

the **Ufologist**

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UFOs in Paradise



Jorge and Marlene Martín

With this first issue of its first full year of existence, the *Ufologist* presents a new face, a new publishing schedule and a new reason for existing at all.

Those readers who have been with us from the beginning will recall that this publication began life as an eight page monthly newsletter called the *St. Johns River MUFON UFO Newsletter*, which we published as MUFON state section co-directors for Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns counties, Florida. It didn't last long. Publishing our honest and considered opinion — based upon our own investigation as well as the work of others — that the Ed Walters case is a hoax got us fired from our lofty (and unpaid) MUFON positions, and that was the end of the newsletter as a MUFON publication.

Hence the *Ufologist*, an independent entity dedicated to open minded investigation and reporting on UFO and related phenomena, with no axes to grind, no money-making tourist attractions to promote and no member-recruiting hierarchy to please.

Toward that end the *Ufologist* has changed, with this issue, from a monthly newsletter to a quarterly magazine, featuring firsthand reporting from the sites of major UFO and related events.

This issue focuses upon ongoing events in Puerto Rico, a delightful place that, along with its hospitable people, more than lives up to its license tag nickname of "The Enchanted Island". We expect to be going there again, and future issues will present details and photographs that we hope will both confirm and expound further upon the overview presented here after an all too brief visit.

We want to thank *Enigma!* magazine editor Jorge Martín and his wife, Marlene, for their help and hospitality in meeting the people and gathering the information for this issue. Special thanks, too, to investigator Fearon Hicks, whose perseverance and dedication to networking in the UFO field gave us a leg up on a fascinating story.

— Anne and Terry Ecker

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January-March 1993

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Is there an alien base in Puerto Rico?

From Taino Indian legends of witches flying out of the mountains to modern reports of disc-shaped objects slipping in and out of the Caribbean, Puerto Rico has a rich history of ongoing paranormal activity. Recently the pace and diversity of this activity has increased until it seems that remarkable events have become almost commonplace.

The *Ufologist* went to Puerto Rico, and with the generous help of noted UFO investigator and *Enigma!* magazine editor Jorge Martín, met and interviewed witnesses to some of the recent unusual events on the island.

According to Martín, the recent upsurge in sightings began with an underground explosion near Lajas in the southwest.

Near Lajas is Laguna Cartagena, a small body of water of uncertain depth, polluted from agricultural runoff and illegal sewage drainage. The lagoon is unusual in several aspects, not the least of which is its shape: from the air, the grassy border of the lagoon looks uncannily like a map of the United States. The lagoon is also known for its large and unusual waterfowl population, some species of which are unique to the lagoon.

For years, people living near the lagoon have witnessed balls of light coming and going from the water. Then, in late May 1987, the phenomenon began to change.

At 10:30 p.m. on May 30, a large red buzzing ball of light was seen descending into the lagoon. At 2:00 a.m. May 31, people in the area were awakened by a blinding white light.

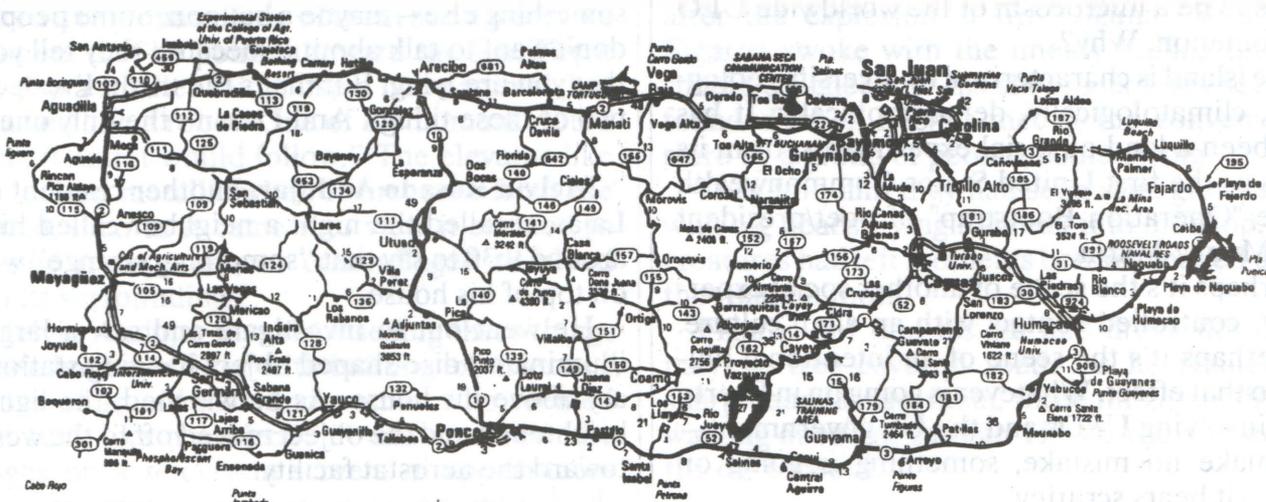
Those brave enough to go to their windows saw a huge disc shaped object with a brilliant lights circle slowly over the water, as if looking for something.

The following afternoon at 1:55 a huge underground explosion followed by a tremor shook the area. Cracks opened in the ground and cobalt blue smoke issued from them.

The first reports from seismic stations placed the epicenter of the earthquake directly under Laguna Cartagena at a depth of 8100 feet. Later, news reports stated that the epicenter had been in the ocean between the southwest coast and Mona Island, in contradiction to what the official seismic report had said.

As if an earthquake followed by blue smoke wasn't jarring enough, residents whose houses bordered the lagoon were forcibly evacuated by members of the U.S. military in grey HUMVEEs and tan four-wheel drive vehicles sporting radarlike rotating antennae on their tops.

As they were being herded away from their homes, residents saw men in what appeared to be decontamination suits sweeping the ground with long-handled devices reminiscent of metal de-



The Witnesses

Johnny Vasques is a WWII veteran who has recently retired to his native Puerto Rico after several years in the United States. His house sits on a bay in Parguera, affording a panoramic view of the Caribbean beyond the line of mangroves and a glimpse of the aerostat facility to the west.

tectors and taking samples of water, plants, mud and grass.

The next day many reported seeing a helicopter with a long chain depending from it. On the chain was a large ball which appeared to be some sort of instrument package. This was slowly lowered into the lagoon.

At 10:30 the following evening – and for three consecutive evenings thereafter at exactly the same time – witnesses in the area saw a strange flying dumbbell come in from over the sea and hover over the lagoon. It was described as a metallic cylinder with large balls of greenish-white light on the ends and a beaconlike red and blue light on its underside.

In the days following the explosion, reports of UFO activity in the area increased dramatically, but possibly the most interesting thing reported to be flying over the lagoon during that time was an airplane the size of a commercial passenger jet which made a low pass over the lagoon as if giving a tour to its putative passengers.

Thus began the most recent – and active – era of UFO events in Puerto Rico. Subsequent days were filled with reports of multiple witness sightings of UFOs, bigfoot-like creatures, landings, entity encounters, abductions, grass circles, animal mutilations and Marian apparitions.

With the entire range of UFO activity represented and flourishing on the island, Puerto Rico seems to be a microcosm of the worldwide UFO phenomenon. Why?

The island is characterized by diversity geologically, climatologically, demographically. It has long been a land of social experiments, from its status as the first United States Commonwealth to the "Operation Bootstrap" of poet/president Luis Munoz Marin.

Perhaps it's the scene of another social experiment, controlled contact with an alien culture. Or perhaps it's the scene of an intentional illusion to that effect. Whatever is going on in Puerto Rico involving UFOs and the US government – and make no mistake, something *is* going on there – it bears scrutiny.

Late one evening in October of 1988 he was watching some neighbor children playing kick the can. When they stopped their play and pointed to the sky, he stepped out to see what the attraction was.

There in the sky in front of his house was a collection of brilliant lights as large as a commercial airliner. It hung stationary and silent for several minutes, then sank slowly until it was lost from sight behind the mangroves.

A year later in October 1989, on the eve of hurricane Hugo, Vasques awoke at 4:00 a.m. and went to the roof of his house to look at the sky. There he was startled to see what appeared to be the same object in the same place in the sky. Again, it hovered silently.

He called his wife and daughter, both of whom arrived in time to see it before it once again sank out of sight behind the mangroves.

"The only thing that stands still like that is a helicopter," Vasques said, "and they make a lot of noise. This looked like a UFO."

