

AN UNUSUAL CONTACT CLAIM FROM OHIO

by John A. Keel

THIS strange case, in which the contact claimant is the Reverend Anthony De Polo of Indianola Road, Boardman, Ohio, assistant pastor of the Bethel Assembly of God Church in Boardman, was investigated by James Capots, Jr., of Columbiana, Ohio, and by myself. The story was reported in the Youngstown (Ohio) *Vindicator* of July 20, 1967.

At about 1.30 a.m. on the morning of July 18, 1967 (Tuesday), Reverend De Polo was awakened by a very loud noise; "the type you hear on television science-fiction programmes". This oscillating sound began at a low pitch and then rose to a high whine until it was no longer audible. However, he said that he continued to experience pressure in his eardrums and he assumed that the sound had risen above 20,000 cycles per second . . . the range of human hearing. This strange noise followed this pattern, rising and falling, three or four times. At a certain point in the curve of sound he distinctly felt that a mental message was somehow being conveyed to him. This message was more a feeling than actual words, but he interpreted it to mean: "Go downstairs".

He headed for the stairs, curious but unafraid. When he reached the foot of the stairs he looked out of a window facing west and there, standing in the driveway between his house and his neighbour's, he saw what he later described as a five-foot tall figure wearing a luminous "space suit". The surrounding glow made the figure very distinct.

At first he thought that some neighbourhood children might be playing a prank of some sort. But he noted that the neighbour's house was dark, and he realised that the glowing suit would be a difficult effect to create.

Something compelled him to step out on to his porch and take a closer look at this strange being. The eerie whine began again and he received a second message which, he says, stated: "You have nothing to fear. I will not harm you; and I know you will not harm me."

He started to step towards the figure when the whining sound began again and he received a third message: "Danger. I must go."

At this point Reverend De Polo looked up at the sky. There was no "space ship" in sight but he noticed that the sky was strangely illuminated "like the light from a mercury vapour lamp such as they use on the turnpike". A fourth message was passed on to him and he is not willing to divulge its contents.

When he returned his eyes to the driveway, the "spaceman" was gone. In the exact spot where he had been standing there was a formless blob of light—not figure-shaped—which faded out and vanished in a short while.

Reverend De Polo claims that he was completely unafraid throughout this experience and that he went directly back to bed without saying anything to his wife

about it. "I fell asleep immediately," he noted. He decided the next day to say nothing about this incident unless other witnesses came forward and reported the same thing.

The Figure

Reverend De Polo describes the figure as wearing a silver suit which was "more refined and less bulky than those our own astronauts wear". Apparently it was snugly fitted to the being's form. There was a trace of a belt around its middle. The being wore five-fingered gloves and a transparent helmet. He could see that the "spaceman" had human features but he did not get a close enough look so that he could describe them. Nor could he tell whether the being's skin was light or dark. He did not see any tubes, tanks, or other attachments to the suit.

The Witness

Reverend De Polo is in his late thirties, possesses three degrees in psychology and philosophy, and has been a college teacher. He seems to be of above-average intelligence, is very articulate and tells his story in a straightforward manner. Investigator Capots spent some time with him in his home and I interviewed him at length by telephone. He does not tend to embellish his story, nor does he invent details to answer unexpected questions about his experience. I personally believe that this is an exceptionally good witness whose story should be taken very seriously.

An Unexpected Investigation

After other witnesses reported seeing UFOs that night (see Corroboration section), Reverend De Polo told his wife about his experience and mentioned it to a reporter. The Youngstown (Ohio) *Vindicator* mentioned him in their UFO story of July 20, but did not describe his contact.

Two weeks later a group of men arrived at his home and identified themselves as "scientists with B. F. Goodrich in Akron, Ohio". They said they were making a serious study of the UFO phenomenon and asked for the full details of his story. He told them everything, including the contents of the fourth message. When he was finished, the spokesman for the group told him that other contacts of this kind had been made and that they fitted a common pattern. "Other people have received similar messages," they said, "and we want to compare notes." They then asked him to keep the contents of the fourth message to himself, otherwise someone else might use the information to lead them astray. When their study was completed, the spokesman continued, they would turn over all the relevant information to him.

