

# THE "STONEHENGE" INCIDENTS OF JANUARY 1975

## PART I: THE INVESTIGATIONS

*Ted Bloecher*

We present here the first part of a paper given by the author at the first conference of the Center for UFO Studies held at Lincolnwood, near Chicago, on April 30th, 1976; the text is presented in full. The investigations were conducted by Budd Hopkins, Ted Bloecher and Jerry Stoehrer.

**N**ORTH HUDSON PARK is located in North Bergen, New Jersey, a Hudson County community. Two miles west of New York's Central Park and about one-quarter the size, it is a pleasant centre for recreation in an otherwise rather drab urban area that extends from Fort Lee, in the north, along the top of the Palisades sill to Jersey City, ten miles south. Approximately half a million people live in this densely populated promontory, sharply bounded on the east by the Palisades and the Hudson River. To the west are the vast undeveloped stretches of the New Jersey meadowlands.

An outstanding landmark in this setting is the Stonehenge Apartments, at 8200 Kennedy Boulevard East, in North Bergen. It is a modern, expensive, high-rise building of unusual design and it is said to be the tallest apartment building in North Jersey. It perches precariously on the rim of the Palisades escarpment directly across the Hudson River from West 89th Street in Manhattan. To the west, the building fronts on a broad expanse of trees, playing fields and the lake that comprise North Hudson Park. Stark and solitary, it rises majestically over the entire area — an impressive structure from every direction. Its very name evokes dark and faintly sinister echoes from the past. The locale is, in fact, a perfect setting for the strange and unexpected events that have taken place at various times since January, 1975 — according to a growing number of independent reports by local residents. The disclosure of the first of these incidents came about almost by accident.

On the evening of November 20, 1975, I received a telephone call from Budd Hopkins, a New York City artist of abstract paintings whom I had not known previously. Hopkins was reporting the remarkable story by an acquaintance of a near-landing of an unidentified object, with sample-gathering occupants, that had occurred ten months before within the early morning shadows of the Manhattan skyline in North Hudson Park, just across the river from New York's upper midtown area. Furthermore, Hopkins said that the witness to this extraordinary event had been known by him for more than 15 years, and that his reliability as a witness could be staunchly vouched for at first-hand.

The observer of this Close Encounter, Type III

(a close range sighting of a UFO and its occupants), was a 72-year-old widower named George O'Barski, the co-owner of a Chelsea-area liquor store in Manhattan who lives in North Bergen and drives daily by car to and from work. At the time of the incident, in January 1975, O'Barski shared his North Bergen home with his son, Frank, a graduate student in his twenties. (During our inquiries, the son was attending Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship.) O'Barski had not discussed his strange experience with anyone but his son, who had advised him not to talk about it, as such a story would never be believed. For ten months the witness abided by his son's suggestion and remained silent — but the experience has troubled the man deeply, and the need to discuss it with some sympathetic listener finally led to its disclosure.

Had the witness known beforehand of Budd Hopkins' interest in UFOs the story would not have remained sequestered as long as it did, for Hopkins — who lives across the street from O'Barski's liquor store — saw the man regularly as one of his steady customers. While they could not be called "close friends," O'Barski not only provided Budd's modest requirements of spirits, but also obliged the artist with little services like the cashing of personal checks, and the like. Their relationship was limited to a specific area of interest, but within that context it was open and friendly. The story came to light, as it turns out, almost by accident and quite possibly might have never been disclosed at all, except for a chance remark.

For some time Hopkins had noticed that something was bothering the store owner. He seldom engaged in his usual, good-natured banter, like his recommendation of a particular wine as being "the best, one I drink all the time myself." (George O'Barski, in fact, is a tee-totaller.) On this occasion he was grumbling about a "cold in the knee" as being only one of a number of "the damndest things" that had befallen him recently — among which was "this thing that came out of the sky" and had left him "goddam scared." This most fleeting reference caught Hopkins' attention at once, and he pressed the older man for details. As they emerged, it was plain that O'Barski had been the percipient of a remarkable experience of some potential significance.



on the following weekend (November 30) to make measurements and take photographs of the area — particularly of the ground traces we had found at the site on the first inspection. On both occasions the doorman of the nearby Stonehenge Apartments was interviewed, and in the course of these inquiries we learned that a plate glass window in the lobby of the building had been cracked, under mysterious circumstances, at about the same time as the O'Barski encounter. Inasmuch as the doorman on duty at the time would have been in an ideal position to observe an object in the area designated by O'Barski, we obtained the name of the doorman on duty when the window was cracked. William Pawlowski was our man, but he no longer worked at Stonehenge; he had, in fact, by then moved to the New Jersey shore. Through a series of complicated references, we were eventually able to get him by telephone.