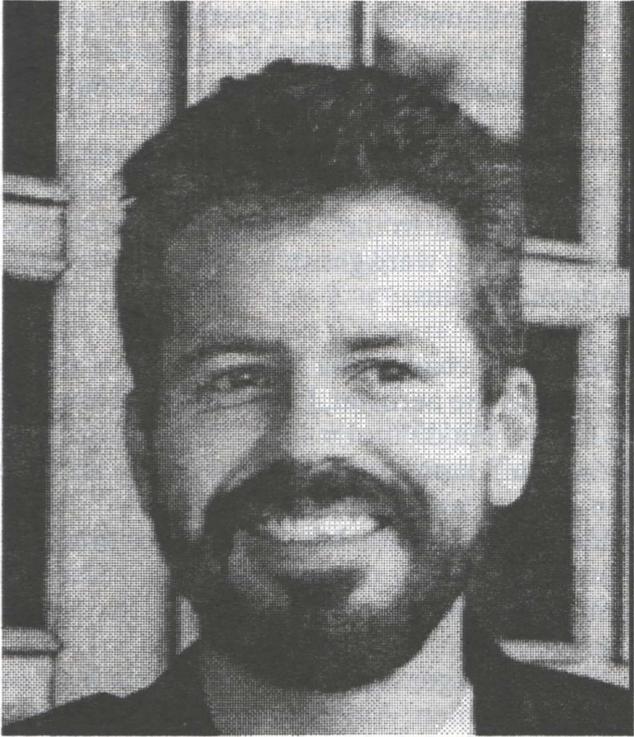
"I've lived in Arizona and camped out on the desert many times, but had to return to Puerto Rico to see a UFO," he added.

He was critical of the efforts of the local police and the civil defense officials from Mayaguez to discredit people who have seen unusual lights and objects.

"They try to tell you that what you've seen is something else – maybe a balloon. Some people don't want to talk about it, because they tell you that you are lying. But that's the truth. I've seen two of those things. And I wasn't the only one."

Melvin Rosado Andujar, another resident of Lajas, recalled the night a neighbor called him around 9:30 to say that "something strange" was on top of his house.

He went out to investigate and saw a large, illuminated disc-shaped object hanging stationary above his house. As he watched, the lights brightened and the object moved off to the west, toward the aerostat facility.



Suddenly he heard a detonation, similar to a sonic boom and immediately three jet fighters appeared from the same place in the sky as the UFO had been and flew toward the west as though in pursuit of the object.

"Maybe it's a secret new airplane that looks like a UFO," he said.

Andujar lives near the edge of town, close to the hills that loom between Lajas and the coast where the aerostat facility is located. It was from this house that he and his mother witnessed unusual activity on the mountain.

"We saw something like an elevator rise out of the ground," he said. "Four people got out — they looked like humans. One of them had a thing like a camera that he pointed toward the sea. There was also a smaller thing, like a hairy animal, but it moved like a robot. One of the humans would direct it and it would follow." The elevator-like box looked metallic when it first rose from the ground, then as it came into view it seemed to become transparent, or camouflaged to blend with its surroundings.

Melvin Andujar says since seeing these things his life has been filled with baffling experiences: visions of an old man and woman who seemed "not real, like a projection" and vanished like images on a television screen, disappearances and re-appearances of personal property, includ-

ing a twenty dollar bill that failed to make the return trip.

"I don't know, maybe they need the money," he concluded with a laugh.

Not everyone can laugh about their experiences. At a convenience store on a country road outside of Lajas a small group of men talked to *The Ufologist* about the lights in the area.

"Two years ago two policemen saw a light over their car at about four in the morning," a man recalled. "And here, at the store, at dawn one of the regular customers saw a flying saucer."

"A young man who was on his way to be tested for a police job saw a bright yellow light along this road early one morning," a store patron offered, "and one customer was at a funeral watch at night near the Laguna Cartagena and the whole funeral party — a hundred people — saw a light go into the water."

They all agreed that many lights have been seen at Laguna Cartagena, and there have been reports in the island of animal mutilations, not just cattle but horses, pigs, chickens and smaller animals.

"The official explanation is that a baboon is doing it," we were told, "Imagine, a baboon in Puerto Rico!"

But the most interesting story is that of the man who refuses to talk about it, merely shrugging his shoulders with a forced smile as he turns away. His companions tell the story he won't discuss.

Miguel Figaroa once owned the darkened building that sits beside the convenience store. He ran a repair shop in the building. One night after the explosion at the Laguna Cartagena, Figaroa awoke with the uneasy feeling that he should go check on his shop. His fears seemed founded when he was met at the convenience store by a group of people, some crying.

They told him they had seen thin, grey beings with big heads trying to break into his shop. The creatures had left moments before, headed down the road on foot.

Figaroa got into his car and drove down the narrow, tree-covered road. As he rounded a sharp bend he saw them, three thin, pale figures walking ahead of the car. He slowed, but edged the car forward.

Then, according to what he later told his companions, the trio turned and looked at him with light streaming from their huge eyes. He was terrified, and they used this moment to run a short ways down the road to a small bridge.

There they left the road and disappeared into the grass by the creek, a creek that runs to Laguna Cartagena.

The patrons of the store remember Figaroa as shaken by the experience, but willing to talk about it to investigators after it first happened.

Then, after the story had become known in the region, he was allegedly visited and threatened by authorities. This, they contend, frightened him more than did the aliens.

He no longer owns the shop, though he still comes by the store. But when the talk turns to UFOs, as it often does in this district, he is quiet.

Figaroa is not the only witness to have allegedly been threatened into silence. On the other side of Sierra Bermeja in the sector of Olivares, where the land slopes steeply down to the Caribbean and the aerostat facility lives **Heriberto Acosta** and his large, extended family.

Acosta is not a young man. He was cautious about being interviewed, because he has been visited by the police and men from the aerostat, who told him not to speak freely about what he and his family had seen. Too many people, they said, were taking an interest in the area. So he speaks carefully, measuring out what he has to say.

He first saw bright saucers in the sky thirty eight years ago, he said. And he has heard the recent explosions. He believes they have to do with construction of some kind at the aerostat.

Acosta talked about his father, ninety-nine years old now, who once chased several greys out of his room with a stick.

He mentioned two female relatives who were in a house when a UFO came close to them and they could see their bones through their skin, the light was so bright.

He still sees the lights at night, low and bright. Sometimes they are there in the day, but higher in the sky.

He and his family were watching December 28, 1988 when the triangular UFO appeared to intercept the two F-14s.

He mentioned almost in passing that some of the people who work at the aerostat say they have seen aliens there, but they won't talk about it any more.

According to Acosta, the lights and the beings have been around a long time, but with different interpretations. In the old days the people used to say the lights were ghosts and witches flying out of the mountains.

Down the road in the other direction, toward the gate to the aerostat, lives a young farmer and his family. He did not want to be photographed, but seemed more relaxed about telling his experiences than was Acosta.

He said he has lived on this land for thirty-five years, and was up on the mountain behind his farm when the explosion occurred in Laguna Cartagena.

"I saw a large, unmarked helicopter land and six or seven men, Americans, in dark green uniforms and black berets, get out and search the area with what appeared to be detectors of some sort on long rods. They were there over thirty minutes before flying away to the west, to where the aerostat is."

The next day he noticed that pairs of circles had appeared in the dry grass on the hillside.

"They were compressed rings three feet wide, thirty eight to forty feet in diameter and they appeared in pairs. After several days there were thirty eight of them."

None of the owners of the land saw anything land there, he said, though one resident driving along the road early in the morning during this time saw glowing lights in the fields.

"Then, in the weeks following the explosion, there were regular tremors, two to three times a week always at 2-3 a.m. and 3 p.m.. They sounded like blasting, deep underground and were followed by the sound of something running under the earth. This went on for around three months then stopped suddenly."

His brother added that many people had seen lights around the aerostat facility and that, in fact, the reason the aerostat was not there at present was that it was being repaired.

"Just a few weeks ago, in early January, I saw a large UFO with yellow lights along its perimeter and a lot of different colored lights inside fly

up to the aerostat, hover, and fly away to the south-southeast," he said.

"Then the aerostat had to be hauled down and taken to the United States for repair.

"Our other brother was a security guard at a refuse dump down the road. He was sitting in his car at work when he saw lights in the rearview mirror. It was a large UFO coming over the mountains from the Laguna Cartagena area, lighting up the area as if it were day.

"He watched as it hovered, then left. He resigned his job the next day."

Victor Rodriguez's life has been touched by the recent rash of UFO sightings. He is a fisherman in Parguera. One evening recently he and some friends were in the area of the small marina when a lighted disc flew in from over the Caribbean, crossed the row of mangroves, and settled noiselessly into the little bay near the marina. The incident was strange enough in itself, but Rodriguez added more.

"The water there is only a few feet deep," he said, "and the thing went straight in—the flat way, not on edge. And it didn't stir up the water. No sound, no wake. Not even bubbles."

He recalled the explosion in 1987.

"There was blue smoke coming out of cracks in the ground," he said, "and U.S. military people around. And someone from the coroner's office, from forensic medicine. Why, I wonder. Did someone die there?"

Rodriguez's brother was a fisherman, too, before he died in what police termed a suicide. Rodriguez has his doubts about the death.

"He hung himself with a shoelace," he said, "They found him hanging by a shoelace on a nail on the outside of his house. And his feet were so close to the ground that at first people just thought he was standing there asleep. The police said he put a concrete block up to stand on, then kicked it away. But a shoelace? To support the weight of a man? He was happy, no money problems, no sentimental problems. He had no reason to kill himself. I think he is dead because of what he saw.

"He was with someone, another fisherman, taking clams near the aerostat. They saw one of the beings, a big headed grey thing. This affected him. He did not tell me all of what he had seen, but I know he saw one of these beings."

And the other fisherman?

"He will talk to no one about it now."

And what does he think about what is happening in the area?

"I think there is something under the aerostat facility—something secret."



