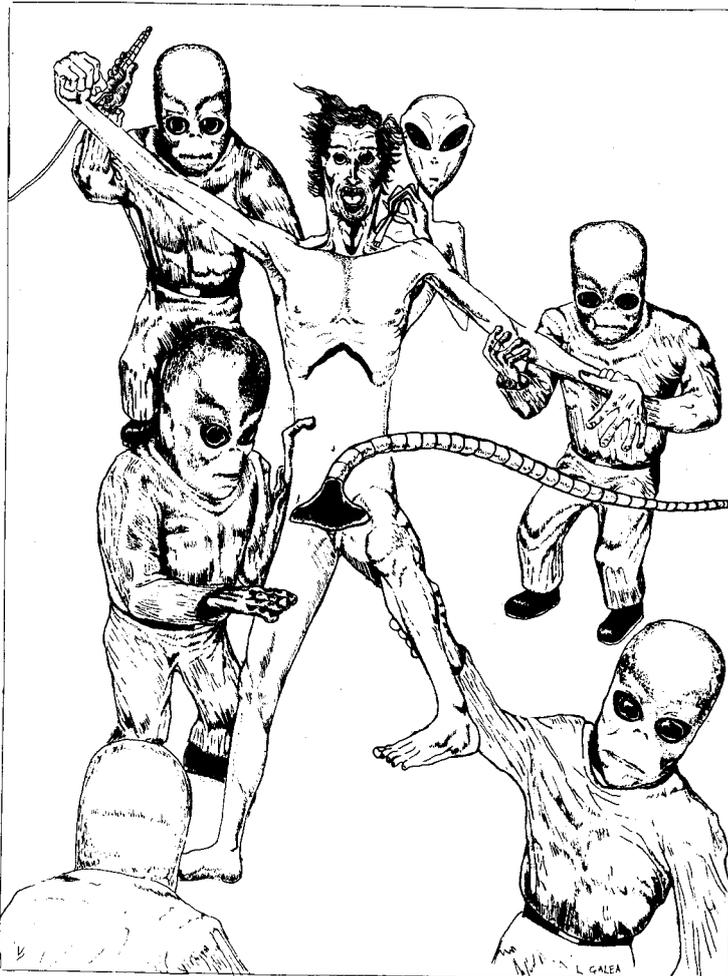


UFO

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Down In Africa

by Cynthia Hind

The middle of September saw a dramatic rise in UFO activity in Zimbabwe which produced a number of intriguing reports from across the country.

It started on Wednesday night, the 14th September, at approximately 20:50 hours to 21:10. Hundreds of people from all over Zimbabwe reported a series of bright lights moving across the sky. Professor Euan Nesbit, visiting from Britain, immediately identified this as 'spectacular meteorite shower' and as a lot of the reports *sounded* like meteors, I accepted what he had to say. But after receiving about 50 reports, I began to realise that these reports did not match the usual behaviour of meteor showers. As I am Continental Coordinator for Africa to MUFON, I receive the MUFON Journal on a monthly basis which contains details of forthcoming meteor showers. There was no mention of any meteor showers during the month of September!

The second speculation as to what this could have been came from one of the South African newspapers and a British paper. They said it was one of the stages of a Russian satellite which went into orbit on the 27th August of this year. This it might well be, although I don't understand the discrepancy of 18 days from lift-off to the jettisoning of what ever it was. But I have had several reports which described a nose cone with three bright lights on it; one in front and two behind and several streamers of light coming out from behind. So this would be a much more likely identification. Many reported a series of smaller lights either a) surrounding the craft or b) following behind in formation. These smaller bodies numbered anything from nine to 14 depending from which angle they were viewed.

Nearly all the reports said there was **no sound**, with two exceptions: one reported a quiet vibration and the other I will refer to later on.

The light was a brilliant white, tingeing to an orangey-red behind. Some said it was 'huge'; others that it was the size of a Boeing 747, flying at its normal speed (approximately 625mph) and that it appeared to be on fire and ready to crash. But the object levelled out a flew in straight line 'at tree-top level'. Those on lake Kariba (about 100 witnesses) said that when it reached the hills at the side of the lake, it rose to avoid them and change direction.

Reports from radio 702 (a commercial radio station operating from Johannesburg) stated that the lights were seen above Kempton Park (near to the main Jan Smuts Airport). They then appeared to move over Botswana and overlapping the borders of Zambia; back into Zimbabwe, over Lake Kariba (around 21:00) to Bulawayo and onto Harare (21:05) passing over many rural areas. Lastly it reached the Mutare area and over the hills into Mozambique when it seemed to fade from view. I have had no reports from Mozambique or Botswana.

Some people reported that they thought they were meteorites, but most were doubtful of this.

Pyrotechnics

Reports came from farm labourers to pilots, MD of a large local company technologists and many fishermen and visiting tourists on lake Kariba. Most people were puzzled and some said they had seen meteorites before, but nothing like this! One group of workers thought it was Jerry Rawlings, the president of Ghana (who was flying into Zimbabwe on that day) and that all the pyrotechnics were sent out of the plane to impress the people who lived there!

