

THE BRAZILIAN ABDUCTION

Boy's story unshaken

The following account is taken in the main from the *Belo Horizonte Diario de Minas* of August 26. It was also referred to at great length in the *Belo Horizonte* daily paper *Ultima Hora* of August 28 and the *Rio de Janeiro Tribuna da Imprensa* of August 29. Readers are also referred to the **World Round Up** feature in the current issue where other Brazilian sightings are recorded, some of them in the same area as where Senhor Rivalino Mafra da Silva was allegedly abducted.

SHAPES that appeared to fluctuate, and two strange objects (of approximately 60 centimetres diameter) that emitted light all over and produced a strange dust and emitted rays that disintegrated a human being—such is the fantastic story told by the boy Raimundo Aleluia Mafra, aged 12. Raimundo avers that his father, Senhor Rivalino Mafra da Silva, was disintegrated before his eyes by the strange objects which were lying at the door of his shack, on the morning of August 20, at Duas Pontes (district of Diamantina), and which objects vanished into the air, leaving no trace whatsoever.

The 16,000 inhabitants of Diamantina are divided in their opinions as to the veracity of this occurrence; some hold that it is simply a case of murder, while others think that Sr. Rivalino Mafra has absconded from his home. And there are some who think it was “the work of the devil.” And there are many who believe the account given by the boy.

The reporters were in the Duas Pontes district, hearing the lad Raimundo describe the disappearance of his father and the events preceding it.

A clear account

Despite his under-nourished appearance, Raimundo was very clear and steadfast in his account, describing the dramatic events in great detail. It was only when he came to speak of his father that he began to falter and to sob. He is a poor thin little fellow, who has had no schooling. His home is a shack some 36 kilometres from Diamantina and, being motherless (he lost his mother a little over a year ago), he helps his father by looking after his two younger brothers and by doing all the house-work. He has never heard of

“flying saucers,” nor of comic-strips, nor radio, nor television or any other such devices.

In the presence of Lt. Wilson Lisboa, Special Police Deputy at Diamantina, the boy repeated for the twentieth time—so the police affirm—the story of the incredible thing that happened to his father before the very eyes of the terrified child. He said the tragic happenings began on Sunday, August 19, during the night. His father and he and his two brothers (Fátimo, aged six, and Dirceu, aged two) had all gone to bed. Raimundo cannot say what time of night it was—the father did not own a watch and, in any case, Raimundo does not know how to tell the time from a clock, but only by the amount of daylight—when suddenly he got the impression that some people were walking about quickly in the room. He called out to his father, and his father lit a small candle. Raimundo then perceived a strange shape, more like a shadow than anything else, floating along through the room, for it did not touch the floor. “It was a peculiar shadow,” he emphasised, “not like a human being’s shadow, for it was little more than half a metre in height and without any human shape.”

“We lay quiet in our beds and the shadow looked at us. Then it went over to where my brothers were sleeping, and looked at them attentively. Then it went out of the bedroom and into the living-room, and out into the yard without opening the door. Immediately after that we heard the footsteps of someone running, and a voice saying ‘This seems to be Rivalino.’ My father thereupon shouted ‘Who’s there?’ Getting no reply, Daddy got out of bed and went into the living-room, and then the voices began again, asking if he was indeed Rivalino. Daddy replied that he was, but still received no answer. We

went back to bed, and we heard 'them,' perfectly clearly, saying that they were going to kill Daddy. Daddy then started to pray in a loud voice, and the shapes outside replied that praying wouldn't help."

The statement continued

Continuing his statement, Raimundo said that they stayed awake the whole night from Sunday to Monday. "On the morning of the 21st (Monday) I got up very early—at 6 o'clock. I went outside to the field to get the horse for Daddy, when I saw two balls lying there, at a distance of a metre from each other. One was all black, with a sort of spike (antenna) and with a small tail. The colour of the other one was black and white, mixed, and it had the same features as the first one, that is to say antenna, etc., and both were emitting queer noises and seemed to be sending out fiery rays. There was an opening from which there came lots of flashes, like the light of a —*^{*}, dying down and flaring up again rapidly.

"I called Daddy to come and see the strange objects. He came out of the house, still praying, and asking what it was. He stopped some two metres from the objects, and told me to keep my distance. At that moment, the two objects, which resembled big balls, joined up into one, sending out lots of smoke and dust so that the sky was blackened with it. Without rising from the ground, but making a queer noise, the thing crept towards Daddy. Daddy was covered by the strange cloud of dust, which was the colour of sunset (yellowish) and he disappeared in the whirlwind produced by the objects. I went after Daddy in the middle of the cloud of dust, which had a strange smell, but I couldn't see anything. I called out to Daddy, but got no answer. At once the dust vanished, as if by magic, leaving no marks whatever on the hard earth, and it looked as though the place had been swept with a broom. I walked round the house trying to find some sign of Daddy, but could find no trace of him or of the strange object, or of Daddy's footprints. Heavens, I thought, is this the work of the Devil? Daddy had vanished into thin air. I went round looking for him in the neighbouring grottoes, but without result. I have tried to keep a watch for the flight of swarms of birds that like flesh (the Brazilian urubú or vulture), but so far there is no sign of Daddy. Already six days have gone by, and there is not a clue. Was Daddy carried off and killed by the balls? I want my Daddy."