Amador Piazza

At his seaside motel and restaurant on the west side of Ponce, **Amador Piazza** told of his experience.

"I never believed the things other people were seeing," he said. "Then in 1990 I saw for myself what they were talking about.

"I was with my security guard, and we were locking up the restaurant for the night when we noticed a light coming from the west, along the mountains.

"As it got closer we could see that it was a big triangle-shaped thing. It hovered without a sound over the top of the hill just across the highway, right up by the transmission lines. Then it teetered back and forth, like it was trying to land on the hilltop. It did this a couple of times, then it sank out of sight behind the hill.

"There is a minimum security prison up there," he mentioned, pointing to the hill across Highway 52 from his motel. "The warden saw the UFO too.

"I know now people are telling the truth when they say they've seen strange things."

Did a UFO capture two Navy Tomcats?

On December 28, 1988 many in the area of southwestern Puerto Rico on either side of the Sierra Bermeja witnessed an apparent contact between a large, triangular UFO and two military jet airplanes, resulting in the disappearance of the airplanes.

To date 113 witnesses have come forward to talk about what they saw that evening and, according to investigator Jorge Martín, their stories are remarkably consistent.

One of the principal, and most vocal, witnesses to the December 28 event is Wilson Sosa of the town of Betances. Sosa and his family live on the second floor of a blue frame house overlooking the wetlands of the Laguna Cartagena. From the balcony off the kitchen one can see the Sierra Bermeja range and the tall antenna of Musiradio, a popular music radio station.

At 6:30 in the evening of that day the Sosas and their neighbors were disturbed by the sound of military jets. The sound was a familiar one in the area, but Sosa was alert to it because a week earlier he had seen a jet, either an F-14 or an F-15, chase a small UFO over the Sierra Bermeja. This time he went outside to look and saw some jets flying to the west.

At 7:45 p.m. the sound of jets was heard again. "My wife went out to see them," Sosa said, "and in a few minutes came back calling for me to come look. I went out and there was a huge UFO blinking with many colored lights, coming over the Sierra Bermeja. I ran to get my binoculars — I always keep them handy, since we see so many strange lights here — and I could clearly see that it was a big triangle with a little curve at the rear side.

"It came forward and turned, then came lower. Then we saw two jet fighters behind it. The UFO turned again, and one of the jets flew in front of it. The UFO turned back and slowed down. The jets flew around it, like they were trying to make it go in a certain direction. Then the UFO slowed down and almost stopped, and just stayed there. It was bigger than the baseball park here, and it just hung there.

"There was a jet at the left rear of the craft, and one at the right. They looked like mosquitoes compared to the UFO, it was so big.

"Then the people all hollered, because it looked like the jet at the rear was going to collide with the craft and we didn't know what would happen — it's a UFO, and what if it crashes? Then the plane disappeared, I don't know if it went into the UFO or what happened, but its lights were just gone. And then the UFO turned toward the west and the second jet disappeared, too. Its lights were gone and the engine sound was gone."

After the jets had disappeared, the UFO hovered for a while then dipped close to the ground and flew around the Musiradio antenna. Sosa had noted that the lights on one side of the triangle were red; the ones on the other side were yellow. As it sat low in the sky it appeared to separate into two pieces from apex to base of the triangle. The two halves, still joined at the apex, swung apart until they were facing each other then, with a shower of red sparks, they broke apart. The two smaller triangles, one with yellow lights and one with red, flew away at high speed, one to the southeast and the other toward the northeast.

Sosa was visited shortly thereafter by two men who claimed to be from the Air Force. He said they were in uniform, and displayed identification badges, but he remarked that they wore no hats, and he had never seen U.S. military personnel without hats.

The men told him they were aware of what he had seen. They acknowledged that he had seen a real event, but refused to tell him what it was. They left with a warning not to speak about what he had seen.

Sosa, who if nothing else is cautious, taped the visit of the two men from the moment they stepped out of the car in front of his house. He would not share the tape with *The Ufologist*, but said he feels it is "his security" in case someone disputes what he has said.

Sosa immediately reported the sighting to Jorge Martín.

While investigating this event, Martín learned that a similar event was reported to have oc-

curred on November 16, 1988 in San German, about 8 miles from Betances.

"There, at 9:00 p.m., witnesses saw a huge, silent yellow light approach from the south, fly to a microwave tower owned by the Telephone Company of Puerto Rico, and hover," Martín says.

"Then, according to witnesses, two jet fighters arrived from the south and began to fly around the light. As in the Betances case, one jet appeared to vanish, its lights and engine noise gone. Then the second jet flew away rapidly to the west. The UFO was then seen to throw out two balls of red light which shot off in the same direction as the jet. Next, the UFO itself flew away rapidly to the north.

"I ask myself, how can these things be? In front of so many people?"

According to Martín, he has verified that the jets were indeed F-14s, but does not yet know where they came from, or whether they were U.S. Navy or Puerto Rico National Guard planes, though he feels evidence suggests they came from a Navy carrier stationed 20 to 25 miles off the coast. He suspects they might have been from the carrier that came to the aid of the Iowa in April 1989, north of Puerto Rico.

The *Ufologist* has learned that carrier is the *Coral Sea*. We have been unable to find any reports of missing planes or pilots connected with the *Coral Sea* during the relevant time frame.

The planes need not be carrier based, and Roosevelt Roads Naval Station is the largest Navy base in the world, covering 8,000 acres on the island and another 22,000 on Vieques Island off the east coast of Puerto Rico.

Martín discovered that there were independent verifications of the incidents.

Martín was informed by contacts in the Navy that there were radar tapes confirming the incidents.

At the time, the FAA denied any knowledge of the occurrences, but Martín was able to find out that there were special "air exercises" in the area during the relevant times.

The occurrences of November 16 and December 28, 1988 are exceptional in UFO annals. More than a hundred persons witnessed what appeared to be confrontation between a UFO and US jets, with the jets disappearing. Taken at

face value, the incident should leave records on several fronts: there should be six families whose sons were lost in action; there should be three jets unaccounted for; there should be newspaper reports, obituaries. The same watchdogs who pointed out the rash of Navy disasters surrounding the Iowa incident should have spotted the horrific, unexplainable loss of three fighters and their crews in a 43-day period.

Yet the record apparently isn't there.

Stripping the witness reports to the bare bones we find

1. Both events happened on a Wednesday.
2. On November 16 the moon was setting when the incident occurred. On Dec. 28, the moon had not risen. So both events took place when there was no illumination from the moon.
3. In both cases the UFO arrived from the south, over Sierra Bermeja.
4. In both cases the airplanes arrived from the same direction as the UFO, as if pursuing it.
5. In both cases the UFO hovered near a large vertical structure, in the November 16, case this was the microwave tower (998 feet above ground level by the VFR chart) and in the December 28 case it was the Musiradio tower, (407 feet above ground level by the VFR chart).

In both cases the jets' noise and lights vanished at once without any sound or indication of impact.

6. In both cases the object flew away to the north (at least half of it in the December case.)

So: The mystery object in both cases advanced from the south, stayed on a course that took it to a tall transmitting structure, then continued on in all or in part in the direction it was originally travelling.

Airplanes came from the same direction as the object and either were made to vanish or departed toward the area of Laguna Cartagena, the aerostat facility, and, perhaps more interesting, a private airstrip on the tip of the island.

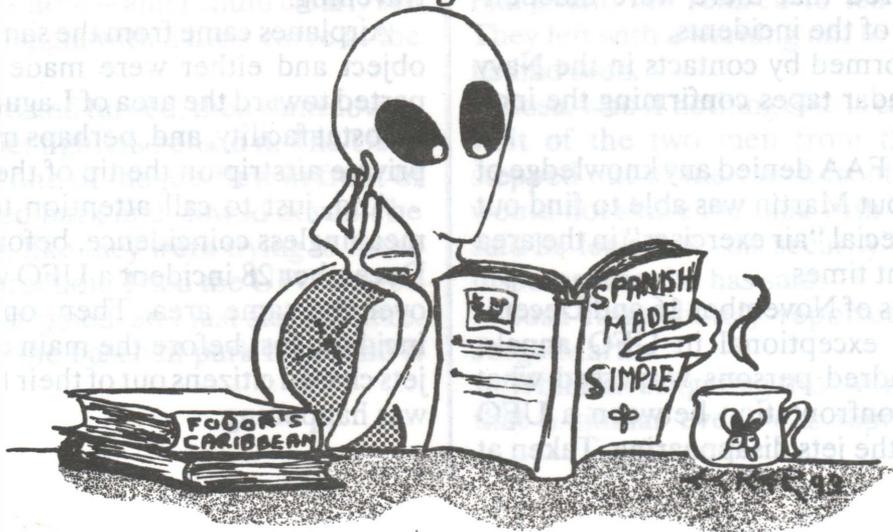
And, just to call attention to what may be a meaningless coincidence, before the spectacular December 28 incident a UFO was chased by jets over the same area. Then, on the night of the incident, just before the main event, a flyover by jets chased citizens out of their houses to see what was happening.



Are these hills inhabited by witches and ghosts – or aliens?

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Aliens in the Swiss Cheese Plant



Marisol Camacho

One young Lajas couple's encounter with humanoids seemed tied to the decorative plant on their porch.

