

BIZARRE 1954 CAR CRASH

Will hypnosis help to solve the mystery of alleged UFO involvement?

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Our contributors are respectively Secretary and committeeman of UFOSIS (Unidentified Flying Objects Studies Information Service) which is active in and around Birmingham. Chairman of the group is Philip Rogers who was one of the founders of UFOIN, for whom this report has been prepared.

THIS is an account of an incident, the report of which has puzzled us for some time. We have met, and know the witness, Commander H.R. Penrose. We also know his story well; indeed in September 1977 he gave us a signed statement about the incident which, although it occurred in 1954, is still clear to him in most respects. A photocopy of the report has been passed to *Flying Saucer Review*.

As to the incident being clear in the witness's mind "in most respects" we must add that we have known for some time that there are obvious gaps in the commander's story. Because of this it has been our wish to arrange for him to be questioned under hypnosis. Hopefully we might then be able to fill out those gaps. Unfortunately we began to make enquiries about this before the formation (in March 1977) of UFOIN, and the subsequent discovery that FSR would be able to help us arrange for sessions of hypnotic regression. Consequently, after we had made tentative enquiries elsewhere the matter was left in the hands of an American parapsychologist, Dr. Hans Holzer, and we gather that Cdr. Penrose's interrogation may possibly become part of a film.

Here, for the record, are the details of the incident as we know them. They seem to begin with a newspaper account in the *Derby Evening Telegraph* of Friday May 14, 1954, of a somewhat bizarre car crash:—

"Mr. Horatio Penrose of 17 Lonsdale Road, Birmingham, escaped with concussion and minor cuts and bruises when his car crashed through the iron railings of the Hilton Gravel Works on the main Derby-Burton road, near Burmaston, just before midnight last night.

"The windscreen was shattered, one door was ripped away, and the main body of the car was also damaged.

"Mr. Penrose was found by a passing motorist trapped in the car with only minor injuries. He was taken by ambulance to Derbyshire Royal Infirmary. His wife travelled from Birmingham to see him today.

"There was no one at Hilton Gravel Works when the accident occurred, and the gates — specially widened for heavy lorries — stood open. If the car had left the road a few seconds earlier it would have gone through the open gates without encountering any obstacle."*

Cdr. Penrose put things in a somewhat different light in his statement. We read of a build-up of relevant events over the two days leading to the



Detail from a reproduction of newspaper photograph of the wrecked car

crash; we learn, in fact, why he was where he was when things "turned sour" for him.

On Wednesday May 12, 1954, at approximately 8 o'clock in the evening, the Commander visited a public house in Derbyshire where he met a man with whom he got into conversation about his motorcar, a black Vauxhall *Wyvern* saloon which was about a year old. The man said he would like to buy it and made a very reasonable offer. Cdr. Penrose was undecided, however, and said he would think the thing over before meeting him in the same public house the following evening.

Meeting as arranged next evening, he told his acquaintance that he was still undecided, whereupon he was invited to the man's house for tea. When they got there they found a sit-down meal prepared for them by the man's wife. Cdr. Penrose remembers thinking they were an ordinary English couple, although a little smaller than average. After chatting awhile he told his hosts that he had decided against selling the car, and he then took his leave at about 10.30 p.m.

His journey home took him along the main Derby-Burton road, in the direction of Birmingham. Sudden-

* We are greatly indebted to the Area Librarian, Derby Central Library, for the kind assistance given in locating this news item in the archives.

ly, he said, a bright light appeared, heading towards him. He describes what followed:—

“As it reached my position I experienced what seemed to be a crash and I was thrown forward against the windscreen. Then the car seemed to be lifted from the ground and I was moving through the air with a bright light above me. The next thing I remember was when I recovered consciousness in the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary where I had had stitches in a cut in my forehead.”

The commander went on: “I remembered a strange occurrence which must have taken place immediately after my crash. At that moment the car was perched on some iron railings, and I recollect being lifted from it by a man in a one-piece suit. He seemed to lift me effortlessly into an entrance on the underside of a large round vehicle which was hovering above us and giving out a bright light.”

Cdr. Penrose says he was taken into a room which had controls in it, and other, similarly dressed “men” (my quotation marks —MCW) were operating these. There were male and female beings — distinguishable by their shapes — who had similar short hair styles, and whose facial expressions “did not appear unusual.”

The witness says they asked questions about his naval experiences and his work with radar, while he countered with questions about their vehicle and its associated engineering. He also suggests that the method of communication between them was of a “telepathic nature,” and adds that when he “...attempted some hypnotic regression, to which [*sic*] they seemed to become very confused” a woman injected some green fluid into his arm after which he remembered no more.

When questioned by police officers after the accident Cdr. Penrose says he was aware that a passing RAC driver had found him concussed, sitting in the driving seat of his car, perched on railings by the entrance of the Hilton Gravel Works.

After his discharge from hospital, and puzzled by the event, he returned to the scene of the accident hoping to trace witnesses. His only success in this respect was to find a railway signalman who said he'd seen a car, with an extremely bright light above it, go past his signal box, and at about the same level.

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Was this event a teleportation which either misfired, or perhaps succeeded, with only partial mental recall for the victim as to things that happened to him?

Following a discussion with the Editor of *Flying Saucer Review* Commander Penrose was interviewed again during November 1977. This time Phil Rogers was present, and one or two points were cleared up.

It should be stated at this stage that we first met the commander in July 1976 when, having heard of our organisation (UFOSIS), he approached us and expressed an interest in UFOs. It was not until our third meeting some weeks later that he told us about his 1954 experience, and even then he gave us only bare details. We assume that his reason for

contacting us was because he felt in 1976 that the “climate” regarding UFOs — both in public interest and press reporting, and not to mention serious researchers — had improved. He told us recently that the never sought publicity for, apart from the fact that it would have left him open to ridicule, he felt he could also have lost his job. By July 1976, however, he was no longer employed by the firm in question.

We also learned that he was kept in hospital for “some months” following the incident, his injuries being cuts on the top of his head and about the face. He also suffered some loss of memory. After leaving the hospital he took one of the nurses out socially as a gesture of thanks for looking after him. He discovered from her that a senior police officer had attempted to interview him while he was in hospital, but was refused permission to do so by the doctors.

It seemed too that the nurse and other members of the staff were puzzled by the description of the bright lights and by what was said to have happened to him at the time of the incident. He learned too that the police interest arose from the abnormally large amount of blood in the vehicle. This, it seems, was far more than could have been expected from the type of injuries sustained by Commander Penrose, and it was thought that another person may have been in the car. The commander assures us, and he is emphatic, that he was alone at the time.

We have spoken to Cdr. Penrose on several occasions during the past twelve months, and at no time has he contradicted himself, or altered his story in any way.

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