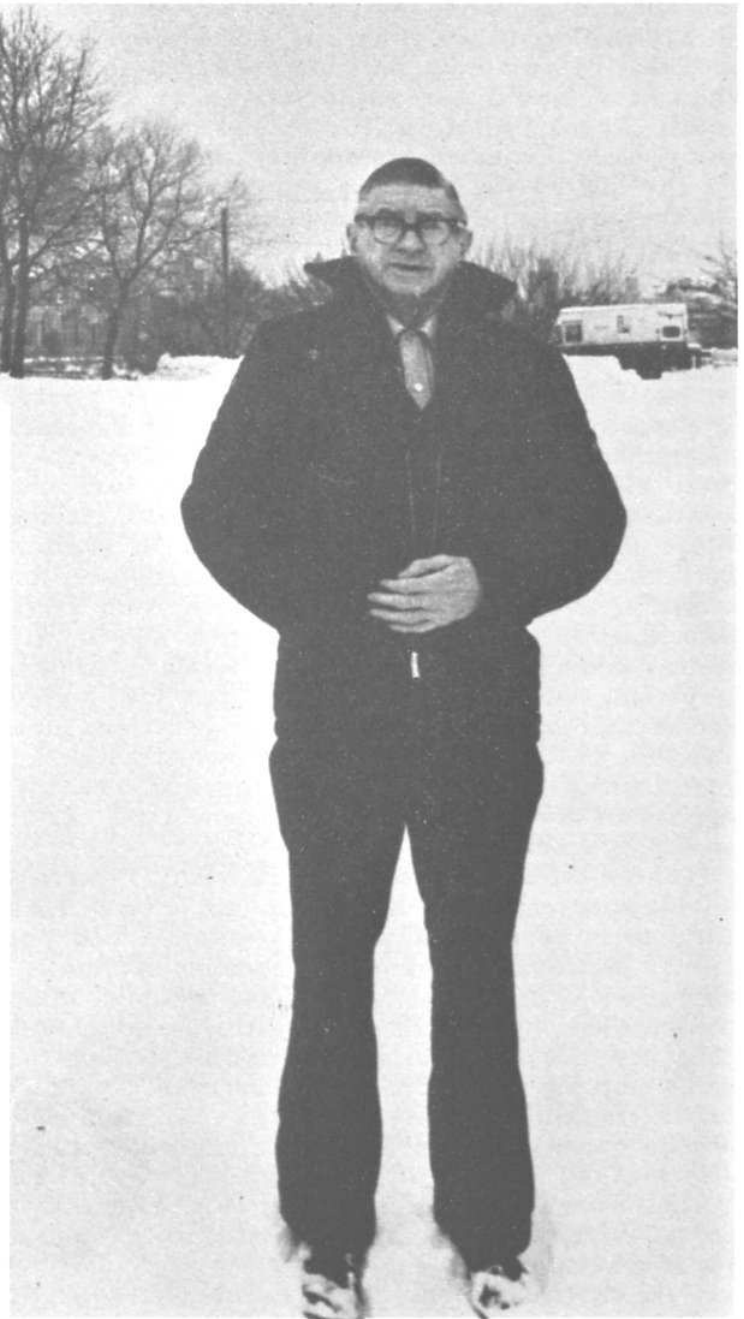
When Budd Hopkins spoke with Pawlowski by telephone on December 5, our efforts had paid off,

Early on in the telling, Hopkins excused himself and went across the street to get his tape recorder. He was able to record this story as it was disclosed in bits and pieces, with numerous interruptions as customers came and went, during the evening of November 19, 1975. Its disclosure had an undeniably cathartic effect upon the witness, and Hopkins was struck by the force and conviction of the man's amazement and fear in his account of what had happened.

#### Background of the Investigations

Budd Hopkins obtained my name and telephone number from a mutual acquaintance and he called me the next evening. We made immediate plans for further inquiries. I met with him at his home on November 21 and heard the witness's remarkable taped statement; then we went across the street and I met George O'Barski for the first time. His perplexity over the experience was unmistakable. We arranged to meet the witness at the site on the following Sunday afternoon (November 23), and I asked Jerry Stoehrer, a knowledgeable metropolitan-area investigator for MUFON (the Mutual UFO Network) and the Center for UFO Studies, to assist us.

