

# ARE THE UFONAUTS FOWL PLOTTERS?

*Nigel Watson*

**M**OST ufologists are familiar with the bizarre elements contained in stories of encounters with ufonauts. Often the behaviour of these entities is so peculiar that the sanity of the witness, or witnesses, has to be seriously considered. A case with these qualities was recounted by Jorge J. Martín in his article "The Chicken Poachers On Puerto Rico," published in FSR Vol. 27, No. 1. One of the two young witnesses reported the activities of 5 entities who were outside their home in the early hours of the morning. She told Martín that: "They certainly seemed to be looking for something out there in the patio, and they were moving the zinc sheets about. They seemed to be very interested in the chickens too, for most of the time they kept shaking the pens and at times they peered closely and fixedly at the chickens. It was something to do with the chickens, that's for sure!"

If we go along with the extraterrestrial hypothesis, we might contend that these beings were conducting some kind of scientific survey, and that one of their objectives was to examine the state of chickens on Earth. Or we might even speculate that they were part of an intergalactic catering corps devoted to discovering new culinary delights to offer to the hordes of their fellow spacemen who are waiting to invade Earth.

This dotty example of entity behaviour can be compared to an incident which occurred during the British 1909 phantom airship wave. At the height of the airship observations many sober British citizens reported circumstantial incidents which indicated that enemy agents had infiltrated the country bent on sinister survey missions. Most of these accounts are included in my article "Airships and Invaders; Background to a Social Panic" in *Magonia* No. 3. However, the weirdest story came from a person in Waltham, Lincolnshire, who in a letter to the *Grimsby News* signed himself "Patriot."

Patriot informed the readers of the *Grimsby News*, in the 28th May 1909 edition, that he felt it "... my duty to draw your attention to an undoubted example of espionage by an emissary of a foreign power which came under my notice the other day."

As he was sleeping in a chair positioned in his garden, he was suddenly woken by a guttural voice. Opening his eyes he saw a gentleman who had a bullet-shaped head, with close cropped hair, standing near his garden paling. On further examination Patriot could see that the man was unwashed, had a weeks' growth of hair on his face, and was dressed like a common labourer. Furthermore, the man was stout and of a medium height. This wasn't a very extraordinary observation except for the fact that this person

concentrated his gaze on the figure of Patriot's fine example of Buff Orpington cockerel.

It was at this point that a rather strange conversation took place. The stranger spoke English in a guttural manner, which Patriot later considered to be due to the German origin of the speaker.

"That's a nish bird, mishter," exclaimed the stranger.

In a modest manner Patriot replied: "It is a tolerably good bird."

After a long pause, during which time the stranger seemed to be deep in thought, he finally asked: "Shingk she lays a lot of eggs?"

"It's a cockerel" said Patriot, rather surprised that the man wasn't aware of the difference between a cock and a hen bird.

"She's a cock'rel, ish she?" was the silly reply.

"No. *He* is a cockerel," corrected Patriot.

"He is a cock'rel. Are all zhuzhers cock'rels?" the stranger asked.

Patriot thought the man was simple minded, but said: "Of course not. All the others are hens."

"All zhuzhers are hens," repeated the stranger under his breath, then after a period of meditation said: "They lay a lot of eggs, I shingk."

"They lay very well," boasted Patriot. "They are laying very well at present, Sjr, and I may be forgiven a little pride in the fact."

After this dialogue the stranger made a fatal mistake. As he pulled a very dirty handkerchief from his coat pocket, a piece of brightly coloured card fluttered from the pocket and landed on the ground. Before the man recovered it Patriot saw that it had been torn from a larger piece of card, and that it bore the words "Professor", "Pil", "cure" and "universal." The stranger then shuffled off in the direction of Waltham Church.