They then requested him to give a speech at a private meeting of Goodrich scientists the following week, on August 15th. Employees of Goodrich were quietly

researching the whole subject. Reverend De Polo obliged them and did visit their plant where he addressed a large and responsive group who afterwards asked many probing and intelligent questions. They said that they were going to file his full report with the Condon Committee in Colorado.

Other Patterns

In my telephone conversation with Reverend De Polo on August 17 I asked a great many background questions and, as is usual in this type of case, found a repeat of many of the patterns now so familiar to me.

He told me that his television had occasionally emitted unusual "bleeping" signals over the past few months. (I have heard this many times in various places around the country, and classify it as "Phase 1".) Probing deeper, I learned that a few months ago he had called in a TV repair man because his set was picking up *voices counting off numbers* and he thought he was "intercepting a ham radio operator from somewhere nearby." (This number-counting business is "Phase 2" in the contactee pattern and is often followed by strange phone calls in which distant-sounding voices continue to recite numbers in patterns.)

Reverend De Polo has received "hundreds" of phone calls since that night, but all were from people who had also seen a UFO. He has not received a single crank call of any kind, nor has he received a number-counting call. Looks like they skipped "Phase 3".

He has not been subjected to any hoaxes or ridicule.

When asked if he has heard any strange noises inside in his house since his "contact", he paused and told me that only last night he had heard what sounded like *a baby crying* around 2 a.m. He had wandered through several rooms but could find nothing that could be making such a noise. (This baby-crying phenomenon has been reported to me in cases in West Virginia and Long Island.) Earlier in the evening he and his wife had heard a loud crash in another part of the house but could not find the source.

I asked Reverend De Polo a few questions about his family background. "I've traced my family all the way back to biblical times on my mother's side," he said. But there is no Indian or Egyptian strain in his family that he knows of.

He was born on May 5th, ruling out the odd "March pattern".

Reverend De Polo has had a long-time interest in ESP and he has had numerous experiences which have convinced him that he may be telepathic. Investigator Capots notes in his report: "He tells me that he has ESP in that he can often tell what is on a student's mind before the student verbalises it. I definitely had the impression that he could 'sense' things about me while I talked to him."

The Fourth Message

He would not reveal the fourth message, but he did imply that it concerned a possible return visit from the being. It may have been a statement about others being contacted in the same area. It was *not* a message about the end of the world, or the problems of our atomic experiments.

Corroborating Incidents

Around 9.15 p.m. on July 4, 1967, a mysterious cloud of luminous gas moved down Market Street in nearby Youngstown, Ohio, at ground level. This gas caused eyes to water and produced dizziness and choking. Respiration equipment had to be rushed to the area to aid victims of the gas. (Similar clouds of gas have turned up in Naples, Italy, and southern Long Island in recent months.) This area is only a few miles from Boardman.

There have been many UFO sightings around Boardman in recent months. On the night of Reverend De Polo's alleged experience, July 18, 1967, witnesses in southern Youngstown reported hearing eerie sounds "resembling a dive-bombing plane, a screaming noise", at 1.20 a.m. One witness who glimpsed the object said that it was cigar-shaped, and was flying just above the treetops. He described it as being "a metallic silver blue" and estimated its length to be about seven feet. A powerful odour, resembling the smell of hot tar, clung to the air. While he watched, the thing turned to green, then to an orange-red. The noises stopped and the object flew off southwards *in the direction of Boardman*.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We hope Mr. Keel will explain to readers, in a future note, what precisely he means by "Phase 3", and also by the "Odd 'March pattern'".

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Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

Socorro landing gear

Sir,—A. C. H. Durham has, indeed, caught me in a non-sequitur. If the landing gear of the Socorro craft were rigidly fastened in place, then there is no way to predict the weight distribution on the pads. Without saying so, I was imagining the linkage among the supposed legs to be flexible, in which case the distribution of weight would be automatic.

I have preached so many times to UFO witnesses and analysts about arguing backward from effect to cause that I ought to be embarrassed at such a slip. If I had any principles, I would be. However I trust that none of the readers thought that I was trying to *prove* that my analysis was the only correct one or possible one. Given an end result and plenty of time, one can arrive at the same end result from an endless number of different and even conflicting starting assumptions. The only way to choose one set of assumptions over another is to find some evidence supporting the *assumptions*, not the conclusions. Since I have no evidence about the construction of whatever Zamorra saw, my little exercise in speculation must remain, at best, as food for thought for designers of landing gear.—William T. Powers, 1138 Whitfield Road, Northbrook, Illinois 60062.