In addition to our on-site inquiries with the witness, Hopkins and Stoehrer met again at the site



George O'Barski at Stonehenge Apartments ▶

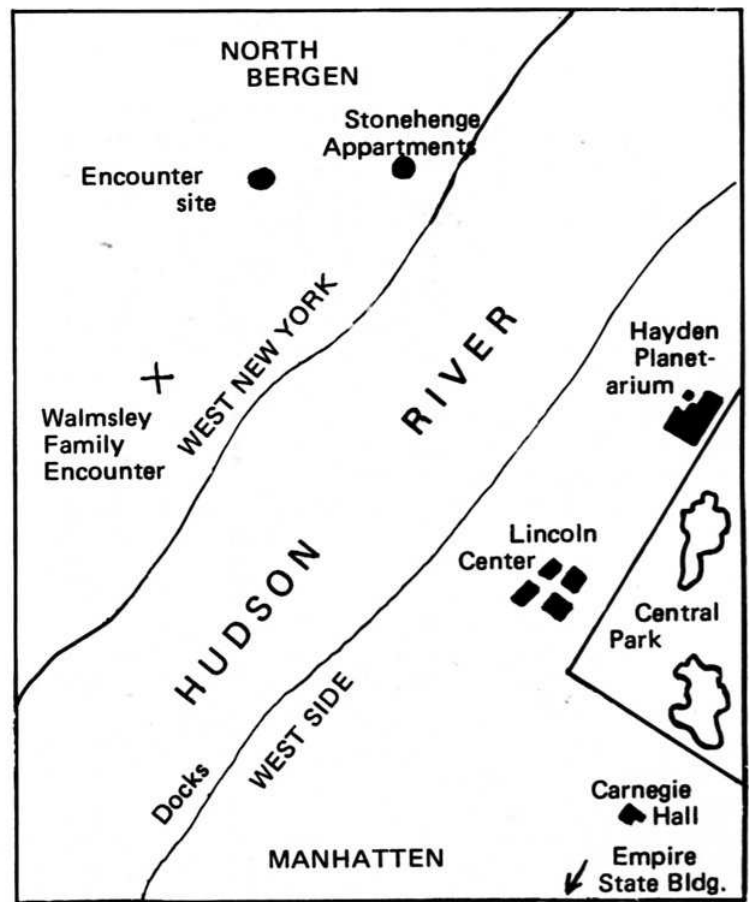
for we learned that the former doorman had indeed seen unusual lights on the night the window had been broken, and that this happened at the same time of night as the O'Barski sighting. I made arrangements with Pawlowski to interview him at his home in Brick Town, New Jersey, on Sunday, December 7, and Jerry Stoehrer and I obtained a detailed statement from the witness at that time, as well as a number of drawings; this information substantially supported the details provided by George O'Barski, about whose sighting the former doorman had no knowledge. Pawlowski, who was approximately ten times as far from the landing site as the primary witness, had not seen any figures; this distance, and the fact of his being indoors at the time, precluded the kind of detailed observation that O'Barski had been afforded.

The damage to the window occurred simultaneously with the observation of lights in the park. Believing that vandalism may have been involved, Pawlowski summoned the police. Two officers arrived quickly on the scene, but the lights had by then vanished, and Pawlowski said nothing about his sighting for fear of being disbelieved. He did, however, inform another police officer, Lieutenant Al del Gaudio, a resident of the building, of the strange lights seen in the field at the time the window was cracked.

The broken window was not the only unusual physical effect associated with the appearance of lights. Pawlowski told us that he had noticed on the same morning, when he went off duty at 8 a.m., that a large elm tree in the park, just across Boulevard East, had likewise been mysteriously damaged. The cause of the damage was unknown, as there had been no storm to account for it.

Hopkins and Stoehrer visited the site after midnight, early in December, to get a more precise idea of the setting at the time of the sightings. On December 8, Hopkins spoke by telephone to Lt. del Gaudio, and the police officer confirmed the fact that Pawlowski reported seeing a lighted object "come down" in the park at the time the window was cracked — although as a UFO sceptic, he saw no connection between the two events. On December 9, Hopkins and Stoehrer went to Police Headquarters in North Bergen to look for the blotter report on the complaint that had been called in by the doorman; a report could not be found, either at that time or on a subsequent search. On December 11, Stoehrer again met Pawlowski, this time at the site, and obtained additional useful information regarding sight-lines that matched O'Barski's landing site even more closely than our first interview had indicated. Our investigations now moved into 1976.

