

UFO OBSERVED DURING CALIFORNIAN BLACKOUT

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THE events described in this report took place in the early hours of Friday, June 18, 1971, near Ben Lomond, California. The witnesses were Mr. W. C. "Tom" Thompson (aged 77), who saw the UFO, Mrs. Minna Thompson and Mr. Leonard R. Clark who both observed the electrical disturbances, and myself who observed both the electrical disturbances and the UFO. All the witnesses reside at 7900 Harvard Drive, Ben Lomond.

12.55 a.m.: I was sitting up late doing some paperwork when an unusual electrical disturbance began. The electric lights and the television set started dimming, or fading in and out in a continuous, but irregular, pattern. It resembled the dot-dash impulses of a code. I glanced at the clock and noted the time. Unexpectedly I sneezed twice and my nose watered so much I rushed downstairs for a kleenex tissue. I stood in the kitchen a few minutes watching the odd pulsing of the lights before going back upstairs.

Expecting a power failure any second, I set aside the papers on which I had been working. Since 10 minutes had gone by and the strange disturbance was still going on, I thought I would go outside to see if anything strange was around that may be causing the interference.

The night was still, clear, and warm, probably in the mid-fifties, and my husband, Leonard, was already asleep on the porch deck. As I reached to open the sliding glass door leading to the deck from the dining room I received a fair-sized shock and saw a spark jump. We have nylon carpeting and I am used to getting "tickled" from static electricity, but this was a sharp bite and I pulled my hand back quickly.

As soon as I stepped outside I could hear the television antenna snapping and buzzing in time with the dimming of the lights: it is secured to the fireplace chimney and is not grounded in any way. The area from the south to the east which reflected the city glow from Felton and Scotts Valley was pulsing in time to our house lights. The power lines across the street were also snapping and buzzing in the same manner as the television antenna.

Through the trees I could see a large star-like object which was bright orange in colour. "Probably Mars," I thought, but decided that coupled with the electrical disturbance it was interesting enough to wake Len.

We went inside the house and I picked up my camera and woke my Dad. My Mother (another night owl) joined me and we went outside together.

1.15 a.m.: From the driveway on the side of the house we could see the orange object in the eastern sky quite clearly between the trees, and, although I felt sure it was a planet (either Mars or Venus rising), to play it safe I took a couple of pictures.

1.20 a.m.: My Dad, Tom Thompson, came out of the house and, not knowing that we were down on the driveway, walked to the front of the deck. He leaned against the corner of the house and was looking down the valley to the south in the general direction of Felton and Santa Cruz. He stood there a while then apparently



View from the porch "deck" of Mrs. Clark's house

became aware that I was calling him, and called out that he was going in to get his glasses and would be right back.

When he joined me on the drive, he asked me if I noticed the smell of ozone in the air. I merely noticed a dryness and told him of my strange sneezing bout. He decided to get his voltmeter to check the voltage variations. I walked up to the cul-de-sac for another look around and noted that the whole area from Felton and Scotts Valley to the south, as well as Ben Lomond and beyond, towards Boulder Creek in the valley

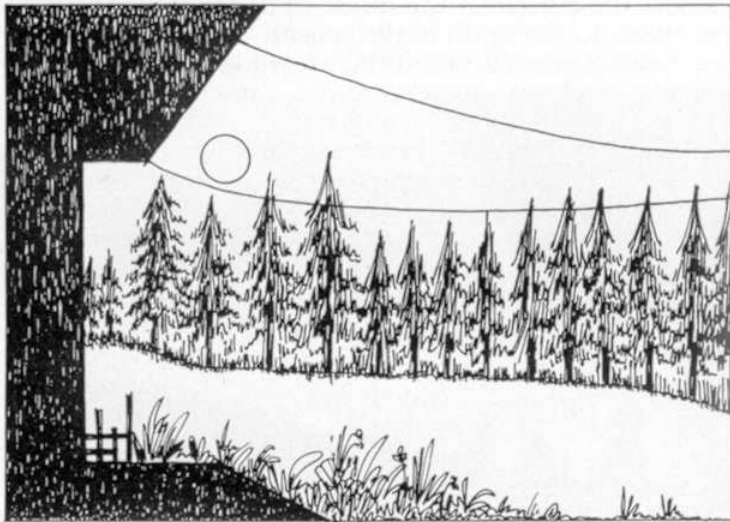
below to the west, was pulsing and dancing an electronic dance while the power lines provided the music.

