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### → VILLAS-BOAS CE3

On February 22, 1958, a 23-year-old Brazilian farmer, Antonio Villas-Boas, sat in the consulting room of **Olavo T. Fontes**, a ufologist who was also a professor of surgery at the National School of Medicine of Brazil, and told an amazing story:

At 11 P.M. on October 5, 1957, Villas-Boas rose from bed to open a window, hoping to cool the room. Outside, over the corral on the family farm near Sao Francisco de Salles, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, the young man saw a "silvery fluorescent reflection, brighter than moonlight." He called to his brother, who refused to look at it and went back to sleep. Villas-Boas lay down for a short time, then got up to look again. The light was still there, but after a short period of time it started moving toward the window. Frightened, Villas-Boas slammed the shutters shut, waking his brother. The two "watched the light appear through the crevices of our shutters," Villas-Boas told Fontes, "and shine through the tiles of the roof, lighting up the darkness of our room." Soon the light disappeared.

On the evening of October 14, between 9:30 and 10, as Villas-Boas and another brother were plowing, they saw a blindingly bright object hovering 300 feet above the north end of the field. When Villas-Boas tried to approach it, it repeatedly evaded him before suddenly disappearing.

But the event that would secure Antonio Villas-Boas a permanent place in UFO history took place the next night. This time Villas-Boas was alone on the tractor. At 1 A.M. he saw a big red "star" in the cloudless sky. The star abruptly accelerated and soon was revealed to be an egg-shaped object which in no time was a mere 160 feet above his head, shining so brightly that

the ground around the young man was lit up as if in daylight.

Paralyzed with fear, he watched the object land. It "looked like a large elongated egg with three metal spurs in front of it (in the center and the sides)—they were three metal bars thick at one end and spiked at the tip. Their color was indistinguishable, for it was hidden by a bright [red] phosphorescence.... Over the machine there was 'something' which rotated at a great speed, also having a sharp fluorescent reddish light, which began to go greenish the moment the machine started to slow up its speed for landing." As it descended, three legs extended from the object's underside, apparently to support it on the ground. A few seconds later the tractor engine died.

Villas-Boas jumped down to flee but felt someone grab his arm. He turned around and observed a small figure, whom he pushed violently. The figure fell over, but three others grabbed him, lifted him off the ground, and dragged him toward the machine.

"A door was open behind it, in the middle," he recalled, "and it opened out from top to bottom, forming a kind of bridge the end of which was held to a metal ladder.... This ladder had been lowered and unrolled to the ground."

Villas-Boas continued to struggle, several times grasping the railing on either side of the ladder. But finally he found himself in a small, square-shaped room with silvery, polished metal walls. The door closed, and one of the figures—he could see five in all—gestured and took him into a larger, oval room, which he thought was in the center of the object because a metal bar ran from floor to ceiling in the room's midsection. At one end stood a table and several stools, all metallic-looking.

As two of the figures held him, they and the others watched him, speaking all the while in "growls, like dogs." He was sure they were discussing him. Because of the way they were dressed, he could see nothing but their eyes, and these only vaguely because they were "protected by two round glasses.... [T]heir eyes seemed to be much smaller than ours, though I believe that may have been the effect of the lenses.... Above their eyes those helmets looked so tall that they corresponded to the double of what the size of a normal head should be." Three tubes ex-

of other contactees. The Giant Rock gatherings gave many their first significant public platforms. In 1956, in radio and television appearances Van Tassel introduced New Jersey's **Howard Menger**, who would turn out to be one of the most prominent (and controversial) of the 1950s contactees, to the world.

