

FROM THE TASMANIAN "FLAP" OF 1974 - PART 2

W. K. Roberts et al

Continuing with further highlights from a report submitted by the Tasmanian UFO Investigation Centre*

It was a very lucky day for the Tasmanian UFO Investigation Centre when Roger Brooks, a senior English master, and Garry Bensemann sighted a UFO at Scamander on August 30, 1974. Their meticulous notes on the sighting resulted in one of the best documented reports to the Centre.

About 10.20 p.m., the two men were out walking a dog on Scamander beach when the dog became excitable. It was then they noticed what looked like a bright aircraft light, estimated to be a half-mile out to sea to the south-east. After watching the light moving erratically for ten minutes and realising it wasn't a plane, Brooks telephoned the Hobart Airport, and was given in turn the Centre's telephone number.

Sightings Officer Ken Bennetto was able to give Brooks hints on how to observe the strange light and the two witnesses then formed a simple rectangle with sticks driven into the sand. Watching the light they logged its flight path.

The UFO darted in strange trajectories and angles around the sky, hovered, altered speed and flashed coloured lights. It moved vaguely north and was due east of the witnesses by 10.45 p.m. Then it started to move steadily south along the coast, so they rushed to their car. They drove some eight or nine miles south of Scamander, keeping the UFO in sight. However, it was moving faster than they and became fainter. By 11.30 p.m. it looked like a moving star and at 12.15 a.m. it had disappeared into increasing cloud.

Description of the Scamander UFO

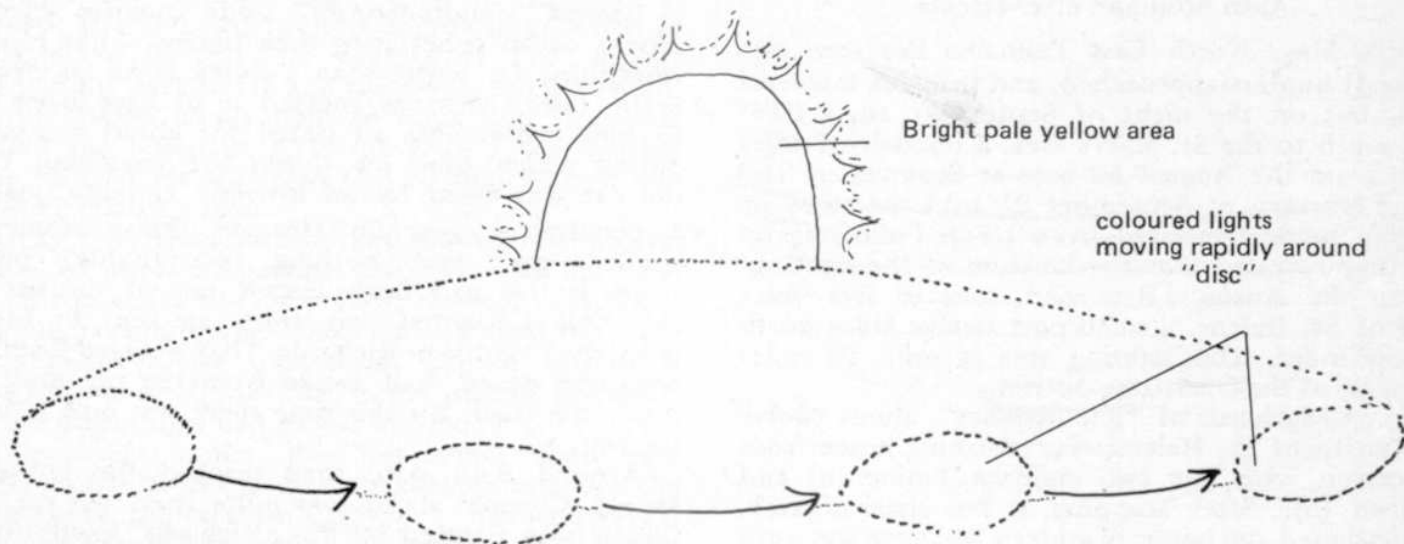
The UFO was mainly composed of lights, the brightest, a pale yellow, was shaped like a sharp dome. Beneath the dome, green, pink and occasional white and pale blue lights moved from left to right around what appeared to be a disc, rather like an upturned plate. This lower part did not appear solid but rather was an area of light. Its apparent size was about a sixteenth the size of the moon. At half a mile this would roughly be of width 20 feet at least. The light from the object did not make shafts in the sky, but twinkled brightly.