Efforts were made to obtain information from other sources; the West New York Glass Company, who replaced the broken window, was contacted in an attempt to secure data on the accident and, perhaps, to obtain a record of the date, but we were unsuccessful. The Stonehenge management was contacted, but they were not interested in our inquiries. We got in touch with the building superintendent directly and requested a copy of the report of the accident, but were advised that records were



**Part of Manhattan, the Hudson River and North Bergen**

**Our cover photograph, across the Hudson from the Empire State Building, was taken by the Editor of FSR in April 1976**

no longer available. The Park Supervisor, Frank Spauldy, and his assistant, Bob Attenboro, were interviewed by Jerry Stoehrer on February 24 and March 19, and both men confirmed the unusual nature of the damage to the elm tree, although once again there was no record of the accident and they were, in fact, uncertain as to when the damage had actually occurred.

#### **Disclosure of attendant incidents**

On January 18, while we were video-taping on-site statements by George O'Barski and Bill Pawlowski, we were astounded to learn that a second Stonehenge doorman, Bill Daliz, had seen a landed object in the field opposite the apartment house just three days earlier (January 15), at the same hour as the earlier events and in precisely the same location. He told us he had seen two oval forms slightly overlapping each other, one red and the other orange, just beyond the crest of the hill. Upon going outside to observe them more closely, they had ascended rapidly into the sky as a single unit, their colours darkening as they went up. He told us on January 18 that he had known nothing of any other reports. We interviewed him at length on January 25.

About this time, Budd Hopkins learned from friends of his who live in a high-rise apartment in

Manhattan at Riverside Drive and 86th Street, that the son of a neighbour family had seen an orange object across the river in the vicinity of "the round building" on the night of January 23. On the 25th, while we interviewed Bill Daliz, Stonehenge superintendent Amaury Perez told us of still another sighting by a former doorman of the building; as far as Perez could recall, the sighting had occurred about the same time as the window-breaking incident. He gave us the man's name and address. The former doorman, Francisco Gonzalez, was then moving from West New York to the Bronx, where he had taken a job as building superintendent. I reached him by telephone on January 29 and arranged a meeting with Hopkins and Stoehrer for February 1.

Coincidences were abounding: a sighting on the same date as my telephone call to Gonzalez, January 29, was made by an observer in a high-rise apartment at 23rd Street and Ninth Avenue, in Manhattan. Mrs. Ann Carr, an acquaintance of Budd Hopkins, told him about the incident several days later. She had seen a lighted, top-shaped object hovering over the Hudson River in the direction of Weehawken, a small community located several miles south of North Hudson Park. The significance of this observation increased when we later learned that on the same evening, and within the same hour, a Fairview (N.J.) schoolboy had come home in terror claiming that he had seen a landed UFO on spindly legs near the lake in the park. The boy had not been believed by his mother until the disclosure of other sightings in the area nearly a month later, and a brief account of the incident appeared in the *Union City Hudson Dispatch* of February 27. We have been unable to obtain the name of the boy involved.

By the end of January we had tied up as many loose ends to the original reports as we could, and Budd Hopkins prepared a written account that he submitted to the *Village Voice*, a widely-read weekly New York newspaper. The story was scheduled to appear in a mid-February edition, but was not published until two weeks later, in the March 1 issue. The paper was available on the newstands on Wednesday, February 25, but even before its appearance there had been more unusual activity taking place in the park.

#### Other strange figures reported

About 2 a.m. on Thursday, February 19, 1976, still another Stonehenge doorman (who has asked not to be identified) observed an unusual figure behaving in a peculiar manner not far from the original landing site. The figure appeared of normal height and was dressed in a coverall-type of garment; he had a light affixed to his head and walked stiffly, bending over repeatedly as if picking something up from the ground. He appeared to be carrying a bag. The light on his head stayed on at all times and faintly illuminated the ground as the figure bent over, although he kept to the darker sections of the park. The figure was observed by the doorman for approximately 20 minutes, from both inside the lobby and from the driveway in front of the building. The doorman said nothing about the incident at this time.

