

THE LITTLE MAN OF GAFFNEY

A Special Report from S. Carolina

by John A. Keel

ON the night of November 16-17, 1966, an intensive meteor shower was visible in many parts of the United States. Excellent press coverage prior to the event prompted millions of people to spend the evening out of doors, watching the display. The city of New York even organised a huge "falling stars" party in a major park, but overcast skies in the area spoiled the view. UFO researchers braced themselves for a wave of mistaken "sightings" and misinterpretations of the phenomenon. It may be significant that not a single false report was received that evening. In fact, only one sighting was reported . . . and that was the story of two police officers encountering a "little man" in South Carolina.

The following evening, November 17, two schoolgirls from Quarryville, Pa., reported seeing a low-level white and green object.¹ Two days later, on November 19, a "flap" broke out in six states . . . Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, Kansas and Michigan. The Michigan sightings were accompanied by power failures throughout the state.²

Although the Leonid meteor showers failed to inspire an outburst of Menzel-type sightings (and maybe this does prove that the public really knows the difference between natural phenomena and UFOs), the report of the two police officers more than made up for the lack of other reports.

Patrolmen A. G. Huskey and Charles Hutchins were on a routine cruise around Gaffney, S.C., about 4.00 a.m. on the morning of November 17 when, according to their story, they suddenly saw a circular machine land and a "little man" step out to have a brief and enigmatic chat with them. They dutifully reported the encounter to the Gaffney Police Chief, and it quickly leaked out to the local newspapers. The story was not widely circulated outside of Gaffney, however, and few ufologists had heard of it until it was mentioned in the April, 1967, issue of *Fate* magazine.³

In November, 1967, I found myself in Atlanta, Georgia, about two hundred miles from Gaffney, and I decided to drive through South Carolina and seek out the two men. As is my practice, my first stop was a visit to the local newspaper office, the *Gaffney Ledger*, where I presented my press credentials to the managing editor, Jack Truelove, and discussed the case. He told me that he received very few UFO sightings and tended to avoid publishing them, particularly since Hutchins and Huskey had been exposed to so much ridicule after their story appeared. Later I learned that there had been extensive sightings throughout the entire area in the last few years, particularly around the village of Blacksburg to the north and Gastonia, North Carolina, a few miles SW of Charlotte, N.C. (The editor of the *Gastonia*

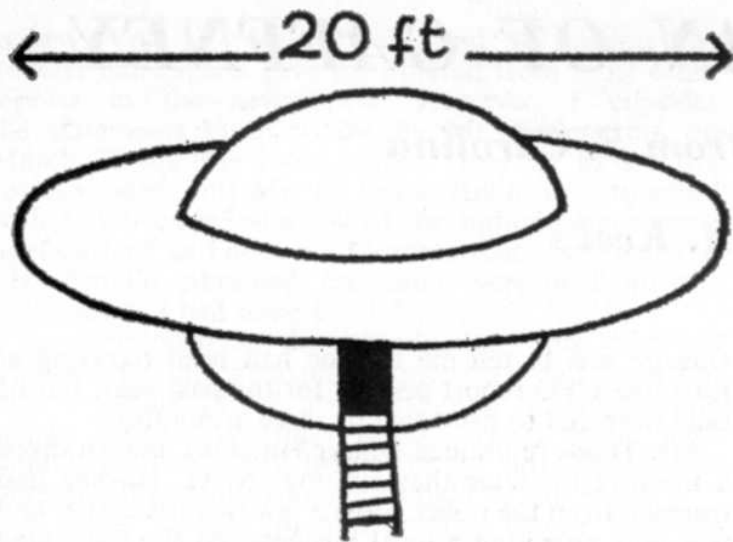
Gazette was to tell me that he had been receiving at least one UFO report per day for the past year, but he only bothered to print two or three a month.)

Mr. Truelove phoned Officer Hutchins and arranged a meeting for later that evening. A. G. Huskey had resigned from the police force a few months earlier and was now operating a local business. At the appointed time I drove to the Gaffney Police Station where I found Officer Hutchins standing outside waiting for me in the bitter cold. He regarded me with some suspicion at first, asking for reassurance that I was "not with the government". He had heard of the well-publicised tragedy of the Ohio police officer, Dale Spaur, who had suffered all kinds of unpleasantness after being involved in the celebrated Ohio UFO chase of April, 1966. I handed my sheaf of credentials to him, showed him a number of my published UFO articles, including magazines which contained my picture, and he relaxed and became co-operative and talkative.

An ebullient man, stocky, about 5ft. 10in. and somewhere in his early thirties, Officer Hutchins quickly revealed a healthy sense of humour and, unlike many police officers, did not seem to take himself too seriously. We adjourned to an empty room in the police station where I set up my portable tape recorder and began the interview. He began with a confession. The "little man" had not had a "green complexion" as was reported in the newspapers, he said. When he and Huskey had first told their story they had been subjected to so many jeers that they deliberately added the "green complexion". Actually, he admitted, the creature's face seemed rather ordinary and human-like and neither man was able to tell whether his complexion was light or dark.