Meantime my husband had given up sleeping on the deck and had retired inside the house.

1.50 a.m.: Returning from my walk I stood in the dining room with Tom watching his voltmeter. The voltage fluctuated about 7 volts at the most, and never exceeded 120v. It would drop on the long pulses to between 113v. and 115v., always returning to 120v. before dropping again. The disturbance acted like a short cutting out the power as if two wires were rubbing against each other. We talked about how strange it was that everything seemed charged with static electricity. Particularly the TV antenna which seemed to be acting like a lightning rod. You wouldn't expect a voltage drain to produce an excess of static electricity.

Everybody headed for bed, except me. I went back upstairs to await the outcome of the events and again spread out all my paperwork.

1.55 a.m.: The lights finally went out, exactly an hour after the time the disturbance had begun. I looked down the valley below and discovered that there wasn't a single light visible all the way to Boulder Creek. The Scotts Valley light glow had also disappeared. It was



The apparent size of UFO and its position as seen by Mr. Thompson

the first time I had known of a power failure that effected the entire valley. I would check with the power company in the morning, I decided.

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During the day I didn't take time out to call the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. My parents had gone off for the day and we had had no further discussion about the events of the night before. They arrived home about 1.30 a.m. I was still up again and my Dad immediately asked me whether or not I had found out anything from P.G. & E. When I told him I had not, he was annoyed since it had been bothering him all day about what he had seen and he thought surely I would have been checking it out. Of course, all I had seen was a planet in the sky and was a little confused by his remarks. He began asking me if what I saw was reddish-orange, and if it was big. What I had seen was only large in comparison to the other stars in the sky.

"Oh," he said, "from where I watched it, it was huge. At least the size of the full moon. Maybe larger." He hadn't mentioned it at the time, since he thought we were looking at the same object from the driveway as he watched it from the corner of the house. He assumed we had all seen the same thing, and we did not realise that *he* had seen anything!

At 1.20 a.m. Friday morning Tom had walked out of the house, without his glasses. He walked to the end of the deck and leaned against the house as he noticed, centred between two trees, a huge orange glowing ball hovering low in the southern sky. "It seemed to sparkle, scintillate, or twinkle steadily. The edges of the disc were very round like a hoop." Since it was as large, or larger than, the full moon, he at first assumed it was the moon rising. The object was so large that it "covered the end of my thumb at arm's length," Tom said. "Suddenly it just disappeared, poof! It looked like the symbol used on the Glen Campbell Good Time Hour (a television programme)," he said. That was when he went inside to get his glasses and then joined me on the driveway. He had observed the object about 30 seconds and it never moved. It just hovered there "all sparkling, like a fish eye."

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If the object Tom viewed had been the result of a light image retained on the retina he would have experienced the phenomenon upon first stepping out of the house on to the porch deck, or as he walked down to the corner of the house, but not after he had turned the corner and gazed south. He is far-sighted and wears eyeglasses most of the time. However, if his eyes are rested, he can read normally without putting on his glasses. He has an astigmatism which he thinks could have contributed to the "scintillating" effect. He has had many years of meteorology, has sailed around the world three times as a radio "sparks" for the navy and various oil corporations. He spent many years as an airport radio operator and also handled the ground weather observations for the airlines using the airfield at Kingman, Arizona. He is thoroughly familiar with "ball lightning" and "plasma" which hangs immediately over power lines on occasion. What he saw in no way resembled these phenomena. In fact, he is still puzzled and can find no explanation for what he saw.

On Saturday morning at 7.40 a.m. I called the Pacific Gas & Electric Co., hoping to contact the same crew that had been on duty Thursday night and early Friday morning. I asked the man who answered if he knew what caused the power failure and the strange voltage drop. He said: "There was a car pool accident on Zayante Road. The car had hit a tree and caused a short across the power line. Eventually the switch opened and the power failed." He added that the failure which blacked out an area from Boulder Creek to Scotts Valley had "affected 10,000 people." He had no explanation for the television antenna and the power lines registering the static electricity, nor had he received any other reports. The situation was very puzzling to him.

A check of the Highway Patrol office revealed that there were two accidents on Zayante Road. One at 6845 East Zayante at 1.02 a.m., and another at Pico Bridge. No cause was listed on the preliminary report.