In late 1991 Albert and Marisol Camacho were living in a trim, pink stucco house on the edge of

Lajas. Albert had been awakened in the past by flashing lights and calls from his neighbors that a UFO was over his house. He had seen it, a large object with yellow, red and green lights. He had not appreciated its presence. It was fortunate, then, that it was Marisol who heard the voices on the porch that night.

"I am a curious person," Marisol said. "I heard the little voices — not talking, really, but just chattering. I looked out the window and saw these little creatures, big shiny white egg-shaped heads, skinny. They were taking leaves off the Swiss Cheese plant. I watched them for five or six minutes, then I opened the window and they ran."

But apparently the lure of the plant was strong, for a few nights later she heard the little voices from the porch again. This time she went directly to the door and opened it, and once again they ran down the street.

"They were fast — faster than a human. I didn't want to talk to them, I just wanted a better look," she said.

And the street they ran down? A block from the house it dead ends in a grassy marsh leading to Laguna Cartagena.

The Swiss Cheese plant is *Monstera delicosa*, also known as the split-leaf philodendron. It is reputed to have medicinal properties, and is a popular house plant.



Puerto Ricans suspicious of aerostat

Much of the recent UFO activity in southwestern Puerto Rico has happened near a tethered radar blimp known as an aerostat. The aerostat came to Puerto Rico in the late 1980s as part of the U.S. Justice Department's drug interdiction program, but there are reasons to suspect it may have a broader job description than merely keeping the hash from reaching Hoboken.

Manned and unmanned lighter than air craft were around during both world wars and well into the fifties. Until the Distant Early Warning line of arctic radar installations was completed, blimps were used to watch over the horizon for possible enemy bombers.

By the mid 1980s technology seemed to have come full circle. Soviet cruise missiles, almost invisible to radar, rendered the DEW line systems obsolete. Radar blimps, it was reasoned, should easily detect the low flying cruise missiles or airplanes designed to defeat conventional radar systems.

In 1986 the Navy was prepared to have manned blimps with crews of twenty four men fly 30-day reconnaissance missions at sea, refueling every three days. At the same time, unmanned tethered radar balloons, aerostats, were being put into service around the Caribbean, California and the coast of Florida to search for illegal drug haulers.

The aerostats were built by TCOM, a Westinghouse subsidiary, and they were expensive. In 1986 the Defense department asked Congress to approve 62.5 million dollars for five of the drug hunting blimps.

For some members of congress it was a happy confluence of being able to vote for the war on drugs and at the same time create some fat contracts for home state defense industries. Congress approved.

The aerostat's dismal track record for simply staying aloft caused some concern. During experiments in 1984 and 1985 in the Florida Keys, the balloons deflated, fell down, got away and crashed at sea. Some ruptured as they were being inflated.

They were re-engineered and tested again. A senior engineer for Westinghouse Defense and Electronic Systems defended the durability of

the new, improved blimps by saying "you could put probably a dozen (bullet) holes in this aerostat and it would probably take us days to even find out we had a leak." RCA was producing aerostats, too, new and improved to allow for repairs at sea. During this time the price per balloon went from \$3 million to \$6.4 million.

In early 1986, *Fat Albert*, a Cape Canaveral based aerostat operated by General Electric Government Services under direction of the Air Force, slipped the surly bonds of earth in clear, calm weather, drifted out into the Atlantic and sank.

In April, 1989 the new *Fat Albert* repeated the feats of its namesake, escaped its tether, deflated, and crashed into the sea off Cudjoe Key.

In May, 1989 it was noticed publicly that the resurrected *Fat Albert* suffered severe transmission problems during rain, lightning was deadly for it, and it had some problems during wind and overcast, too. But the aerostats, for all their failures, seemed born under a lucky financial star.

The effectiveness of the blimps in the drug war may have been dubious, but the aerostats were also being used by Voice of America to broadcast TV Marti, bringing the joys of American sitcoms to poor benighted Cubans.

On January 30, 1990, the U.S. senate approved permanent funding for the Voice of America/TV Marti program, by a vote of 98-0, authorizing \$16 million annual funding for 1990 and 1991.

On March 22, 1990, the Miami Herald reported that TV Marti would be sharing aerostat space with spy radar.

Castro was suitably outraged, and reacted by pulling out the stops on his Soviet-made transmitters and blasting south Florida listeners with a policy speech notable for being long and dull as a stalk of sugar cane. The notion that we were getting under Castro's skin encouraged the American public to think it was getting its money's worth of something, even though what it was at any moment might be obscure, particularly to radio audiences in south Florida. At least the aerostats had some apparent value as a military tool.

Then, in March, 1991, a Cuban defector flew his MIG into Key West. No one noticed him until he had circled the island a few times. NORAD's explanation for the oversight was essentially that everyone was looking the other way.

"For years our emphasis was toward the Pole and toward the coasts," NORAD spokesman Major John Niemann said, "We are aware of gaps in our coverage."

And Fat Albert? Apparently it had its electronic eyes peeled for Cessnas and Cigarette Boats. In an interview with the *Miami Herald* in March, 1991, retired Air Force colonel Alan Gropman, now a private defense analyst, says the aerostat is simply "not geared toward low-flying supersonic MIGs."

So what are the aerostats good for? They're fragile, they haven't spotted a lot of drug runners per dollar, and are positively myopic when it comes to enemy aircraft. Is their sole purpose to be a flying pork barrel, a pinata for people like Arizona Senator DiConcini, whose involvement with the aerostat program was the recent subject of a television news magazine broadcast? Or might the big white blimp really be something black in disguise?

They do tend to show up in areas where there are large numbers of UFO sightings. In May, 1990, an Army ship, the *Carlton Tide*, dragged an aerostat similar to the one in Puerto Rico into

Pensacola Bay off Gulf Breeze, Florida for a six week stay for what was termed "sea trials". Another Army aerostat was tethered near Gulf Breeze for three months in 1988 for "research".

The aerostat most recently tethered at Parador before it saw the light is under control of the U.S. Customs service and is similar to Fat Albert. The *Ufologist* has been told that it was made by General Electric, and that there are possible connections to a nearby unfinished Voice of America station. It may be staring off toward Cuba, too, but there's a possibility its focus may be closer to shore.

Local people who have applied for jobs at the aerostat facility report being asked questions about their beliefs and experiences regarding UFOs and the possibility of extraterrestrial life, questions that seem singularly unrelated to the jobs being sought. And there is no shortage of people who claim to have seen UFOs entering and leaving the water offshore from the facility. Nor, for that matter, are stories involving sightings of decidedly nonhuman personnel at the facility rare.

None of this is to say there's an alien base under the aerostat facility in Puerto Rico, of course. And it's hard to imagine what interest a supposedly technologically superior society would have in a blimp. If true, it may be an indication that *they* have elected representatives with a need for pork barrels, too.

One What?

Even the *Ufologist* sees one in Puerto Rico

Most ufologists, we suspect, go on site with a lingering if unstated hope that they'll see something unusual in addition to hearing other people talk about the unusual things they've seen.

As we listened to the witnesses to the spectacular UFO events in Puerto Rico we couldn't help but wonder why, if these things were as thick in the air as it seemed, could we not see one? We had been told that a few weeks earlier a group of Japanese ufologists filming a documentary had been able to add their own sighting to the list of documented cases.

This time it was our turn to get lucky.

As we drove back to San Juan along highway 52, I suddenly saw a small white disc slip behind a mountain to the north. There was no time to say or do anything, so I sat there, staring at the mountain, frustrated at the thought of what might be gliding around the airspace behind it.

I mentioned what I had seen to the others in the car, rather hesitantly since there was absolutely no way to demonstrate that I had not simply misinterpreted a fulvous whistling duck at 300 feet—the island reportedly is teeming with them—or something equally prosaic.

Jorge Martín mentioned that the land beyond the mountain was part of a national guard base.