The landing

Hutchins had been on the Gaffney Police Force for about six months at the time, and Huskey had been a policeman for five years. He could no longer remember the exact date, but he did remember that they had been watching an unusual number of "falling stars" all evening. Some time after 4.00 a.m. (the newspaper stories gave the time as 4.45 a.m.) they were making a routine patrol along the isolated and unpopulated road through an outlying section of Gaffney known as the West Buford Street Extension when, as they neared a right-angle bend in the road, they suddenly saw a metallic object directly in front of them. This object was descending and was about 20ft. above the ground when they first observed it. Hutchins described it as being spherical, like a ball, with a wide, flat rim around it. There were no portholes or lights visible on it. It was completely dark, reflecting a dull gold colour in the



The Gaffney object
Based on sketch by Officer Hutchins

headlights of the police car.

As the object settled to within a few feet of the ground, both men got out of their car in a state of benumbed amazement. Later Hutchins estimated that the object must have been about 20ft. in diameter. A small door suddenly opened noiselessly on the underside of the sphere and a short ladder, 4 to 6ft. long, dropped down. White light poured out of the opening, but neither man could see anything in the interior. A figure appeared in the doorway, descended the ladder and walked slowly and deliberately toward the two police officers. When the figure reached a point about 15 or 20ft. from the two men it stopped.

"He didn't move stiffly," Officer Hutchins told me. "He moved just like anybody else, but kind of slow . . . like he was taking his time. He wasn't scared of us or anything like that."

In appearance "he was about the size of a 12-year-old boy . . . maybe four feet." He wore no helmet or headgear and was dressed "in a gold suit with no buttons or zippers". His costume was shiny, like metal, in the reflection of the headlights. It was not self-luminous.

"We were both kind of shakey and scared," Hutchins admitted. "So he did most of the talking. When we asked him questions, he wouldn't answer us, but just went right on talking."

Hutchins could not remember seeing the feet of the creature. It was standing in high grass and the feet must have been hidden. Unfortunately, since my interview took place a full year after the incident, both men had understandably forgotten small details. They could not even remember the full context of the "conversation".

"He talked real good . . . like a college graduate," Hutchins claims. "Didn't have any accent or anything. He acted like he knew exactly what he was saying and doing . . . didn't make any quick moves or false moves. He just stood there and talked to us."

What exactly was said? Officer Hutchins thinks that he stammered out a question like, "What are you doing here?" The creature did not reply, but asked a

question of his own. "He wanted to know why we were both dressed alike," Hutchins says, "so I guess we told him we were police officers."

"His speech was very . . . very precise. He pronounced each word very carefully. I can't remember everything he said now . . . but it wasn't anything very important. I think I asked him where he was from but he didn't answer. He just laughed. He had a kind of funny laugh."⁴

The confrontation was brief, perhaps only two or three minutes. Then the creature announced: "I . . . will . . . return . . . in . . . two . . . days." He turned, walked slowly back to the ladder, climbed into the object, the door closed and the craft began to whirr. "It wasn't like those whirring sounds in science fiction movies . . . there was no screeching to it. It was soft, like an engine with a muffler on it." The object rose slowly into the air and vanished into the black sky.

The two policemen stood there for a few minutes in stunned silence before they finally pulled themselves together and returned to the Police Station.

They returned to the site the next day with a local Councilman named Hill and found several fresh footprints in the exact spot where the "little man" had stood. They "looked like children's footprints". No casts were made.

After the story had appeared in the local papers both men were subjected to considerable ridicule, but neither one received any hoax phone calls or crank letters. However, about two weeks after the incident two strangers turned up in Gaffney, made a few inquiries, and called Hutchins from a local restaurant. "They said they were doctors of some kind," Hutchins told me. "I think they were from the government or something. By that time both of us were fed up with the whole business and we didn't want to talk about it any more. I told those fellows we couldn't see them." These two strangers were apparently not very persistent. They went away and neither man was approached by any investigator of any kind.

Later I spoke to A. G. Huskey on the phone (I did not meet him personally). He confirmed Hutchins' story, recited the same details, but showed a great deal of reluctance. He wanted to forget the whole thing. He had left the force after suffering an accident totally unrelated to UFOs and now operates his own business in Gaffney.

Hutchins appeared to be a straight-forward, honest witness. There were many details he could not remember and he did not seem to attempt to embellish his story at all. His reputation in Gaffney is excellent. Careful cross-examination failed to uncover any discrepancies in his narrative. He told it like it happened, no more, no less.

The meaning of the contact

Accompanied by Hutchins and another police officer, I carefully inspected the site of the alleged landing. It looked very familiar to me . . . for I have stood in a hundred similar, if not identical places, during my investigations in the past two years. The West Buford Street Extension is a desolate place, covered with thickets and trees. There is only one house in the area

and that is some distance from the site. As Dr. Jacques Vallée noted in his study of the 1954 French landings, most of these incidents occur in isolated, thinly populated areas.