Cloud began to appear about half an hour after the object was first sighted. Jupiter and the stars went dim, but not the UFO. Only after it disappeared south into the increasing cloud did it fade at about 11.50 p.m. It was seen again just after midnight, very distant, but moved into cloud again after some twelve minutes.

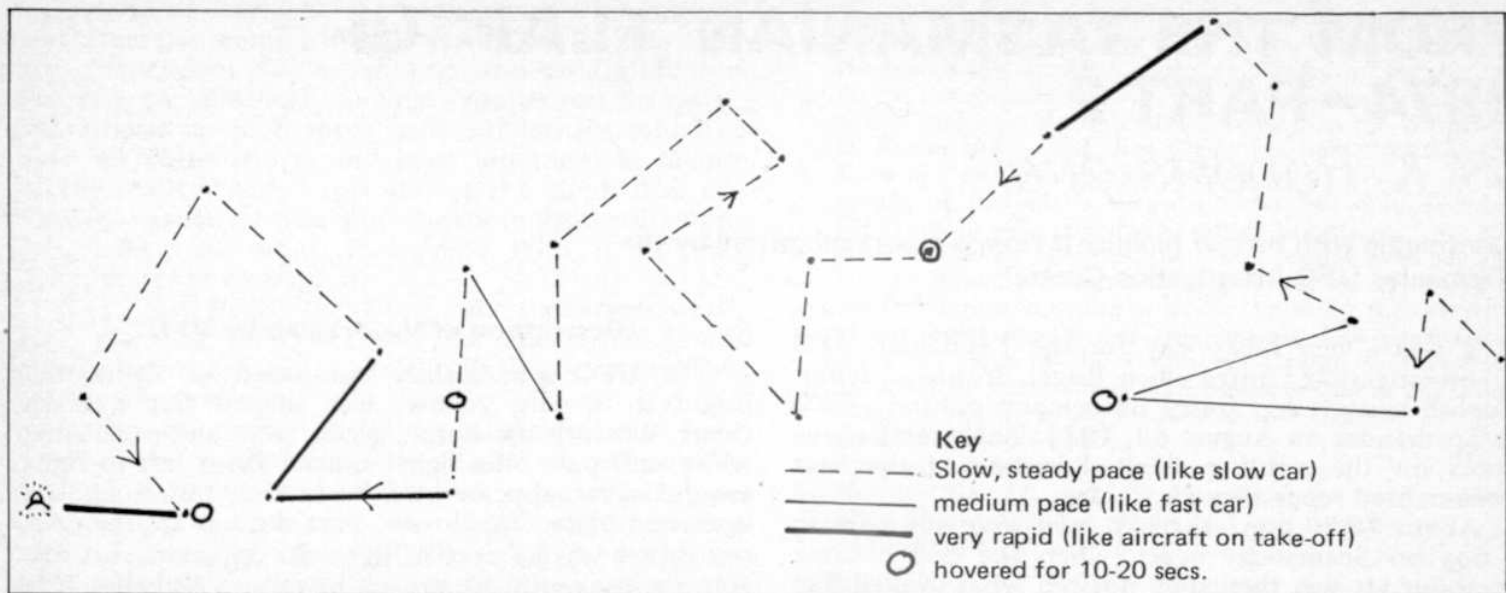
The movements

In relation to St. Patricks Head to the south, the UFO appeared to be at the same height (around 1,600 feet). The light was first seen to the south-east and came northwards initially. When it was moving in a darting, hovering pattern the witnesses set up their rectangle of sticks. There was no circular or curved flight noticed. At times it moved at slow, steady car speed, then the speed of a fast car, and at other times like the speed of an aircraft on take-off. When it was stationary it would remain in the one position for some 10 to 20 seconds before moving on. When it travelled away to the south,

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UFO sighted at Scamanda



Sample of type of pattern made by UFO on the 25 min. northward journey (10.20—10.45 pm) at Scamanda

gaining elevation, it did so steadily but at an increasing speed.

