

Ted Bloecher has been an active, highly regarded ufologist since the early 1950s. One of the first to recognize humanoid reports as a valid part of the UFO phenomenon, he probably knows as much about CEIIIIs (ufological shorthand for "close encounters of the third kind") as anyone in the world. In the article that follows, he tells us what we have learned about these bizarre events.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind by Ted Bloecher

Over a four-week period in the fall of 1975 five very strange events took place in various locations in North America:

- A young woman named Judy Powers was driving home from work on October 14 at 5:30 A.M. near Peers, Alberta, Canada, when she saw what she first believed was a cattle truck parked in the road ahead with its lights on. As she drove closer she saw that it was a strange object standing in the road with two "men" on top standing motionless, each holding a long rod or staff in his hands. The figures, of normal size, were wearing helmets on their heads; Miss Powers could not see their features. She drove hurriedly by and raced the remaining half mile to her home, where she persuaded two other people to return with her to the site. But when they got there, less than ten minutes later, both the men and the object were gone.
- Early on the morning of October 26, between 12:30 and 1:30, Mrs. Peggy D. (name confidential) and her 17-year-old daughter were driving to their suburban Birming-

ham, Alabama, home after visiting Mr. D. in the hospital. Near Cahaba Heights, on the Jefferson-Shelby county line, the two women were amazed to observe two enormous figures, at least seven to eight feet tall, standing near the right-hand side of the road.

They wore close-fitting clothes of a dull silver color. The pants, Mrs. D. reported, were "darker but they still had a silver tint." She especially noticed their boots, which were "real shiny, like aluminum foil, coming up midway between the calf and the ankles, tight-fitting at the top." The entities had "round helmets" on their heads that obscured facial details; "antennae" stuck out each side and the helmets had faceplates that either were self-luminous or reflected the headlights of the car. The figure standing closest to the road faced the street and held one arm up, pointing at the sky; the second, smaller figure was facing in another direction and apparently looking up at the sky.

The women, startled by their unusual appearance, swerved in the road. The daughter, who was driving, then stepped on the gas and they hurried on without stopping to investigate. Oddly enough, the daughter's boyfriend, following in a separate car, did not see the figures although he did see their car swerve out into the opposite lane and then speed up.

• At 2:30 A.M. on October 27, while driving near Poland Springs, Maine, two young men, David Stephens, twenty-one, and Glen Gray, eighteen, suddenly discovered they no longer had control of their car. The vehicle proceeded over a back road near a lake where they saw a large cylindrical object rise from a field.

The object pursued them down the road and as it was doing so a beam of brilliant light struck the young men. They found themselves some distance down the road, the car at a complete stop, the doors (previously locked) now unlocked. Responding to an irresistible impulse, the youths returned to the site and again saw this UFO, this time in the company of two smaller objects.

As they were watching, the UFOs put on a spectacular display: a strange "thick-looking fog" rose from a nearby pond and engulfed the car. Just before it did so, Stephens

and Gray saw—or thought they saw—the pond take on an oceanlike appearance and an "island" suddenly come into view.

When they finally returned home at dawn, they were unable to account for a missing period of time and began to experience odd effects for which there was no apparent cause. Alarmed, Stephens's parents notified the police.

Under hypnosis several weeks later Stephens told of being taken out of the car and somehow finding himself, in the next instant, looking down from a portholelike window aboard the craft. From this vantage point he saw the car, driven by his companion, swerve off the side of the road. A four-and-a-half-foot-tall entity of strange appearance then confronted him and communicated with him telepathically, telling him not to be afraid. He was led into another room where he was instructed to undress; afterward four beings, looking much like the first, subjected him to a physical examination. They took blood samples, and a machine with dials "scanned" his body. The beings told him they would see him again. Next he found himself back in the car with his companion, who seemed to have been unaware of his absence.

In the days that followed peculiar poltergeistlike manifestations plagued Stephens's house. Stephens continued to suffer from odd physiological effects, but they eventually disappeared. An encounter with a "man in black" took place. Many of these complex aftereffects, too numerous and involved to summarize here, tend to cast doubt on the veracity of the percipients; yet they seem to be typical of those reported in similar experiences. The encounter occurred just before a spate of reported UFO sightings in that area.