On encountering him, the anti-contactee **Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York (CSI)** noted, "Mr. Van Tassel turns out to be a handsome, broad-faced, fair-haired man in his early forties, with a pleasant, deep voice and an easy-going manner of speech. It is impossible not to be struck at once by his evident 'sincerity'.... A person listening primarily to the *sound* of his discourse, and applying little thought to its *sense*, would probably never have reason to suspect that this big, sincere, affable, humble man was anything other than what he claims to be." Yet "he endorses everyone else's stories no matter how questionable they appear to others" ("George Van Tassel," 1956). CSI's **Isabel Davis** remarked that for all his promotion of them, none of the other contactees spoke of "ventlas" or in other ways acknowledged Van Tassel's universe in their claims. "On February 13, 1953," Davis wrote, "Ashtar ... tells the [Van Tassel] group that '86 projections, 9100 waves, of 236,000 ventlas' are combining forces to create a 'Light energy vortice' near the Earth that will 'create extensive damage.' Five nights later, with this armada still presumably patrolling space near Earth, [George] **Adamski** is having a long calm conversation with Orthon, Firkon, Kalna and Ilmuth, and the Venusian 'master'—none of whom breathe a syllable about the disciplinary ventlas" (Davis, 1957). To Davis and other critics, it seemed clear that their publicly united front notwithstanding, Van Tassel and his colleagues did not believe each other's stories.

Van Tassel died suddenly of a heart attack at 3:30 A.M. on February 9, 1978, in Santa Ana, California. In 1979, unable to pay a hefty tax bill, his widow Dorris sold the property to a San Diego real estate developer who then let it be known that he planned to turn the Integratron into a disco. Outraged, Van Tassel's followers raised money to buy the land back in 1981 (Curran, *op. cit.*). The Integratron, however, remains unfinished. In the late 1980s it was purchased by Emile Canning ("Integratron Revives," 1991).

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tended down from the helmet and blended into the suit. "All five of them wore a very tight-fitting siren-suit, made of soft, thick, unevenly striped gray material," Villas-Boas would recall.

Suddenly the growling ceased, and now all five of the figures grabbed the young man and forcibly undressed him, though without hurting him or tearing his clothes. Villas-Boas sensed that they wanted him to know they were not trying to be unkind.

One of them used a soft spongelike object to spread a thick, odorless liquid all over Villas-Boas's body. He was led to a small, square room, where a blood sample was taken from under his chin by two figures holding two rubber-looking pipes. Then Villas-Boas was left alone for half an hour or so.

"A kind of bed" sat in the middle of the room. Exhausted, he sat down on it, then smelled something like "painted cloth burning." Its source, he discovered, was gray smoke emanating from little metal tubes in the ceiling just above him. He got violently ill and dashed to a corner of the room to throw up.

A few minutes later, to his understandable astonishment, a naked woman entered the room. Without speaking she made her intentions clear, and Villas-Boas suddenly became "uncontrollably sexually excited, something that had never happened to me before" ("I suppose the liquid they had spread on me may have caused it"). He and the woman had intercourse twice, though without kissing. "Some of the growls that came from her at certain times nearly spoiled everything," he would tell Fontes, "as they gave me the disagreeable impression of lying with an animal."

The woman was "beautiful," though not entirely earthly in appearance. She had whitish blond hair, a wide face with prominent cheekbones, and a pointed chin; "she had big blue eyes, rather longer than round, for they slanted outward, like those pencil-drawn girls made to look like Arabian princesses, that look as if they were slit ... except that [hers] were natural; there was no make-up."

After the second sex act the woman lost interest in Villas-Boas and distanced herself, to his annoyance. He reflected that perhaps all "they" wanted was a

"good stallion to improve their own stock." (Later he would conclude that the woman, who was shorter than the others, was the figure he had knocked down at the initiation of the abduction. He assumed the others were male.)

Soon the door opened, and one of the "men" called to the woman. Before she left, she turned to Villas-Boas, "pointed to her belly, and smilingly (as well as she could smile) pointed to the sky.... Then she went away. I interpreted the signs as meaning that she intended to return and take me with her to wherever it was that she lived."

The man returned with his clothes, and after Villas-Boas got dressed, the two went to another room where three of the crew members sat on swivel chairs talking, or growling, with one another. As Villas-Boas's companion joined them, the young man noticed a clocklike device on a table. He tried to steal it while he thought the others were looking elsewhere, but immediately one of them grabbed it and shoved him roughly aside.

A few minutes later Villas-Boas was given what amounted to a tour of the ship. He did not see the woman again, but he was certain she was in a particular room. The door was ajar, and he could hear movement inside it. Because all the other crew members were in view, he decided that the room's occupant had to be she.

He was finally ushered out of the machine. He watched the object shoot off toward the south. It was 5:30 A.M.

