on my list. Joel Mesnard's reference here is of course not to the humanoid types, but to Jader Pereira's appendix, in which he lists nine other known cases in which entities of non-human form were reported.

It looks however as though the only one that bears much resemblance to the "maggots" of Monsieur and Madame Plumauzille is the Spanish case at San Marti de Tous (see Footnote 1 above).

ANTHROPOID AND UFO IN INDIANA

Jerome Clark

JUST as the bizarre "Momo" scare was ending in Louisiana, Missouri, towards the end of July 1972¹, an equally strange, if considerably less well publicized series of events erupted in the tiny (pop. 900) town of Roachdale in west-central Indiana located 40 miles west of Indianapolis.²

The first witnesses were Mrs. Lou Rogers and her infant son Keith. One night during the first week of August Mrs. Rogers had stepped outside the family's rural trailer house to roll up the windows of the car, since the sky had clouded up and rain had begun to sprinkle. As she did so, she thought she heard a sort of growl in the darkness, a "boo" or "oo" sound. Momentarily puzzled, she proceeded to ignore the sound (explaining to me later that "...you hear all kinds of strange noises in the country") and went about her work.

Then she heard it again and this time Keith became terrified. The growl, a "real deep" one, sounded as if it had emanated from a human rather than an animal voice, and whatever had made it seemed now to be breathing down her neck. She turned around slowly but could see nothing. Thoroughly shaken, she and Keith fled into the house.

She did not know it then, but an hour and a half earlier one of her younger brothers, looking out of a Ladoga, Indiana, farmhouse window, had seen what he thought was the explosion of a plane. He had observed a luminous object sailing through the sky, alighting over a cornfield separating Randy and Lou Rogers' house from a neighbour's; the object hovered briefly and then "just sort of blew up" – silently. This cornfield would house the creature which for the next few weeks would terrify the people of Roachdale and cause some of them to fear the Second Coming was at hand.

Over the next couple of nights the Rogerses heard odd noises around the yard. "It sounded as if something was going around the place pounding the siding and windows," Randy Rogers said. "Whatever it was, it must have gotten braver each night because the noise got louder and louder with each night." Rogers borrowed his father's shotgun to protect himself and his family. Whenever the marauder came around, he would rush outside into the night to glimpse an enormously broad-shouldered, shadowy biped escaping into the cornfield. The thing stood about six feet tall.

"At a certain hour," Lou Rogers said, "it would always come around – between 10.00 and 11.30 at night. You could feel it coming somehow. It's hard to explain. The feeling would just keep getting stronger and stronger, and then when it got strongest

so you knew something had to happen, the knocking would start. This happened every night for two or three weeks.

"Another thing about it – it smelled *rotten*. Like dead animals or garbage."

Because it appeared only under cover of darkness the Rogerses never saw it completely clearly, but they were able to observe that it was hairy and black. Once, as Mrs. Rogers washed dishes, the creature ducked up and down on the other side of the window above the sink.

"We sort of thought it might be a gorilla," she said. "It would stand like a man but it would run on all fours. Even on all fours it was as tall as my husband, who's 5 feet 9 inches. It was real broad.

"I was never exactly afraid of it. If it was going to hurt me, it would have that first night. I had no awareness of it in the daytime, no fear of it. I'd even leave the doors open. Sometimes I'd put out garbage and later it would be gone. My husband thought I was crazy, trying to make friends like that. My little boy would never go out alone to play. But I was pretty curious about it.

"What was weird was that we could never find tracks, even when it ran over mud. It would run and jump but it was like somehow it wasn't touching anything. When it ran through weeds, you couldn't hear anything. And sometimes when you looked at it, it looked like you could see *through* it."

Once, however, she and her younger brother came upon a pair of tracks made by something that stood on two feet – or rather, a foot and a stub – but these were only three inches in diameter, much smaller, she was sure, than the creature she had observed would have left. She had no idea what had made them.

Nor did she know how a plastic "flying saucer" toy showed up at the house one day. It did not belong to her son, who displayed no interest in it and placed it out among the garbage. The next day it was gone.

Over the next three weeks other Roachdale area residents reportedly viewed the creature. They did not accept its presence as calmly as the Rogerses had. An estimated three dozen persons claimed encounters with the beast, described as huge and gorilla-like, with shining eyes. Conservation Officer William Woodall of Crawfordsville interviewed a number of witnesses as the panic spread. He admitted he had no answers.

A taste for children and salad

The most spectacular report came from the Carter