

THE UFO INVESTIGATOR AS COUNSELLOR AND HEALER

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Mr. Musgrave is an American who lives in Canada. His contribution is the text of the formal paper which he presented at the CUFOS Conference at Lincolnwood, near Chicago, on April 30, 1976

UFO field investigators are more than scientific detectives. They also fulfill an important social function as counsellors, and in some cases as healers, in the sense of helping people to cope with extremely stressful and staggering experiences. Like it or not, it is a role that each conscientious field investigator is forced into by the nature of how people react to the UFO phenomenon. Because of this fact, more attention should be paid to this role when choosing and training investigators — without ignoring the importance of keeping to scientific method while carrying on UFO investigation.

By now it is commonplace that whatever may be behind the UFO phenomenon, UFO percipients have gone through a real experience which in general they try to describe as best they can. The intensity and genuineness of this experience has even been the main factor in convincing some sceptical investigators that the UFO phenomenon is both real and worthy of serious attention. For better or worse, our main source of information about the phenomenon (up to this point in time at least), is the UFO percipient. Because of this fact, attention has been paid to discover just how reliable and accurate such information is, and what kind of detective work brings out the most complete and accurate account of what was experienced and what really happened.

Attention has focused on the UFO percipient as a source of information. But at the field investigator level little attention has been paid to the UFO percipient as a person who has experienced something that potentially is the most traumatic and/or "meaningful" experience of life. In a growing number of cases I've investigated there appears to be almost a direct relationship between the "meaningfulness" of the experience to the person and the strangeness of the event. "Meaningful" UFO experiences make up a small percentage of UFO cases, but both stress and meaning are factors that play an important part in the UFO phenomenon. In addition to uncovering valuable data, attention must be paid to the well-being of the person who has experienced the phenomenon. Lack of attention to this on the part of some UFO investigators has meant that investigations sometimes have heightened the anxiety associated with a UFO event. It may even turn out that the investigators' role as healer or counsellor outweighs their role as data gatherers. UFO investigation has to be concerned about ethics as well as scientific method.

To my knowledge, no extensive quantitative study has been made on what motivates a UFO percipient to become a UFO reporter (or what motivates a person to become a UFO investigator for that matter). To UFO investigators what may be taking place is purely a matter of scientific inquiry. But the attempt to alleviate the stress associated with a very strange experience is a large factor, if not ultimately the only factor, that brings people to report their UFO experiences. This seems particularly true of UFO events of high strangeness (and, need it be said, of potentially high information). Some excellent field investigators' manuals are now available. In addition to the matters of technique and data gathering they deal with, future editions should pay attention to the methods of dealing with such stress as now exists, and on methods which at least avoid increasing stress, if they don't actually help alleviate it.

Not enough attention has been paid to the uniqueness of UFO research. It is the only area of scientific inquiry in the non-communist world in which the major contributions are being made by "amateurs" — it is truly a people's science (which explains in part the reluctance of academic institutions to accept it). The fact that UFO research is carried on by amateurs has been both its strength and weakness. Anyone can be a UFO investigator or UFO expert. One corollary of this is the unfortunate fact that there is little or no adequate training or supervision of field investigators other than on a local basis or by means of field investigators' manuals which are the best that can be done under present circumstances. This has contributed to the harm that can be and has been done by unthinking or unconcerned investigators. Regrettably I've come across more than one UFO sighting where investigators have increased already existing tensions, or even created tensions that didn't previously exist. A recent example centred on an occupant report that came from the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies during Autumn 1975. The main witness, a young woman, observed two silver-suited occupants standing on the platform of a disc-shaped object by the side of the road. She made the mistake of reporting her sighting to the local news media and was deluged by hundreds of sightseers and dozens of UFO investigators from all across North America. She was informed by some UFO investigators that she definitely saw a spaceship, that the occupants sometimes abduct people, and that UFOs often return to the same spot. The

experiences after the sighting convinced her never to report a sighting again, and was a factor in her decision to move out of town.