The reported height varied greatly but most referred to 'tree-top' level. Some reported a height of 2-3000 ft. (one a pilot report). Some mentioned 2-300ft. and these came from different parts of the country.

At 21:04 I heard an explosion from my study in central Harare and some workers in Fort Rixon, near Bulawayo heard five explosions. Professor Nisbet said these were the meteorites passing through the sound barrier.

Two people viewed the object from directly underneath and said it had a flat belly and that it was looking, moving on a straight course. One technician said he could see two engines in front and felt it was a machine of some kind. All objects were seen **below** scattered cloud level. Apart from this, the night was clear.

Two mothers reported that their children were affected: a three-year-old child, Beatrice (40 km from Harare) woke and shouted for her mother when the lights went over, saying that there was a lion inside or outside her room. She subsequently drew what she saw but I have not yet seen her drawing. An 18-month-old baby woke and could not be settled. She is normally a very quiet and contented child but kept the family awake all night with her distress.

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Down in Africa

by Cynthia Hind

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UFO at Ruwa

On Friday 16th September, at approximately 10:15, 62 children from Arial School, a private primary school in Ruwa (about 20 km from Harare) were in their playing field for mid morning break. Suddenly they saw three silver balls in the sky over the school. These disappeared with a flash of light then reappeared elsewhere. This happened three times and then they started to move down towards the school with one of them landing (or hovering) over a section of rough ground made up of trees, thorn bushes and some brown-grey cut grass with bamboo shoots sticking up out of the ground. Because of harmful creatures like spiders and snakes, the children are not allowed in this area although it is adjacent to their playing field and is not fenced off. One can soon disappear from view while walking here, and there is only one very rough track used by tractors in an attempt to clear the area.

There is a line of electricity pylons and according to one boy, the object followed along this line prior to landing. There is also some controversy as to whether the object landed on the ground or hovered over it. On Tuesday, 20th September, I went out to the school with a BBC reporter and a television crew, as well as my son and Gunter Hofer, a young man who builds his own electrical equipment, viz. a Geiger counter, metal detector and magnetometer, to discover whether the object left any traces behind.

The headmaster of the school is Mr. Mackie, who was most co-operative and although he had never been involved with UFOs or a believer in them, said that he believed that the children had seen what they said they saw.

I was able to interview 10 or 12 of the older children and this was recorded for BBC television. The reports were similar although some children were more observant than others. The consensus of opinion was that an object came down in the area they indicated, about 100 metres from where they were at the edge of the school playing-field. Then a small man (approximately one metre in height) appeared on top of the object. He walked a little of the way across the rough ground, became aware of the children and disappeared back into the object. The object took off very rapidly and disappeared. The little man was dressed in a tight-fitting black suit which was 'shiny' according to one observant girl (11). He had a long scrawny neck and huge eyes like rugby balls, He had a pale face with long black hair coming below his shoulders.

I had suggested to Mr. Mackie prior to visiting the school and before the children had been interviewed, that he let the children draw what they had seen and he now has about 30-40 drawings, some of which are very explicit and clear, although some are rather vague. The children's ages vary from five to 12 years. I have 22 photocopies of the clear drawings as Mr. Mackie kindly allowed me to page through the pictures and choose those I wanted. Most of the descriptions are similar, but some of the craft are very obviously 'flying saucers' and I wonder how many children have had access to the media. Others a crude but more or less in a saucer shape.

The children vary in cultures: there are black, white coloured and Asian children. One little girl said to me, 'I swear by every hair on my head and the whole Bible that I am telling the truth.' I could see the pleasure on her face when I told her that I believed her.

The smaller children from five to seven years were very frightened at the time and ran shouting 'Help me, help me.' When the older children asked why they were saying this, the reply was, 'He is coming to eat us.' I should think that this applies to more of the black African children who have legends of *tokoloshies* eating children.

The teachers were in a meeting and did not come out. When I queried the headmaster about this he said that the children always shouted and yelled during their playtime and no-one thought that there was anything unusual going on. The only other adult available at the time was one of the mothers who was running the tuckshop. When the children came to call her, she did not believe them and would not come out: she was not prepared to leave the shop with all the food and money.

Gunter and the men thoroughly examined the ground around where the children had seen the object, but could get no reaction on the Geiger counter or any of the other equipment. If the object was hovering perhaps nothing would show. I walked, on my own, along the electricity pylons for quite a way, caught up in thorn bushes, tramping blithely over snake holes and discarding all caution. I found no place where some object could have landed and press down the foliage. In fact, I should think the bamboo stumps would have been a deterrent.

The day was hot around 33°C, and I had a long walk through waist high brush. When I reached home again at about 12:50, I had a headache, my feet ached and I felt disorientated. If you don't hear from me soon, you will know that I did cross the landing site and am probably suffering from a mild dose of radiation!