• On November 5, at about 6:30 P.M., seven forestry workers riding in a truck about twelve miles outside Heber, Arizona, observed a UFO at close range. It was over a clearing near the road. One of the men, Travis Walton, jumped out of the truck and ran toward the object; as he approached, a beam of light from the UFO struck him, lifting him into the air and then felling him. The others drove off in blind panic. When they regained control of

their emotions a short time later and returned to the scene, they found neither Walton nor the UFO.

Five days later Walton called his family from a telephone booth outside Heber, where they subsequently picked him up, unshaven and exhausted, with a puncture mark on his arm. He said he had revived apparently inside the UFO. He was lying on a table, surrounded by five-foot beings who looked like "well-developed fetuses." They had no clear facial features except for very large, wide-set eyes. Walton panicked and struck out at one of the beings, then fled from the room. In another room he encountered a normal human being wearing a blue coverall and a helmet.

This being led Walton into an enormous "hangar" containing several dislike UFOs and directed him to another craft where he saw several other human beings—two men and a woman—who also wore blue coveralls. There a masklike device was placed over Walton's face and he knew nothing more until he found himself lying on a highway outside Heber, five days later, with the UFO departing as though having just left him at the site. Many of the above details emerged during subsequent hypnotic sessions with the witness.

A retired couple, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Eilbes, who live in the Milwaukee suburb of Wauwatosa, were at home on the evening of November tenth when their doorbell rang. Mrs. Eilbes answered it to find a very strange "man" on the steps. He was wearing a narrow-brimmed hat and had a brown face "like smoked meat" marked with numerous vertical gray lines; his chin was narrow and his mouth merely a small opening no more than a quarter-inch wide. In his hand he held a white rod five feet long.

When he did not respond to her queries the woman called her husband, who responded by saying, when he saw the figure, "What the hell is this—something left over from trick or treat?" He grabbed for the figure but the entity hit the ground with the rod, making a "click," and immediately *glided* backward out of reach.

At this Eilbes went into shock. Before he retired to the couch both he and his wife saw at least four similar beings on the lawn and in the street. They were moving

about in long slow jumps "like astronauts on the moon," hitting the ground with their rods and then floating several inches above the lawn. They looked "deformed," according to Mrs. Eilbes, "like gnomes," with "clawlike hands" and "bowed legs." As the being who had rung the bell drifted across the lawn he raised an arm to the witnesses, displaying a bent hand. Although Peter Eilbes had a close look at his face, for some reason he was unable to recall any details except the small mouth. There were no reports of UFOs in this area.

These stories—and others like them—are known to ufologists as Close Encounters of the Third Kind (CEIIs), a term coined by Dr. J. Allen Hynek in his book *The UFO Experience* to denote those accounts in which human beings claim to have seen UFO occupants. Such reports are by no means rare. David Webb and I have collected over 1500 for a catalog we are preparing for the Center for UFO Studies—and it is likely that there are many others which have not yet come to our attention. Once shunned by many UFO researchers as too outrageous for serious consideration, they now are accepted as a legitimate part of the UFO phenomenon, perhaps even its most important part.

They are significant because they provide information about the UFO mystery that we do not get from the far more frequent yet often inconclusive reports of random night lights. With CEIIs the chance of misidentification of conventional phenomena is minimal—these are close-range sightings of structured objects which sometimes leave traces at the site or produce physical effects upon people or machinery.

Generally speaking they can be explained in only three ways: (1) As a hoax (either the witness is lying or he is the victim of someone else's practical joke); (2) as a temporary delusion or a psychotic aberration; (3) as a "real" experience reported as accurately and honestly as the witness is capable of reporting it.

Such reports are as old as the UFO phenomenon itself. In 1947, during the first sightings of the "flying saucer" era, several CEII accounts were published in local news-

papers, which treated them, understandably perhaps, as jokes; after all, so far as they knew there was no precedent for such stories and consequently no reason to take them seriously. Only a tiny handful of students of the esoteric knew of the 1896-97 "airship" sightings during which over sixty accounts of "aeronauts" (i.e., UFO occupants) appeared in the press.