Reflecting on this incident, Patriot was forced to believe that the guttural speech of the person indicated that he was a German secret agent. In addition the word "Pil" on the card he dropped could have meant Pillau, a town in Prussia, according to Patriot. (Though it is more likely the card was nothing more than an advertisement for a patent medicine of some kind, to my way of thinking.) Hence, Patriot came to the conclusion that the man was in reality a German professor of poultry-breeding who had been employed by the German secret service. His argument was: "That the Germans intend to invade England none but a few contemptible nincompoops dispute. It is obvious that when the troops do land they will require food. Is it not therefore probable, nay certain, that an

intelligent nation like the Germans would send out men skilfully trained in the arts of deception to spy out where the best provisions lie?"

It is easy to see that Patriot interpreted his unusual encounter in a manner which went along with the predominant worries prevalent at that time. After all British citizens were "seeing" German spies in the air, and on the ground (or even worrying about whether they were burrowing underneath them!) so it was no wonder that Patriot "saw," or claimed to see, a German poultry spy. If we are to be completely level-headed about this encounter, we might surmise that if it actually took place as he described, then he merely met a gentleman of the road. Tramps, as they were popularly called, were not too infrequently seen in Britain at that time — or for many years later. Indeed in that locality at about the same time other alleged German spy incidents were explained by sceptics and the authorities as being the mistakenly perceived activities of tramps. We might even speculate that the whole encounter was merely a vivid dream, or that Patriot made up the story for propaganda purposes, or he was a soft-headed chump who liked writing long silly letters (I know I do!)

In the same way we could dismiss the Puerto Rico encounter which took place on the 3rd March 1980. Just as Patriot saw his entity as an archetypal German (bullet-headed, stout, cropped hair, guttural voice, etc) so the witness in Puerto Rico saw her entities in the light of a new predominant paradigm. Although I'm no expert on Puerto Rico, we might assume that the inhabitants of the island are aware of the UFO phenomenon, and therefore the five entities looked and behaved as if they had just stepped out of a science fiction movie. Another interesting point is the fact that in both cases no aerial phenomena was directly associated with the entities; we are left to make that assumption. A sceptic might say that the Puerto Rico encounter was another instance of a vivid dream, or a gang of drunks dressed in fancy costumes were responsible, or the witness was a weak-minded individual who saw spacemen at any suitable opportunity (we could even invoke the works of Freud at this juncture).

On the face of it these sceptical considerations seem as unlikely as the reported incidents themselves. We need a whole lot more evidence about both cases if we are to attempt to explain them in a satisfactory manner. Since we don't have such evidence it is better to state that these incidents didn't happen at all, and that the witnesses are liars who bask in the light of publicity: taking this viewpoint we need not trouble ourselves with the messy particulars of these mental aberrations. Such an attitude is supported by the philosopher David Hume (1711-1776) who argued that where an event is reported that is contrary to all our ordinary experience, it is wiser to suppose that the report is false.

If we ignore such advice we can examine these inci-

dents from several standpoints. Granville Oldroyd, Britain's most industrious historical anomalous phenomena researcher, notes that:

"There are, as I see it, four possibilities, which are:-

- 1) Both reports are untrue.
- 2) Both reports are true but unconnected.
- 3) Both reports are true and are connected with each other.
- 4) One report is false and one report is true.

We have one chance in four of selecting the correct one: not very good odds . . ."

These four categories do not exhaust all the possibilities open to us. For example we could differentiate between objective and subjective truth, and hypothesise that:—

- 5) Both reports are objective and connected.
  - 6) Both reports are objective but unconnected.
  - 7) Both reports are subjective and connected.
- Etc.

Such considerations can be seen as our witting response to these accounts. But on analysing this data we can present our unwitting response to such incidents by any conclusion we might make which isn't supported by the evidence. For instance, if we conclude that both incidents are true and connected with each other, then we must have some valid arguments to support this statement. Furthermore any extrapolations based on this evidence must also be based on valid arguments. Even if you can prove that both incidents are objectively true, it doesn't follow that extra-terrestrial spacemen have taken an interest in terrestrial poultry for 71 years, or that the German people have a network of secret poultry spies which they have hidden throughout the 20th century!

