

MAIL BAG

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.

The TV "Hi-jack"

Dear Sir,— I thought you might be interested in a report from *Studio Sound* (August 1978 issue) regarding the Southern TV "space message" and am enclosing a copy. As you can see from the report it is technically not that easy to "Hi-jack" a TV station, despite the Sunday Times report mentioned by Mr. Priest (Vol. 24, No. 1), [The item is signed 'The Space Agency.']:

"But the mind-bender of all time was yet to come. Following the first Rowridge takeover in 1976, there had been speculation in the trade press that a tv transmitter would be the next to fall to the mysterious 'piggy-back pirates'. An article in 'New Scientist' predicted a takeover by Christmas '76, according to allegedly 'informed' sources. It never came. It was almost a year later that the forecast event took place, and the circumstances were even more strange than anyone could have imagined.

"TV stations are far harder to 'get at' than radio transmitters. There are many tv repeaters in the UK, but most of them are heavily guarded, not by men, but by sophisticated electronic devices that monitor the signal and automatically inform a central monitoring station if anything untoward occurs. And, of course, jammers have to deal with both video and audio signals. On the video signal is a test system called ITS (insertion test signal) which is designed to indicate faults by means of video test waveforms. A potential pirate would somehow have to inject a signal and rebroadcast the ITS intact to avoid the transmitter being switched off immediately. In the final event, the audio signal only was taken over, but this would have meant receiving the composite signal, extracting the ITS and video and retransmitting them, while simultaneously inserting a new audio signal. Very sophisticated equipment would have been required to do this without detection, yet, somehow, it was done.

"Even more remarkable was the way in which the relay station at Hannington, near Newbury, was got at. Hannington receives its signal off air from—would you believe?—Rowridge and transmits Southern TV to much of Southern England. The receiving

antennae are both high up on the mast and highly directional. The transmitter itself is approached up a long, shallow hill, giving no nearby high-point to aim into the receiving antennae. Transmission must have occurred from almost directly under the tower, to do nothing less than 'blast' into the antennae and overcome their directional properties, the only alternative being to fire into the beam from the nearest hill some miles away. Both options would have needed either extraordinarily high power (impossible from a portable location) or massive aerial systems that could hardly be hidden from view. Yet it happened.

It was certainly no 'in house' job.

"But most bizarre of all was the message. It came over thousands of tv sets during the early-evening news spot. Preceded by a strange humming, a seemingly electronic voice announced that it was 'Vrillon, representative of the Ashtar Galactic Command', and warned the governments of Earth to lay down their weapons to avoid the risk of destroying the entire planet. Strange words indeed, yet UFO researchers from many parts of the world have suggested that this form of message is quite usual in the 'flying saucer' field and has many hundreds of antecedents. They also suggest that this sort of communication, taking over a broadcasting channel, while unusual, is by no means without precedent. It was 'obviously' a hoax but, as a letter in 'The Times' pointed out, there is no way we can be *certain* of this while the mystery remains unsolved.

"Almost curiously, however, was the reaction of the Press to the event. The broadcast went out on a Saturday, and was picked up by the weeklies, the dailies on the Monday, and by independent Radio News immediately. Almost without exception they stated that Vrillon had threatened the world with 'intergalactic invasion', something that was never even hinted at in the message itself. The following day IRN obtained a good-quality, off-air recording of the event, but merely changed their broadcast announcement to include 'edited highlights' of the transmission. However, although they *must* have listened to the tape, they persisted in leaving the 'invasion' reference in their copy. The broadcast aroused considerable phone-in comment during the following week but, although

several listeners mentioned the discrepancy, it was never corrected. So much for objective reporting: maybe paranoia ruled OK?"

If the "responsible researchers" who placed an advertisement in FSR Vol. 23, No. 6 have not yet obtained a copy of the message I suggest they try Independent Radio News as mentioned in the report or try phoning *Studio Sound* (01 686 2599) as I am sure that they would be helpful.

I would be interested in the address of any Swiss UFO groups that you happen to know especially from the German speaking part.

Yours truly
D.I. Norman,
Seestrasse 15,
2563 Ipsach,
Switzerland.

Under-exposure?

Dear Mr. Bowen,—May I refer to FSR Volume 24, No. 2 and the letter written by Paul Murray ("Perils of over-exposure"). I am afraid I must disagree with him.

1. Over exposure cannot be a bad thing. I would have thought that we would have wanted a greater public awareness of the UFO problem. And in any case, we've put up with so much ridicule over the years that we should be hardened to it by now.

2. Hoaxes. A problem, but we've learned to deal with them.

3. I would rather it became fashionable to see a UFO than for the public to remain embarrassed about reporting a sighting.

4. I presume when Mr. Murray refers to "Pete and Dud" he is referring to the two gentlemen who were seen sky-watching on the BBC TV documentary. May I ask who is going to achieve more..., him in his living room or they on their hillside. The latter I think.