But when we examine CEIIs we find a bewilderingly wide variety of reports which on the surface seem to have little in common. The appearance and behavior of the entities differ in many ways from account to account, so that some researchers have thrown up their hands in dismay at the apparent confusion and contradiction of detail. Yet here are certain consistent features. Let's examine some of these:

Appearance: The most obvious characteristic seems to be the size or height of the entities. This varies from small (under a foot) to gigantic (ten feet or more). However, the considerable majority fall into three categories: 1) "dwarfs" that average three to four and a half feet all; (2) "normals" of standard height or slightly under; and (3) "giants" of seven feet or more. In a study published in *Flying Saucer Review* for January-February 1964 Jacques Vallée concluded that there is a connection between the behavior characteristics of each class and their height. Dwarfs, for example, tend to appear in pairs, often wearing shiny silver "divers' outfits," usually with helmets, and very often with abnormally large round eyes.

"Normals," on the other hand, usually appear in groups of three or more and resemble human beings more closely but sometimes have wide-set ("wraparound") eyes, rudimentary noses and ears, and slitlike mouths. They are most often seen in different-colored coverall-type garments. "Giants," typically described as being particularly ugly, sometimes are said to possess only one eye.

Behavior: This is a difficult category to define because we must base our classifications on the *apparent* behavior of the entities. A wide variety of behavior has been reported, much of it inconsistent and perplexing, some of it absurd and manic. It is always possible that what the witness perceives as happening is not what actually is taking

place. Many close encounters with humanoids have an extraordinarily "staged" quality about them, implying that the entities' behavior was contrived for effect.

Entity encounters seem to fall into two general categories—intentional and unintentional. In many instances the witness will "happen" on a situation and "discover" entities who quickly "escape" into their UFO as if they have been caught at something. Somehow this "discover-and-escape" behavior is unconvincing. A UFO and its crew sitting in the middle of a back road at night would certainly be aware of the noise and lights of an approaching car in time to get away *if they did not want to be observed*. A famous example of this "discover-and-escape" scenario (which occurred in broad daylight) is the encounter at Socorro, New Mexico, in April 1964 as reported by Police Officer Lonnie Zamora.*

Activities: Again and again witnesses describe seeing humanoids "gathering samples"—that is, beings picking up stones and rocks or pulling up plants and depositing them in handy containers. One of the best such cases occurred just across the Hudson River from New York City in North Bergen, New Jersey, in the early morning hours of January 1975. As the witness, seventy-two-year-old George O'Barski, drove his car into North Hudson Park, he saw an object swoop down from behind him and land in a field next to the road just ahead of him. Driving slowly by, he saw eight to eleven small entities emerge, each with a little spade and bag, and begin to dig up soil samples, after which they reboarded the UFO, taking off swiftly and silently, leaving the witness utterly flabbergasted.

Another distinctive activity often described by witnesses appears to be a sort of "repair operation" by the entities on their vehicle. In November 1964, for example, two women in New Berlin, New York, watched for four hours as the crews of two UFOs made elaborate repairs on a unit which they had removed from the bottom of one of the objects.

Attitudes: The attitudes the entities display toward the

* See "The New Mexico UFO Landings" by Coral Lorenzen, August 1964 *Fate*.

witnesses in CEIII reports are particularly baffling and inconsistent. In many cases the beings remain entirely oblivious to the presence of the witness (as in the North Bergen case); at the other extreme are those cases in which objects land and entities emerge to interact directly with the percipient. Following this brief direct confrontation, sometimes including attempts at communication (often unfathomable or, even when understood, absurd in content), the entities re-enter their vehicle and take off.

Cases in which the entities acknowledge the witnesses' presence fall into two general categories—active and passive interaction. The “discovery-and-escape” situation is passive recognition of the witness's coming on the scene, whereas the “direct confrontation” is an example of active recognition. Of course the abduction reports—in which occupants take individuals aboard the craft—are a dramatic example of active interaction between percipients and UFO entities.

Other Distinctive Features of Behavior: Reports of disappearing entities are not uncommon, nor are reports of flying and/or floating UFO beings. An early example of the “disappearing” entity figures is a September 30, 1954, report from Marcilly-sur-Vienne, France, in which seven witnesses allegedly saw a being “dissolve.” The UFO which accompanied it also vanished, emitting a heavy fog and apparently fading away inside it.

