

Ancient Astronauts Modern Mysteries

By John A. Keel

Disappearing Act

One warm summer evening in 1876 a young man named Rudolph Fentz left his home on New York's Fifth Avenue for a stroll. His wife detested his smelly cigars so it was his custom to take a stroll and enjoy a smoke after dinner. But Fentz's walk was longer than usual this time. He failed to return. Eventually his case became just another of the many forgotten files of the Missing Persons Bureau of the New York Police Department.

Seventy-four years later, at 11:15 in the evening of June 24, 1950, an odd-looking man suddenly appeared among the Times Square crowds. He wore mutton-chop whiskers (very unusual in 1950) and was dressed in curiously dated clothes. A policeman struggling with the after-theater rush noticed him because he was behaving in a peculiar manner. He was gawking at the signs and blundering confusedly through the traffic. The cop headed into the street to lead him to safety but before he could reach him the man staggered in front of a taxicab and was killed instantly.

At the morgue, police found some odd things in the man's pockets: about \$70 in large, old-style bills, a receipt from a livery stable for the care of a horse, and some business cards bearing the name "Rudolph Fentz" and a Fifth Avenue address.

Capt. Hubert V. Rihm, then with the Missing Persons Bureau, took an interest in the case and did a lot of checking. He uncovered the 1876 report and tracked down members of the Fentz family. Apparently the man who blundered around Times Square in 1950 was the same man who had disappeared in 1876. His clothes were new. None of the papers and objects in his pockets showed any signs of aging. The corpse was about the same age, 29, as the man who had vanished decades earlier.

Somehow Rudolph Fentz had found a gateway through Time and had crossed the barrier that separated one age from another. If he had lived he would undoubtedly have had a very interesting story to tell. Like Rip van Winkle, he had been caught up in the inexplicable Time Machine which traps hundreds of people each year, and which has created innumerable legends.

Long before Albert Einstein defined time, people on every continent, in every age, were experiencing strange distortions of space and time. In biblical times, prophets vanished mysteriously

for years, eventually returning with baffling tales of how they had been whisked away to other worlds, telling how their trips seemed to take only a few days or months. But when they came back they were astonished to find that years had passed.

Later, during the Middle Ages, magical beings were credited with remarkable time-bending powers. The fairy lore is replete with stories of people who allegedly visited the underground caverns of the Little People. Although they thought their visits were of short duration, when they emerged they found many years had passed. Sometimes the situation was reversed. Those who thought they had spent years among the fairies found it had only been a few hours or days.

The Bible, our richest historical document, is filled with stories about the Sun standing still, or days of total darkness. We are told, in other historical works, about periods when time seemed to be paralyzed over the whole planet. Some of these tales are even repeated in ancient Indian lore.

Time, as Einstein postulated, need not be a constant factor throughout the universe. When it is 1974 on this planet it could be 2274 (our time) on another planet in another galaxy, or 1500 B.C. It is even possible that we will unravel the mystery of time sometime in the future and be able to build devices which will take advantage of natural phenomena to move us forward or backward in time. We could become time travelers and revisit ancient Egypt for example.

A few brief minutes of our time can cover the entire life cycle of a microbe. An astronaut flashing through space at thousands of miles per hour is aging more slowly than the people he left behind on Earth. Time is a relative thing, really nothing more than a convenient measurement we have devised.

For years now the comic strip character Alley Oop has been wandering back and forth through time, thanks to a "time machine." But maybe a physical machine isn't even necessary to accomplish it. There seems to be some unknown set of natural laws at work in thousands of cases, shifting surprised human beings through some weird time warp.

There are now thousands of modern day instances in which ordinary people have entered a time warp while viewing an unidentified flying object or while undergoing some "supernatural" experience. Repeatedly, investigators have uncovered cases in

which the witnesses' clocks and watches mysteriously stopped or lost several minutes of time. Most contemporary watches are not only waterproof and shockproof, they are also anti-magnetic. That is, they are manufactured from alloys which are not affected by magnetism. (In the old days, professional magicians would borrow a watch and cause it to stop suddenly by pressing a concealed magnet to it.) Expensive watches worn by UFO witnesses have been carefully examined and tested by experts. No reason could be found for their peculiar behavior.