It was apparent that the electrical disturbance had begun seven minutes earlier than the accident which occurred at 1.02 a.m. However, the location of the accident scene on Zayante Road was in a direct line over the hill from our house, and in a direct line with the object that Tom had seen. Since without his glasses Tom would not estimate how far away it was, it could have been very close to us, or perhaps several miles away. I wondered if the occupants of either car had been distracted by something they may have been watching in the sky. It seemed odd that two accidents had occurred on the same road at approximately the same time in a remote area. Undoubtedly at one o'clock in the morning they were the only two cars on the road!

The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* newspaper had not received any UFO reports or any reports about the power failure. They planned to check it out.

The main office of the Highway Patrol had received no UFO reports and the cause of both accidents was attributed to late night drinking. All other particulars were confidential.

The *Santa Cruz Sentinel* on Monday, June 21, carried the following small item:

"POWER OUTAGE AFFECTS AREAS—Power outages Friday at 8.10 p.m. out of Soquel and Scotts Valley were reported by a number of persons to the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. Some 900 customers in the Old San Jose Road area of Soquel were without power for 32 minutes, according to Wayne Mathews, PG&E district manager. Some 300 customers in the Vine Hill and Laurel areas of Scotts Valley were without power for about two hours. Cause of the Old San Jose Road outage is unknown, Mathews said. The Vine Hill-Laurel outage was caused by a limb on the line."

There was no mention in the above article of the power failure which had occurred early Friday morning which affected 10,000 customers, but it was odd that two other outages had occurred on Friday night.

The weekly newspaper, *The Valley Press*, carried a small item on Wednesday, June 23, which stated, "Early Friday morning the Felton Fire Department received about four calls regarding a transformer fire in the Zayante Fire Protection District." The names of those callers are not available.

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Mr. Thompson's UFO report:

Conditions: Very dark—clear with stars overhead. Faint odour of ozone in the air.

Electric power surging up and down in our house 5-8 volts variation, as viewed on an accurate AC voltmeter. The line frequency of 60 cycles was not varying.

The glow of lights on the horizon to the SE towards Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley and Felton areas seemed to go up and down with the fluctuations of the line voltage.

The orange-coloured UFO was observed to be stationary. It was visible for about 30 seconds, then suddenly disappeared. Nothing more.

The object seemed to sparkle orange-red, scintillate, or twinkle steadily. The edges of the disc were very round, like a hoop. It resembled the dazzling disc on the Glen Campbell TV show.

The object was observed unexpectedly, and no one else was close by at the time. Further observations showed nothing in the area. The ozone odour gradually faded away.

There was no moon.

The object hung between two pine trees about 1,000 yards from the house. It appeared to be above the trees which stretch for about 3 to 5 miles away to the skyline. I wouldn't hazard a guess as to how far away or how close it was without my glasses on.

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Mr. Thompson said he has seen many fireballs or
(Continued on page 29)

ENTHUSIASTIC REPORTING, KALEIDOSCOPIC THEORIZING

by John Cleary-Baker, Ph.D.

UFOs—Key to the New Age by Arthur Shuttlewood, published by Regency Press, 43 New Oxford Street, London WC1. Price: £1.80.

Arthur Shuttlewood has done it again! In this latest of his three books, Britain's leading contactee has produced a lively and kaleidoscopic work in which occult and scientific theories jostle each other, interspersed with details of many new UFO reports from the Warminster area.

For the sighting reports we may all of us be grateful. If Warminster is indeed a ufocal—"window area" to employ John Keel's terminology—it is a useful thing to have constantly on hand an enthusiastic reporter ready to chronicle the events as they happen.

The occult aspects of Mr. Shuttlewood's researches are not susceptible to ready comment. Some readers will attach a great deal of importance to numerological calculations involving the number Nine. Others will dismiss them as vagaries of coincidence. I should not care to essay the task of arbitrating between the parties.

The scientific ideas mooted in the book are always of interest and some of them are unquestionably not without value. I think, however, that Mr. Shuttlewood's flirtation with the Theory of Serialism, as propounded by the late J. W. Dunne, adds little to our understanding of the elusive UFO. Serialism, which involves the philosophically unacceptable notion of an infinite regress, has never been taken very seriously by those best qualified to pronounce upon it. Of Dunne's excursions into the realm of Relativity, Professor C. D. Broad wrote:

"I should suppose that Mr. Dunne's brief account of the doctrines of the Theory of Relativity would be unintelligible to those who are not familiar with it and unacceptable to those who are."