The ability to “float” sometimes is reported when no UFO is directly involved. Fairly recently persons in Hartford City, Indiana, reported seeing a pair of small silvery beings rise off the ground and ascend into the night skies until they disappeared. Flying entities figure in several 1948 reports from the state of Washington where witnesses allegedly saw “men” wearing winglike contraptions. But in other cases the entities have not had to don artificial contrivances to remain airborne. During August and September 1967 many Venezuelans sighted small “flying humanoids”; some of these beings, according to the reports, even entered upper-story windows of homes and apartments. Some appeared in the company of UFOs; others simply “flew off” into the nighttime sky, graceful as birds.

If these reports sound particularly incredible, we must

remember that they are by no means unique and they must be considered along with other equally unlikely behavior that is repeatedly reported in CEIII cases.

Association with Vehicles: From the beginning UFOs and UFO occupants have displayed a specific and continued interest in vehicles. (Four of the five cases detailed at the beginning of this article concerned witnesses who were driving trucks or cars at the time of their experiences.) In many cases a car's motor and lights will fail when the UFO appears, only to function properly again when the object departs. Of the seventy “wave” reports which David Webb documents in his report 1973—*Year of the Humanoids* (which details sightings from September through December), twenty-five incidents involved witnesses in or associated with a vehicle—more than a third of the cases for that period. Electromagnetic effects were reported in ten of these cases.

Physical Effects: The physical effects associated with close encounter cases are not limited only to vehicle machinery but extend to electrical appliances and lights in homes as well. Animals and people may also experience such effects. The witness may report a feeling of dizziness or light-headedness or a “prickly” sensation when in close proximity to a UFO. Or he may describe being immobilized, sometimes by a beam of light shone on him from the UFO or shot at him by the UFO entity.

Some reports, particularly those in which an abduction occurs, state that the witness is subject to effects that occur *after* the experience. For example, the psychological effects may be severe enough to create problems requiring professional treatment, as in the case of Barney and Betty Hill after their 1961 abduction.

We also have cases in which ground traces, residues, and scorched vegetation have been found at the sites of UFO landings—and even a few controversial instances in which “humanoid footprints” have been left at the scene.

Communication: Those reports that describe comprehensible communication between UFO entity and witness surely rank among the most significant CEIII incidents. Such communication may be verbal, telepathic, or even by gesture. When it is verbal the entity usually speaks

in the percipient's native language, sometimes articulately and sometimes in a jumbled mixture of comprehensible and nonsensical words.

On occasion the messages have been downright bizarre. For example, during the spate of CEIII cases in Venezuela in 1967 one witness was told by a diminutive humanoid that "the earth is cracking" and "they" are here to save the human race. The classic *non sequitur* delivered by a UFO entity occurred in France in 1954; asking the witness where he was and being told France, the humanoid testily insisted he was elsewhere; upon being told the time he took issue with this as well!

It would be foolish, of course, to take such messages at face value. It even appears, in some instances at least, that the UFO entity has lied about a specific bit of information (that "crack in the earth," for example). While all of these so-called messages need to be collected and carefully analyzed, we must view their contents with a healthy degree of skepticism. Such reports underscore the need to know as much about the witness himself as we need to know about the contents of messages from the entities.

Wave Patterns: CEIII reports not only correlate well with other close-encounter cases but also tend to follow wave patterns. The UFO waves of 1947, 1950, and 1952 showed corresponding increases in CEIII reports. But it was not until 1954 that the first truly massive number of CEIII incidents took place, most of them during heavy waves of UFO sightings in Europe and South America. During the wave of late 1957 CEIII incidents increased but not to the same degree as in 1954.

Not until the great UFO waves of 1965-68 did CEIII's recur in great numbers; 1967, for example, produced more CEIII reports than did 1954 but they tended to be distributed throughout the year, with a moderate peak in March, which happened also to be the peak month for American UFO sightings in general. In August and September, during heavy UFO activity in both England and South America, there was a corresponding increase in CEIII's in those countries. The two greatest peaks for CEIII reports remain the French wave of the fall of 1954

and the wave of reports in the United States in the fall of 1973.