Typically, the witness is driving alone along a deserted highway or remote back road. Suddenly he sees an unusual object in the air or on the ground. After what seems to be only a few minutes, the object disappears or flies off and the witness continues his journey. But later he realizes that his watch is unexplainedly slow . . . sometimes an hour or more behind even though his experience seemed of short duration. How can we account for it? This answer may be more incredible than the witness's remembered experience.

It could be that the witness's watch *never stopped at all*. Rather, he or she temporarily entered another time cycle. For a period of, say, one hour (normal Earth time) the witness existed outside time. His watch continued to function normally but, like an astronaut, he was in a field outside the flow of Earth time. When he reentered the normal field his watch had fallen behind. What had seemed like only 5 or 10 minutes had actually *been* only 5 or 10 minutes . . . *but in another time field*. Meanwhile an hour or more of Earth time had passed. So when he reentered the Earth's time field his watch was slow.

Psychic and occult literature contain many descriptions of this type of event. In 1967, for example, a man named Smallridge was standing in front of a mantel in California when, he says, he was engulfed by a blue light and suddenly found himself in a strange room surrounded by a group of unusual beings. He conversed with them for about 2 hours . . . at least it seemed like 2 hours. Then he was suddenly back in the room in California and the clock on the mantel said 12:05 a.m. It had been 12:05 just before the blue light had appeared! Had he merely hallucinated the 2-hour conversation . . . or had he temporarily entered into another time field . . . another dimension?

One of the most famous episodes in the history of strange occurrences took place in 1593. According to accepted historical documents, on October 24th of that year a Spanish soldier who had been standing guard in Manila in the Philippines suddenly vanished from his post. Some 24 hours later he reappeared, thoroughly frightened and confused, in *Mexico City . . . some 9,000 miles from Manila*. No one has ever been able to explain how he managed to travel so far so fast.

Today thousands of people have suffered distortions of space. Airplanes have covered vast distances in ridiculously short periods of time . . . particularly in such mysterious areas as the notorious Bermuda Triangle. But so have people in automobiles. In 1967, four elderly women set out on a drive that would normally take them 4 hours. They made it in an hour and a half although they never exceeded the speed limit and could recall nothing unusual on their trip. That same year, another family crossed the entire state of Kansas in 30 minutes!

Mr. R. D. Smallridge had his first encounter with this unknown force in 1958 when, as a truckdriver, he was making a routine trip to deliver a truckload of eggs from Hardy, Ark., to Memphis, Tenn. He stopped for a cup of coffee, as was his habit, at an all-night truck stop near Black Rock, Ark. When he left the diner, he checked his watch with the wall clock. It was exactly 2 a.m. After looking over his tires and truck routinely for a few minutes, he started his engine and headed for the highway. The next lap of the trip covered 60 miles to Trumann, Ark., where he usually stopped for another cup of coffee.

But, according to his story, he never remembers reaching the highway. The next thing he knew he was pulling up in front of the luncheonette in Trumann. When he walked into the restaurant and looked at its clock, he was astounded. It was 2:15 a.m. "I had traveled 60 miles in 8 minutes," he declared.

This trip normally required changing highways and passing over a state weight scale near Jonesboro. He could not remember doing any of this. Somehow he had traveled 450 mph between Black Rock and Trumann!

Charles Fort once wrote that one could draw a circle beginning anywhere. In the psychic sciences and ufology we seem to be drawing endless circles that begin and end nowhere. Each year more people undergo these bizarre experiences. Yet the many generations of scientists and thinkers who have studied these occurrences have failed to produce any rational, down-to-earth explanation. Time is an important element in the paranormal experience and always has been. And time itself seems to be circular in construction, like Einstein's hypothetical curvature of space. If you

begin at one point and travel long enough you will arrive at the same point.