Unfortunately, this case is neither unique nor uncommon. Although it may be a bit extreme, even an experienced field investigator may say something that seems innocent enough but which will upset the UFO percipient. Investigators must pay careful attention to their use of language, and be aware that much more than scientific observation is taking place as they talk with the witness.

As a footnote, this and similar cases have convinced me that witnesses' names should never be made public without careful thought. Part of the UFO investigators' obligation is to protect percipients from the publicity and harassment that comes with making a UFO sighting a public event.

In addition to the kinds of stress associated with almost all UFO experiences, there is an even more profound stress associated with at least some kinds of UFO experience. The stress experienced by some UFO percipients may be at an even deeper level than commonly imagined. In an increasing number of cases I've been involved with (particularly close encounter, occupant and potential abduction cases), the investigator-percipient interaction is subsumed under that of the healer-patient. The percipient comes not only to tell a story and to understand, but also to "cure" or work through an experience. It is in part for this reason that unconscious communication of percipient and investigator can sometimes play a crucial role, not only for the uncovering and understanding of the totality of what occurred, but also for the working out of the experience for the percipient (and also in some cases for the investigator as well).

This is a heavy burden. Some field investigators solve it by not paying attention to it. For this working out may be a hazard for the investigator as well as for the UFO percipient. In these kinds of cases it may become an occupational hazard, if you will, for the field investigator to become physically involved and even controlled by the psychological projections of the witness. In such cases he is not only working with the percipient to find out more about the UFO experience, but ultimately he is working on himself as well. It should be kept in mind that investigators may encounter cases where they have a block in pursuing and uncovering the UFO story — blocks created by fear of working out the experience with the percipients. Any investigator who is working with these kinds of UFO reports should be well aware of his own instinctive disposition as to why he became a UFO investigator in the first place. It may be that a UFO investigator sits on a case, or doesn't uncover the full story, because the full story would force him to confront his own psyche.

Another consequence of looking at the UFO percipient as a person rather than as a subject is that healing considerations outweigh scientific considerations. For instance, I have a few potential abduction cases for which I believe this to be true. The latest one occurred in January of this year when at least ten independent witnesses observed a light dancing

about in rural Alberta for about an hour. The closest witness, a boy of 10, reported that he could see portholes and legs as it landed near him. Subsequent to the episode, the boy has had a recurrent nightmare in which he is taken aboard the object by "spacepeople" from Saturn. I learned of this case only three weeks after the event. But by this time the boy was no longer experiencing the nightmare, and had difficulty in remembering the sighting. He now slept well, and seemed uninterested in the UFO sighting. His parents reported a number of changes in his behaviour. I've elected not to rush in with the hope of learning more about a possible "real" abduction. My decision to monitor how he copes with this experience is based on the obligation to do what I believe is best for the person rather than the obligation to learn as much as possible about the UFO phenomenon.

While the field investigator has an immediate concern for the well-being of the UFO percipient, it would be potentially fruitful for those in a position to do so to investigate the consequences of the hypothesis that at least some abnormal behaviours, psychoses and neuroses are in fact generated by "real" UFO incidents. Developments of the last few years have demonstrated that the Hills' experience is not unique. Others have undergone an abduction experience, be it real or otherwise, and others have become conscious of the experience only because they needed and sought professional psychological assistance. Even at a low stress level I know of more than one case of multiple amnesia episodes combined with a deep feeling of dread; it is at least possible that these were caused by a UFO encounter. Some abnormal personality changes may be the result of UFO encounters, whether they be abductions or less esoteric meetings. Without detracting from the physical aspects of the UFO phenomenon, there may be a typology of behaviour changes and disorders that are generated by UFO events.

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ROAD HAZARD DOWN UNDER?