Varieties of CEIII Experience: One way to classify the different kinds of sightings of UFO beings might be to specify the precise relationship the UFO entity has to the vehicle that transports it. I suggest the following classification system:

Type A: Entity is observed inside the object only (the true occupant), through doors, ports, windows, transparent dome, or whatever. The association is explicit.

Type B: Entity is observed getting into and/or out of an object. Association is still explicit.

Type C: Entity is seen in the immediate vicinity of an object but not actually entering or leaving it. Association is implicit.

Type D: Entity is observed independent of UFO but there is UFO activity in the area at the time, usually reported by independent sources. Association is circumstantial.

Type E: Entity is observed independent of an object and there is no record of UFO activity in the area at the time. The association with UFOs is negative.

Type F: Neither entity nor UFO (or in some cases, only a UFO) is seen, but the percipient experiences some manner of intelligent communication, either directly or psychically.

Type G: Percipient has an on-board experience, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Entities may or may not be physically present, but their involvement is at least implicit.

How credible are these reports?

At this stage we can answer that question only by determining, through careful investigation, the reliability of the person or persons reporting the experience. The *contents* of such reports are no longer a dependable index for credibility since perfectly credible people do report wholly incredible experiences. When an investigator approaches a particular case he must not allow himself to be put off by its bizarre nature; he must concern himself with such matters as establishing the sanity and sincerity of the

Perhaps you can see that that's closely analogous to the idea that God was in charge. It becomes a matter of one's definition of God. I find that worthy of much thought.

Anyway, it's conceivable that intelligent beings on separate worlds are not all unrelated, that they didn't evolve independently.

It is absolutely clear that if the Villas-Boas and other such incidents have any validity, if there is a conceivable possibility that man could mate with a being from another world, then we didn't evolve independently. Establishment biology, assuming independent evolution, absolutely eliminates that possibility.

Mr. Fuller also mentioned the problem of contamination, pathogens from other worlds. I think there's another side to that problem, too. We don't understand what disease really is. I was chairman of an exobiology committee to consider what ought to be done with the Lunar Receiving Laboratory after the moon program was over. The Lunar Receiving Laboratory was built at a cost of about eighteen million dollars at Houston, just in case there might be organisms on the moon. Nobody believed that there were and science had no reason to expect organisms on the moon, but the possibility seemed so frightening that the powers-that-be spent eighteen million dollars to build this laboratory where the astronauts were brought after they got back from the moon. They spent two or three weeks in isolation so that if something began to develop on them, we wouldn't turn it loose on the earth at large. (Actually, it could have gotten loose several times when the space capsule landed on the water; it was very scary.) But there weren't any organisms on the moon. It was just as everybody suspected, but it made us think about the possibility of contamination of disease organisms from another world—or of our disease organisms contaminating another world.

The conclusion that I arrived at after listening to many expert witnesses testify is that we don't know the answer to that one either. Not only are there very intricate defense mechanisms against individual organisms on earth, but apparently organisms that infect other organisms have something highly specific about them, too. In plant pathol-

ogy the really amazing thing is that a given plant pathogen infects only a small number of hosts. There are about three hundred thousand different species of flowering plants; yet any given fungal pathogen infects, perhaps, only half a dozen of these. Why doesn't it infect all the rest? Either because all the rest have some kind of defense or because the disease organism does not have the ability to infect; it is not specifically matched to the hosts that it can't infect.

If the second possibility is right, then the chances are good that a totally alien organism would not infect us at all—or be infected by our organisms. It's an opposite conclusion from that Wells draws in *War of the Worlds*; yet until we learn more about disease, we can't say for sure.

So biology may have something to contribute to all this. As far as I'm concerned, I'm happy to toy with other questions. Did God create men in his image on other planets? If so, what does this mean to all of us? Are they allowed to visit us? Are the visitations really something else than what we think they are? Are they part of a display, perhaps being put on to mislead us? There are many ideas, many questions, but answers are, alas, in short supply.

Proceedings of the First International UFO Congress

CHICAGO, 1977

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