During the 1950s a small group of UFO researchers suggested that maybe the flying saucer pilots were not from outer space but were time travelers. Perhaps, it was postulated, they were from the future, examining us so they might better understand the circumstances of their own time period. And, in fact, some of these strange entities seemed to be immortal, appearing again and again to different people in many generations. For example, an entity calling himself "Ashtar" has a very long history. The name can be found in ancient mythology. Ashtar is still busy contacting people all over the world. He is as well-known to spiritualists as he is to UFO enthusiasts.

Could it be that our life cycle is but a moment in Ashtar's? Or could Ashtar belong to some mathematical anomaly, a world outside our own time field? Anything is possible once you suspend the rules and natural laws we recognize.

We are prisoners on this planet, trapped in a stream of time that flows in only one direction. But there is evidence that there are flaws in this stream . . . holes. From time to time a few of us blunder into these holes. We find ourselves confronted by strange beings who ask, "What is your time cycle?" (a question commonly asked of UFO contactees). Or we find that our watches are suddenly running slow. Have we been catapulted momentarily outside of our time field?

Four thousand years ago a man named Enoch had such an experience, and his report was regarded as so important that it has been handed down through the ages. In occult literature we find many reports of people who simply turned a corner and found themselves on a street or in a garden that existed years earlier. Then there are the endless haunted places where ancient battles are refought generation after generation before alarmed witnesses. In sea lore we have many variations on the Flying Dutchman theme . . . stories of doomed ships that reappear and reenact the tragedies that destroyed them. Finally, there are all the ghost stories in which witnesses observe the reenactment of a murder or accidental death. It is as if these events—battles, shipwrecks, and crimes—somehow became "video tape recordings" to be played back again, again, and still again.

The ancient gods were immortal, showing themselves to individuals in many generations and, interestingly, usually staging such appearances in the same geographical location. Men usually built elaborate shrines and temples on these sites. (Stonehenge was built at a place where a god was said to appear every 19 years.) Were these gods recording-like apparitions

like our phantom battles and ghost ships? Or were they bridging time, coming through specific holes in specific places?

We could dismiss Ashtar and his cronies as illusions and hallucinations except for one uncanny fact: *they have an infallible knowledge of our future!* When Smallridge had his weird 2-hour conversation with them in December 1967, he claimed they told him of the forthcoming assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Throughout history they have kept us informed about our immediate and distant future. The religious texts of all major religions are filled with prophecies that came true. Prophecies passed along by these messengers from another world.

An intelligence residing in a time frame outside our own may somehow be able to see our future and our past in a single glance. While we are trapped in this single moment of time, these outsiders are not so confined.

But this talent for seeing our future is not unique to the inhabitants of another dimension. Medical experiments with schizophrenics have shown they can also see and live an experience before it happens. And there have always been human beings with clairvoyant gifts . . . the ability to see the future.

When you delve into this mystery you are swamped with problems that are more philosophical than scientific. If people can see the future, is that future unchangeable? Are we trapped not only by time but by events? In this context many events take on new meanings and require new interpretations. Our whole theory of history needs revision. Fred Hoyle, one of the world's greatest astronomers, has openly discussed the possibility that the future may control the present instead of the other way around. Certain puzzling events now taking place become understandable when we are able to see how they fit into or precede events yet to happen.

If the Ashtar apparitions are able to see—to know—our future, then they might need to manipulate certain events in our present. This manipulation is becoming more and more apparent in the worldwide occurrences of UFO sightings and manifestations.

Meanwhile, innocent people like Rudolph Fentz blindly stagger through the holes that separate our 2 worlds. Thousands of others get lost for 5 minutes or 5 hours and never quite understand what happened. Hundreds more step across that invisible boundary line each year and *never* come back. What, we wonder, *really* happens to them? Will the fliers and seamen who have disappeared without a trace in the Bermuda Triangle reappear 100 years from now, stumbling around Miami or Ft. Lauderdale in bewilderment?

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