For Canon José Avila Garcia, incumbent of the

* The original says "like the light of a grasshopper" (gafanhoto, locust or grasshopper), but we suspect it may be some other Brazilian insect. (Not a firefly at any rate—Editor.)

Cathedral at Diamantina, the case is nothing more than a problem for the police. He stated that there have been all sorts of quite different versions as to what happened, but he thinks that the boy had a dream and that the father has been the victim of a crime. "But, by a strange coincidence," the Canon added, "during the week before the disappearance of Senhor Rivalino Mafra, I was told a rather strange thing by Sr. Antonio Rocha. The latter said that while making a visit to Rio Manso, a place near Duas Pontes, he had seen two balls of fire, emitting strange flashes, fly over the house of Sr. Rivalino. In confirmation of these facts, Sr. Antonio Rocha called as witnesses two other persons who had been with him and whose attention he had drawn to the objects. Sr. Antonio Rocha is a person who deserves to be believed. Perhaps he can give further information on the matter," concluded the Canon.

When the newspaper reporter called upon Sr. Antonio Rocha, the latter confirmed what he had previously told Canon Garcia and Monsenhor Walter, adding that the two strange objects were flying around at great speed in a circle, and very low, above the house of Sr. Rivalino. "I know nothing about the disappearance of Sr. Rivalino," he concluded, "but I did see two strange objects in the sky over Duas Pontes. From the description of the objects given by the son of the missing man, I have the impression that they were the same as those seen by me."

Sr. Joao Madalena de Miranda, an official of the Biribiri Textile Mill, some 8 km. from the scene of the extraordinary occurrence, was the first person to arrive at the spot, having been notified by the son of the missing man. He noticed that at the spot indicated by Raimundo, over an area having a radius of more than five metres, it seemed as though someone had swept the ground clean of all dirt, including all the loose soil, leaving an appearance of exaggerated cleanliness.

Another explanation

In the opinion of Sr. Elagmano Marques da Costa, manager of the Biribiri Textile Mill, the whole thing is nothing but a trick staged by the missing man. He also visited the spot, and is of the opinion that Sr. Rivalino has simply run away to avoid the burden of having to look after his family. He says he does not believe the boy's story, though he is impressed by the repeated descriptions of the episode given by the boy.

The thing that has perplexed the Diamantina authorities in their attempts to get to the bottom of the case is the steadiness with which the boy Raimundo sticks to his story. For the twentieth time the boy has repeated it to the reporter of the

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Diario de Minas, and the Police Officer, Lt. Lisboa, noted that there is very little difference between this and what the boy said on the previous occasions, and that his statements contain no contradictions. He repeats the same story every time, without forgetting the least detail.

Lt. Wilson Lisboa, Officer of the Special Police in charge at Diamantina, together with the *Diario de Minas* reporters and a large posse of police, went on the evening of August 24 to Duas Pontes, which is 28 km. from Diamantina. Lt. Lisboa ordered various searches to be made in the neighbourhood of the humble dwelling of the missing man, but with no results.

Speaking to the reporter, Lt. Wilson said: "As an official authority I have the duty of following up all trails and all the versions of the story, without concerning myself with whether or not the facts are absurd." Already, he added, an investigation had been made into the past life of the missing man, but nothing had been found that could help to throw any light on the case. Sr. Rivalino was in fact born at Pinheiro, a small town in the Diamantina municipal district. He had never attended school. He possessed no photograph of himself.

The child is normal

One of the first steps taken by the Diamantina Chief of Police on hearing of the affair was to have the children placed in a home and to have Raimundo examined by a psychiatrist. Dr. Joao Antunes de Oliveira examined the boy and found him normal, with no signs of mental illness or disturbance.

The doctor questioned the boy at length, finding no evidence of any lying on his part. Raimundo repeated the same story more than four times and always maintained the same steadfastness in his account of what had happened. The doctor had no hesitation in declaring the lad to be in good condition except for a slight degree of physical debility. Speaking to the reporter, the doctor was unwilling to enter into a discussion of the details of the case, preferring to adhere to a

medical and clinical standpoint. He expressed no opinion as to the veracity of the occurrence and stated merely that in the first examination that he had made of the boy the latter had seemed to him to be in perfectly good mental health.