Over the next month he suffered from sleepiness and bouts of nausea (Lorenzen and Lorenzen, 1967).

*Reaction.* Villas-Boas's story came to light in November, a month after the event's alleged occurrence, when he wrote Brazilian journalist Joao Martins, who had written articles on UFOs for the popular magazine *O Cruzeiro*. Not long afterwards he carved a model of the UFO in wood and sent it to Martins. Martins arranged for him to be brought to Rio, where he and Fontes interviewed him at length and Villas-Boas produced a sworn statement.

Both Fontes and Martins were impressed with Villas-Boas's intelligence, straightforward manner, apparent sincerity, and refusal to speculate. Fontes wrote that "we are not dealing with a psychopathic case, a

mystic, or a visionary subject. In spite of this, the very substance of his story becomes the heaviest argument against it."

Fontes gave Villas-Boas a thorough physical examination. He found two "small hyperchromic spots, one on each side of the chin ... rather roundish in shape ... scars resulting from some superficial lesion with associated bleeding under the skin—of at least a month or at the most a year since they came into existence" (*ibid.*).

This was the only physical evidence—or alleged physical evidence—for Villas-Boas's fantastic tale. Martins told him that the story lacked proof and was too outlandish to be published in *O Cruzeiro*. Perhaps, he suggested, the popular press would be interested. Villas-Boas went home the next day, however, without talking with anyone else about it.

This was Villas-Boas's last encounter with ufologists until 1962, when two representatives of SBEDV—Sociedade Brasileira de estudos sobre discos voadores, a Brazilian UFO group—traveled to Villas-Boas's village and interviewed him, in spite of his reluctance to discuss the experience. A short English-language article on the case appeared the same year in the *SBEDV Boletim* ("The A.V.B. Contact Case," 1962) but was little noticed outside Brazil.

The first mention of the case in an American publication was in a *Fate* review of *The Great Flying Saucer Hoax* (1962), by Coral E. Lorenzen, director of the **Aerial Phenomena Research Organization** (APRO). Taking note of Lorenzen's reliance on material supplied by Fontes, Max B. Miller said he questioned the Brazilian physician's reliability because he had circulated a report of an "alleged rape of a Brazilian farmer by a somewhat uninhibited female from space" (Miller, 1962). Lorenzen responded, "Dr. Fontes has earned a reputation for thoroughness, objectivity, and originality of thought.... The so-called 'rape' case (this designation is inaccurate—it should be called 'seduction') ... was never published in the *APRO Bulletin*, nor was it mentioned in my book for the simple reason that we do not feel that it was sufficiently authenticated. I do not know how Miller happened to come upon this particular incident, but I do know that he did not get it through me or APRO. I believe it is especially significant that he should use

such mention of a disreputable incident in a review of my book" (Lorenzen, 1962). Five years later Fontes and Martins's report of this "disreputable incident" would be published in its entirety in Coral and Jim Lorenzen's *Flying Saucer Occupants* (1967).

The story got its first major exposure in English in the January/February 1965 issue of *Flying Saucer Review*, published in London. It would be the first of a series Gordon Creighton would write for the magazine over the next few years. The Villas-Boas case would become one of the most famous **close encounters of the third kind** and would be seen as an early example of the UFO-abduction phenomenon, which by the 1980s would be a central issue in the UFO controversy. In time other cases of sexual contact—some strikingly similar to Villas-Boas's—would emerge (Bullard, 1987; Hopkins, 1987).

In 1978 Villas-Boas made his first public appearance, on a Brazilian television show. Now a lawyer practicing near Brasilia, a married man, and the father of four children, he recounted the familiar story, adding only one new detail: that the woman had put a sperm sample into a container after their second sex act ("Foreign Forum," 1980). Coincidentally or otherwise, a Wisconsin man interviewed by American abduction specialist Budd Hopkins reported what he characterized as a traumatic sexual encounter aboard a UFO in the early 1960s; he claimed that after the woman left the room in which the act occurred, two male crew members "took little spoons and scraped the leftover semen off my penis and took it in a sample in a bottle and kept it" (Hopkins, *op. cit.*).