Conclusions

Scamander is over 150 miles from Hobart, situated on the State's east coast, being only 35 miles as the crow flies south-east of Gladstone. The report certainly fits in with the UFO "flap" from the north-east and a further sighting at St. Marys soon after.

Checks with the DCA proved that there were no aircraft in the sighting area, whilst our astronomical adviser discounted satellites. The brightest astronomical object, Jupiter, was noted by the witnesses at the time of the sighting. The weather tallied with their description, being fine at first with increasing cloud later. No one else viewed the UFO, most people being in bed at the time. This observation by two articulate witnesses made what could have been just a "nocturnal light" into a sighting of high probative value.

Auto Stop and after-effects

Since May, North East Tasmania has seen cars followed, hunters approached, and brilliant low-level UFOs, but on the night of September 16, a UFO came south to the St. Marys area, a number of miles inland from the August 30 case at Scamander. The Hobart *Mercury* of September 21 told the story of a family being terrorised by a UFO. Following up this story revealed that the location of the sightings was on the Anson's Bay road, four to five miles north of St. Helens, a small port twelve miles north of Scamander. The sighting area is only 20 miles south-east of the Gladstone district.

Mrs. A. Richards of "The Marshes", about twelve miles north of St. Helens, was returning home from Launceston with her two children Janine (8) and Kathleen (5). After stopping at her sister-in-law's, she continued on home. Kathleen by now was very tired and went to sleep. At this stage the car was running well.

Mr. R. Brooks of Scamander (the English teacher featuring in the previous case) visited the witness on behalf of the Centre and we are indebted to him for the following narrative.

It was dark with light drizzle when Mrs. Richards approached a bridge on Anson's Bay road, approximately four to five miles north of St. Helens. She noticed that the car radio went static; previously there had been good reception and she hadn't noticed this trouble before. Following this, the sky in her field of view ahead was lighted brightly. As the car crossed the bridge it lost power on a gentle incline, then stopped dead. All the car lights went out — headlights, wireless, heater, dashboard — total dark except for the light in the sky. Mrs. Richards tried to start the car, but after ten seconds a deafening vibrating noise enveloped the car "like 30 to 40 large jets."

"I felt my head was splitting open. I thought the world was coming to an end," said Mrs. Richards. The noise forced her to cover her ears. Kathleen was still asleep but Janine said the sound was "deafening."

Almost simultaneously, quite painful electric shocks began penetrating their bodies — like electric vibrations, far worse than a shock from an electric kettle (Mrs. Richards guessed it to have been 400 to 500 volts). This all lasted for about a minute, during which time she thinks she screamed. Then the car was filled by an invisible choking smell — a penetrating gas, far stronger than commercial bottled gas, and nothing recognisable. Janine smelt it too and both leaped out of the car for air. "All I wanted was fresh air and to breath properly," said Mrs. Richards. They dragged Kathleen who was dazed, half awake from the car, and fled down the road. By this time there was only light in the sky.

Around 9.45 p.m. they reached the house of Mr. H. Chappel about two miles from the car. Mr. Chapel was alarmed by Mrs. Richards' uncontrolled state. He returned with his brother and Mrs. Richards to the car. There was no sign of any light. The car

started faultlessly although there was little water in the radiator. Mr. Chappel is a mechanic and at that time could find nothing wrong with the car except a hot bonnet; probably the radiator had boiled. Mrs. Richards finally continued on home.

Husband second witness?