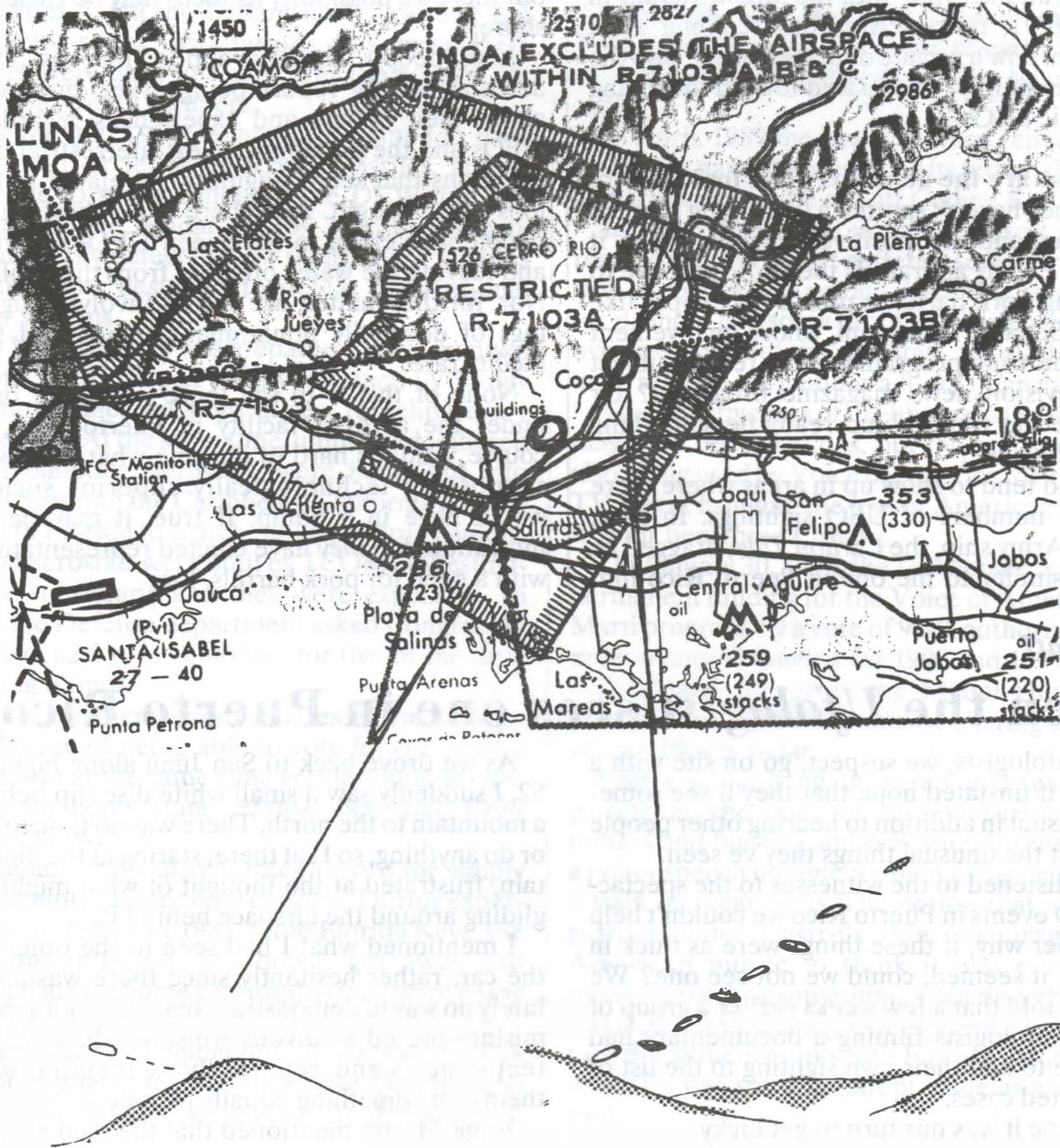
We were near the point where the highway turns north to cross the Cordillera Central. I was still looking at the mountains, when suddenly the little white disc sailed into view again, farther away and higher, rising with the classic "falling leaf" motion, tipping its bright white top toward us, then its grey underside.

This time I yelled. We were in the fast lane, and the object was rapidly vanishing into the clouds, but three of us saw it before it was gone. The good cameras were packed, but I had a disposable

camera in hand and took a picture of the general area of sky where the disc was wafting away. It didn't come out, something I should have known by the fact that no mysterious men tried to take the camera away.

Below is a drawing of the object as it appeared, correlated to the map of the area. During both sightings it was flying over the restricted airspace designated R-7103A on VFR Terminal Area Chart for Puerto Rico.

—Anne Ecker



Policemen encounter aliens at El Yunque

By Jorge Martín

Translated from Spanish by Ron Ecker

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It is well known that Puerto Rico is undergoing a period of intense UFO activity. Sightings, abductions, and chance encounters with alien beings have increased considerably in recent times.

Enigma! Magazine, like other communications media, has reported on current cases in Cabo Rojo, Lajas, and, most recently, in Adjuntas.

It is less well known that events of this type have also been occurring in the sector of El Yunque and Rio Grande.

As part of *Enigma!*'s continuing coverage of the recent rash of UFO events on the island, we present a report on an encounter between a group of policemen and their wives and alien

beings on El Yunque as well as some important UFO sightings in that sector.

Since ancient times, the mountains of El Yunque and the Sierra de Luquillo have been a place of mystery and legend for the people of Puerto Rico. The original inhabitants of the island regarded the area as sacred and believed that El Yunque was the home of the gods. Over the centuries countless stories of strange, supernatural happenings have become part of the folkloric history of the region.

The area today comprises the Caribbean National Forest and is under the control of the U.S. Forest Service.

Is it merely coincidence then, that this area is the site of modern paranormal activity or are there underlying reasons for the broad range of unusual occurrences being reported there?

The answer could very well be in the singular experience of ex-policeman Luis Torres who, with his wife Marguerita and two other policemen and their wives, camped in the area one night in late February, 1991.

Their experience came the attention of *Enigma!* through the action of a friend of Torres, who confided the story to us.

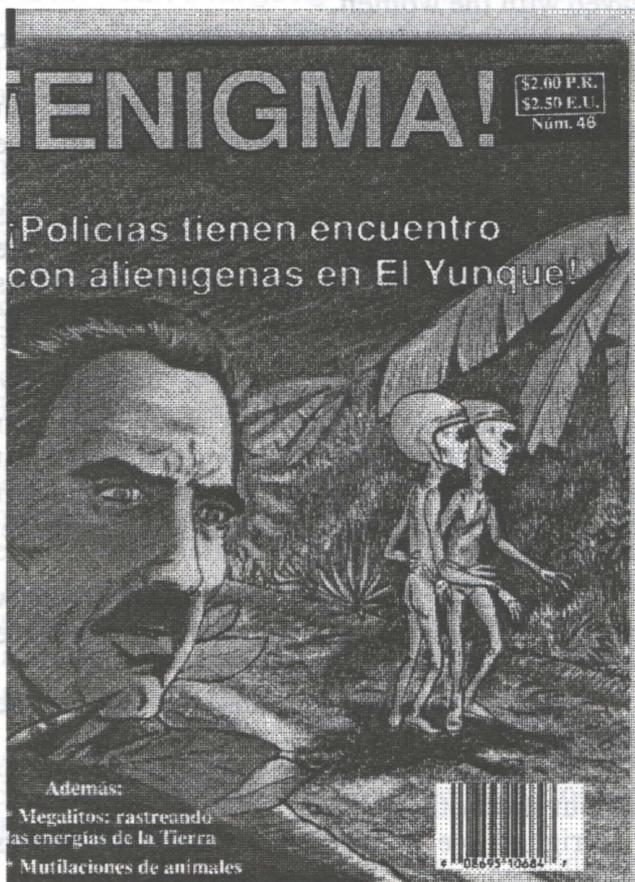
We contacted Torres, who amiably agreed to tell us about that night in El Yunque.

Here is what he explained to us:

"That was at the end of the month of February, 1991. My wife and I went with some friends to visit the area of El Yunque. We ascended the mountain by way of highway 191, and when we arrived at the campground that is a little before the area of the fish pond — exactly where the last cabin is, and where the offices are where the forest rangers give lectures on El Yunque — here we set up camp.

"We went up there full of curiosity, hoping to see something, but never expecting to see what we saw.

"We had been standing in the parking lot, looking at the sky," he continued, "and at about 3:15 in the morning we saw two little persons coming down the highway in front of the ranger station.





Jorge Martín

“We took a closer look, and we couldn’t believe what we were seeing. They were like children, coming down the highway—not on the sidewalk, but on the highway. But they weren’t children.

“They had small bodies, like six year old children. They were walking down the highway calmly, in front of us like it was nothing.

“They were talking in a strange language, like a ‘fee, fee, few mon fewn fun mong’—a language we couldn’t understand, so fast no one could understand it. It was like when one listens to a recording played too rapidly, that sort of sound, more or less.

“When we looked more closely we saw how bizarre this was. They clearly were not ordinary humans. They were almost four feet tall, thin, and were dressed from head to toe in a one piece outfit. You know how an exercise suit looks? Tight fitting? Well, it was a thing like that.

“In the moonlight, and there wasn’t much moonlight that night, the clothing looked monochromatic, a smooth, even greenish grey color. It went over their heads, covered the top of their skulls. The only skin that was exposed was the face and hands, nothing more. Their arms were

long, to the knees, and their hands were long too, as near as we could tell.”

In response to further questioning about the appearance of the beings, Torres said:

“The heads were large, tapering. Large above, small toward the bottom, similar to an egg. I did not see any eyebrows, just the egg-shaped face. They had huge dark eyes that protruded a bit from the face, as if they were pop-eyed. Their necks were thin, not large at all. The nose and mouth were hardly noticeable—not much there to see.

“The skin appeared to me to be grayish green.

“They passed by us like it was nothing, and they had to see us because we were right in front of them on the edge of the highway.

“They went down the highway talking to each other in that funny language, and when they were about some hundred feet beyond us they did an about face, and started back toward us.

“When they were about to come by us again we told the women to hide behind the cars. We wanted to see what would happen.

“One of the fellows, another policeman, stayed with the women.

“My brother in law who was with me said ‘I’m going with them,’ and tried to follow them.

“I took out my gun, not to do them harm, but so they could see we had a weapon just in case they intended to do something to us.