Whatever the true nature of his experience, Villas-Boas's sincerity—his belief that the events occurred as described—seems beyond dispute, and there are other, similar cases in which conscious fabrication is not an issue. Nonetheless the Villas-Boas episode inspired at least one hoax. In 1967, in the paperback *The Terror Above Us*, George Wolk, using the pseudonym "Malcom Kent," wrote a purportedly true but, in fact, wholly fictitious account of sexual experiences aboard a UFO.

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**HILL ABDUCTION CASE**

On September 26, 1961, when a Portsmouth, New Hampshire, woman sat down to compose a letter to a UFO researcher, she could not have known that within a few years she and her husband would become two of the most famous UFO witnesses ever, as close to household names as such persons get. Nor could she have suspected that their experience would expose a whole new, heretofore-unsuspected aspect of the UFO phenomenon, with consequences that would be felt for decades afterwards. At the time, however, she was simply someone who needed reassurance and further information.

The letter was addressed to Donald E. Keyhoe, a retired Marine Corps major who, as the author of several best-selling books on the subject, was a ufologist of unusual prominence. Soon after their experience, which occurred on the night of September 19-20, the witnesses, Barney and Betty Hill, sought out UFO literature in the local library and there found Keyhoe's 1955 book *The Flying Saucer Conspiracy*. Betty's letter was forwarded to the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP), which Keyhoe had directed since January 1957.

Betty Hill reported that as they drove through a national forest in New Hampshire's White Mountains, a UFO had paced their automobile. Twice they stopped to get a better look at it. On the second occasion Barney had looked into the object as it hovered nearby. He saw "many figures scurrying about as though they were making some hurried type of preparation. One figure was observing us from the windows. From the distance this was seen, the figures appeared to be about the size of a pencil, and seemed to be dressed in some type of shiny black uniform." Barney Hill became "hysterical" and ran into the car. Strange "beeping or buzzing sounds . . . seemed to be striking the trunk of our car" as it accelerated. "We did not observe this object leaving, but we did not see it again, although about thirty miles further south we were again bombarded by these same beeping sounds." She further wrote:

At this time we are searching for any clue that might be helpful to my husband, in recalling whatever it was he saw that caused him to panic.

His mind has completely blacked out at this point. Every attempt to recall, leaves him very frightened. We are considering the possibility of a competent [sic] psychiatrist who uses hypnosis [Rodeghier, 1994].

The following account of the Hills's experience is based on a variety of primary documents and printed materials, including NICAP's investigative report and a book on the case by journalist John G. Fuller.

*The first story.* **Walter N. Webb**, a Boston astronomer and UFO investigator, first heard of the case on October 19, when he received a letter from NICAP secretary Richard Hall, who urged him to meet with the couple. Webb called on them two days later and conducted the first of a series of interviews, from which a full account of the Hills's conscious memories would be compiled. The account that follows draws in part on Webb's report of his early interviews with the witnesses.

Barney, 39, and Betty Hill, 41, were an interracial couple of impeccable reputation. Both were active in the area civil-rights movement. Barney, a dispatcher at the Boston post office, served on the advisory board of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and on the board of directors of the Rockingham County Poverty Program. Betty worked days as a social worker for the state of New Hampshire and devoted her evenings to volunteer labor for the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. They were also devoted members of the Unitarian-Universalist Church in Portsmouth. The Hills, in short, were solid citizens, not liars or lunatics. Yet their story, even in its early version, was a fantastic one, and in time it would grow even stranger.

On the evening of September 19, the couple were driving home from a trip to Quebec, going south on U.S. Highway 3. At around 10 they left a restaurant in Colebrook, New Hampshire. Thirty miles later, near Groveton, they noticed a bright light beneath the moon and Jupiter in the clear southwestern sky. The light headed west, then north. At one point it crossed the face of the moon. Barney thought it might be a satellite or an airplane, perhaps an airliner on its way to Montreal, but Betty thought it might be something more interesting; her sister had seen a UFO four years earlier. After a few minutes it curved westward,

then eastward in their direction. Since their car was the only one on the highway, the Hills wondered uneasily if the craft was interested in them. Barney stopped the car and retrieved a .22 pistol from the trunk.