Wartime UFO

Sir,—Your letter in today's *Daily Telegraph* prompts me to pass on a small matter which may just possibly be of interest. In or around the year 1942 my father was staying with relatives at Southsea, Hants. He was out walking one day when, as he described afterwards, he saw a cigar-shaped object travelling at tremendous speed in the area of Hayling Island. What struck him, besides the great speed, was the absolute silence of the object. He was at a loss to account for this

thing. He was convinced he had seen it. In later years I formed the opinion that the object must have been an early experimental jet, but though this would account for the speed (possibly), it would not account for lack of noise.

Recently I have begun to wonder whether in fact he was seeing what people are calling UFOs. It does seem as though his experience fits in with the accounts of other people I have read about in recent years.

Being of a sceptical nature, I have very much reserved my judgment on the UFOs, but reading between the lines, it does seem as though certain authorities, especially in the United States, are giving more consideration to the matter than they are willing to admit publicly. The whole matter is bedevilled by sensationalism. I regret more serious study was not mentioned in the recent article to which you refer in your letter.—"A Clergyman" (name and address supplied).

Manipulating the news

Sir,—A method of "News Management", as it was first called in Washington, has come to Whitehall in a big way. This is the manipulation of official information given to the public by various Ministries, its major function being to keep the Government's image as bright as possible. First official admission that the men operating this machine are made to issue totally false statements to the public emerged recently from a report given by Mr. Chapman Pincher of the *Daily Express*. He revealed that officials of the Defence Ministry, the Foreign Office and the Post Office were all instructed to issue misleading statements to the newspapers to cover up an activity which the Government did not want exposed. In spite of this exposure, the practice continues. Notwithstanding that this doubtful practice usually relates to the

D-Notice system, which advises newspapers on security matters, it will be apparent to UFO researchers that this could quite well operate with reference to release of information concerning UFOs. Mr. Pincher concluded his article by stating that "the public should be even more concerned about the disinformation (i.e. false statements) being issued for home consumption by Whitehall".

Let us look at the emphatic and official explanations given to the recent wave of saucer activity. Sir Bernard Lovell: "I am convinced that most sightings are merely Venus or manifestations of some other natural phenomena". Note that this is a statement of fact, to be sure and which we fully admit to, but used in this instance as a blanket statement covering the many reports published during this period.

A U.S. Air Force Base reports that refuelling exercises have been held on three nights of the period of the October "flap", entailing "planes flying alongside a powerfully lit giant jet tanker in a cross-shape formation". Not until actually being asked by a *Sunday Express* reporter was it revealed that this refuelling took place between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m., recent sightings being in the early hours.

The Ministry of Defence officially admitted that this explanation could no longer be valid, and stated: "It looks as if there is still no rational explanation for the object reported being seen". According to the Ministry, the R.A.F. last year (1966) investigated 95 sightings. Twenty-nine were satellites, 9 were satellite debris, 10 were balloons, 5 were celestial phenomena, 5 were meteorological phenomena, 17 were aircraft, 15 were miscellaneous and 5 remain classified as *unidentified*. This year they had received a total of 153 sightings, plus, of course, the many more of recent activity.—John D. Llewellyn, Area Investigator—B.U.F.O.R.A., 63 Masons Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.

MISSING MENTIONS

A READER has remarked on similarities between certain passages in Coral and Jim Lorenzen's recent paperback *Flying Saucer Occupants*,* and passages in Gordon Creighton's article in *The Humanoids*. I can put our reader's mind at rest on that score, for while preparing the book, Mrs. Lorenzen asked for permission to quote certain cases from our special issue—for which publication she had herself written an excellent article. There was never any question of permission being withheld, and it was expected only that if the authors used cases from *The Humanoids*, then due acknowledgements would be accorded. In fact mentions of

FLYING SAUCER REVIEW and its special issue are duly listed in an appendix of recommended reading at the tail end of the book: there is also an occasional reference to the REVIEW in the text.

Nevertheless, it is felt that the authors were cavalier towards Mr. Creighton, for there is neither mention of him, nor is there acknowledgement of the mountain of research he had done, or translations he had made from original source material in Spanish and Portuguese. Furthermore these sources are not mentioned, although they were punctiliously listed in Mr. Creighton's article in *The Humanoids*.

* Signet Books.