The object came down directly in front of a telephone pole which sits about 50ft. in from the bend in the road. The two officers took a few steps forward from their car but made no attempt to approach the entity. Their voices could have carried easily for 15 or 20ft. in the still night air.

I now have in my possession two remarkable photographs of "little men". One was taken at Oriental, N.C., in the summer of 1967, the other was taken in Lambertville, N.J., in September 1967. I am currently running a complete check on the photographers, and so on. If their stories are true, it would appear that in both cases the "little men" were not only aware that they were being photographed but that they *deliberately* posed for the photographers. In this Gaffney, S.C., incident it also seems as if the contact was a very deliberate one.

At 4.00 a.m. that morning there was probably little or no life in Gaffney and the cruising police car moving casually along a deserted road in an isolated area would have been most conspicuous. If the Ufonauts had wanted to make a deliberate contact in the area this was an ideal situation.

In view of the many other incidents now coming to our attention, such as low-level flights over cities and towns, and a steadily increasing number of landings and contacts, we might assume that the UFOs are finally coming out of "hiding" and beginning to make their presence known in a very deliberate manner. "They" do not seem especially interested in communicating important information to us, but they do seem to desire notice and attention.

Neither Hutchins nor Huskey had read any UFO literature before the incident, nor do they seem very interested in such literature now. They were not aware of the numerous other far-flung contactee stories in

which the witnesses also reported that the Ufonauts declared they would return at a specific time.

Both men revisited the landing site nightly for two weeks after the incident without seeing anything unusual. However, they did see a large orange ball sailing across the sky a few days later.

A woman in Gaffney has been complaining to the police that her house has been "haunted" for the past year. She lives alone in the heart of the town and insists that a strange, oppressive "electronic sound" frequently permeates the house and seems to "wrap around" her. No one takes her seriously, even though others have reported hearing and "feeling" this sound when visiting her.

Farther north, around Gastonia, N.C., low-level sightings are continuous in the vicinity of Spencer Mountain, a high hill topped with radio and TV antennae. There has also been an epidemic of "haunted houses" in that area in the past year or two. The strange sound of a baby crying has been frequently heard in old cemeteries at night. While in Gastonia I checked into one fresh report . . . a Mrs. Delores Jamison said she had seen a brilliantly illuminated object, flashing red and blue lights, manoeuvring over the end of N. Broad Street on the night of November 15, 1967.⁵ I visited the spot and discovered that the object must have been hovering directly above the Hollywood Cemetery. Cemetery sightings have become commonplace throughout the world—perhaps because cemeteries are deserted at night and offer excellent landing space.

Gradually, the pieces of this enormous puzzle are falling into place.

NOTES

- ¹ Quarryville, Pa., *Sun and Christiana Ledger*, January 14, 1967.
- ² Jackson, Mich., *Citizen-Patriot*, November 21, 1966.
- ³ *Fate*, April 1967, page 25.
- ⁴ This "funny laugh" has been frequently mentioned by contactees. Apparently it is a strained or artificial laugh, sometimes described as hysterical or insane.
- ⁵ Gastonia, N.C., *Gazette*, November 16, 1967.

TWENTY YEARS BACK - 5

by Brinsley Le Poer Trench

EXACTLY twenty years ago today (at the time of writing this article), on January 7, 1948, Captain Thomas F. Mantell, of the Kentucky Air National Guard, met his death over Godman Air Force Base while chasing an unknown flying object.

The Mantell case, like the Arnold sighting and that of Chiles and Whitted, ranks as one of the earlier classics. Although the tragic story has been related many times in UFO books published in the early 1950s a new generation of people interested in the flying saucer story is now with us and that is why it is being revived here. Furthermore, it is salutary for some of us veterans to be reminded of these outstanding past events in the flying saucer saga.

Early that afternoon an enormous, circular, glowing object was sighted by many people at Madisonville, Kentucky. Later, thousands of witnesses throughout the State saw the giant UFO. The State police were

deluged with telephone calls and they contacted Godman Air Force Base, near Fort Knox, and warned them of the approaching UFO.

Shortly afterwards, the glowing object was spotted from the Godman AFB control tower. Colonel Guy F. Hix, the commanding officer of the base, radioed Captain Mantell, who was then airborne with his squadron of F-51 Mustang fighters on a training flight.

Soon Mantell reported back to base that he had sighted the UFO and his squadron was going after it. The other pilots were Lt. Robert Hendricks, Lt. Buford Hammond and Lt. Albert Clements.

After a while, due to running out of oxygen, the other three pilots abandoned the chase, leaving Mantell still climbing up towards the object.

Approximately half an hour after the chase had begun, Mantell's voice cut in dramatically over the radio.

"It's directly ahead of me and moving at about half my speed. I'm closing in now to take a good look. The thing looks metallic and is tremendous in size."

That is the last official report that Mantell made.

(continued on page 22)