They were now in a forested, uninhabited area. Betty was watching the object, still off to their right, through binoculars. It was closer and lower, and Betty could see a band of lights which appeared to run along the edge of a disc-shaped structure, with a red light on either side of it. The object was moving in a steplike pattern, tilting vertically as it initiated each "step." It was spinning all the while. At various times Barney looked through the binoculars as well. Reluctant to abandon his plane hypothesis, he was nonetheless puzzled that he could make out a fuselage but not wings. And try as he might, he could not hear any sound emanating from the craft.

Driving at no more than five mph as they monitored the object's movements, they entered the Franconia Notch in the White Mountains. They stopped again and watched the object pass behind the top of Cannon Mountain (4077 feet elevation) a mile away. They caught occasional glimpses of it as it moved past other mountaintops. When they resumed the drive, the object reappeared and resumed its position to their west. It was traveling parallel to them, low enough so that it was sometimes lost behind the trees. By now there was no doubt about its shape. It was a flattened, circular disc.

Two miles north of North Woodstock, the object descended on a clearing to their immediate right, then stopped and hovered less than 100 feet in the air and a few hundred feet away. A blue-white fluorescent glow shined through a row of windows along the side. No longer spinning, the object, which looked to be the size of a four-engine aircraft, hovered in a slightly tilted position.

Barney stopped the car in the middle of the road and slipped the pistol into his coat. He got out and, using the roof to brace his arms, turned the binoculars on the craft. As he was doing so, the object crossed the road 100 feet in front of them and stopped above a field to their left. Though he still could hear no sound, Barney kept telling himself this had to be a

helicopter whose pilot was playing some kind of joke on them.

He began to walk toward the object, stopping at intervals to bring the binoculars to his face. The object resumed its slow descent. Now, as he gazed through them, he could see a number of humanlike figures, perhaps as many as 11, inside the windows. They were watching him. They stood in a corridor which encircled the craft at its center. Abruptly all but one of them started to scurry about, turning their backs and appearing to pull levers on the wall, acting with what struck Barney as cold efficiency. The red lights on either side of the craft moved outward, and Barney saw for the first time that they were attached to the tips of two pointed fins sliding out from the sides. He said over and over again, "I don't believe it. I don't believe it. This is ridiculous!"

The object moved closer to Barney, to the extent that it filled the entire field of view through the binoculars. The intense stare of the "leader," or so Barney thought of him, was profoundly unnerving. The figure appeared to be fiercely determined to do something, and Barney suspected it was to capture him "like a bug in a net." The figures could now easily be seen without the glasses. The UFO was about 75 feet from him.

Overcome with terror, Barney turned and ran. From the car Betty could hear him screaming and crying. "They're going to capture us!" he shouted. He jumped into the car and tore off down the highway. Barney told Betty to look above them to see if the object had swung above them, as he feared. Betty rolled down the window and gazed upward. There was nothing but blackness. Barney was sure the object was blocking out the stars, which were visible through the back window. Suddenly, an irregular beeping sounded, loud enough to shake the car and seeming to emanate from the rear of the car. The Hills then experienced a tingling sensation in their bodies and a feeling of drowsiness.

Sometime later, passing through Plymouth, the couple became conscious of a second series of beeps. They were inside the car, and Barney was driving, but they sat numb and passive. When the beeps faded, Betty said, "Now do you believe in flying saucers?" Barney snapped, "Don't be ridiculous." They said no

more. They were not sure where they were until they saw a sign indicating that Ashland—35 miles south of Indian Head, where they had heard the first beeps—was close by.

They turned off on U.S. 93, and only after driving it a few miles did the couple emerge from their semi-sleep state. They exited on Route 4 and headed for Portsmouth, which they reached just as dawn was breaking. Once home Betty, for reasons she did not understand, asked Barney to put the luggage in the back hall instead of the main part of the house. She and Barney both felt strangely clammy and unclear. Barney went to the car, and as he was retrieving their suitcases, he noticed that the leather binocular strap, which he had had around his neck just hours ago, had broken. Furthermore, something about his lower abdomen so bothered him that he stepped into the bathroom and examined his genitals with a mirror.

Betty could not understand how a pink, powdery substance got on her dress. She threw the dress into a wastebasket, then thought better of it and retrieved it. She placed it on a clothesline, and soon the pink material blew away, though it left some stains.