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Hence an unwitting response to such accounts can be seen when they are uncritically incorporated into what are perceived as larger patterns of activity, which are more likely to be reflections of our own assumptions and bias rather than any insight into objective reality. Thus, Martín relates the Puerto Rico sighting to a UFO which took place nearby at the same time, and to reports made throughout Puerto Rico, over several years, of animal mutilations which have included hen murders of the strange kind. In his "Notes and Comments on the Puerto Rico Chicken Poachers" Gordon Creighton (in FSR Vol. 27, No. 1) goes one step further and links the Puerto Rican cases to a global plot by the UFO entities (or their controllers) who are bent on mutilating animals for some sinister reason that we can only guess at. On the same basis we can speculate that the airship waves of the pre-1947 period can be directly related to the post-1947 UFO waves, and that the same extramundane source is responsible for all of them.

The danger with this kind of approach is that we ignore the context in which the sightings are made. Since a reported UFO observation (or something we might relate to a UFO type observation) is part of a human experience, we must examine the prevailing beliefs and attitudes of the percipients and note the influences which might have a bearing on them. We might note that historical, cultural and geographical factors, amongst others, separate UFO waves and flaps (even the use of terminology like UFO wave or UFO flap is a manifestation of our ufological bias). Thus we should ask why that person, or that group of people, at that time, in that locality, "saw" and reported an incident which they felt to be unusual, and why they noted the incident which they felt to be unusual, and why they noted the incident and how they interpreted it.

Many ufologists have collected legends, folktales, and accounts of historical events which they believe relate to the contemporary UFO context. However, this kind of approach assumes that our current secular UFO hypotheses can interpret any historical incident which bears a relationship to our current concepts of UFO visitations, without any regard to their context or to our own bias and prejudice which are part of the contemporary context. Perhaps in the light of this we

ought to consider whether our UFO hypotheses have any legitimate right to be applied on a Universal basis; after all we should be sympathetic to the idea that when we are dealing with different UFO waves and flaps, they might have come about for a multitude of different reasons, have a special meaning for the percipients involved, have uniqueness in many respects, and have an inner dynamic of their own.

We only have to look at the ridiculous lengths to which Space Age interpreters have gone in order to discover the existence of space vehicles and astronauts in our ancient past. It is obvious how meaningless such observations are when based on poor research methods and gigantic leaps of the imagination. Such techniques are fine if we are attempting to produce a book which will top the best seller charts, or a work of science fiction. But if we want to make a valuable contribution to ufology and other areas of study, we must constantly question our data in a rational and sceptical manner.

This doesn't mean to say that we should not use material separated by historical, cultural and geographical factors for the purposes of comparison. In this article I have revealed a possible chicken interface between a 1909 and a 1980 case, and this could lead to further research and study of immense importance! However without an awareness of the context and background of these incidents, and the qualities which separate and unite them, we are in danger of losing sight of the matrix of complex and subtle factors we are confronted with.

At this point you might like to know what I think about the significance of this alleged chicken interface. The main argument against any relationship between the two is that each emerged from a different milieu, and can be explained in a variety of ways. But ignoring those factors, we can note the lack of any other poultry cases both in 1909 and in the post-1947 period (unless you know differently). Out of all the thousands of contemporary cases it is relatively easy to find one that will have some elements which can be compared to some elements of a historical case. As to the validity of the two cases we have found, I will chicken out on that discussion, but I hope that readers will be aware that such material cannot be viewed in black and white terms.

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# 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.

## Mice, UFOs and a Reward!

Dear Mr. Bowen, — As your readers well know, mice have long been used as subjects in laboratory experiments. The knowledge gained from these experiments often may be used to determine the mechanism of damage in a member of the same species injured by an otherwise unknown cause. (For example, the effects of microwave radiation are especially easy to identify.)

Because of this fact, I hereby offer a reward of \$50.00 for copies of each published description of mice killed or injured as the alleged result of their proximity to a UFO.

