

THE EXTRAORDINARY HAPPENINGS AT CASA BLANCA

by Gordon Creighton

IN her excellent contribution to our special number, *The Humanoids*,¹ Mrs. Coral Lorenzen gave a brief outline of this strange affair, identifying the place as Riverside, California, though if one wishes to be very exact it seems that it actually took place in the adjacent residential district of Casa Blanca. As Mrs. Lorenzen observes, the matter does not appear to have been properly investigated by an experienced student of UFO phenomena. It should be placed on record, however, that in addition to the version² quoted by her, there is also an account³ which appeared in 1955 in the *Journal of the Borderland Sciences Research Association*. It seems necessary that we consider both these accounts for each contains something absent from the other.

According to the author of the BSRA version, Mrs. Winona Cromwell of Hemet, California, two of her own friends, Mrs. Jean Rowland and Mrs. Mary Starbuck, had learnt of the occurrence from a report in their local paper.⁴ These two ladies therefore went to the house where the happenings had allegedly occurred, and managed to interview all the witnesses, who were a group of about eight or nine children ranging in age from four up to fifteen years.

The BSRA report was quoted at length in the valuable and, unfortunately, now defunct British bulletin *Uranus*⁵, but until the publication of *The Humanoids* there has never been any mention of the case in the pages of *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* and it is very likely quite unknown to most of our readers. I have now come across something else which possibly deserves to be considered in association with the Casa Blanca case, and so the present seems an opportune moment for recording here the additional data and sketches to supplement Mrs. Lorenzen's account.

The series of truly extraordinary happenings at Casa Blanca began at about 2 p.m. on Sunday, August 22, 1955, while the group of children were playing in the garden of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, parents of one of the boys (Kermit Douglas).



fig. 1

Kermit and another boy were wrestling on the lawn when, looking up, Kermit noticed a curious object in the air above them, as in Figure 1.

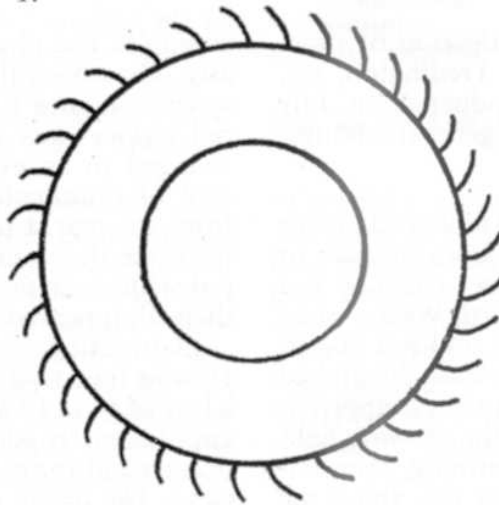


fig. 2

As they watched, it disappeared, and object No. 2 appeared.

This was a hovering disc, which at times seemed to be spinning. When it did so, the lines emanating from it were "bent round", as shown in the sketch. (All sketches are based on those by Mrs. Jean Rowland, from the descriptions given by the children.)

It was not long before more of the children were seeing the objects, which were of various colours but

mostly silver. In addition to the shapes shown in Figs. 1 and 2, there were also those shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

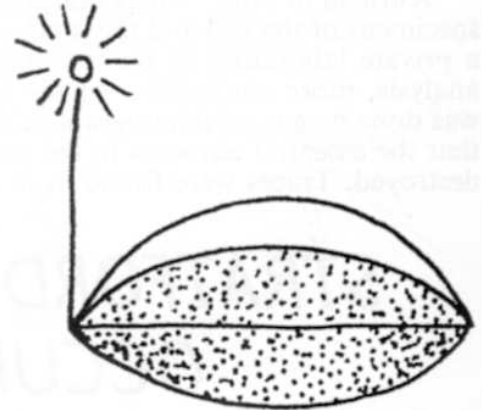


fig. 3

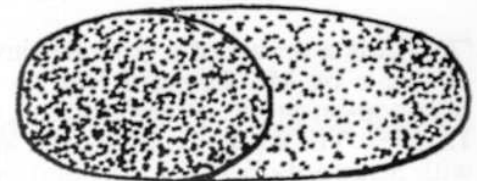


fig. 4

The objects all seemed to be "semi-transparent," and were continually vanishing and re-appearing. Each time one of them vanished or reappeared, the children heard a high musical "ping". This went on for some time, but whenever a child went into the house to call the parents the objects disappeared. So we have no adult witnesses⁶.

The first reactions of the children to these phenomena had been joyous, but now things were happening that began to frighten them.