The couple tried to reconstruct what had happened after they left Indian Head, but memories were faint. They vaguely recalled a luminous moon shape sitting on the road. Barney had the impression that for some reason he had said to his wife, "Oh, no, not again." Betty thought Barney had taken a sharp left turn off Route 3.

Later, after the couple had caught several hours' sleep, Betty packed up the dress and shoes she had worn that night. She placed them in the back of the closet and never wore them again. Her act reflected a fear that in some fashion she had been exposed to radiation, a concern she confided to her sister Janet Miller, who lived with her family in nearby Kingston. Janet said she would check with a physicist-neighbor about radiation detection. The physicist suggested that Betty run a compass over the car; if the needle became seriously disturbed, this could be evidence of an unusually high degree of radiation.

When Betty walked outside in the rain with a cheap compass, she saw something that she was certain had not been there before: more than a dozen perfectly

shaped, silver-dollar-sized circles on the exterior of the trunk. When she put the compass over a spot, the needle wavered out of control. Over other areas of the car, however, it resumed its normal position. Barney reluctantly agreed to conduct the same test, and he got the same results.

(Webb would write years later, "I recall viewing similar spots on my own vehicle and realized that they had a natural cause due to some sort of weather-related or road precipitate. The spots, too, gradually faded away. I believe Betty's description of the spots was somewhat exaggerated, and in her postencounter excitement she quite naturally was *looking* for something on the car that might explain the 'beeps'. And, of course, passing a compass over a large metallic object such as an automobile will cause the needle to spin" [Webb, 1994b].)

Returning home late one evening six weeks after the sighting, the Hills stepped into their house and were startled to see leaves piled on the snack bar in their kitchen. Sorting through the leaves, Betty found the blue earrings she had worn the night of the incident. Approximately six weeks after that, Barney came home early from work and was resting when Betty returned. Going into the kitchen, she noticed a newspaper on the snack bar. Underneath the paper was a "frozen piece of ice in a pattern—as if somebody had taken a bowl, filled it with water, and frozen it. There were strange marks in the ice." When she woke Barney up to ask him what this was about, he had no idea what she was talking about. Though trivial in themselves, the two incidents suggested that somebody had been in the house without their knowledge or permission. These would not be the last such episodes. In later years, according to Betty, she would find other evidence of apparent home invasions, in which objects would be removed from their usual places and dropped in some highly visible location. Nothing was ever stolen. The relevance of these odd events to her UFO experience is purely speculative (Schwarz, 1983).

The day after the sighting, Betty phoned Pease Air Force Base, and she and her husband discussed their experience, omitting some of their fantastic details (such as the figures) out of fear of being thought crazy. The next day Maj. Paul W. Henderson of

Pease's 100th Bomb Wing called back with a few questions. As the Hills recalled the conversation, Henderson claimed that the U.S. government knows that UFOs exist and wants to know more about them. His report on the Hills's sighting was forwarded to **Project Blue Book** at Wright-Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio. Henderson reached no conclusions, and his telephone conversations with the couple comprised the whole of the Air Force investigation. Nonetheless on September 27, 1963, Blue Book released this statement:

The Barney Hill sighting was investigated by officials from Pease AFB. The case is carried as insufficient data in the Air Force Files. No direction (azimuth) was reported and there are inconsistencies in the report. The sighting occurred about midnight and the object was observed for at least one hour. No specific details on maneuverability were given. The planet Jupiter was in the South West, at about 20 degrees elevation[,] and would have set at the approximate time that the object disappeared. Without positional data the case could not be evaluated as Jupiter. There was a strong [temperature] inversion in the area. The actual light source is not known. As no lateral or vertical movement was noted, the object was in all probability Jupiter. No evidence was presented to indicate that the object was due to other than natural causes.

*Series of dreams.* Unable to get the incident out of her mind, Betty took out some UFO books from the Portsmouth library and then wrote Keyhoe. When Webb conducted a six-hour interview with the couple on October 21, he found that their apparent amnesia concerning some parts of the episode had unsettled them profoundly. Betty also reported that one and a half to two weeks after the UFO incident, she had six straight nights' worth of extremely vivid nightmares, unlike any she had ever experienced before. They were so lifelike that she could not stop thinking about them even during the day.