Yours sincerely,

**Jan Eric Herr,**  
6250 Stanley Avenue,  
San Diego, Calif. 92115  
U.S.A.

June 21, 1982.

## That "Concorde" film: unidentified object seen from a different angle

Dear Sir, — It was interesting to note how quickly that portion of the British Airways Concorde TV advert was cut when it was discovered there was an unwelcome intruder disporting itself thereon.

Experts were quick to discount this "visitor" as being a "light effect," but really did they do their homework? Perhaps their wills-not-to-believe were showing. Mine did when I first saw what I thought was a piece of paper chasing Concorde — how ridiculous!

Had these "experts" examined the rest of the Concorde footage they would have found that this "UFO" was there, following exactly the same path, on yet another piece of film taken that day, completely discounting their lens flare theory. Apparently there was more than one chase plane following the Concorde and photographing it simultaneously. But obviously, had the experts examined the film this further footage of the UFO would also have been cut; it wasn't, for on February 13th and 14th, 1982, in the British Airways World Cup advert, this fur-

ther UFO footage was beautifully revealed.

I was further reminded of my casual approach to the Concorde object when I saw "Ensemble" 14 (BBC) for again there were unidentified things in the sky during the balcony scene of *L'amour et vie*, showing the possible female tenant with a sky background. There, in the first shot, was a small cloud-like object over her right shoulder. In a second shot (and a third shot) there were two objects, the first had been joined by a cigar-like object.

Of course these objects could have been other things, like aircraft, but then the objects did not move between shots. They could have been structures, balcony or street lamps etc., but then they were up in the air and both were not there all of the time. An airship is a possibility of course, but then there were two, and two airships at once seems unlikely. Or perhaps it was a studio shot with a defective background; when should one close one's mind?

Yours faithfully,

**A. Calvert,**  
26 Well Road,  
Barnet,  
Herts.

February 15, 1982

## Misperceptions encouraged in USSR?

Dear FSR, — I urge your investigator to exercise extreme care in the evaluation of Soviet UFO accounts (e.g.: Creighton's three-part series on Feliks Zigel), since there appears to be some sort of deliberate deception going on.

For example, I believe that I have mustered overwhelming evidence that the great Russian UFO of June 14, 1980 (also seen over Argentina) was only the launching of the Kosmos-1188 satellite, distorted by eyewitness misperceptions and possibly by the addition of spurious fantasies. It is similar to the "jellyfish UFO" over Petrozavodsk on September 20, 1977, which has been solved to the satisfaction of leading American ufologists as the launching of Kosmos-955. Another spectacular Soviet UFO, on May

16, 1981, was caused by the launching of Meteor 2-7. All these shots came from the officially non-existent Pleseck cosmodrome, north of Moscow. Because of secrecy requirements, it suits Soviet purposes that these events be mistakenly perceived by the population as "UFOs," and I suspect that this misperception may be deliberately encouraged.

In the same light, the great Gindilis Report" (Academy of Sciences, 1979) on UFO statistics actually is based mainly on secret Soviet space weapons tests in the 1967 FOBS program "Garbage in, garbage out."

This data may disappoint British UFO enthusiasts but it cannot be ignored.

Respectfully,  
**James Oberg**  
RT2, Box 350,  
Dickinson  
TX 77539  
May 25, 1982

## New Spanish Book

Dear colleague, — We hereby advise you of the publication of our joint research book entitled *UFOs and Science* (Los OVNIS y la Ciencia), just released this month by Plaza & Janés, an important publisher from Barcelona, Spain.

The book's foreword has been contributed by Dr. Richard F. Haines, experimental psychologist at NASA's Ames Research Center, who wrote that "what Ballester Olmos and Guasp have done is to approach the subject of scientific Ufology systematically, carefully, critically," which basically matches with the real objectives the authors had in mind when working on this book.

We feel that, in order to place this book in its true perspective, the following thought from the book's introduction will be in order: "Ufology, in its current state, is an *embryo* of a significant, new discipline, as originally was the Alchemy, which only became Chemistry when magic and obscurantism were separated from pure