

TRACTOR DRIVER UNDER "COLD SCRUTINY" BY UFO

A young man's unnerving close encounter, near Garah, New South Wales

W. C. Chalker

Our contributor is Field Investigator and Liaison Officer of the UFO Investigation Centre, Sydney, Australia.

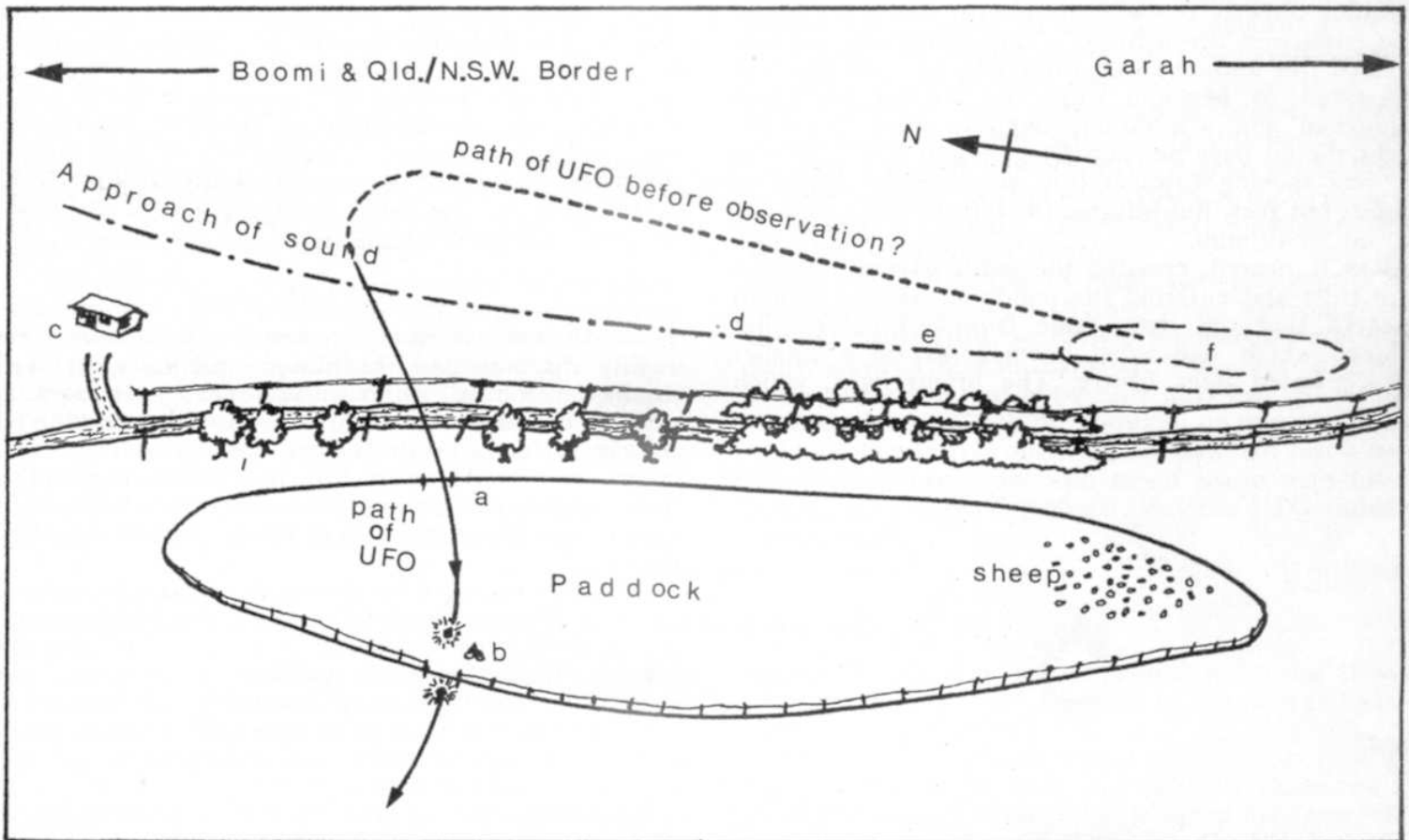
DURING his 1972 summer vacation, Greg Hardy, a New England University Economics student (from Grafton, N.S.W.) was working on a friend's farm. The farm, operated by a Mr. Cook, is situated roughly 13-14 miles from Garah and exactly 50 miles north-west of Moree, some 20 miles from the NSW-Queensland border. The surrounding country is typical of western NSW: flat, the monotony of the landscape being broken only by bushland, which is fairly heavy in parts.