However, with all its defects of exposition this book is one which ought not to be neglected by UFO students. I wrote of Arthur Shuttlewood's second work, *Warnings from Flying Friends*, that it contained gold nuggets buried among much detritus. Precisely the same expression may be employed in dealing with this latest of his publications.

As always, the transparent honesty and integrity of the author are reflected in everything he has written.

UPROAR IN BRAZIL

Gordon Creighton

ITAPERUNA is a small town in the northern part of the Brazilian state of Rio de Janeiro, and lies about 50 km. to the north-west of Campos, home of the two dead young men in the leaden masks,¹ and not much further than that from the beach at Atafona where, apparently, the young men carried out some of their "experiments" when they allegedly "shot down a UFO which fell into the sea."

We are greatly indebted again to Dr. W. Buhler, who has rushed to us by air-mail a batch of press-clippings² which cover the period September 27 to October 10, 1971, and tell the story of the fantastic things now going on around this peaceful and pleasant little country town, where dwarfs 50 centimetres high, "like gnomes", flying in a "saucer" the size of a *Volkswagen* car, have been terrorising motorists and have played a few notably nasty tricks. These happenings appear to have developed into a "flap" since about September 19, although in truth there has been a steady trickle of reports from the Itaperuna area for at least two years past.

The widespread anxiety and alarm engendered by these events may provide food for thought for those who are so ready to criticise governments for censoring or suppressing UFO reports.

I shall deal in this article particularly with three of the Itaperuna reports, in which it is claimed that motorists or pedestrians have been taken into "saucers", taken for "flights", or levitated into the air by beams of light.

Case I. The Typewriter Mechanic

Paulo Caetano Silveira, aged 27, a typewriter repair mechanic, residing at rua Bonifácio Alonso 213 in Itaperuna, had been to a place near Carangola to repair some machines. As he was driving home to Itaperuna on the evening of September 22, 1971, in his *Vemaguete* 61 car, registration number HA-3064, he noticed some sort of dark, low-flying object behind him, which seemed to be dogging him. At first he did not pay too much heed, feeling that he might perhaps have been deceived by the fleeting shadows of the trees against the sky. But, when nearing the town of Tombos, he began to notice something else, which he has described as a red light or a red ball of fire.³ This thing repeatedly came right above his car, but it was significant that whenever another car appeared from the other direction the "thing" always fell back. At its closest he was able to see that its colour tended at times towards bluish, and that it was in fact a luminous disc.

Arriving in Tombos and already somewhat alarmed, he called in at the Police Station and reported the matter, but they did not seem to take his story very seriously. They gave him a drink of water well laced with sugar and suggested that he stay and spend the night in Tombos.

Calmer now, he started off again. At first he thought he had shaken the thing off, but soon found that it was still following him, though far behind. Thoroughly



worried now, he put on all speed and came to Natividade, where he stopped at a friend's place to put some more water in the radiator. He told the friend of his experience and was advised to say a few *Pater Nosters* . . .

It was now about 7.00 p.m., and it looked for a while as though the prayers had worked. Then, far ahead of him on the road, he saw what he at first took to be an enormous black ox, planted right in the middle of the highway. But the "black ox" soon turned to a vivid red and he now saw that it was the disc that had been pursuing him. From red it turned to a blinding white. Then a luminous beam shot out from it towards him, and he felt his engine beginning to falter. The engine died, and he found himself confronted by a craft a little bigger than the familiar *Volkswagen* car. He got a good view of it. It had small windows, just like an aircraft, and a door was open. Near this door were standing two small chubby beings about 40-50 centimetres high, or roughly about the size of a ten-year-old child. He felt his whole body, and especially his legs, being drawn in some mysterious way towards that open door. [We are left to presume he got out of his own car—EDITOR.]

The creatures, as one gathers from his accounts given to the press (see sketch), were reminiscent in appearance of the dwarfs shown in the traditional children's books of fairy stories. They had fair complexions, slit eyes, flattish heads, and there was something in their features that somehow reminded him, he says, of the Brazilians of the North-East.⁴ The dwarfs were dressed in one-piece overalls of a beautiful bright, luminous, sky-blue colour, with long sleeves to the wrists, high collars, and "Roman helmets"⁵ with spikes.⁶ The creatures moved around like automata, he says, with rigid arms and legs, and were carrying objects that gave out vivid beams of red and blue light.

Paulo says he felt all energy and willpower being drained right out of him, along with the sensation of