

THE MYSTERIOUS CACONDE CASE

Dr. Walter Buhler

AFTER our investigations at Botucatu, I travelled on almost due northwards from there to Caconde, a place on the borders of the States of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, where another strange occurrence had been reported. I arrived there on the afternoon of September 15, 1968. The region, with its large dam and resultant lake, is very similar to the neighbouring resort of Poços de Caldas, famous for its hot radioactive springs.

The case concerned an odd occur-



Sr. Caetano and family

rence that had happened to a certain Senhor Caetano Sergio dos Santos, a municipal night-watchman. When I called at his home he was not yet there, but his wife received me cordially, and was already explaining the affair when he arrived.

Sr. Caetano is 28 years old, a

Sr. Caetano's house



sizeable man of athletic appearance, with the typical dark skin of the Brazilian "Caboclo" (man with part-Amerindian ancestry), active enquiring eyes and quick understanding.

He told me that, on the morning of May 17, 1968, on arriving home after his night duties, he found a metallic cylinder lying on the right-hand side near the back-door of his house. It was approximately 17 cms. long and 15 cms. wide. He tried to pick it up, but found it was so heavy that it required both hands. Describing its weight, he likened it to "the weight of the starter motor of a Chevrolet car."

Nobody had heard the object fall there, and there was only a tiny impression about $\frac{1}{2}$ cm. deep in the ground where it lay. The family consequently concluded that it might possibly be some stolen object that had been deliberately placed there to cast suspicion on them—or perhaps, even worse—a terrorist bomb, as the newspapers of São Paulo were full of reports of such cases at that period.

Sr. Caetano carefully surveyed the mystery object for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Its surface was smooth, of a dull greyish colour (but it shone brightly at night under the electric light, as he

was to find later). The two flat ends of the cylinder were covered with some transparent material that was so closely joined to the metal that no junction point was visible, and he found nowhere where he could introduce the tip of a screwdriver, try as he might. The surface of the cylinder was so hard that it was impossible for him to scratch it.

Beneath the transparent covering at each end there was a dial, and a pointer to indicate, apparently, five numbers, 1 to 5. But, on a slightly larger circle, and corresponding to the conventional five "Arabic" figures, there were five other symbols so complicated in their form that Sr. Caetano found it totally impossible to reproduce them, try as he might. The five Arabic numbers and the five mystery symbols were cut in low relief, and there was a sort of engraved groove between the numbers and the symbols. The pointers on each of the two dials seemed to be of the same material as the cylinder itself, but were of different colours, one being black and the other red. The pointers stood respectively on one side of the "O" mark and of the symbol that ceased to correspond to the "O" on the other dial, each pointer having a small ball on its tip.

His 1½ hours of scrutiny concluded, Sr. Caetano betook himself to bed.

He rose again at 2.00 p.m., lunched, and then went outside to sit in the sun and eat an orange. At that moment an aircraft flew overhead, and he watched his mystery object to see if either pointer moved. They did not. So he resolved to dash it violently on the ground, using all his strength, but still there was no response; the pointers did not budge.

He and his family were a little shy about showing their queer find to all the neighbours, but he did show it to the people next door, saying: "Look at the clock I found in the yard!"

He forbade his two children to touch the object, and set it on top of the wall (about 6ft. high) of the shower-compartment in his bathroom, between a small oil lamp and two pieces of soap.

Senhora dos Santos was expecting a child very shortly, and consequently he was in the habit of returning several times each night to see how she was.

On the first night after he found the cylinder, he returned to see his wife (first visit) at half-an-hour after midnight, and as he walked past it he noticed the strange glow of the object under the electric light. Back with his work-mates at the factory, he told them about the weird object in his house.

Returning again to see his wife at 01.07 a.m., he learnt en route from some neighbours that they had heard his wife calling for help, so he broke into a run and found the whole house in an uproar. His wife and the two loudly crying children (aged 7 and 3) were out in the backyard, wearing only their light nightclothes, and the night was quite cold.

It seems that Senhora dos Santos had been awakened just before 1.00 a.m. by a loud humming noise emanating from the place where he had put the "object". A strange blue light was also coming from the same spot and a terrifying sort of heat was rapidly pervading the whole house right through into her



Where the mystery cylinder rested

bedroom (the room farthest from the "object"). She therefore decided to turn off the electricity, but that had no effect on the luminous, acoustic, and thermogenic phenomena, which continued to grow in intensity. At last, finding it impossible to remain in the house, she roused the two children from their beds and took them outside, where she gave the alarm.