“I am an ex-state policeman, and I know it was not our intention to hurt these beings, but we were concerned because of our wives, and it was such a strange thing, we didn’t know what could happen.

“When I took out the weapon, they realized it. They did not look directly at us at any time, but they started to walk faster, and when they got just beyond us they crossed the highway to the left and jumped into the thick underbrush there, where the ground is steep.

“My brother in law and I left running to follow them but they lost us in the underbrush when we were about sixty feet from them.

“They got away. We searched but did not see them again.

“We were there until about five in the morning, but saw nothing more.”

Intrigued, we asked Torres where the beings disappeared.

“You know the parking lot before the fish pond where there are little cabins for picnics? And there’s a sidewalk there that used to go down to the falls of Lamina until it was closed? They say Hurricane Hugo destroyed part of that sidewalk, and they’ve closed it and never opened it. Well, it was right there.”

“What do you think about what you saw there, those two beings?, we asked.

“Well, look. They were extraterrestrial beings. I have no doubt at all. They definitely exist. The extraterrestrials exist, and all of us there saw them.

“I don’t drink or smoke, nor do the others. We are religious people, and we’re sure of what we saw. They were little things that looked like people, but they were not human beings.”

Torres commented that “Now I am convinced they are here in El Yunque. What are they after in these places? I really don’t know, and I would like to know.

“This includes El Yunque, Cabo Rojo, the area of Adjuntas, where we were a little while ago and saw some strange lights moving erratically in the sky. We’ve seen the UFOS that come there. I know it’s true, because we’ve seen them – they are looking for something in this country.

“I would like to have contact with them, and have them tell me. I’m not afraid of them, and I hope to God to encounter one of them face to face and ask him what they want.”

Finally Torres said, “I am an ex-policeman, I know that there have been many people who have had similar experiences in El Yunque. I know four policemen who have seen things there much stranger than I have.”

For her part his wife Marguerita let us know that “They were like two little boys, two little men three or four feet tall. Large heads and black eyes. It was as if they had large black circles where their eyes were. To me they weren’t human, they were some bizarre creatures. They had their own language, a rapid buzzing sound. They never looked at us directly.

“If they wanted us to see them, then it was a very special event, and at the same time very compelling because of they way they looked. They looked like little twins.

“They went down the road together and back up. They were identical. I think this was a won-

derful experience, because later we went to Adjuntas and saw some flying saucers and now we know that they are here, all around us.”

She added, “Some people have the luck to see them and others don’t.”

How true that is.

Other things have occurred in that area.

On the night of Friday October 18, 1991 Mr. Antonio Contrares, his wife and neighbors, residents of the Barrio Naranjo in Fajardo, saw a large, luminous disc hanging in the air over El Yunque.

“The first one who saw it was my wife, when she came home from work at 12:15 that night,” said Contraros.

“According to her – and she doesn’t like to talk about it, because her pastor told her that UFOs exist and are instruments of the devil – she watched the light from the car while she was driving home. Then when she arrived she called to me to come see the strange light.

“When I came out I saw that big thing, like a football with three lights in the middle. She said she thought it looked more like a hamburger with the meat in the middle and the three lights in the middle of the hamburger, but it was that sort of shape.

“She told me that when she saw it coming the lights were flashing, blinking over the top of the trees in the forest. From where we live one can see the forest well. We can see the radar (Punta del Este) and that luminous thing was over the left side of the radar. It was there in the sky from 12:15 to 12:30 in the morning, give or take. After that it floated up slowly and gradually disappeared.

“It was easy to see the shape of it, but the structure was dark and more obscure. The lights in the middle were white and very bright.”

As we said earlier, El Yunque has always had an aura of mystery. There have been many accounts of encounters with strange beings. Is the explanation for this to be found in the long standing rumors of an extraterrestrial base somewhere in the Caribbean National Forest, a base that has been there a long, long time?

The experiences of the Torreses and their friends, and the Contrares from Fajardo could be indicative of that. Right now, the possibility that there is a base in that area cannot be ruled out.

Men hear differing tales from same abductor

Perhaps one of the more bizarre reports in a bizarre lot involves the independent experiences of two men who seem to have encountered the same metaphysics-spouting humanlike being and his white — not grey — biologic androids.

The two men, fisherman **Andy Olivares** and hot dog vendor **Amaury Rivera**, did not know each other when they had their experiences, yet the parallels are unsettling.

At the time of his contact Rivera had recently moved from his native New York to Puerto Rico to live with his grandmother.

One night while driving home from work on a country road he saw what he took to be a cow by the driver's side of his car. He slowed for fear of hitting it, looked again, and found himself face to face with a small white being.

He remembers looking to the passenger side of the car where another child sized white creature stood.

He claims to have been escorted by these beings to some sort of large room where several other rather dazed looking people were seated.

Then a human-appearing male with dark skin showed the audience views of a "big rock", perhaps an asteroid, hitting the earth with catastrophic results.

According to Rivera, the people were failing to pay adequate attention to the demonstration, being more interested in watching the little white beings. This seemed to irk the human, and he picked one of the little ones up and told the crowd not to be afraid of the little things, because they were like robots, manufactured for certain tasks.

The encounter ended after daylight with Rivera awakening in his car just in time to see and photograph a huge UFO being harassed by a jet fighter.

There followed the predictable encounter with government agents seeking the negatives, which they did not find, Rivera's brief efforts to go public with his story, and the discovery that some-

one else had apparently had a very similar experience.

Andy Olivares, a commercial fisherman and diver, told the *Ufologist* what he recalled about his encounter.

"I was driving home one night about 9:00 when I saw something white cross the road ahead of me on a hill. I thought perhaps it was a monkey, but then there was another one there, and I could see it was no monkey.

"Then I didn't remember anything more, except I was sitting in the car with tears streaming down my face. I drove home, and when I got there my wife was upset because it was almost 11:00. I was two hours late."

While he couldn't remember what had happened, he became afraid to be out after dark, a fear that interfered with his fishing. He began to have nightmares. Finally he went to Jorge Martín for help in unravelling what had happened to him.

Then, on July 25, 1992, while his wife was in the hospital giving birth to their daughter, a strange man, whom Andy characterizes as Hindu in appearance, came to his house. It was the first of several encounters with this being, during the course of which Andy was told, among other things, that the small white creatures were manufactured, and only lived a few days before they were recycled into new ones.

Andy claims to have been given messages about the impending deaths of large numbers of people on earth, the nature of god, and other metaphysical subjects.

The two men have since met and are puzzled by the similarities and differences in their encounters.

"I think people are told different stories because they are contacted by different people," Olivares said, "but this sounds like we have seen the same person, and he has told different stories. I don't know what to think."

Puerto Rico a microcosm of UFO and related phenomena

The late Ivan Sanderson, that proto-cryptozoologist and all around mystery hunter, wrote about an unusual encounter between the U.S. Navy and something *very* fast off the coast of Puerto Rico.

In 1963 the navy was engaged in training exercises in the Caribbean designed to acquaint personnel with the detection and tracking of underwater craft, such as Soviet submarines. These exercises were conducted off the northwest coast of Puerto Rico, in the vicinity of the Puerto Rico Trench. There were five small ships, destroyer class, and the carrier *Wasp*, and a few submarines. Sanderson's account, taken from personal contacts he was unable to confirm through military channels, is as follows:

Shortly after the onset of the exercise, a sonar operator on one of the destroyers reported that one of the submarines had broken formation and gone off in pursuit of an unknown. As Sanderson points out, the sonar operator did not know whether this was part of the exercise or not, although the speed of the unknown, over 150 knots, certainly suggested it was a legitimate target.

The deck officer reported to the skipper, a lieutenant commander. He contacted the *Wasp* but found that their radio was jammed with incoming reports from other ships and the radio-sonde aircraft, all reporting this undersea object. Sanderson reports that thirteen craft in the area noted in their official logs that "their underwater tracking devices had latched onto said high-speed submersible."

This was immediately reported to C.O.M.L.A.N.T. in Norfolk, VA.

According to Sanderson's sources, the ships tracked this object for four days and to a depth of 27,000 feet (This, of course, raises questions. Four days doing what? Not in a straight path, certainly. That would take them out into deep ocean). At any rate, Sanderson was convinced that the US Navy had an encounter off Puerto Rico with an unknown using technology not invented here. The *Ufologist* has been unable to verify any of this. Nevertheless, FOIA fans take note.

And, for what it's worth, the Puerto Rico Trench is located at 19.5 degrees north latitude a number celebrated in the tetrahedral geometry of Richard Hoagland.

In other interesting historical notes regarding Puerto Rico, Dr. Donald Menzel, Harvard astronomer, UFO debunker, and purported MJ-12 member, noted in his 1963 book *The World Of Flying Saucers* that on January 12, 1947, a huge fireball was seen to explode over Puerto Rico. Following its explosion the thing changed course several times before being lost to sight. The luminous trail showing the numerous zig zags and photographed some twenty minutes after the event is published in Menzel's book.

From February to July, 1975 multiple animal mutilations took place in the Moca district. Not only cattle were involved; rabbits, sheep, ducks, geese and goats took a beating too.