On the night of December 15/16, Hardy was ploughing in weeds in a paddock. The sky was clear with no visible cloud cover. The moon was at about

three-quarters phase and the stars were clearly seen. Visibility was described as being "perfect."

The incident

At about 1.30 a.m. (December 16) Hardy stopped the tractor near the access gate for a "smoke." He then heard the noise of a high powered engine, sounding something like a low flying plane, or a semi-trailer cruising nearby. His curiosity made him turn to investigate the source of the noise, but nowhere could he make out any light. All he could determine was that something was passing by at low altitude. At first the noise appeared to be approaching from the direction of the Cook farm house. It appeared to approach the road and follow it on the opposite side



The sighting area, near Garah

Key: (a) noise first noticed here at about 1.30 a.m.
(b) site of close encounter with UFO at about 1.35 a.m.
(c) Witness returned to house at about 2.05

a.m. and returned to b with friend
(d) sound cut out here
(e) sound of deceleration
(f) supposed landing area

towards Garah, roughly in a south-easterly direction, and parallel to the powerlines running on each side of the road.

Some 500 yards down the road the noise of the "motor" cut out, de-accelerating, and dying gradually as it went further away. Hardy stared up into the sky following the direction of the sound, but nothing was to be seen. He expected at least to see some black object pass by. In this respect he was adamant that if the noise had come from a truck without its lights on, then he would still have been able to see it in the clear moonlight. However, it appeared to be passing by at some height, and of course, invisible flying trucks are quite rare.

The "noise" (which Hardy later stated that he took to come from a "mothership"), then appeared to land in an area obscured from his sight by some fairly heavy bush about two miles down the road on the left hand side.

Hardy thought little of the incident and began ploughing again. Some five minutes later he had reached a spot roughly opposite the gate where he had heard the noise. It was here that he first noticed a light approaching the tractor.

Stopping the tractor (but leaving the motor running), he watched the object as it came towards him. He first saw it in the paddock across the road, heading directly towards the tractor in a straight line. He compared the light to a car's headlight, but dismissed this knowing that there was no road where it appeared to be, and since the ground had been ploughed and was rather rough to drive over, the light should have been bobbing up and down. Instead it was moving towards him at a steady height of about ten feet, not hugging the terrain; the speed was about 30-40 mph.

As it neared, crossing the road, passing between the trees and entering the paddock, he was able to discern that the light came from a small circular object which had what seemed to be a smaller concentrated light centre. The bright light, which

illuminated a wide area, appeared to be radiating from the surface of the circular object and not from the central mass.

When the object was fifty yards away, it made a smooth turn, heading now west-south-west. When it was just twenty yards away from the witness it stopped and hovered, still about ten feet from the ground. It did not appear to be solid, but the centre appeared to be more concentrated than the rest of the white ball of light. The "shape" of the sphere "was traced out by three (or four) ill-defined lines on the outside of the object". These "circles" or "ribs" of relatively well-defined light, were geometrically spaced apart at 120° to each other. All were vertical and met at the top and the bottom of the object. The total diameter was three feet, and the concentrated light centre, enclosed by the "cage" of circles was between eight and nine inches in diameter. Overall, the light appeared to be constant, but the ground illumination appeared to be flickering (this effect was hardly noticeable and may have been due to an optical aberration). The eye level of the witness, sitting on the tractor, was about seven feet from the ground, and the object was two or three feet above his eye level, i.e. about ten feet from the ground.