A few moments later there came a noise like a clap of thunder from the roof of her house, and a rain of pieces of tile fell around them. Then there was silence, and her husband appeared a few minutes later.

When they entered the house, the heat and light phenomena (which had lasted about ten minutes) had ceased and the temperature was normal again.

The mystery cylinder had vanished, and above where it had stood was a gaping hole in the tiled roof.

In sharp need of a morale-booster, Sr. Caetano headed in due course for a nearby bar where some friends of his were gathered, and he told them of these happenings. On his way there he ran into the town clerk, Sr. Benedito Oliveira dos Santos, and informed him too.

Two members of Professor Flavio Pereira's investigation group in São Paulo subsequently visited Caconde and made a complete study of the

affair. They established, *inter alia*, that on the night in question the outside temperature had been 9° Celsius, and there had been frost. They collected some of the debris from the shattered roof and took a radiation background reading on the top of a wooden table and another reading on the top part of the wall where the mystery object had stood. Of the two, the reading from the top of the wall was the higher, but it should be borne in mind that, since the whole area of Poços de Caldas and Agua do Prata is rich in radioactive springs it is probable that the radioactive content of the locally-made bricks and tiles and plaster might also be found to be abnormally high. Consequently it seems to me that a more reliable procedure would have been to take the check readings not from the table but from a number of places on the other walls of the house.

The precise details of the radioactive findings in this case are not known to me. As is well known, the residual radioactivity from UFO phenomena is usually very temporary, dropping steeply in a few hours.

I had the opportunity to meet the town clerk, Sr. Benedito Oliveira dos Santos, a very pleasant, highly intelligent and well-informed person, and hope that it will be possible for us to pay a further investigatory visit to Caconde before long.

While I was at Caconde, Mr. Nigel Rimes remained in Botucatu investigating the landing there.* On the day previous, Mr. Rimes and Sr. Willi Wirz and I (all of us members of S.B.E.D.V.) spoke to a packed audience in Botucatu in a room at one of the two local radio stations, the full proceedings being broadcast. The audience showed a very lively interest in the UFO problem, and kept us busy with questions.

NOTE

* See the article *Landing at Botucatu* by Nigel Rimes in FSR for November/December 1968 (Vol. 14, No. 6), pages 21-24.

Translated by Gordon Creighton.

WE RELY ON YOU TO "GET CRACKING"

and tell your friends about FLYING SAUCER REVIEW. It's our best advertisement!

MAIL BAG

Correspondence is invited from our readers, but they are asked to keep their letters short. Unless letters give the sender's full name and address (not necessarily for publication) they cannot be considered. The Editor would like to remind correspondents that it is not always possible to acknowledge every letter personally, so he takes this opportunity of thanking all who write to him.

Witness intimidation

Dear Sir,—Reference Janet Gregory's letter (*Mail Bag*, November/December 1968) and my recent letter placing on record the July 24, 1952, sighting at Vico, Italy. (*Mail Bag*, January/February 1969). I have since found another case of witness intimidation in Italy. It is reported . . . in the *Flying Saucer Review*, in an article by Gordon Creighton, *The Italian Scene*, Part 4, July/August 1963, p. 11. Perhaps you will consider reprinting this account to complete the documentation of this intriguing problem.—Jacques Vallée.

Sir,—“Better late than never.”

Having only just read *FLYING SAUCER REVIEW* of November/December 1968, on page 30, in “Mail Bag”, I came across the letter “Men in black” by Janet Gregory, Mill Farm, Thringstone, Coalville, Leics.

I would very much like to answer this letter and I hope it will be of interest to both you and Mrs. Gregory. I see that Jacques Vallée has answered it in the January/February issue, but I would also like to contribute if it can be of any help.

In “Black-out sur les Soucoupes Volantes” (Black - out on Flying Saucers) by Jimmy Guieu, a well-known French author, radio broadcaster and UFO researcher, a typical case of witness intimidation was mentioned in this book on page 216, that in 1955, a certain “Mr. Blanc” (real name and town were omitted) had received an object from a UFO occupant (a woman). It was a sort of optical instrument rather difficult to describe. This “Mr. Blanc” later contacted a UFO investigator in France (where it happened) who belonged to the UFO research group called “OURANOS”, told him his fantastic story and was able to show the investigator (who up till then was rather sceptical) the optical instrument in question. The investigator examined it and was convinced that such a perfect instrument was unknown to our science. He was also able to experiment with it, which only confirmed his belief and authenticated the witness' story.

