A CLASSIC CE2P: KERMAN, CALIFORNIA, 1978

Editor's note: This case was first reported in IUR *3, no. 9 (September 1978): 9–10, and is one of those included in Michael Swords's survey of physiological effects reports included on pp. 8–10, 24 of this issue.*

The story of Officer Manuel Amparano of the Kerman, California, police department is one that took place months ago on May 13,1978. *IUR* was aware of the incident at that time, but could not gain access to sufficient information about it as the officer's superior, Chief James Van Cleaf, elected to withhold most of it, for uncertain reasons. Amparano deferred to his boss and would talk with neither press nor UFO researchers. The first break in the case occurred when the June 27 issue of the *National Star* disclosed Amparano's name and ran a brief (and occasionally inaccurate) account of the event. Amparano expressed anger that the material had been published at that point; indeed, when he refused to let the *Star* photographer take his picture, the photographer used a telephoto lens to shoot him when he was in his garage in his undershirt, washing his car.

The picture in Kerman has changed now, however. A new police chief, Bill McKinney, has expressed willingness to submit all details, including the names of possible additional witnesses and records of Amparano's medical examinations. In the meantime, Amparano has provided us with a firsthand account of the unusual event.

Amparano was on Del Norte Ave. on the southwest outskirts of Kerman at 3:32 a.m. when he observed a reddish glow ahead of him. Thinking it was a fire, he drove to the site and pulled off the road by a cotton field near railroad tracks in time to see an unusual source of illumination about 45 degrees up in the southern sky. The source looked like a horizontally oriented oval, twice as wide as it was high; it was crimson red in color, looked half as large as a full moon, and uniformly illuminated. It was bright, but the intensity did not hurt the policeman's eyes. As it hovered motionlessly and silently, Amparano watched it out his open side window (his car pointing toward the southwest) for about four minutes. Suddenly the light source momentarily shot out a beam of blue light, like a camera flash. The mysterious object then receded toward the southeast and cut straight up out of sight into the clear dark sky in seconds.

As Amparano drove back to the station, he was aware of a tingling sensation in his body, but dismissed it as being due to the "cold night air." It wasn't until he met five other witnesses and a chaplain back at the station that he learned he was "sunburned" as red as a lobster. The effect lasted for four hours before fading down. At 7 p.m. on the same date, the officer went to the Fresno Community Hospital for treatment of third-degree burns on his arms, face, and neck. Here is what is known about the physiological effects of the encounter thus far, based on Amparano's recollections:

- Amparano was burned right through a long-sleeve, dark blue uniform.
- The burns only occurred on the portions of his body facing the light through the open window (not through the windshield as reported in the *Star*). He was not burned where the metal door shielded him from the light. His back was normal.
- The redness died down after four hours, but the burns remained visible for two days. The day after the encounter, white "fever blisters" popped up on his face and the front

May 13, 1978, Kerman, California. A bright red oval object shoots a blue beam at an officer in a police car. The witness feels a tingling sensation and gets third-degree burns on his face, neck, and arms.

of his arms; these lasted for a week.

• The officer suffered a burning sensation "under" his skin for a week. At home, his body hurt badly, especially his groin. His wife told him he twitched in his sleep.

• Amparano claims that the hospital found his blood pressure to be high, something that had never happened to him before. He said that other tests were performed and codeine tablets were prescribed.

• Amparano said that two doctors felt the burns were caused by some form of microwave radiation. The symptoms certainly seem to point in that direction. *IUR* hopes that the medical records will shed more light on the physiological effect in a definitive way; only time will tell.

Contrary to published accounts in the press, Amparano did not personally apply for worker's compensation for injuries "caused by a UFO." In California, at least, an employer applies for the compensation on behalf of the employee. Also, the cause of the burns was listed as being of undetermined origin.

Is the officer's account credible? Amparano, a 32-year-old Mexican-American, has been an officer for five years on Kerman's 10-man police force. His colleagues regard him as a reliable individual. He spent four years in the Marines and was on combat duty in Vietnam. He took pains to avoid publicity about the event, informing *IUR* that he would "just as soon forget the whole thing," that disclosing it is "more trouble than it's worth."

There is also the potential for additional witness corroboration in this case, as 14 people called the station to report sightings that night.

Follow-up at the time of the event included calls to the airport at Fresno, which saw nothing on radar and had no planes going southeasterly at the time. Sgt. Holmes at the Air National Guard made similar comments, Vandenberg Air Force Base had no rocket launches, and local meteorologists launched no illuminated balloons at the time. We will present part two of the Kerman case when additional file material is available from Kerman's police chief.

Postscript

Inevitably, there was never a part two of this article, as is typically the case in UFO investigations. We don't know why, but we suspect that the Kerman police chief never sent that extra information for review.

This case is a perfect illustration of how those who claim there is nothing substantial to study about the UFO phenomenon are wrong. True, we don't have a piece of what was seen by Officer Amparano, but we have the effects on his body and his position in the squad car, to provide a quasi-experiment for our own benefit. Whatever radiation caused his skin problems and other symptoms could penetrate cloth but not windshield glass or the metal of the door.

It has often been suggested that microwaves could be the key cause of skin damage and similar effects in UFO cases. Microwaves cannot penetrate metal, but they can pass through glass (which is why doors to microwave ovens have metal wiring within the glass to prevent radiation from escaping). Microwaves can certainly penetrate clothing.

One line of investigation would have been to find out the properties of the window glass in Amparano's squad car and then test it with various microwave frequencies and power levels to see how much of the incident radiation penetrated to the interior. (Glass effectively blocks the ultraviolet rays of the Sun, which is why you can travel in a car and not get sunburned on a sunny day.)

Another line of investigation would have been to learn about accidents that have occurred with high-powered microwave generators and compare the effects on humans with what happened to Amparano. This might provide some estimate of the intensity of microwaves (if that was the radiation) that affected Amparano.

Finally, if the event had been followed up immediately, investigators could have scoured the area around the sighting location and hunted for effects on any vegetation that might have been exposed to the blue beam (this is assuming the beam wasn't directed solely at the squad car). If the beam affected Amparano, it certainly could have affected nearby plants and possibly animals.

This case, alas, also illustrates the difficulties faced by UFO investigation. Chief Van Cleaf would not allow Amparano to talk to investigators, and he certainly wouldn't have allowed access to the squad car, so any immediate investigation of the car or injuries was impossible, including any testing of what radiation could penetrate the windshield. Acquiring another identical make and model of Amparano's squad car would have been possible, but not easy, given the lack of financial resources (then and now). Then you need a device that can generate powerful microwaves, and test equipment to measure the radiation. No easy task, any of this.

Intriguingly, it is still possible, more than 30 years later, to do some of this research, especially if the make and model of Amparano's squad car can be identified. If an identical model could be located, at least the properties of the glass could be documented (or perhaps from available manufacturer information). And we could definitely research microwave accidents to compare with Amparano's injuries. Further, since he was only 32 years of age, he may still be available for further questioning about lingering effects from his experience.

CE2p cases, as Michael Swords has labeled them, are uncommon, especially detailed accounts with a reliable witness. Each case is important and should be seen as an opportunity to learn more—unlike garden-variety UFO sightings or even large, low-flying, triangular-shaped UFO cases that give us a peek and nothing more.

Editor's note: In an interview published in the *Fresno Bee* of December 2, 2002, Amparano said of his injury: "It was like a sunburn when you fall asleep at the pool. There were white blisters on the parts of my body facing that light. I also had trouble with sunlight. It was like right after you have your eyes checked and they are sensitive to light. That lasted about a week." ✦