

TWO "CREATURE" REPORTS FROM NEW ZEALAND

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READERS of FLYING SAUCER REVIEW may be interested in two "bizarre figure" reports that the Auckland University UFO Research Group¹ has investigated this year. Although in neither case was a UFO seen, the strange behaviour and dress of the figures, and the unusual circumstances surrounding the encounters make them worth recording. In one case a witness tried to converse with the figures, but was deliberately ignored.

The first incident was the more straightforward of the two. In this the "spaceman"—as one of the witnesses described the figure—was observed for only about six or seven seconds. Miss Gay Harvey, aged 29, a waitress, and Mr. Nino Perego, aged 37, a cocktail barman, both of Lower Hutt, reported seeing an average-sized man dressed in a "diver's suit" striding along an isolated country road late at night as they drove past in the opposite direction. The date can be pinpointed no closer than about a week before Christmas, 1968, at between 10.30 p.m. and 11.00 p.m.

Description of the entity

The couple were travelling from Wellington to Auckland and came upon the figure on the lonely Taupo-Tokoroa highway, about five miles north of Wairakei. Mr. Perego, an Italian who had been in New Zealand for nearly a year, was driving and consequently received a better view of the figure as they passed it on the other side of the road. The "man" was about 5ft. 7in. to 6ft. tall, of average build and wearing a shiny, plastic-type dark blue suit. It was loose fitting though not baggy. There was a belt or division of some kind round the waist, and the trousers appeared to end or be tucked in at the ankles with the feet enclosed in shoes of the same material. The sleeves appeared to be tucked in at the wrists and the hands were also encased in material of substantially the same kind. There appeared to be a collar or division around the neck where the helmet began. The headpiece was more rigid than the body material but was of the same colour.

Mr. Perego said this headpiece was cylindrical like a small "kitchen rubbish tin", and it had a flat top. Its size indicated that the figure had a head of apparently normal human size. There was a clear plastic-type window on the front of the helmet. Through this he could not determine any facial features but only a contrasting skin colour. The window was square and, on a normal person, would have extended from the eyes to the mouth and from ear to ear.² The figure was striding along slowly, like a "zombie", and did not acknowledge the passage of the car. It faced fixedly forward throughout the period it was illuminated.

Although Mr. Perego braked after he realised what he had seen, Miss Harvey did not want to return

because she was feeling ill and wished to reach Auckland as soon as possible. The night was dry and overcast and the road at the observation point was straight and flat. The surrounding terrain was mainly scrub country. Miss Harvey did not have as good a view as her companion, but was able to confirm the general description of the figure. It was she who used the terms "spaceman" and "diving suit". She had not heard of UFOs before. Mr. Perego had a heavy Italian accent, but nevertheless was fluent in English, and quite articulate. He said he was a keen science fiction reader and had also read articles about UFOs, and found them interesting.

Although the incident had not been published, the Group successfully urged the two nearest newspapers, the *Taupo Times* and the *South Waikato News* (Tokoroa) to appeal to the public for any other witnesses. None came forward.

A Maori's encounter

The second incident occurred in the extreme north of New Zealand and involved a 46-year-old Maori, Mr. Nathan Brown, of Awanui. Mr. Brown, educated to secondary school level, and an able seaman during World War II, had been drinking before the encounter. This must obviously detract from his account, but the three Group members who made the six-hour car trip to Awanui to carry out an investigation came away satisfied with the story.

Mr. Brown had been drinking and playing darts in the private bar of the Awanui Hotel with friends until about 1.00 a.m. on February 22. He had then decided to walk the two miles to his home north of the small township because it was a warm, clear night. About one mile north of Awanui on the flat plains, he noticed an incandescence behind some tall pampas bushes on the western side of the road. He crossed over and walked along the row of bushes looking through the gaps to find the source of the light.