At the time of the experience, Mr. Richards, who was waiting at home, saw lights in the sky and heard a distant roar. He thought it was his wife driving along the farm road and took little notice, expecting her to arrive at any minute. He was surprised when the car did not come over the hill.

The next day, a St. Helens garage proprietor, Mr. G. Stone, examined the car thoroughly and could find nothing wrong. The radio worked, and the electrical system was in working order.

The day after the event, Mrs. Richards' arms and fingers were badly swollen and she had difficulty in walking. She was also numb on the right side of her face and had a red mark, two-cent-sized, above her right eyebrow. She claims she did not bruise herself but that the vibrations did it. Despite tranquilisers, her nerves have been in a poor state since the incident. She consulted a doctor who felt she was suffering from severe emotional reaction. The children suffered no after-effects.

Mrs. Richards says her greatest frustrations have come from trying to convince people of what happened. She has never had any form of mental disorder or delusions. She doesn't drink and has not been sick. She says, "I am hardly likely to make up a story like this. Why should I?" People the investigator spoke to described the witness as sane, healthy, hard-working and sincere, and were emphatic that this was no made-up story.

A Richards repeater

Two nights later, on September 18, it was Mr. Richards' turn to be followed. About 8.15 p.m., when he was returning home by car along a back road, he first noticed a light. It was to the south-east at a 45 degree angle and apparently following him about a half-mile behind. On a closer look he concluded that he could see an area of light occupying as much of the sky as the Southern Cross but with no definite edge. When he stopped, it stopped. It was a pale yellow colour and seemed to be attracted by the car headlights. The witness used just his park lights and the object fell in behind. All this lasted about half an hour until Richards reached his home at "The Marshes". On arriving home he told his wife and two of the children, the third child being asleep.

Ricky (11) went outside and spotted the object. It was an inverted banana shape low in the east. The colour was a vibrant yellow, like egg yolk. They all went back into the house and watched the UFO hovering above tree tops about 100 to 150 yards from the house. Unlike the earlier part of the sighting, the object now had a clear outline.

They were under the impression that light attracted the object and when they turned out the house lights, the crescent shape went further away. It remained near the house for five minutes in all before slowly fading out.

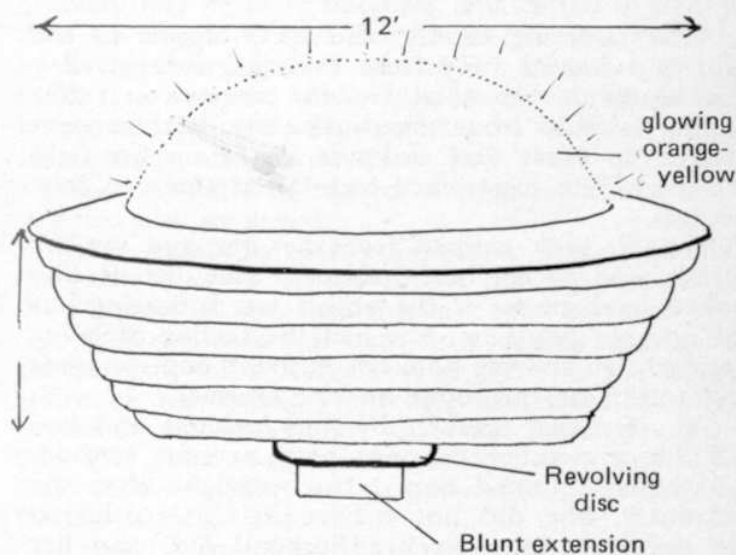
At no time was Mr. Richards' car affected, whilst no sound was heard from the object. While being followed, he travelled 20 to 30 m.p.h. When seen from the house the UFO was about a third the size of the moon. When first seen from the car it was a vague area four times the size of the moon.