From the time the object entered the field, Hardy realised that it was nothing natural. Alarm, mixed with curiosity, rooted him to the spot. He said he had the feeling that the object was coldly analysing and gathering information about him.

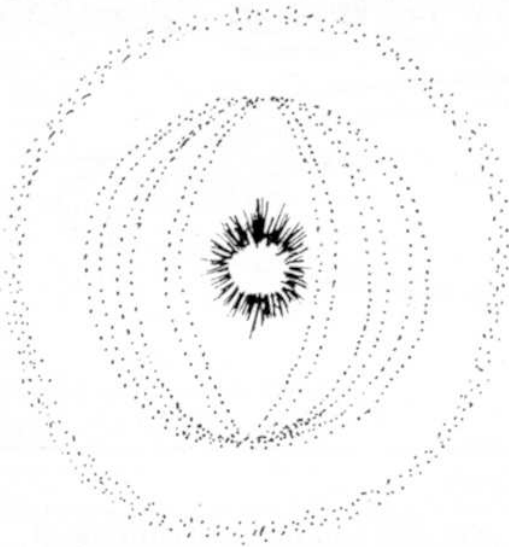
It hovered for about five seconds, then suddenly vanished. The witness whirled about on the tractor seat, and saw it reappear, further behind him and to the right, just outside the paddock fence, still hovering at ten feet. It continued moving away in the same direction, finally disappearing in the distance.

Reaction

Hardy was extremely shaken by the incident. He swiftly disconnected the plough and hastened back to the farmhouse, where he was met by the barking of dogs. Banging on the door he roused his bewildered colleague, Mr. Rowan Hickson (whose shift he had taken over as Hickson had had little sleep). The first thing the witness said was: "Where's the shot gun?" Hickson noticed that Hardy looked white in the face.

The two returned to the scene of the sighting and by now Hickson was a bit nervous. Nothing unusual was noticed, save the silence of the place. During the previous night the winds had been quite gusty, but that night conditions were absolutely calm and clear. Once the area had been investigated, Hickson returned to his sleep, while Hardy continued ploughing - this time armed with a shot gun.

Earlier he had noticed that there were sheep at the other end of the paddock. By the time he reached that end, everything appeared quite normal. The sheep merely shuffled out of the way of the approaching tractor. About five miles to the south he had noticed a house light earlier in the night, but he didn't notice whether it had been on during the sighting.



The UFO: a "concentrated light centre enclosed by a 'cage of circles'."

Comparisons

The fact that the "noise" appeared to follow the telephone wires which ran parallel to the left hand side of the road is interesting. Another possible relationship between UFOs and power lines was also revealed in a case I investigated on the outskirts of Beaufort, Victoria in July, 1969. A young man and his mother saw two circular objects, apparently metallic, with visible portholes, giving off a reddish glow. They flew parallel to some three-tiered high tension powerlines, carrying 66,000 volts, only deviating from this parallel line of flight when the witness's car approached. Both objects turned towards the car, but when the engine was switched off, immediately resumed their flight parallel to the powerlines. John G. Fuller also noticed this perhaps tenuous interest in powerlines displayed by UFOs during his investigations for his book, *Incident at Exeter*. Physical evidence for a direct relationship is insufficient, but merits further investigation, particularly when one considers the numerous so-called electro-magnetic (EM) effects on vehicles, such as those reported in France early in 1972.

Comments

Hardy had started ploughing at about 11.00 p.m. on the Friday night, and stresses that by 1.30 a.m., he was not showing signs of excess fatigue. He admits that he was a little tired but not to such an extent that his faculties were impaired. Another important point is that the witness is partially colour-blind (to bright surfaces in particular). He would have been able to distinguish between red and white, but the colour green would have been difficult for him to recognise. With this in mind, he describes the object as being a "white ball of light."

