



1.942 My Encounter With the Little Man

By Ron Quinn

This strange occurrence took place during August 1942 in Mongaup Valley, a small community located several miles east of Monticello in upstate New York. Even today, 56 years later, this event is as fresh in my mind as if it had happened only last week.

Each summer, our parents would take my brother Chuck and me on a two-week vacation somewhere in New York. Mom's older sister would accompany us with her three children: Martin, Jackie, and Rita. Our dad would come out during the weekend for a visit, then return home by train.

These little escapes to the country were

a welcome change after spending almost a year in the cramped confines of the city. We would either head for the mountains or rent a beach cottage out on Long Island. Most of these vacations were filled with adventures, especially if our cousins were along.

Dad had met Richy Murtagh through a friend, and Murtagh mentioned his folks had acreage and a large home in Mongaup Valley, and also a guest cottage they rented out for the summer months. Dad asked if they would rent him the place for several weeks, because he was searching for a place to send the family for vacation. Dad also said that Mom's sister would most

likely come along with her children. Richy checked with his parents and they agreed to rent us the cottage.

Unknown to me at the time, this vacation and the strange experience I would encounter would stay with me for the rest of my life.

Murtagh met us at the train, and how we all managed to squeeze into his car with all our baggage is another mystery. It was about eight miles to his place, and as we sped along, my heart beat with excitement at the prospect of living out in the open country once more before school began.

Murtagh mentioned that a river that had a deep swimming area was near the cottage. In a short while we crossed a bridge, and I caught sight of the river below.

Turning right, we traveled a short distance along a dirt road, then up a hill. On the right stood a large, stately, two-story home surrounded by trees. Just below was the cottage, near an open field. A cow grazed nearby and the family dog, Nelly, barked wildly as we came to a stop.

Our first enjoyable afternoon was spent exploring the surrounding country. I ran happily down the grassy slopes and felt the cool grass beneath my bare feet. The air had a clean freshness to it as I stopped beside the river and sat with the others, dangling my feet in the cool, moving water.

Several days into our vacation, which at times resembled a Tom Sawyer adventure, especially our trips along the river, I committed a minor infraction of the laws

set down by Mom and was instructed to return to the cottage and remain there for an hour while the others played.

A Small Visitor

I was sitting perhaps four feet from a window. After a short period of time, I heard a tapping sound, like somebody gently hitting a nail against glass. I looked in the direction of the sound and froze in fear. Standing on the outside window ledge was a small, oddly dressed man about 12 inches high.

At this point, you might be saying, "Oh, just a young child's imagination." But not so.

This little fellow did not entirely resemble the traditional elf, gnome, or leprechaun we have all seen depicted in various books and movies. Somewhat frightened, especially by something I knew could not exist, I looked away in hopes the illusion would disappear.

Again came the sound, and once more I glanced up. The little guy was smiling and waving his hand. The tapping came from his walking stick tapping lightly against the windowpane.

After all these years, I can still describe that little man, down to the last detail, as his image is branded deep in my memory. He had an odd-looking hat, dark green in color. A short, dark gray beard covered his lower face. From beneath his hat, silky, curly hair cascaded down to his shoulders and covered his ears, which I never saw.

His light gray shirt fit somewhat tightly around his upper body, but the sleeves were

quite baggy. The little guy's trousers were the same color and ended just below the knee. Something resembling a black belt encircled his wide waist, but it had no buckle. He wore dark brown, soft-looking boots that ended just below the trousers. The toes of his footwear did not curl back and end in a point like we have seen in drawings.

Comparing his features to those of a normal-size man, he looked to be in his 50s. His extremely large eyes were his most striking feature, and the expression on his little face was that of pure friendship and love.

I sat gazing at this individual in dismay. I might have been only a lad of ten, but I had been told many times I was several years ahead of myself when it came to logical thinking. I knew what I was seeing just couldn't exist.

Now I understand children of this age have some vivid imaginations and often see things that aren't really there. The excitement of the trip, the dark, lonely forests, and all the fun we were having could have triggered an illusion like this, but what I was looking upon was real in every sense of the word, including the movement of his body and the shadow he cast on the ledge below. Everything was there.

After a few moments, this happy fellow motioned for me to come closer. I glanced out another window and saw the others playing with Nelly. I wanted to open the door and call to them, but changed my mind for no apparent reason. I looked back

toward the little guy, and again he motioned for me to come nearer. This time I did, and knelt beside the window a foot or so from my uninvited guest.

He kept smiling and looking me over as if he had never been this close to a human before. When I first saw him I had experienced fear. Now my feelings had turned to bewilderment and friendship, mixed with a dab of sadness.

I didn't speak, but simply knelt transfixed at what I was witnessing. I reached forward and slowly opened the window. As I reached out to touch this strange individual that had invaded my life, he stepped back and his head tilted from left to right as he inspected me from every angle.

After smiling once more, the little guy leaped from the ledge, landing gracefully on the grass below. He ran with long leaps across the lawn, stopping momentarily to look back, then disappeared among the shadows of the trees.

I ran and told the others, but they only laughed, as I might have if I heard the same tale from another. Mom smiled and said I was either daydreaming or had a very active imagination.