* * * * *

May I close by posing a question. For many years now we have been besieged by UFO sightings, landings, contactees, abductions, materialisations (and the opposite). We have photographs and cine-film; umpteen books, magazines, periodicals and newspaper articles. Explanations by the most eminent of scientists and by the most ordinary of men. Enough evidence in

fact to prove the case for the UFO a thousand times over.

Why then do we still not know what they are, why they are here and where they come from?

Yours sincerely,

John W. Fellows

38 Windsor Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey.

9 November 1978.

On "Close Encounters of the Third Kind"

Dear Sir,—I was somewhat puzzled by Helen Frank's letter about the film CEIIIK. What did she expect? It was not a documentary film nor was it made to show the subject from an astrophysical or scientific viewpoint. It was an ordinary run-of-the-mill film, designed to interest and entertain the public; and to my mind (and judging by the crowds in this country who went to see it) it succeeded. I myself am a UFO buff of 25 years standing, and a reader of FSR for 12 years or more, and far from laughing at the film or being disgusted with it, I enjoyed it so much that I went twice with friends to see it.

The story was based on the "Bermuda Triangle", and although many of the "effects" were exaggerated, they were nevertheless like the story, founded on certain facts. I considered the photography superb, and the arrival of the mothership in all senses "out of this world". We were thrilled to see Dr. Hynek standing in the crowd, and were aware of his sure touch on the whole film. I have seen many pictures of UFOs in FSR and basic UFO books, which strongly resembled the UFOs in the film. And where, I would ask Helen Frank, would she find a company who would dream of making a commercial film which was not aimed at being a box office attraction? Certainly not in this country, sister!

Yours truly,

Roma Browne,

2, Riverside, Forest Row, Sussex.
November 1st, 1978.

Do UFOs feature in Biblical prophecy?

Dear Sir,—In FSR Vol. 24, No.2 there was a letter from Malcolm Smith of Brighton, Nr. Brisbane, commenting on a letter by J. Wadkin in a previous issue. I agree with most of what he says, but there is one item that I cannot accept:—"Whatever else UFOs might be, they are not covered by any Biblical prophecy."

This to my mind is wrong. Whoever else could St. Mark have been speaking of in Chapter 13, verse 27, than extraterrestrials, hence UFOs as "coming from the uttermost part of

the earth to the uttermost part of heaven?"

Perhaps I too have a vivid imagination but this passage to my mind is in fact a UFO prediction.

Yours truly,

J.W. Goodes

Stewards House, Collyweston, Lincs PE9 3PW.

5 November 1978.

A matter of paranoia

Dear Sir,—On October 31, 1978, I was listening to the Bryan Hayes programme on London Broadcasting (L.B.C.); the subject under discussion was future inter-stellar space travel from, in this instance, the Barnard's Star part of the Universe. The guest speaker was a member, I think, of the British Interplanetary Society, but I cannot recall his name.

As is customary in this feature, part of the time was devoted to a "phone-in" of questions by listeners. One caller brought up the subject of UFOs and possible encounters with them, but Mr. Hayes' guest replied that he doubted very much whether any visits to this planet had taken place, or were taking place. He added that in his opinion some scientists and researchers concerned with ufology are paranoid in their attitudes. I thought this was rather a strange term to use.

My viewpoint is one of open-minded interest. I see no reason at all why we should not have been visited — or are still being visited — by extra-terrestrial entities. My experience is that a closed mind is a narrow one. The history of science is littered with instances of free-thinking men, since proven correct in their claims, who were constantly at odds with their contemporaries and institutions about problems and discoveries of the times.

I look forward to the time when you and your colleagues are invited to present evidence and facts about UFOs in a similar programme, and that you would be allowed the same degree of understanding, considering that established science has changed its mind on numerous occasions regarding the dating and origins of the Universe, and seems to be continuing to do so.

Yours faithfully,

D. Durand

15 Netherburg Road, Ealing, London, W5

November 1, 1978

[The more Mr. Durand — and other readers — become acquainted with the subject, the more they will appreciate that paranoia is invariably the affliction of those diehards who complain of paranoid attitudes in free-thinkers who seek only the truth. This

would seem to apply in particular to habitual debunkers of the kind who invariably speak from a background of ignorance of the subject which they seek to denigrate.

Regarding our reader's final paragraph I would like to point out that on three occasions I have been invited by LBC to take part in live phone-in programmes. No restriction was placed on anything I said and, with the subject being discussed freely for an hour on one occasion, and for two hours on another (a bit of an endurance test, that!), I judged by the remarkable phone-in response that the features were very successful.

EDITOR.]