Frightening moment near Tayene

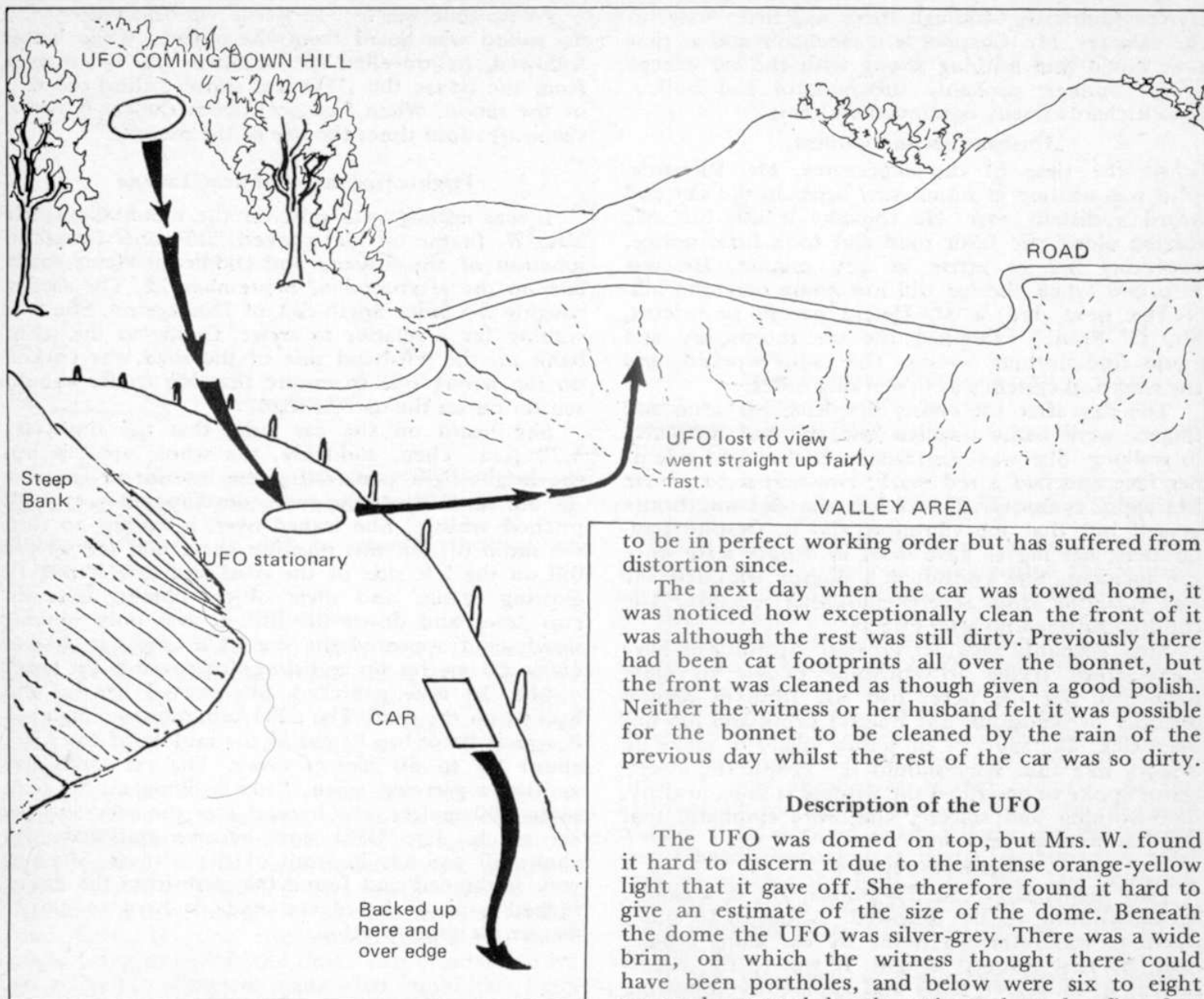
It was raining with mist on the mountains when Mrs. W. (name on file) parked 200 yards from the junction of the Tayene and Diddleum Plains roads late on the afternoon of September 22. The area is roughly 30 miles north-east of Launceston. She was waiting for a relative to arrive. Owing to the steep bank on the left-hand side of the road, she parked on the wrong side to ensure that log trucks should see her car on the narrow road.