The following morning (February 20) at about the same time, another doorman, Teofilo Rodriguez, observed a similar figure behaving in much the same manner as earlier. Rodriguez said the figure continually bent over from the waist as though he were picking something up, or putting something on the ground. A light on his head illuminated the area immediately around the body, but as before, he kept to the darker sections of the park. The doorman watched him on and off for more than two hours, from both inside and out. At that time Rodriguez said nothing, but when on the following morning the same figure once again appeared, Rodriguez notified the Stonehenge Security Guard, Alberto Perez. After some initial scepticism, Perez agreed to go out onto the street in front of the building to see for himself. He observed the figure moving about near the flagpole (see the diagram of the area), approximately 500 feet away. His description of the figure and its peculiar behaviour essentially matched that of the two doormen, although Perez was of the opinion that the light was hand-held, rather than on the head. He said the figure walked slowly, as if wearing heavy boots, bent over repeatedly from the waist, and made "screwing" motions in the ground. He watched for only a limited period of time, whereas Rodriguez saw the figure on and off until nearly 5 a.m., three hours later.

When Rodriguez was relieved on Saturday morning by the same doorman who had seen the figure two nights before, he mentioned the incidents and learned for the first time of the figure's first appearance. We heard about the incidents less than a week later, on February 25, after the taping of the O'Barski report for New York's Channel 5 "Ten O'Clock News" programme. Perez and Rodriguez were interviewed at length by Hopkins and Stoehrer at Stonehenge on February 27; and the first doorman provided a detailed account of his own observation for Stoehrer and me on March 14. None of the witnesses attached an "other-worldly" significance to this figure's appearances, all having concluded that it must have been "some crazy guy" who was up to no good.

These observations were climaxed on Sunday, February 22, by another UFO appearance above the park — this time in broad daylight. Shortly before noon, during a heavy rainstorm, doorman Eddy Obertubessing saw a motionless, disc-shaped object, round and flat and "shiny, like chrome." While dark clouds scudded swiftly by, this featureless object remained stationary in a heavy wind, alternately obscured and revealed by the fast-moving overcast. Present for approximately 20 minutes, it vanished when momentarily hidden by the swirling clouds. When the sky cleared a few minutes later, it was no longer there. The doorman had time to alert a second witness: George Roque, the assistant superintendent of the building, also observed the object. This sighting came to light during the February 24 television taping.

On March 5, Obertubessing reported that earlier in the week a woman who lives in one of the building's upper floors overlooking the park had glanced out of her windows at about 9.30 p.m. and was

amazed to see a small, sparkling object darting through the park, near the ground. She told the doorman that there had been no people in the park at the time, and that the object ran wildly in all directions, moving over the lawn just opposite the apartment house and moving out as far as the lake. It threw off red and yellow sparks as it skittered back and forth. The date of the incident was later determined to be Monday, March 1. The observer refused to be identified and would not consent to a first-hand interview.

### Media response to the Stonehenge Reports

The response to the publication of Budd Hopkins' article in the March 1 issue of the *Village Voice* was immediate and striking. At least four New York television stations reported the O'Barski/Pawlowski observations on their news programmes on February 25 and 26, and local radio newscasts also featured the stories. As a result, intense interest in the Stonehenge reports was excited in the metropolitan area. During the following weeks, we received dozens of telephone calls and letters, many of them referring to other UFO incidents in the New York area, some of which went back many years.

As might be expected, these responses included a high number of "noise-level" reports. Honest mistakes about "lights in the sky" are par for the course, but there was also calculated exploitation. On Saturday, March 6, under the encouragement of a North Jersey flying saucer promoter and publisher, North Hudson Park became the scene of near-pandemonium when thousands of people gathered there to greet the well-publicized arrival of a Chicago "medium" who announced that he would "try to pick up vibrations" from at least one of the UFOs that had visited the scene during the past year. The press were out in force, greedy for a silly but sensational story. They were not disappointed.

Unfortunate and irksome as this media-event was, it did not discourage UFO witnesses of unpublicized

sightings from reporting their experiences, for their accounts continued to come in. Follow-up inquiries on the stronger cases were conducted throughout March. One of the more substantial reports from the North Bergen area was an older sighting that had taken place on October 14, 1972. A young Belleville, New Jersey, man driving south along Boulevard East a few blocks below North Hudson Park had an unobstructed view of a brilliantly-lit object flying slowly up the New Jersey side of the Hudson River. It was directly opposite the observer when first seen; he quickly pulled over to the curb and got out of his car. The object had a row of white lights that moved alternately up and down, much like the wagging tail of a dog. As the UFO approached the George Washington Bridge some five minutes later, its lights were suddenly extinguished and it ascended at high speed.