Linda Mouton Howe, in her book *An Alien Harvest*, one of the first in depth explorations of the mutilation phenomenon, dealt with the Puerto Rican cases by noting the "Vampire of Moca" who in 1975 slaughtered the animals in this northwestern region of the island near Ramey AFB. (N.B. If the name Ramey rings a bell, think of Roger Ramey, base commander at Roswell in July, 1947. Small world, what?)

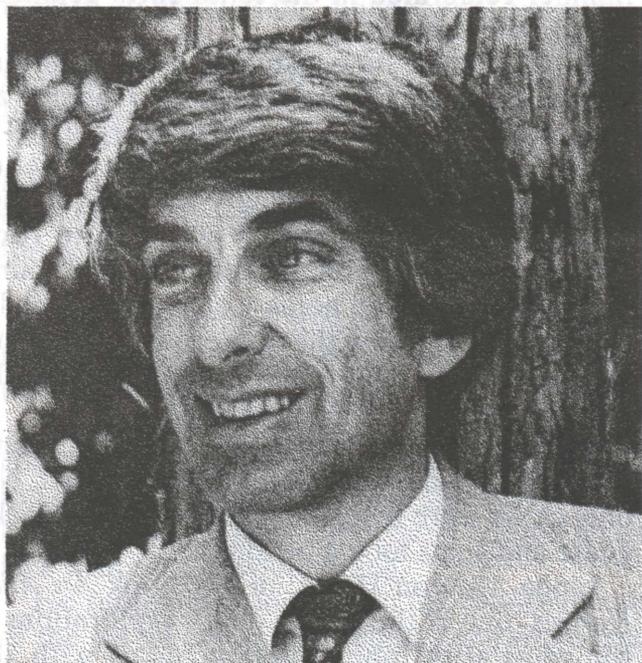
Howe reported that one Hector Vega Rosado discovered two goats dead on his farm on March 18, 1975. Their thoraxes had been punctured and the area above their haunches had been cut with a sharp instrument. There was no blood around the carcasses.

Janet and Colin Bord, two British chroniclers of the unknown, recorded the following Puerto Rican sightings in their book *Unexplained Mysteries of the 20th Century* (Contemporary Books, 1989).

On Oct 20 - 21, 1973, Nine people on an outing to El Yunque in search of UFO experiences saw four entities five to six feet tall with long arms, big eyes, pointed noses and ears. One had a small device of some sort with lights on it. They moved by jumps and bounds, like men on the moon.

On July 12, 1977 in Quebradillas, a small being dressed in green was seen. It had a tail, and was

sporting a box with blue and red lights on its back. The lights lit up as the being flew away.



Jacques Vallee

The 1975 rash of Puerto Rican cattle mutilations and related UFO events caught the attention of Jaques Vallee. In his 1979 *Messengers Of Deception*, he tells about Puerto Rican reaction to strange deaths of cattle and domestic animals that began February, 1975. The problem was so great that by April 9, F.N. Rodriguez, Puerto Rican Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, said the problem was "occupying his department full - time."

Federal Meat Inspector I. Fernandez listed the causes of death unknown, and a biophysicist from the University of Puerto Rico, Dr. Angel De La Sierra, stated he had investigated a case in which the incision had been made "similar to what is done in experimental surgery". One wonders if he is referring to lasers, which were certainly experimental in 1975.

Vallee relates the story of Mr. Orlando Franceschi, a hospital worker in Ponce. On April 18, 1975, Franceschi saw a dwarflike creature. Afraid it

was about to attack him, he tried to hit it with a shovel but was suddenly paralyzed. The being floated away. He went home where his mental distress was so acute that his family called the police to investigate.

They learned that other people had seen the being the same night, and had thrown rocks at it.

Franceschi's encounter produced aftereffects. For several days, he heard messages in his head, warning that mankind was doomed to disaster unless more prayers were said.

April 19, the day following Franceschi's ordeal, two women saw a "vivid orange light hanging stationary over their garage" near Ponce. It hovered for about five minutes then ascended silently and slipped behind the mountain, leaving a glow that lasted several minutes.

Vallee's book reproduces a map from *Flying Saucer Review*, June 1975, correlating UFO events with animal mutilations in Puerto Rico. It is interesting to note that a wedge shaped area along the southwestern coast from Ponce to Cabo Rojo to San German is the area most heavily affected by both UFO sightings and animal mutilations. And, if the placement of the markers is accurate, one of the unusual happenings was noted in the bay where the aerostat facility is now located.

Alien Animals?

The rain forests of Puerto Rico are host to many types of exotic flora and fauna. Perhaps some are even more exotic than imagined.

Jorge Martin reports two incidents of unique animals found in the rain forest. One, a bird, had the retractable fangs of a reptile. Story has it its captor displayed it for a while, until a sceptic, bent on showing that the fangs were superglued on, attempted to extract one. When the bird bled, its owner decided it was better off wild and let it go.

The other animal was reportedly a winged lizard, found by a zoologist. The animal was injured, and the zoologist carefully nursed it back to health and released it.

Before one giggles too much at these exotica, it is well to remember that Puerto Rico is the home of the white, sightless fish *Alaweckelia gurneei* from the subterranean pools of Camuy.

Aliens by Daylight

Three anecdotal reports have come our way regarding the sighting of small grey aliens in Puerto Rico and Costa Rica. We offer these with thanks to Jorge Martín.

One of Martín's sources on the island reported that a group of three grey beings varying in height from around 4 feet to close to six feet were seen walking down a country road in the southwestern end of Puerto Rico in broad daylight.

At first the witnesses believed they were seeing people in costume, then, as they realized this was something else entirely, they began to pursue the beings. Children on bicycles, adults on foot, tried to catch the creatures. The entities fled but not before turning to salute their audience with fingers raised in a V — the peace symbol to some, the victory symbol to others.

Another of Martín's contacts reported seeing a topless military vehicle like a jeep carrying three passengers and a driver. Two very human American soldiers sat in the front seats; the rear seats were occupied by strange looking fellows with hats underneath which black hair was visible. They wore sunglasses.

The appearance of the rear seat passengers was sufficient to cause bystanders to stare.

Then, without warning, the wig and hat of one of the rear seat passengers flew off, revealing a creature with a large, bald, grey head.

The jeep sped off.

Martín is in contact with a woman from Mayaguez who recently took a vacation to Costa Rica, where she had an interesting encounter.

She was walking a nature trail in the rain forest one day when she turned a blind corner and found herself face to face with a small being.

He was grey, short, with a large head and big, black eyes. He was dressed in a turquoise jumpsuit and his small ears came to a point.

She grabbed her camera and took a picture as he dove behind a bush.

The *Ufologist* is going back to Puerto Rico to see the lady in Mayaguez and her photo album, among other things.

Our Lady of El Yunque?

According to Jorge Martín, the unusual happenings in Puerto Rico haven't been restricted to UFOs.

Martín told *The Ufologist* that he had learned that some of the people in the area near El Yunque had witnessed what they took to be manifestations of the Blessed Virgin Mary near a spring where a Catholic church had been built near an old Taino Indian sacred spot.

According to Martín, the local Catholic population had been increasingly attracted to the location because of the apparitions seen there.

Then a group of worshippers and their priest were met at the spring by military men with black berets. They had a creature in a cage, a small, hairy hominid. They told the people this was what they had been seeing, this was the thing that had appeared as the BVM.

While parishioners crowded around the cage, the priest ran into the church and rang the bell calling the people in for mass so they would not look at the being. They dispersed and went in, leaving the creature with its captors.

Puerto Rico has one of the most extensive cave systems in the Western Hemisphere, and many of the caves have underground rivers flowing through them. The cave systems have not been thoroughly studied, and only 220 caves have been documented. One system, the Camuy, has a room 200 feet high. The Camuy River, 9 miles long, flows through this system and is believed to be the third largest underground river in the world.

Military installations on Puerto Rico include Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, Fort Bundy (USN), San Juan Naval Station, Salinas Training Area (US Army), Fort Allen (US Army), Henry Barracks (US Army), Sabana Seca Communications Center (US Navy), Fort Buchanan (US Army), Camp Tortuguero (Puerto Rican National Guard), and the defunct Camp Garcia (Marine Corps Air Station) on Vieques Island.

Abduction book raises troubling questions

Into the Fringe

by Karla Turner

Berkley paperback 1992, 242 pages, \$4.99

Reviewed by Anne Ecker

Remember those horror movies where the action advances by the positively irrational behavior of the main characters? You know—eight teenagers in an old cabin, one goes outside and vanishes mysteriously, so they *all* go outside, split up, and wait to become beastie chow? If you liked that, you'll love *Into the Fringe* by Karla Turner.

Turner, a former college instructor, recounts a series of unusual experiences and dreams she and her son and husband, various friends and extended family members have had since 1988.

Turner's odyssey began in mid April 1988 when she assigned her freshman argument and logic class the task of making an objective evaluation of UFOs, the Loch Ness monster, and Bigfoot.

While reading the students' papers, her interest was piqued by Strieber's *Communion*. She bought it, read it, and passed it on to her son. *Communion* led her to Hopkins's *Missing Time*.

The first plot point comes when Turner decides to hypnotize and age regress her husband to see why he seems stressed. She is not trained in hypnosis, but has been hypnotized several times herself so feels herself qualified to perform. Her husband should be grateful he wasn't suffering from a toothache.