She heard on the car radio that the time was 5.20 p.m. Then, suddenly, the whole area lit up, the bright light penetrating the interior of the car. At the same time, the radio developed a very high pitched whistle. She leaned over, intending to turn the radio off. In this position she could see up the hill on the left side of the road and saw at once a glowing orange and silver object coming between two trees and down the hill. It was only moving slowly and appeared the size of a large car. It was 15 to 20 metres up and dropping towards the road.

Mrs. W. now panicked. She started her car and backed up the road. The UFO kept approaching until it was at fence-top height in the middle of the road, about 20 to 30 metres away. The car-radio still emitted a piercing noise. After backing up the road some 100 metres, she backed over the edge and the car stuck. The UFO now became stationary for about 60 seconds in front of the witness. She was very frightened and found the glare from the dome-shaped top of the object made it hard to clearly discern its upper portion.



UFO seen at Tayene 29.9.74



Diagrammatic sketch depicting the Tayene incident

After hovering briefly, the UFO dipped to the right and moved away from the road over a valley area alongside the road (to the south-west, after coming initially from the south-east). It then went straight up fairly fast and was lost from her field of vision. The experience had lasted three to four minutes.

Mrs. W. now jumped from her car and ran off up the road to her house about a mile distant. She looked back to see if the object was following but did not see anything. She had the feeling of being watched. On arriving home her husband and son went back to the car, but found nothing unusual.

She was very shaken by the incident and was sick for a number of days with nervous tension. Her freshly permed hair turned straight after the encounter. She did not believe in UFOs prior to the sighting, although her husband did, and her relatives said she should report the sighting.

It would appear the presence of the UFO affected the car's radio. Before the sighting it was claimed

to be in perfect working order but has suffered from distortion since.

The next day when the car was towed home, it was noticed how exceptionally clean the front of it was although the rest was still dirty. Previously there had been cat footprints all over the bonnet, but the front was cleaned as though given a good polish. Neither the witness or her husband felt it was possible for the bonnet to be cleaned by the rain of the previous day whilst the rest of the car was so dirty.

Description of the UFO

The UFO was domed on top, but Mrs. W. found it hard to discern it due to the intense orange-yellow light that it gave off. She therefore found it hard to give an estimate of the size of the dome. Beneath the dome the UFO was silver-grey. There was a wide brim, on which the witness thought there could have been portholes, and below were six to eight reversed stepped bands estimated to be five feet in depth in all. In width, the object was about twelve feet. At the base, in the centre, was a small revolving disc and again below this a protruding box or tube of short length. The tube object appeared to split into four sections as the UFO sped off.

Investigation

The sighting was initially reported to the RAAF. They could find no explanation. The RAAF did not visit the sighting area, but interviewed the witness by telephone.

The Centre's Northern Representative, Mr. John C. Dean, visited the sighting area and checked the surrounding ground for any marks or magnetic variations. Nothing was found. Mrs. W. was still disturbed by the incident when Dean called to see her two weeks later. The car was not available for inspection at the time.

Explanations such as weather balloons, aircraft, helicopters, and meteorological phenomena were all ruled out leaving us with a good low level daylight sighting.

THE CASE OF CARLO ROSSI

Mary Boyd

THIS interesting, and possibly very important Italian case occurred at 3.00 a.m. on July 25, 1952, in the district of San Pietro a Vico (Lucca). Brief accounts of it have appeared from time to time in European UFO journals but the present version, which I have translated from the new book *UFO In Italia* (Vol. 1),¹ where it is listed as Case No. 51, seems to be much more complete than any previously seen.