The sighting couldn't conceivably be explained away as either ball-lightning or swamp gas. Conditions were just not present to give rise to them. Furthermore, the object was well defined in shape and its movements certainly not erratic. There was no body of stagnant water nearby; all the dams are usually fit for drinking and the numerous irrigation ditches are in constant use.

Some time later, the witness happened to be ploughing in the area where he thought the "noise"

had landed. He made a casual inspection, but found nothing unusual.

Hardy has not seen UFOs on any previous occasion and his only familiarity with the subject comes from reading Von Däniken's books and various newspaper articles. He did not report the incident to any authority, but mentioned it to a friend, who pointed out that he and someone else had seen an identical object sometime during November, 1972, about a month before his sighting. The local newspaper, *The Moree Champion*, records that on the same night a local farmer saw an identical object while driving in the area, some time before Hardy had his encounter.

I know the witness personally and feel that his observations are accurate in most respects, consideration being made for his colour-blindness. To add support to his evidence, similar sightings in the area during November, 1972 have been confirmed. A truck driver also claimed to have seen the object early on that Saturday night.

Similar sightings include:

November 26, 1968, 9.40 p.m. Mr. J.A. Wyatt and Christopher Bolton were followed by a circular light while driving between Maitland and Port Victoria, Yorke Peninsular, South Australia. The UFO travelled parallel to them, in a south-westerly direction, for about 9 miles, when the UFO made a sudden half-circle-turn in front of their car. According to the witnesses, "It came down at a very slight angle towards us at a very fast rate. It got larger and larger and changed colour from bright white to orange-red." It came within 200-300 yards of the car and travelled parallel to it. It sped off when the witnesses arrived at Port Victoria where they contacted Constable D. Guerin, but it returned, remaining in the sky for about 4 minutes.

January 5, 1972. For 13 miles, between Penrith and Windsor (suburbs of Sydney), a Wahronga man driving home from work was pursued by a blinding light, some 3 feet in diameter. The object's distance from the car varied between a few feet off its back bumper bar, to trailing about a quarter of a mile behind. The man brought his car to a half just outside Windsor, hopped out and stood ready with his car spotlight to meet the object. But the UFO suddenly disappeared.

THE CONTACTEE OF TRES ARROYOS (Continued from page 17)

has ever watched a loved one dying of that terrible scourge will feel that we should approach such a story with anything but scrupulousness and extreme candour. Yes, as we all know, alas, it *may* turn out to be just another piece of cruel hoaxing by those beings, totally devoid of pity, who watch from the wings of this *gran teatro del mundo*, this great theatre of the world.

But in an infinite Universe the number of possibilities is also infinite, and we should take great hope from this thought. Our cancer cure, incomprehensible as this present version of it is, *could* turn out to be genuine. It would be a dreadful thing if, having had

so valuable a clue in our hands, we threw it away because we were not prepared to examine everything with the utmost care.

One thing is certain about the Maceiras case. *It is claimed that something has radically improved this poor old codger's health, has pumped his brain full of new ideas, and has filled his mouth with a third set of teeth.* If all this be true, — and Dr. Hynek has referred to this case in a public lecture last August in London, then it is quite a lot more than *our* science and *our* medicine are capable of doing in this year of Grace of 1973, so it looks as though we would be prudent if we did not scoff too soon.

RATIONALITY AND ITS LIMITATIONS

I. Grattan-Guinness, MA, MSc, PhD

DILLON'S BOOKSHOP in London keeps its stock of UFO books in the section for the history and philosophy of science. It seems to me an admirable place for them, for the problem of UFOs appears to have not only an extensive history but also an exceptional range of philosophical features. It is with these latter aspects that the notes below are concerned.