A Memory and a Mystery

The others went on to tease me for several days about my tall tale. Occasionally, while out hiking with the gang, one would stop and yell out, "Look...look! I just saw that little man run across the path!" Then they would all run off laughing.

During the last week, I always kept an eye out for that little fellow, but I never saw him again.

Dad was an artist and I inherited his talent, so I drew a sketch of my little visitor. I still have the original.

In 1946 we moved from New York to Washington State, then to Tucson, Arizona.

In all this time, that one experience remains high on my list of pleasant memories. I've told this story numerous times at parties and so on and have received various explanations.

To this day I'm certain that strange little character was real and not something conceived in the mind of a young lad with a "very active imagination," as Mom had put it.

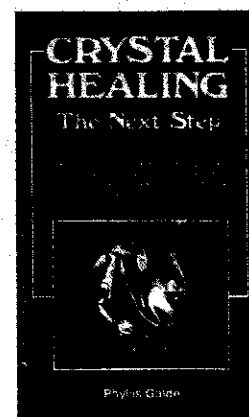
Why am I so certain, you might ask.

Well, the final proof was the little footprint left in the soft earth just below the

window. When the fellow jumped, one foot landed on the grass while the other hit the moist ground. It left a perfect print, but the others claimed I had made it to try to prove my story.

It's quite possible none of this ever happened. If that is the case, why have these few moments of fantasy been so cemented into my memory? Either it happened or it didn't. There can be no middle ground. This brings to mind another well-known statement: "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." 8

Ron Quinn is an explorer, treasure hunter, and published author who resides in Tucson, Arizona.



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Fifty years ago



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SPECIAL SAUCER REPORT

The Little Man Who Wasn't There

The crowd gathered in the remote canyon waited anxiously. But the saucer and its midget pilot failed to appear on schedule.

by Wallace Kunkel

Scores of individuals from various parts of the United States gathered on a remote, timbered canyon in the Sierra, 35 miles northeast of Oroville, Butte County, Calif., on last July 20th, awaiting arrival of a flying saucer and its midget pilot.

They saw nothing. Nothing, that is, except other believers and doubters—and an array of movie, photographic, and radio equipment that could have recorded adequately the biggest world news event.

Nearly 40 persons appeared on the dusty logging road running along the side of the canyon. Professionals and amateurs turned their movie and still cameras listlessly or hopefully upward. Across the pine-

covered mountains nothing moved. Not even a bird broke the blue pattern of sky reaching across the forested quarter-mile drop to the junction of Jordan and Marble Creeks, where John Q. Black, a miner, says he saw a flying saucer seven different times—once getting as close as 40 feet to the saucer and its “midget” pilot.

As 6:10 in the evening—“arrival time”—came and went a strange quiet fell across the mountainside. Lines of disappointment crossed Black's weathered face.

He said with emotion: “I never felt so bad about anything in my life as when he didn't show up. But I hope that before the summer is over he'll come in again. If he does, I'm going to get up behind him

and go for a ride. I've only myself to look after. I want to get a chance to prove my story.”

Black believes that the pilot, whom he says he saw get into his unorthodox craft in Plumas National Forest, in northern California, may have been frightened off. Newsmen, saucer organization members and the idly curious braved the steep road down to the mining claim Black operates in partnership with John Van Allen. The question remained: has Black actually seen anything? Are there flying saucers, from earth or outer space?

These questions each person on the mountainside seemed to ask himself as he packed away his binoculars or his camera.

On one thing most persons seemed agreed—Black's sincerity. Those who talked with him were convinced that he believes he saw something, and that he was not trying to perpetrate a hoax. Black said that he purposely kept his story secret for three months because he did not seek notoriety.

“I didn't do this as any publicity stunt,” the miner, past middle-age, insisted. “I've been pestered to death for interviews. People have been coming in here ever since the story got out. I'm getting so many letters I don't try to answer them.

“When I first told a sheriff's deputy about the flying saucer I was only trying to get information. I asked him if there'd been any sightings of flying saucers around here. He said he would make a report on what I told him. He made his report, all right. People began writing to me and com-



Miner John Q. Black points to spot near creek in canyon where he saw midget pilot enter saucer with a water pail.

ing in. I'm more worn out with all this crowd than if I'd been working all day in the mine.”

The story that fired the imagination of countless people in the United States and abroad was first published June 24, 1953.

Black and his partner came to Brush Creek store on Oroville-Quincy Road that day to buy supplies. They were having soft drinks when Black told his story to Mrs. Violet Belcher, store proprietor.

Mrs. Belcher listened to Black's account of the flying saucer episodes, was impressed by the man's evident sincerity and sug-

gested that he make a report to Captain Fred Preston of the Butte County sheriff's office. Captain Preston had come into the store while Mrs. Belcher was talking to Black and his partner, John Van Allen.

When interviewed for FATE, Black was doing his washing in a gasoline-operated washer at the miners' camp on the road above the 40-acre mining claim he and Van Allen hope will some day produce titanium, a metal used in hardening copper and steel.