One of the objects, very beautiful and brightly coloured (Figure 3), had landed in a field about half the distance of a city block from the children, and two of the boys suddenly became aware of something else near the house next door. Looking more closely, they saw that this was an extraordinary

creature of about the size of a four-year old child (Figure 5).

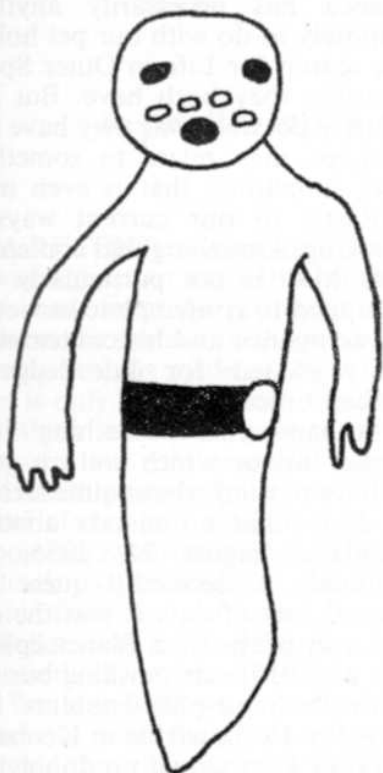


fig. 5

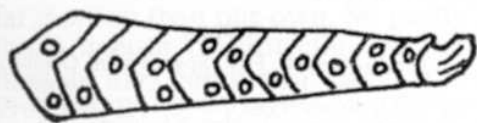


fig. 6

This creature was transparent, and the boys could see the wall of the house right through him. The round disc⁷ on the creature's belt shone like a bright mirror, and dazzled the boys. The creature had "round objects on his face which sparkled like diamonds", and the boys stated emphatically that *it was not standing on the ground, but hovering above it*. In confirmation of this, Mrs. Lorenzen's version mentions that the children saw a being 3½ft. tall emerge from the landed craft, and that this being "had a big red mouth, big red eyes, and four diamond-shaped things where his nose should be". And now, something that is very interesting, Mrs. Lorenzen has at this point an item which is missing from the BSRA account. Her version, taken from *Saucer News*², says that another boy had told reporters that he saw that this "strange man" was

carrying two guns, with which he paralyzed the two boys.

Continuing now with the BSRA account, we read that the children told Mrs. Rowland and Mrs. Starbuck that the strange craft in the sky and in the field bore very bright sources of light (see the "antenna" as shown in Figure 3), "which seemed to emit some kind of ray".

One of the boys, aged seven, started walking towards the object that had landed in the field, saying that it was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. But two of the older boys, seeing this, ran after him and tripped him up and so prevented him from getting any nearer to the craft or whatever it was.

Another boy saw an "arm" (Figure 6) suspended in the air about twenty feet from him, and beckoning to him. Questioned as to its size, he said it was about as big as the arm of a child of four or five.

A second and even more extraordinary creature (Figure 7) appeared to one of the boys, and "spoke to him".

This creature was evidently more solid looking than the other one, for the boy said that it was wearing clothing that looked like satin. The creature told him to climb up into



fig. 7

a nearby tree, adding that he would be picked up from there in fifteen minutes time.

He and one of the other lads accordingly climbed up into the tree and sat there waiting. The rest of the children must have sensed the danger in this, for they urged them to come down and, when they still refused, forced them down from the tree by turning the garden hosepipe on to them. One may well imagine that it is fortunate that they did so, for a few minutes later one of the mysterious craft came over and flew about around that particular tree before disappearing for the last time.

Meanwhile, however, after one of the vessels had landed in the nearby field, another boy had climbed a tree and, from the tree, had gone on to a roof, no doubt in order to get a better view of things. This boy was about to climb down again, via the tree, when he suddenly turned and walked straight off the side of the roof. The other children watched him land on his head, but with no apparent injury. It is however important for us to note that this boy had no subsequent recollection of having fallen from the roof, and absolutely refused to believe⁸ it when the other children told him what had happened. (According to Mrs. Lorenzen's version, this boy had also seen "a silver arm which beckoned to him".)

Mrs. Rowland and Mrs. Starbuck concluded their account with the statement that they felt certain that the children were telling the truth, "for they have been, and still are, very frightened, so that it will be a long time before they forget what they have experienced".

So much then for the Riverside or Casa Blanca case, which looks suspiciously like an attempt at child-kidnapping by totally mysterious creatures possessing the power of hypnosis or of casting a "glamour" upon their intended victims. I fully agree with Mrs. Lorenzen that it calls for further investigation, and I am glad that one of APRO's Advisers, geologist Dr. Philip Seff, is going to undertake this.