Another impressive close encounter proved to have taken place only five hours before the O'Barski/Pawlowski incident, and in the same general locale. On March 25, Jerry Stoehrer was invited to address the Robert Fulton School PTA in North Bergen on the subject of the Stonehenge incidents. In the course of that meeting, he learned that Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wamsley and three of their children had observed an object with rapidly rotating lights outside their home at 67th Street and Boulevard East, in West New York — just a dozen blocks south of North Hudson Park. It floated out of sight behind buildings to the north and the family ran out into the street to observe it more clearly. The object finally disappeared from view "behind the round building."

The UFO experiences that we have investigated from the North Hudson Park area may be grouped into two specific periods of activity — the original reports of January 1975, and the reports of approximately one year later, occurring in the midst of our inquiries into the earlier events. The next part of this report will review in detail the incidents of January 1975.

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# THE CASE OF THE VALLADOLID TRACTOR DRIVER

*Fr. Antonio Felices et al*

An investigation by eight members of the 'Charles Fort' Investigation Group, Valladolid, Spain, whose Chairman is Father Felices. This report was published in *Stendek* No. 23 of May 1976 (address: STENDEKCEI, P.O. Box 282, Barcelona, Spain). Translation from the Spanish by Gordon Creighton

THE case covered in this investigation was the first of an extensive series of sightings which have been going on, with a frequency hitherto quite unknown in this part of Spain, ever since July 1975, and which constitute an extremely interesting "flap." Our "Charles Fort" Group have been conducting a detailed analysis of developments, and we are able to emphasise that the "flap" has had two constant features of great importance, namely (1) the high percentage of Type 1 cases, and (2) the marked degree of attention shown by the UFOs to the witnesses, which in a number of cases may be described as outright persecution.

## The incident at Pedrosa del Rey, July 17, 1975

A study group went to the area a few days after the case had occurred, to interview the witness and gather details about the affair, which had already been the subject of a number of sensational reports carried by the media throughout the whole of the country.

The brief facts of the case are as follows:

At about 6.30 p.m. on July 17, the tractor driver Emiliano Velasco was engaged in ploughing a field known as "No. 21," at Villaster de Abajo, to the west of Valladolid, when he heard a discordant sound which he took at first to be due to a possible mechanical defect in the tractor. He was able to continue ploughing the furrow on which he had started, and came to the end of the run without difficulty. Then, when he had turned around and was about to come back down the field in the opposite direction, he was confronted with a cylindrical object which seemed to be floating above the ground. It was emitting a vivid silvery light. As he watched, the object performed a number of movements in successive circles around him and then, as his tractor moved up the field (400 metres long) it began to come closer to him. When he had nearly reached the edge of the field the object emitted a flash as it passed across in front of his track. Then, when he had completed his turn, there was a second flash from it, and he heard a high whistle and one of the panes of glass of his "driver's cab" was cracked.

## Interrogation of the tractor-driver

We had a number of interviews with the witness, with members of his family, and with various other

local residents, our group devoting a very considerable number of hours to these enquiries in the course of several visits. All the interviews were taped, and we give below the extract containing the more important of the statements made by the witness:

CFG: You say that, before catching sight of the UFO, you heard a noise. Can you describe the noise?

Velasco: At first it seemed to me that there was something wrong with the engine of my tractor... as though a pipe had broken...

CFG: Then why didn't you stop at once, if you thought there was something wrong with the tractor?

Velasco: I carried on with the furrow, so as to get off the middle of the field. Because, despite the noise, the tractor was working perfectly.

CFG: What was the shape of the object?

Velasco: It was like a jar. Like a jam-jar. It had a sort of "hat" on top, and V-shaped feet.

CFG: Any other details that you recall?

Velasco: Yes. It had a sort of belt or band round it, and two windows above the band. And on one side of the thing it had some antennae spread out, like a fan...

CFG: What was the total length of time between the moment that you heard the sound and the moment when the thing went out of sight?

Velasco: The time it took to do one normal "run" the length of the field. About half an hour.

CFG: What, approximately, was the size of the object?

Velasco: Well, let me tell you. It was bigger than the tractor...say about three metres high and more or less the same width.

CFG: This noise you mentioned — could you hear it throughout the whole period of the observation? Did it vary in strength?

Velasco: I heard it the whole time. When the thing came closer to me, the noise was so loud that I couldn't even hear my own engine, and it was at that moment that I realized a pane had cracked.

CFG: Were you scared?

Velasco: Not at first. It was very beautiful to look at, like a shining jewel. Then, when the thing came closer and started moving in circles, it was a different matter... And when I heard the "crack" and saw my smashed glass I got terribly scared and I made off at top speed towards the main road.

(The mayor of Pedrosa del Rey, Don Aurelio