1. It is widely thought among scientists and non-scientists alike that the purpose of scientific theories is to explain the unknown in terms of the known. We know certain things already; now we must use our wits and our observations to learn about the things of which we are at present ignorant.

This may be an accurate description of the *chronology* of our discoveries, but it is a false analysis of the knowledge that we obtain. For *scientific theories, as theories, explain the known in terms of the unknown*. We "know" our observations; and we explain them with theories whose basic components are "unknown". For example, Newton's law of gravitation explained the motion of physical bodies on the earth, and of the planets of the solar system, in terms of forces obeying a certain law of attraction. Now it is these forces which are unknown, not the motions they explain.

One of the chief hopes of students of UFOs is to obtain an explanation of the phenomena in which they are interested. It must be realised that the explanation will be in terms of "unknowns" in the sense of the above discussion, and that therefore the explanation might be more strange than the sightings which inspired it, not more familiar.

2. The relationship between knowns and unknowns is an important aspect of the logic of explanation, and its frequent misrepresentation is a correspondingly significant feature of the conception people have of rationality. For when a "rational" explanation of UFO phenomena is sought, rationality is conceived as the process of passing from unknowns to knowns, from ignorance to knowledge, from error to certainty. But the argument above exposes a sense in which this conception of rationality is wrong. Let us call this view of rationality "dogmatic," meaning not that it affirms any particular dogma but rather that it shares with all dogmas a belief in the infallibility of its principles and the certainty of its deductions. By contrast, the vision of rationality as a means of discovering new unknowns may be called "critical," emphasising its motivating spirit in the search for errors and unexpected effects. Critical rationality views rationality as a collection of *current habitual expectations* which may require *revision* when next used. Dogmatic rationality sees rationality as a system of *established criteria* whose standards all problems must meet.

3. Dogmatic rationality appears prominently in

Dr. Grattan-Guinness is Principle Lecturer in Mathematics at a College of Technology in Middlesex. He is also an Historian of Mathematics and Mathematical Logic, and his two books *The Development of the Foundations of Mathematical Analysis from Euler to Riemann*, and *Joseph Fourier, 1768-1830*, were published by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.

the rejection of UFO sightings. The alleged phenomena are "physically impossible" (that is, they lie outside the range of our established experiences). Hence UFOs do not exist. Of course the conclusion may be true; but this kind of argument is insufficient, because it relies on the correctness of dogmatic rationality, which in fact has sometimes been refuted by ordinary physical phenomena. The mistaken character of dogmatic rationality is not widely recognised, least of all by ordinary people whose belief in it motivates their hostility to alleged UFO reports.

4. Critical rationality may lend a few insights to our relationship with possible higher species. Relative to us they must seem to be *super-rational*, of orders of technical knowledge beyond our current capacities. Hence the apparent impossibility of their actions is *only to be expected*. Furthermore, if several different species are observed here, some may be at a different level of super-rationality from others. It would be important to hear of cases where apparently different species were observed simultaneously.

Mention of the possibility of different levels of super-rationality emphasises the fact that *super-rationality is not omniscience*. The higher species may surpass us, they may even have been our gods in times long past, but they are not God. Indeed, their super-rationality will be critical in the same way as our rationality, subject to revision and adaptation.

5. We need to admit the superiority of higher species only with respect to their physics and technology (and by implication, perhaps, to their mathematical and linguistic powers). It is a mistake to infer that they must have higher ethical, moral and judicial codes also. There is no necessary correlation between science and ethics; packs of wolves do not have to have Watergate hearings.

This last point is one of several reasons why I dislike comparisons between humans and animals to be used in discussions about higher species. Such comparisons are bound to be weak because they have to be extended in order to apply to comparisons of ourselves with higher species, and in the process may well bring in factors which previously were irrelevant. Critical rationality is an important example; it must play a *far* more limited role in animal life than it does in ours or would in any more advanced culture, since it requires among other things considerable linguistic capacity.

6. One of the most unfortunate features of twentieth century science has been the grossly