FSR Vol.15, No.1 (Jan./Feb. 1969) carried a letter about it from Dr. Jacques Vallée, in which the latter pointed out that it was not true (as Janet Gregory had appeared to suggest in her letter about "Men in Black", in FSR Vol.14, No.6) that "witness intimidation" was confined to the United States. According to Dr. Vallée, who evidently takes this as a genuine "MIB" case, the original press report of it appeared in the newspaper *La Nazione* (published in Firenze (Florence), for September 25, 1952.²

On the night in question Carlo Rossi, a keen fisherman, was on his way to a spot where the river Serchio deepens and widens in a broad curve opposite San Pietro a Vico, about 4 km. from Lucca. While walking along the footpath in the dark, he suddenly noticed a strange light on the river. At the point where he was the river bank is very high and the water invisible. His curiosity aroused and somewhat alarmed, Rossi quickened his pace until he was parallel to the light, then he climbed the embankment and leant over. To his amazement he saw hovering low over the river an enormous circular craft apparently taking in water by means of a long tube. Completely silent, it seemed to hover by means of propellers.

Rossi described it as follows: "I judged its diameter to be about 25 metres; a round disk painted black with no appendages. Along its depth of about 2 metres were oval apertures like mouths. I should guess that through them it sucked in air which probably operated its mechanism. In the centre a small turret protruded 3 metres below the disk and half a metre above it. It was as big as a room, transparent like glass or plastic and with a diameter of 5 metres. Inside were visible four thin tubes attached to a large cylinder in the centre. A bluish flame shot with orange passed from one cylinder to another and alternately rose and fell. These flashes coming from the transparent turret lit up the disk by reflection on to its surface. The craft had five propellers underneath it and these extended about half their length from the black cylinder band or depth around which they were placed at equal intervals. Attached to the upper part of the turret were three more propellers, the lowest being the breadth of the disk and the other two above it being proportionally smaller."

The astonished Rossi remained motionless and half afraid, half curious, continued to watch the

strange machine as it hovered above the water. The only sound was a rustle like silk. Suddenly a porthole opened in the upper part of the turret and a human figure looked out as if searching for someone. He evidently spotted the indiscreet witness for he pointed to him as if indicating his presence to someone inside. Rossi, seized with panic, scrambled down the embankment, but he had barely reached the bottom, where he was quite out of sight of the craft, when a green ray passed over his head. Simultaneously he felt an electric shock through his whole body. Terrified, he threw himself down and on looking up he perceived the sphere rise above the embankment, rapidly gain altitude and disappear at a fantastic speed towards Viareggio.

For a long time the witness did not mention his adventure to anyone for fear of being taken for a liar or visionary. Then two months later something else happened. On September 15, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, Rossi, on arrival at his usual fishing spot, found another unknown fisherman there. He looked like a foreigner, wore blue coveralls and carried a short fishing rod. Tall, very thin, with a pointed nose and strange grey eyes, he at once began to speak in correct Italian but with an unrecognizable foreign accent. After a few minutes he asked Rossi if he had ever seen an aeroplane or other flying object over the river. Rossi at once thought of his earlier experience, but sensing danger in some curious way, he replied that he had never seen anything. More words were exchanged, then the mysterious stranger offered him a cigarette which the witness noticed was different from any, including familiar foreign brands, that he knew. This one was long and thin and had a unknown gold mark stamped on it which he didn't think to examine at the time. Scarcely had he lit it, however, and started to smoke, than he began to feel dizzy and sick. Instinctively he extinguished it and was about to put it in his pocket, when the individual unexpectedly seized his wrist, snatched the cigarette from him, tore it into shreds and threw them into the river. Then, without a word, he rushed off, leaving the witness terrified and perplexed.

After regaining his composure, Rossi decided that this time he would report his experiences to the Authorities, because this last episode made him fear that someone was bent on securing his silence. On September 26, therefore, he went to the Lucca office of the Public Prosecutor and testified to an extraordinary experience that had endangered his life. The Press took up the matter, the trustworthiness of the witness was acknowledged, but nothing further came to light.

Recently, however, the case was investigated by the Prato Ufological Research Group under its chairman Siro Menicucci. They succeeded in tracing relatives of Carlo Rossi (who until then had only