Bill Chalker

A report of a bizarre encounter with a UFO by a lady driver of a car in a country district of New South Wales in Australia. Our contributor, who has a BSc (Hons) is an industrial chemist and consultant for the Australian Co-ordination Section (ACOS) of the Center for UFO Studies and Co-ordinator of the Sydney, NSW, group, UFOIC. His report is dated July 4, 1976.

THERE have been many incidents reported in Australia in which unknown aerial objects have followed cars, and several of these have contained a danger factor where the driving ability of the percipient is concerned.

Australian close encounter cases include several events of this type, such as the Pimble Station (Western Australia) event (27.7.65),¹ the Bourke's Flat case of 4.4.66 which involved the bending of headlight beams and possibly related road fatality,² the Wadonga occupant event (24.8.67),³ the north-west W.A. case of November, 1969,⁴ the Penrith to Windsor car chase (5.1.72),⁵ the Mooraduc road car stop case of July 25,⁶ the central Australian long distance car pacing event of August, 1972,⁷ and the Tayene case of September 22nd, 1974.⁸

In most of these cases, the presence of the UFO has called upon the car driver to make sudden efforts to maintain control of the car, and often the event leads to the vehicle leaving the road. Only the Bourkes Flat case of 1966 is suggestive of a fatality related to the presence of a UFO.

The incident which is the subject of this report, represents a variation on this theme, and as far as I can ascertain it is unique. Some cases in the literature provide interesting similarities, but if the reader is aware of cases in which the phenomenon to be described has occurred, I hope they will draw them to my attention.

The incident

Early on Monday morning, March 22, 1976, a Murrurundi couple were returning from their holiday. Nearing the outskirts of Tamworth (population about 25,000), the couple stopped at Nemingha, a small settlement about four and a half miles from Tamworth itself (see Figure 1).

Nemingha, situated on the New England Highway, consists of scattered houses, centred around a road intersection and a railway station. The New England Highway leads to Tamworth 4½ miles (7.25 kms) approximately to the west, while in the other direction it leads to Armidale approximately 65 miles (104 kms) to the north east. The minor road at Nemingha heads towards Numdla, some 32 miles (50 kms) to the south-south east.

In Nemingha itself, at the intersection, there is a post office-service station, the Nemingha Hotel and some houses. Powerlines run parallel to the eastern side of the highway, and a street light is situated

close to the road, in front of the post office-service station (see Figure 2).

The Murrurundi couple were towing a caravan, and they parked opposite the Nemingha Hotel, under the street light (in front of the petrol service station). They were studying a road map, trying to decide whether to take the road to the left (which would take them over a partially bitumened road to Murrurundi, via Nundle), or continue through Tamworth. The time was about 5.45 a.m.

Suddenly a small white car with its headlights on appeared on the road ahead (evidently coming from Tamworth). The couple stepped from their car, hoping to ask the driver for directions, but at that point a bright greenish-yellow light descended from above and completely enveloped the small car. The light apparently disappeared, and as the car started to drift to the wrong side (to its right) of the road, it became enveloped in a thick ball of white haze. The car then stopped on its wrong side of the road.

The Murrurundi couple described the events that followed:

"It seemed like two minutes had passed before the white haze disappeared (I assumed that at this point the car lights were out—B.C.). A lady dressed in blue stepped from the car and with a yellow cloth proceeded to wipe the windscreen which seemed to be covered in a white substance.

"After a few minutes she was about to get back into the car when its lights came back on (apparently by themselves—B.C.). She stared, as we did too, then she threw the yellow cloth on the roadside, got back into the car and proceeded towards us.

"We watched as the cloth she threw away burst into flames..."⁹

A driver of a utility truck pulled up beside the Murrurundi couple, evidently having observed the weird phenomenon. According to the couple he appeared to be very frightened.

The small car, now being driven very slowly, came towards the witnesses, then turned (to its right) taking the road to Nundle. The Murrurundi couple noticed when the small car passed them that it was covered in a "...thick white substance not unlike white paint. The only part of the car not covered was where the windscreen wipers were working."¹⁰

The Murrurundi couple were very shaken and