Under hypnosis he recalls a childhood UFO encounter and wakes to draw a picture of the entity from his past.

Now things begin to happen in earnest. Turner tries to enlist the aid of the therapist who has been treating her for stress, but he refuses to see her husband, telling her she should seek treatment instead.

She then turns to the list of UFO organizations in the back of *Missing Time*, selects one, and calls its "international director" who refers her to a local MUFON chapter.

In early July, 1988 through MUFON, she meets Barbara Bartholic, an investigator with Oklahoma MUFON.

Less than three weeks after their first meeting the Turners spend the weekend in one of Bartholic's guest houses so that Bartholic may age regress Turner's husband. Bartholic, it is explained, once worked with a "qualified hypnotherapist" on abduction cases, but as the number of abductees to hypnotize grew she learned the technique herself.

So the Turners spend the weekend in Oklahoma with their new friends, hyped up at the prospect of learning more about their own UFO experiences through age regression.

The events of the weekend in Oklahoma bear particular scrutiny.

The regression—the second one Bartholic has done on Turner's husband—takes place Saturday evening in the guest house occupied by the Turners. Besides the Turners and Bartholic, there is another person present. He is identified as a retired military intelligence man, now a counselor. Though he is staying at another of Bartholic's guest houses, he stays in the house where the hypnosis session is going on but remains in a separate room, resting.

The session, predictably, unearths a horrifying abduction experience.

At 2:00 a.m. Bartholic takes her leave of the emotionally overwrought Turners. The counselor, presumably rested, prepares to return to his own guest house, but is followed by the Turners, who do not wish to stay alone.

The counselor, whom Turner characterizes as "a good listener" whose presence she found "comforting", listens while Turner's husband rehashes the evening's hypnosis session.

At 3:00 a.m. they go outside, where the counselor points out a strange light in the sky. As they watch, it resolves into an array of lights and moves closer until it seems to be bearing down on them. They flee inside just as they are able to make out a dark shape connecting the lights.

They've seen their first remembered UFO.

Turner's husband sleeps after this, but Turner is too wound up to rest. She and the counselor spend the night talking about the UFO phenomenon.

So, thirty nine pages into the book finds Turner in a strange house, the guest of someone she has known less than a month. She has had little sleep, is emotionally distressed by her husband's apparent abduction experiences, has been menaced by strange lights in the sky, and is comforted by a sympathetic stranger.

Disorientation, deprivation, dependency. This sounds like a classic means of insinuating a dubious belief system into a vulnerable mind. For the purposes of the book it hardly matters whether or not this was intentional, though the question certainly should set off alarms about the motives, methods and accountability of some UFO groups.

The Turners return home after this watershed weekend, and the action advances on several fronts.

Their son and his fiance and a friend turn up with UFO related hidden memories and ongoing strange happenings. They have nightmares and hear strange sounds.

They call Bartholic, who tells them to look themselves over for scratches and punctures. They do, and they find them.

Turner quizzes friends about possible experiences, having been told by Bartholic that entire groups of family and friends sometimes have common experiences. Sure enough, her best friend is a part of the abduction scene, too.

The book becomes a swirl of dreams, altered states, and contusion lists, culminating with Turner's husband's dream of being abducted by a white pickup that descends out of a cloud, seizes him, and takes him to an underwater base where he is first held in a phony western-style saloon and then quizzed by a US Army Major about what he knows about the aliens.

The book is really very well written, and one can readily sympathize with Turner's distress as her reality becomes more and more fractured.

It's frightening, though, to see Turner's willing descent into the popular culture of ufology and it's astonishing to watch her passive capitulation to the experience. If, as some suggest, paranormal phenomena such as poltergeist activity—

which describes much of what Turner claims to have actually experienced—feed on the emotions of the person who is the focus of the event, Turner seems to have constituted a buffet. The sleep of reason truly does beget monsters. If her reality is fractured, she seems to have helped wield the crowbar against it, as well as enlist the aid of a formal wrecking crew of UFO investigators.

It is harder to sympathize with the actions of the "researchers" in this case, who seem to have their own agenda.

Instead of treating Turner's case as something to investigate, the investigators seem to have steered her into believing she was part of the usual abduction scenario, an event so standardized in popular culture that it finds its way into television commercials.

This muddying of the waters makes it unlikely that anyone will ever know whether the motive force behind Turner's experiences was internal or the product of an external intelligence.

The moral of this story just may be "If you don't want to come home with a fish, don't go to the fish market."

The Puerto Trench lies off the northern coast of the island. At 8,742 miles it is the deepest spot in the Atlantic Ocean.

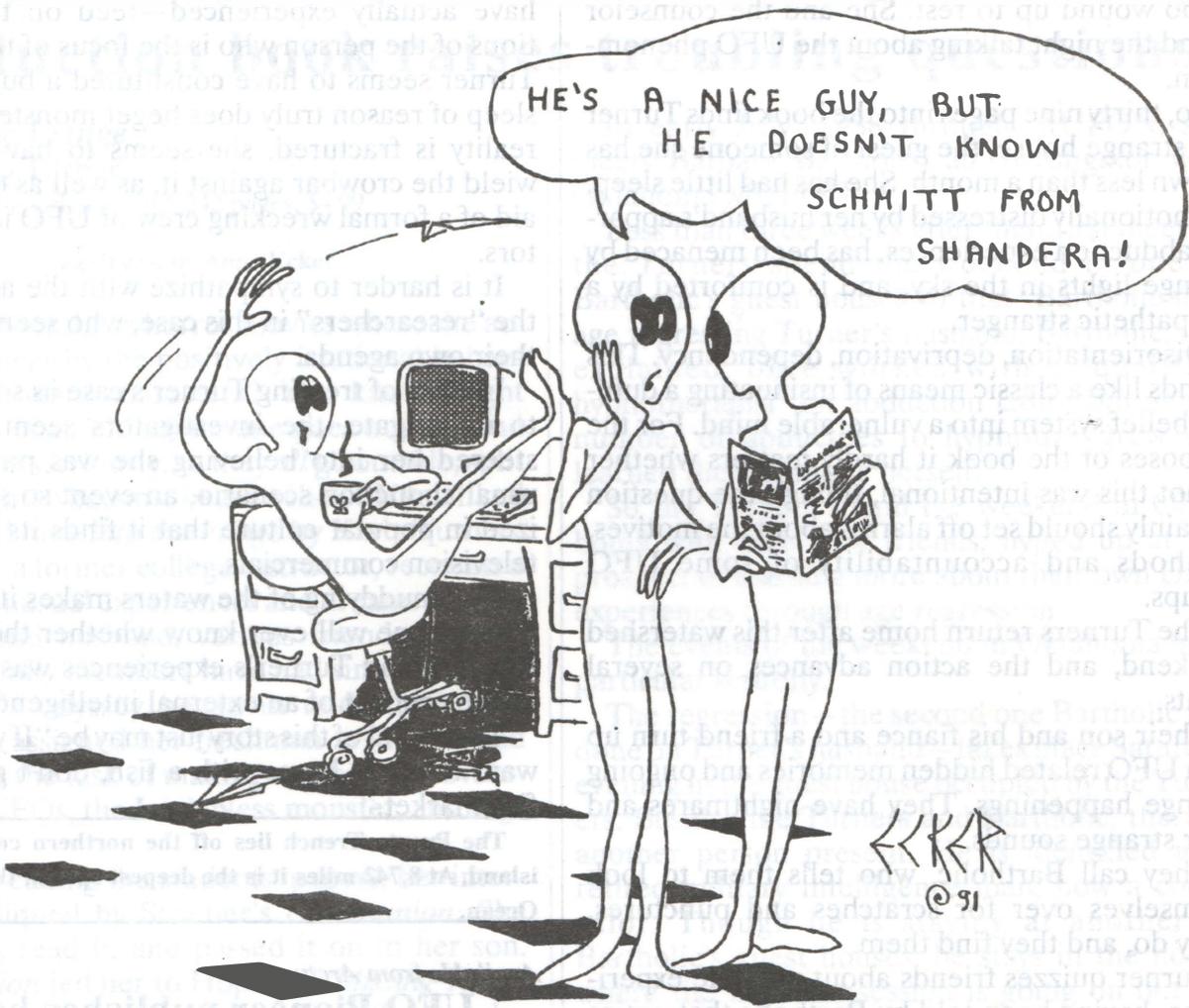
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UFO Pioneer publishes booklet

George D. Fawcett, one of ufology's genuine "old timers" now living in Lincolnton, North Carolina, has written and published a twenty eight page typescript booklet called *Human Reactions to UFOs Worldwide (1940-1983)*.

During his forty eight years (so far) of UFO research, Fawcett has founded and advised several UFO study groups in New England, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Florida. He has written numerous articles over the years, and in 1975 wrote a book titled *Quarter Century Studies of UFOs in Florida, North Carolina and Tennessee*. He is currently affiliated with North Carolina MUFON and is planning a UFO museum.

Fawcett's booklet on human reactions to UFOs is available for five dollars from Arcturus Books Inc., 1443 S.E. Port St. Lucie Blvd., Port St. Lucie, FL 34952.



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