“Mr. Blanc” promised to come back again, but he was suddenly “taken ill” with pneumonia and was never seen again. The investigator went to inquire after his health but came up against a wall. He was told that “Mr. Blanc” had

left his apartment and no one knew where he was. A couple of months later a relative of Mr. Blanc came to see the investigator and told him that Mr. Blanc had been contacted by four unknown men. (It does not mention whether they were dressed in black or not.)

I have translated the end of the last paragraph:

“—After the departure of the mysterious visitors, Mr. Blanc was at a complete loss. Frightened, he disappeared the next morning, abandoned the town he lived in and went straight to one of his relatives in another part of France. Since then, Mr. Blanc is living in a state of fear. He refused to give his address to the investigator, and his relative dissuaded the latter to look for him. Also, Mr. Blanc is *not interested in flying saucers any more* and makes sure not to raise the subject of flying saucers in conversations in the new town in which he is hiding.—”

What did these four men tell Mr. Blanc to scare him so much?

In conclusion, Jimmy Guieu states that this resembles the case of Albert K. Bender.

This would seem to show that it is not only in the U.S.A. that there are “men in black” who scare off UFO witnesses.

Miss Tova Bratt, Ave de Miremont, Geneva, Switzerland.

Suggestion about reprints

Sir,—With reference to the footnote to your article “Aimé Michel v. Général Georges Lehr” in *FSR*, March/April 1969

I, for one, would most certainly support a lithograph reprint of the first two years' issues of *FSR* and I feel sure many others would do so too.

If you are in doubt about this fact, why not advertise in the next issue of *FSR* for readers' opinions on this?

M. J. Knight, 11 Tackley Road, Bristol.

[I took it that my note on page 28 of the March/April issue would be taken as a “sunder”, but the response has been very small.—EDITOR.]

The McCarthy UFO detector

Reader A. J. E. Mobey of Ewell, Surrey, suggested recently that *FSR* should seek a technical appraisal of the circuit diagram published on page 29 of the September/October issue for

1968. Following our suggestion, Mr. Mobey put his questions to Mr. C. Maxwell Cade—the designer, Mr. Colin McCarthy, had departed for Australia—who has written as follows:

“Herewith the correspondence regarding the UFO detector: **TR4 is shown inverted in the diagram.** Can you take it from here?”

Taking it from that point, we record our thanks to Messrs. Mobey and Cade for their assistance in this matter. We trust readers have not been too greatly inconvenienced by this error. A glance at the author's original diagram has revealed that Miss Pauline Bowen's sketch was a faithful reproduction of that diagram.—EDITOR.

Mysterious Radio Signals

Sir,—Further to my article “Mysterious Radio Signals” in the March/April *FSR*, there have been further developments in the discovery of the nature of Pulsars. A considerable number of pulsating radio sources are now known, and optical pulsations have now been definitely observed to synchronise with the electrical signals, particularly in the case of a small star at the centre of the Crab nebula. This star is believed to be the remnant of a super-nova which gave rise to the nebula. The issue of *Nature*, dated February 8, 1969, contains three communications on the subject: “Discovery of Optical Signals from Pulsar NP 0532” by Cocke, Disney & Taylor on page 525, “Optical Pulsations in the Crab Nebula Pulsar” by Nather, Warner & Macfarlane and “Nature of Radio & Optical Emissions from Pulsars” by Hong-Yee Chiu & V. Canuto.

The theory of emission by neutron stars, given in the last paper, appears reasonably convincing, at least to a non-expert. Thus the signalling hypothesis is probably untenable in the light of recent discoveries. This does underline the dangers of drawing hurried conclusions from unusual events. However, this does not detract from the mystery of the other events which I reported, and which still remain unexplained. The radio pulses first reported by Mr. Milne are still being received in an intermittent and unpredictable manner, and no satisfactory theory has been put forward to account for them.

G. Elliott, Sandon, Chelmsford, Essex, April 22, 1969.