Those vexed questions

Dear Sir,—Regarding your latest editorial (FSR Vol.24, No.2) concerning the validity of evidence given under hypnosis, and especially with regard to the Aveley abduction, I should like to make the following observations:

Although I accept that a hypnotised person may fabricate details or "recall" things suggested to him by others, it seems to me that we are doing the Avis family a great disservice to suggest that the whole of their experience may have been illusory, or a *fugue* (as Dr. Finch theorises). We seem to be forgetting those events which took place *after* the abduction: i.e. changes in the personalities and the habits of several members of the family, plus events of a "poltergeist" nature (movement/disappearance of articles, etc). Some of these latter were, I recall, verified by one of the case investigators. Are we then to presume that both he and the Avis family are "fuguing" on a regular basis; dreaming up a series of non-existent happenings?

Flying Saucer Review readers, and those familiar with the works of John Keel, will be aware that after-effects such as those described above are quite commonplace among UFO percipients: not only those involved in CEIII's and CEIV's, but even some who have only seen wandering nocturnal lights. They also often suffer from visitations from MIB — surely the most ominous and most overlooked aspect of the whole UFO business. In ignoring these kinds of "UFO aftermath," it would appear that investigators and theorists are shying away from the growing body of data linking UFOs with so-called "supernatural" phenomena. Perhaps it is more comforting to believe that flying saucers are either nuts-and-bolts spacecraft rather than illusory products of the human mind. Unfortunately reality is rarely as we would wish it to be, and we stand to lose much if we dare to ignore those facets of our

subject we find personally unpalatable.

Yours faithfully,
Michael S. Grayson,
114 Eyre Court, London NW8 9TY
26 October, 1978.

[Dr Finch was quite right to voice his opinion that the Aveley witness, John Avis, could have experienced a fugue; that he sometimes seemed to be "filling-in" or romanticising. He was present when the hypnosis sessions were held with John in his house, and his view as a medical man should be respected.]

However, none of this precludes the possibility that the witness was subjected to interference from some unknown "controller;" that the dream-like experience could have been the response to external stimuli from, for example, UFO occupants in, or even beyond the bounds of our planet. I believe that something like this could be possible, and the editorial article "Vexed Questions" hinted at this; in no way can it be construed as "shying away from ... data ... linking UFOs with so-called 'supernatural' phenomena." — EDITOR.]

On water containers and oil cans...

Dear Sir,—I feel I cannot let your article "The Ufonaut's plea for water" FSR Volume 24, No. 2, 1978, pass without further comment.

The UFO phenomena, by its very nature, must be the subject of the most critical analysis if we are to succeed in separating the wheat from the chaff and arrive, eventually — hopefully, at a solution.

Five points spring to mind regarding this report that bear further study.

1. H.M. states he bump started his car and took it for a 10 to 13 kilometre drive to charge the battery. Assuming the charging system was by a dynamo, a fair assumption for 1951, then I doubt if a journey of this nature at 11 o'clock at night, using side, stop and headlights, would in fact charge the battery beyond being sufficient to start the engine immediately it had been stopped. By the time the car had stood all night, it is debateable whether there would have been any improvement in the condition of the battery.
2. H.M. must be very brave (or foolish) to stop at 11 o'clock at night on a deserted country road at the request of a complete stranger.
3. It's stretching reason a shade too far to believe that "beings" coming from as far away as "the stars" (or planets of the Solar System) would travel those distances, whatever the method of motivation they employ, without a commodity upon which they are, under certain circumstances, dependent, i.e. water!
4. It seems equally inconceivable that a supposedly intelligent entity would then go out in search of water without taking a receptacle in which to carry it. Surely there would be something on board the craft that would have held water.
5. One last point that bothers me is the fact that H.M. and the entity used one of H.M.'s old oil cans. Have you ever tried cleaning out an oil can with water? At best, it's a long drawn out process. At night by a mountain stream it is impossible. The result must, therefore, have

been a can of contaminated water, hardly a suitable agent for medicinal purposes.

The reason for this letter is not to pick fault with this very interesting case but to highlight the importance of being alive to the finer details in the hope that these may provide valuable clues that will eventually lead to the completion of this very complex picture.

Yours faithfully,
W.J. Dawson,
"Mulsanne", 120 Currock Park
Avenue, Carlisle.
2nd November 1978.

[I am grateful to Mr. Dawson for his comments. At the time when this article was edited, some of his points, namely 1, 3 and 5 stuck out like "sore thumbs". However, there seemed little merit in commenting editorially at the time, and there was another point which our reader does not mention, namely that a professional engineer should raise no objection, for example, to trying to clean an oil can with cold stream water.

Again the account impressed with its dream-like quality and it seemed that "H.M." could have had an encounter with something — yes, an occupant from a UFO — which "took him over" implanting ideas in his mind, some of which after 26 years were retrieved in clear detail. Nevertheless we may never have an inkling of all that could have happened to the witness inside the craft unless there is further investigation aided, for example, by hypnotic regression. This could, I suspect, turn out to be a CEIV case—EDITOR].

UFO

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