

THE CAR THAT TURNED TRANSPARENT

Gordon Creighton

ONILSON PATERO, a 40-year-old Brazilian traveling salesman, was driving back to his home in Catanduva, in the northern part of the state of Sao Paulo, at 3.00 a.m. on May 22, 1973. He had been to Itajobi to submit his accounts to the firm for which he worked and had then made a detour to give a lift to a youth. He was now on State Highway No. 321 (the Washington Luis Highway as it is described in some of the newspapers), and in the vicinity of Kilometre Seven. It was raining hard, and he was driving at moderate speed.

He switched on the car radio, and heard the announcer say it was 3.00 a.m., and then came a song by the singer Nelson Ed. He turned up the volume, but suddenly the programme was overlaid by powerful interference resembling static. He fiddled with the knob, but the noise grew louder and louder, till finally the radio programme was blotted right out. Meanwhile he noticed that the car, a Chevrolet *Opala*, was losing power, and thought he must have an electrical defect somewhere. The engine continued to fail, even though he dropped down into second gear and then into first.

Then he became aware of an intense beam of bluish light shining into the car, playing momentarily on his driving mirror and then moving on to the back seats, where he had a briefcase. His first reaction was to get right over to the side of the road, thinking a lorry was coming by. He pulled over, the engine now almost dead, and put up his arm to shield his eyes from the glare. But no truck went by.

Uncovering his eyes, he got out quickly and now became aware of a strange and powerful heat that was almost suffocating. The beam of light was focussed on him, and he perceived its source, an opaque oval-shaped object about ten or twenty metres from him, and at a height of some fifteen or twenty metres from the ground. While opaque itself, the object was emitting light which lit up the whole region around as though it were day.

Transparency and fire

Then he saw a tube start to descend from the object, and in panic he tried to escape, but found himself held by something. He looked behind him, and saw that the beam was playing upon the car and making it completely transparent. His skin was on fire, as though he were burning. He managed to run some distance. And then he fainted.

Two young men who came along the road some time later saw a deserted car with the lights full on, a door open, and a body lying face downwards on the rain-sodden ground. A briefcase and documents were scattered around. They thought the man must have died in an accident, and hurried on to notify the Police.

Police Highway Patrolman Clovis Queiroz went to the spot and while examining what he thought was a corpse, was surprised to see some sudden movement. Then the body sprang to life, Onilson Patero jumped up, and began shouting wildly: "They're after me! They're after me!" The patrolman thought he must be mentally deranged and so took him to the Padre Albino Hospital, where Dr. Elias Aziz Chediak gave him a thorough examination and kept him under observation until 7.00 p.m. when he was allowed to go home.

The documents scattered around and gathered up by the Police were found to contain many cheques and other papers *which had been inside the locked briefcase*. None of the cheques or other papers were however found to be missing.

After-effects

Onilson Patero's hair, which had been brown, turned completely black during the night of May 22, but was subsequently reported to be slowly reverting to its original shade.

A few days after the episode, greenish-yellow spots, resembling bruises and subcutaneous effusions of blood, began appearing on Onilson Patero's chest and abdomen, and he returned to the hospital for further examination.

Dr. Chediak gave a statement to the press, which quoted him as saying: "I am absolutely sure that the man is telling the truth. His statements are fully coherent and he presents no symptoms of mental debility." Commenting later on the spots on Onilson Patero's body, Dr. Chediak said: "He was burnt, and the burns are no ordinary burns. They look as though they were caused by some strange rays."

The doctor also told the press that, a week previously, a man and his wife employed at the Fazenda Secap (farm) claimed to have seen a similar oval flying object, "with two figures like people, in big hats and linked together by a sort of tube." According to one newspaper, as many as six local residents claimed also to have seen the UFO. (One paper said it was Onilson Patero himself who had seen the "two figures like people, in big hats and linked together by a sort of tube," but it seems likely that the attribution of this to him, rather than to the other witnesses, is a mistake.)

The affair was given very wide press coverage in Brazil and generated general alarm and excitement in the whole local populace. Day and night watches were organized by folk hoping to see or photograph a UFO, some enthusiasts even voicing the crazy desire to "establish contact with it, if possible, and ascertain its origin and purposes", which doubtless only goes to show that optimists are born, not made.

Onilson Patero's second encounter

The present is a preliminary and summary report on the Onilson Patero affair, for it does not end there. Later reports indicate that on April 26, 1974, Onilson vanished, having driven to the nearby town of Julio de Mesquita and promised his family that he would be home again that night.

He was found on May 2, six days later, by a farmer named Cesar Menelli, sitting sodden with rain, his clothing covered with ticks, on a small hill, very difficult of access, near Colatina, in the State of Espirito Santo. Colatina is over 900 kilometres from Catanduva.

This brief account is based on reports published in the newspaper *Estado de Sao Paulo* for May 24, 1973 (acknowledgements and thanks to Mr. Nigel Rimes) and the Tio de Janeiro newspaper *O Dia* for May 29 and May 30, 1973 (acknowledgements and thanks to Dr. W. Buhler).

The hitch-hiker again

After I had prepared this summary of the Onilson Patero case, we received SBEDV Bulletin No. 94/98 (Sept. 1973 – June 1974) in which Dr. Buhler has given a long and enormously detailed account of both Onilson's first encounter with the UFO and his "repeater" experience in April/May 1974, during which time he was allegedly taken aboard the UFO by the entities and found that one of the latter was in fact the mysterious young fair-haired, blue-eyed hitch-hiker, to whom he had given a lift on the night of May 21, 1973.

Owing to the time that it will take before I can complete a translation of Dr. Buhler's report, I have thought it better to present this brief outline of what appears to be one of the most weird cases yet to emerge from Brazil.

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