After some yards he came to a gap about 8ft. wide where he saw three people. The line of pampas bushes was apparently in a shallow, overgrown ditch, 10ft. away from a wire fence bounding a roadside paddock. Between the ditch and fence was long, thick grass. He said two men were sitting on the grass verging the road tar-seal, with their feet in the ditch and their backs to the road. They were about 4ft. apart. A woman lay apparently across the ditch as if supported by a board that he could not see. Witness said his first reaction was that the three were having a roadside party. He greeted them but they remained silent. He asked other questions but got no answer and at one point asked: "Can't you talk?"

He then thought that maybe the people had been involved in a motor accident, even though there was no

car nearby. This impression was gained because of the strange state of the woman. She was lying with her feet towards the road and slightly above the level of her head as she lay across the ditch. Her feet came to about 2ft. in front of the man. She was dressed in a long white gown which extended from her neck and even covered her feet. Mr. Brown likened it to a nightdress, but pointed out that her arms were inside the sleeveless gown and appeared to be straight down her sides as if she were lying at attention. She was facing upwards and appeared to be a woman of average height. She had her eyes closed and appeared to be unconscious. Her face was thin and she had good features. Her skin was pale and looked like that of a dead woman. She appeared to be a young woman and had unnaturally white shoulder-length hair.

Heads moved

At this point the witness stepped in between the two silent men to see what was wrong with the woman. He walked into an invisible repelling force which he likened to a bar across his stomach. He stepped back, then tried to move forward again a couple of times, but found the same restraining force. At this point his attention turned to the men.

Both were sitting in a relaxed position looking down at the woman. Their heads were slightly bowed and their shoulders drooped. Their hands fell loosely into their laps. Mr. Brown said they appeared to be about 5ft. 6in. in height, with dark brown skin and brown hair cut

short like a crew cut. He did not get a good look at their clothing, but they appeared to have on brown jackets and brown trousers. He leaned down and tried to peer into the face of the man on his left. The man quickly turned his head in the opposite direction so that his face was not visible. Brown then turned to the man on his right who also quickly turned away. Witness then jumped quickly around to the other side of the man on his right, but the man just as quickly swung back in the opposite direction. Brown then tried to grab the man's shoulder in order to pull him round, but his hand could not penetrate to within less than a foot of the man's body because of an invisible repelling force. He described it as a "fuzzy wall".

Ritual

At this point Mr. Brown felt that he was contending with unnatural forces and strange beings, and stepped back on to the road. Witness was obviously superstitious (as are most Maoris in this area, regardless of education) and then carried out a protective ritual that many northern Maoris evidently perform after encounters with "ghosts". This involved the immediate chewing and spitting out a piece of rolled tobacco and urinating in a circle while swearing. This incredible ritual concluded, Brown ran off. He said he sprinted to a bend in the road about 40 yards farther on and was "shaking like a leaf". He looked back and the luminous haze was still there. During the incident he could not see the source of the haze, but it was very illuminating. It encompassed a circle about 40ft. in diameter behind the pampas and extended about 20ft. up into the air.

The witness, a single man who lives with his sister and brother-in-law, woke the two on his arrival and told them the story. They did not take him seriously until he rang the Kaitaia police. The policeman who took the call (at about 2 a.m.) heard the story and told Brown to "go to bed". He then rang the Awanui taxi driver, Mr. Lionel Yerkevich, whose wife answered the phone. Mr. Brown poured out his story and suggested that Mr. Yerkevich travel to the area to see if there had been an accident. To the woman Mr. Brown sounded "stone cold sober". However she did not wish to send her husband out at that time of the morning on dubious grounds, and did not wake him.

Mr. Brown, by now much calmer, said he returned immediately to the scene of the incident, but the light and the people had gone. In the morning on his way to work as a groundsman at the Awanui Hotel he said he searched the area and found marks in the grass where the people had been the night before. He also found a neatly flattened strip of grass 3ft. or 4ft. wide and about 60 yards long, extending south on the roadward side of the fence. These marks were seen later in the day by a Kaitaia insurance agent, Mr. Joe Robinson, who was intrigued by Brown's story. The Group members interviewed Mr. Brown in late April, and his story had not differed from that which he told friends the day after the incident.

Physiological effect?

One thing he mentioned was that for about three weeks after the incident he had been unusually tired, (continued on page iii)

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