For Dr. Benedito Starling, Judge of the Diamantina Court, the flying saucer story is unacceptable. "In my view," he said, "it is either murder or the man has run away to avoid the burden of bringing up his children, or there is also the possibility that the man has fallen into some cave and died there. In my conversation with the Chief of Police, I have suggested that he consider the case solely in its police aspect—i.e. murder or accidental death or purely and simply a case of the man's having absconded. As far as the boy's story is concerned, it does not merit being taken into consideration. What is required rather is a thorough investigation of the boy's mental faculties. Raimundo is an undernourished child and, consequently, liable to hallucinations. I believe personally that his father may have found a bigger diamond and may have concocted this crazy story in collaboration with the boy so as not to have to share the proceeds of his find with his three partners."

The *Ultima Hora* in its August 28 issue published in its Police News section a scathing attack of the scientists of Brazil who remained sceptical in the face of the mounting evidence of the reality of the flying saucers. On the same day the *Diario de Minas* reported that Dr. Joao Antunes had carried out a medical and psychological test on the boy Raimundo. The doctor arranged for an impersonator pretending to be dead with his face covered to be brought before the boy. "Here is your dead father! You lied when you said he had disappeared! Tell us what really happened." With a sad look the boy re-affirmed that he had told no lie and repeated his original story. After this, Dr. Antunes had no further doubts about the boy's story.

Opinion in the district is, however, still divided. A section of the public remains terrified and hesitates to go out of doors. The streets were said to be deserted at night.

NICAP faces crisis

Warning of Air Force campaign against saucers

THE National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (N.I.C.A.P.), of 1536 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, 6, D.C., U.S.A, led by Major Donald Keyhoe, last August issued an emergency bulletin containing several items of great interest to UFOlogers. It also issued a grave warning.

On the front page it carried the following announcement:

"An order controlling all Air Force personnel statements on UFOs and other 'military subjects' has been disclosed by Major Wm. T. Coleman, former UFO Project Officer and Air Force H.Q. spokesman. The order, a section of AFM 190-4, covers books, articles and scripts for talks and broadcasts. Major Coleman quoted Ch. 4, Section B.2.g., as follows: 'When the manuscript concerns military subjects it will be submitted to the Office of Information, which will review it for accuracy, propriety and conformance with policy, security and for the deletion of classified matter. The policy applies to active duty personnel, retired personnel, civilian employees, and members of civilian components.'

"By this order, the Secretary of Air Force Office of Information must delete all evidence of UFO reality and intelligent control, which would, of course, contradict the Air Force stand that UFOs do not exist. The same rule applies to A.F. press releases and UFO information given to Congress and the public. (Our italics—Editor.)

"Major Coleman's important disclosure was contained in a letter to N.I.C.A.P. member Kurt Zeissig, after Zeissig's persistent queries about *Flying Saucers and the U.S. Air Force*, a book by Lt. Col. L. J. Tacker, A.F.-UFO spokesman from 1956 to 1961. After previously stating that the A.F. was not responsible for the book's contents, Coleman admitted it was reviewed under AFM 190-4. Even if Tacker had wished to show positive evidence, this would have been prohibited."

Later on in the bulletin, N.I.C.A.P. warns its readers that:

"The Air Force has launched a new, vigorous programme to nullify all UFO evidence, discredit N.I.C.A.P. and other secrecy opponents, and bury

the UFO problem from public view by the end of 1962. (This followed A.F. rejection of our offer of an unpublicised joint evaluation of N.I.C.A.P. evidence.) We are NOT attacking the A.F., nor the loyal personnel who in line of duty censor the UFO facts. We realise the 'explain away' policy is probably set by a higher agency, as many A.F. members oppose it. But since the new programme, if successful, would destroy N.I.C.A.P.'s prestige with Members of Congress and the public, we are sending this alert while there is still time to act.

"The A.F. programme's main steps to end Congressional and public interest in UFOs:

1. Release of the "most baffling" UFO reports, to disprove secrecy charges; then 'final explanations' of these long-unsolved cases—by answers contrary to documented facts. (Proof in N.I.C.A.P. possession.)

2. New attacks on expert evidence; belittling claims that 98 per cent. of the pilots, tower operators, scientists and other responsible UFO observers had illusions (optical and otherwise), failed to recognise ordinary objects, committed hoaxes, etc.

3. Quick explanations for new sightings reported by the press, even if the 'answers' must later be retracted as 'preliminary evaluations.' (Cases on file.)

4. Getting rid of important sightings, for years classed 'unsolved' by A.T.I.C., by the new label, 'Insufficient evidence.' (Proof in N.I.C.A.P. possession.)

5. Misinforming Members of Congress and the public that N.I.C.A.P. has refused A.F. requests for its UFO evidence. (A.F. signed claims in N.I.C.A.P. possession.)

6. Claims that the UFO issue is kept alive only by the N.I.C.A.P. 'hobby group' and other 'flying saucer enthusiasts.' (Letters on File.)"

Most unfortunately, at this stage N.I.C.A.P. found itself at a crisis in its affairs and followed this information with an urgent appeal for funds so that it might issue a detailed refutation of the campaign anticipated from the U.S. Air Force. By the time this number of the *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* appears the success or failure of the cam-