I am particularly glad that it is a scientist who is to probe the case. For, having no scientific reputation

of my own to lose, I venture to assert that—if authentic—this case yields to none in importance for it may involve contact with beings of a substance and a nature that are totally inconceivable to the mind of a modern scientist and that may derive from realms that cannot even be grasped intellectually by our brightest brains (though writers of bygone days suffered no such handicap). As I have endeavoured to suggest, many times, the so-called “UFO Phenomenon” seems to be something of enormous and growing complexity, involving many “creatures” and many “vessels” of totally disparate natures and origins.

Following on from Casa Blanca, I want to touch now on another matter about which I wrote in 1965 in an article entitled *A Russian Wall Painting and Other ‘Spacemen’*. Figures 1 and 2 in that article were from Henri Lhote’s book¹⁰ on the prehistoric frescoes found in the Sahara, and I suggest that, whatever those two strange figures might represent, there hardly seemed to be grounds for thinking, as some people did, that the creatures portrayed might have any bearing on the “UFO Problem”.

I have recently been taking another look at Lhote’s book, and particularly at his coloured reproduction (between pages 104 and 105 of the English edition¹¹) showing what he calls “The Great God, with Praying Women”.

None of these creatures look much like human beings, and the most extraordinary of all is the “Great God” himself, which I reproduce here (Figure 8).

This creature, painted between 6,000 and 8,000 years ago, is every bit as outlandish as those allegedly seen by the American children at Casa Blanca in 1955, and I particularly wish to draw attention to a certain resemblance between it and Casa Blanca Figure 7.



fig. 8

The Casa Blanca creature of Figure 7 has, in addition to its four “legs”, an extraordinary “doubling” of the forearms, so that two of these emerge at each elbow, one going upwards and one downwards.

I am well aware, of course, that, as the critics will not fail to point out, “this is just the sort of thing that kids draw”. Indeed, I think I recall finding, some years ago, some of my own earliest scribbles in which much the same sort of “four-armed” creatures appear. But the fact remains that the “Great God” of the Tassili frescoes in the Sahara also has some very odd projections sticking upwards from his elbows, and while nobody would maintain that he is identical with Mrs. Rowland’s drawing of what the Californian children say they saw, I have found the resemblance between Tassili and Casa Blanca haunting my mind.

If there are strange creatures in the Universe that are totally unknown to our science, and that appeared to the children at Casa Blanca, then it may well be that creatures of the same order were familiar to the unknown people who made the Tassili frescoes. Let us not forget the wise old Gurdjieff’s dictum that *for every new piece of knowledge acquired by modern Man, ten old pieces of knowledge are lost*.

I am nowhere suggesting, of course, that either Tassili or Casa Blanca has necessarily anything remotely to do with our pet hobby, the search for Life in Outer Space. Possibly they both have. But it is equally possible that they have not. Perhaps they relate to something else, something that is even more fantastic to our current ways of thinking, something that contemporary Man is not particularly well equipped to contemplate in view of his arrogance and his contempt for what passed for knowledge in earlier times.

Perhaps this something is a matter about which we are going to have to think about quite seriously. For, make no mistake about it, Sunday, August 22, 1955, was evidently a decidedly queer and special sort of day. It was the date not only of the Casa Blanca episode but also of the astonishing business of the “armour-plated goblins” seen at Kelly-Hopkinsville in Kentucky. Charles Fort would no doubt have agreed that some very strange creatures were abroad in our world on that day.

NOTES

- ¹ *The Humanoids*, FSR, Special issue, October/November 1966 (p.55). Coral Lorenzen: *UFO Occupants in United States Reports*.
- ² *Saucer News*, October/November 1955.
- ³ From “Clips, Quotes and Comments,” *Journal of Borderland Sciences Research Association (BSRA)*, Vista, California, 1955. (At that date under direction of Dr. Meade Layne).
- ⁴ *The Riverside Enterprise*, August 30, 1955.
- ⁵ *Uranus*, London (Ed: E. Biddle) Vol. II, No. 4 (10), February 1956, p.67.
- ⁶ This absence of adult witnesses could of course suggest that the children had fabricated the story. But it might equally well suggest that some crafty creatures intended to kidnap children without benefit of adult witnesses.
- ⁷ Perhaps these shining discs and antennae points have a hypnotic purpose.
- ⁸ This suggests that the boy’s mind had already been conditioned in some way and amnesia induced, though it might perhaps also have been simply due to striking the ground with his head.
- ⁹ Gordon Creighton: *A Russian Wall Painting and Other ‘Spacemen’*, FSR, July/August 1965, p.11.
- ¹⁰ Henri Lhote: *A La Découverte des Fresques du Tassili* (Paris, 1958).
- ¹¹ Do. English edition: *The Search for the Tassili Frescoes*. Hutchinson, London, 1959.

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