Black did not appear anxious to talk about the saucer episodes but later told his story. Afterward, at the bottom of a deer trail to the junction of the two creeks, he pointed out for FATE's representative the spot where he said that he had observed the saucer and its midget pilot.

The story was fantastic. It was unbelievable. Yet he spoke with apparent veracity and conviction.

Here is his story. The quoted parts are his own words.

Black saw the saucer seven different times. Sometimes it was only a flash down Marble Creek above the trees. "Right near those two trees on the mountainside and past that dead snag there. He always comes that way."

Twice, he saw it down the mountain slope, near the junction of the two turbulent creeks.

He saw it three times on the 20th day of the month, about 6:30 in the evening—in March, May, and June. This was what led him to believe it would return July 20.

The first time he obtained a fairly clear view of the ship was on March 20th. He and his partner were lying in a cabin two miles from their camp. Black came down to their hard-rock mining claim to see how a tent frame had withstood the winter snow. He did not have a watch but concluded that it was about 6:30 in the evening because the sky was beginning to "haze-up."

"I was standing on the road and just got a glimpse of the object. I saw it coming down the hillside. It looked like a piece of circular aluminum. I guess I was about a quarter of a mile from it. It was not a plane. It made no noise and there was no smoke."

On May 20th two months later, he had been hunting mountain lions and as he reached the confluence of Jordan and Marble Creeks he saw the saucer again. He smelled smoke and walked over to investigate the source. He had just climbed over a big rock near Jordan Creek when he saw the saucer take off.

"The thing was in the air when I saw it, and was going 'miles an hour' down Marble Creek. I was about 100 feet from it when it zoomed away.

"The pilot must have had a fire but had kicked it into the creek when I came up."

Black saw ashes and dead coals floating on the water. The rocks near the stream were hot, as though a fire had been burning on them. However, they had been brushed clean.

"The pilot must have seen me. He got out of there so fast that I didn't get a look

at him."

On June 20th, at the same time, 6:30 in the evening, Black saw the "midget pilot" as well as the ship.

"Yes, I was alone at all times when I saw the saucer. That's what makes it so hard to prove."

This time, he observed the man before he noticed the craft.

"I saw him first when I was coming down Jordan Creek. I didn't pay much attention to him then. I thought he was just another fellow fishing. But when I got closer I could see he wasn't a fisherman.

"He was about four or four and one-half feet tall, with little feet—he was kind of like a midget. He had black hair and was wearing a forest green outfit. There didn't appear to be any seams in his clothing. The cuffs of his trousers were not turned up but were sort of weaved into the material. He wore a peak-billed cap with a cord running around it.

"When I first saw him he was dipping up a pail of water. The bucket was about a foot long and flared out in the middle. The handle was square and looked as if it was made of foam rubber."

The little man was about middle-aged, dark complexioned, "and had eyebrows."

"The only thing about him that was different from us was that he had a smaller mouth—not a sucker mouth, either. He was broad shouldered and had small feet and was kind of barrel chested. He looked powerful.

"He brushed some mud off his

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trousers. Then he stood up looking at the water. I stepped on a dry stick and he looked around and went into his ship, taking the pail of water with him."

Black noticed that the man's shoes were dull black, apparently without heels, and that the soles were extremely flexible. When the man stepped up on the landing apparatus, the soles bent down noticeably.

The saucer was about eight feet in diameter and about four or four-and-one-half feet thick. It tapered to the edges.

"It looked like a couple of soup plates put together. There were no signs of any rivets or welds. I've been a machinist and I studied it pretty closely.

"There was one small window, about nine by 12 inches."

The ship was resting on a large flat rock not more than 40 feet from where Black stood. It was supported by what resembled a two-inch pipe attached to a circular base with two cross members.

When the man stepped up on the tripod-like apparatus, the landing gear retracted into the belly of the ship, leaving the surface smooth. The craft took off with a hissing sound.

"The saucer started taking off the minute the pilot was inside. It weaved past the trees and went up at about a 45 degree angle and was gone right now.

"I don't know why he would stop here, except this is a pretty good spot for anyone to land who doesn't want to be seen. He might have figured it was a nice place to get water and he might fish here a little at night."

That is Black's story.

He added that he is a World War I vet-

eran and is familiar with the appearance of known aircraft. He would not have mistaken a helicopter for a saucer, he said.

Van Allen admitted that he did not believe, at first, that his partner had seen a saucer.

"I didn't put much stock in what he said—until he began to describe the little man," Van Allen said. "After that, I could always tell by his eyes when there was something in the wind and he had seen something.

"I saw it myself on the hillside twice—just flashes of it. It looked like a streak."

The men have been mining partners in Butte County for four years. Black is a native of Napa County, Calif., and his partner was born in Minnesota.

Mrs. Belcher said, "I have known Black for five years and I believe he saw something. He is not a drinking man. There are gentlemen in these hills I wouldn't have listened to if they had told me they had seen a flying saucer but he isn't one of them."

Did John Q. Black see a flying saucer? Opinions vary.

But reports of saucer sightings will continue to stir the imagination of mankind until it is proved conclusively that they are, or are not. 8