By the time the Hill case had run its course, investigators would see these sorts of details—missing time, fragmented memories, inexplicable anxieties and obsessions—as symptomatic of an abduction experi-

ence. But when Webb met the couple, only a few scattered accounts by individuals who claimed to have been grabbed by UFO entities seemingly intent on kidnapping them had been recorded. Most were from South America. One prominent kidnapping claim, from Domsten, Sweden, in December 1958 (*The Emergence of a Phenomenon*, pp. 133-35), was later exposed as a **hoax**. Nothing like the modern abduction phenomenon was known or even suspected in 1961. Thus Webb cannot be blamed for dismissing as irrelevant what would turn out to be crucial clues to the case's hidden dimension and most dramatic aspect. In his October 26 report to NICAP, Webb wrote:

In his conversation with me (and with his wife since the sighting) a mental block occurred when he mentioned the "leader" peering out the window at him. Mr. Hill believes he saw something he doesn't want to remember. He claimed he was not close enough to see any facial characteristics on the figures, although at another time he referred to one of them looking over his shoulder and grinning and to the leader's expressionless face. However, it is my view that the observer's blackout is not of any great significance. I think the whole experience was so improbable and fantastic to witness—along with the very real fear of being captured adding to imagined fears—that his mind finally refused to believe what his eyes were perceiving and a mental block resulted.

In November Betty recorded her still sharp memories of her dreams, which were remarkable indeed. They were also terrifying, she wrote, "greater than I had ever believed possible."

Betty dreamed that she was struggling to regain consciousness. Finally able to open her eyes (in the dream), she saw herself on a path in the woods. On either side of her was a man. Two men were in front of her, two men behind her. Men also surrounded Barney, who looked as if he were sleep-walking. He did not respond when Betty called his name, and Betty did not respond when the man to her left asked if Barney was his name. Speaking in a friendly but businesslike fashion, the man went on to reassure her that she had nothing to fear. She and Barney would

be given some tests, then released unharmed and in short order. The man spoke English clearly, though in a foreign accent. His companions were silent.

The strange figures were slightly over five feet tall, with oversized chests and noses, black hair, and dark eyes. Their skin was gray. They wore uniforms consisting of trousers, short jackets, slip-on shoes or boots, and caps similar to those worn by the Air Force, "but not so broad in the top."

Barney and Betty were led to a metallic disc-shaped structure "almost as wide as my house is long," Betty noted. They stepped onto a ramp which led to the rear of the craft, and they entered through a door. At this moment Betty froze in fear and stopped in her tracks. The leader told her that the longer she refused to cooperate, the longer she would be away from her car. Betty stepped inside and strolled along a corridor which followed the curve of the ship.

As she and the leader went into the first room along the corridor, she was alarmed when she saw that Barney was being led farther on. Why could she not be examined in the same room with her husband? The leader replied in an exasperated tone that it would take twice as long that way. Then four or five men briefly came into the room, to leave when yet another man, who would do the examining, stepped inside. In a pleasant, reassuring tone he asked Betty a number of questions. Though he spoke in English, the doctor, as Betty would think of him, had an imperfect command of the language, and she could not always understand him. At the same time he did not always understand her answers. For example, he shook his head when she answered his inquiry about her and Barney's ages. When she talked about the foods human beings eat, he seemed confused.

He then said he wished to perform a few simple tests on her. Harmless and painless, they would determine the differences between his people and human beings. The leader then returned to the room and watched as Betty was sat on a stool with a bright light shining down on her. Standing in front of her, the doctor examined her hair and cut off a sample from the left rear of her head. He studied her mouth, throat, ears, hands, and fingernails, taking a piece of the last. Next he looked at her feet. Then he ran a slender, letter-opener-shaped instrument along her

arms and handed the scrapings to the leader, who placed them on glass slides.

Betty was then asked to lie on an examination table. The doctor pulled a machine over. It looked, Betty thought, like "the wires of an EEG, but no tracing machine was seen." He explained that he wanted to check her nervous system. He proceeded to touch various parts of her anatomy with the needles. Her dress was removed because it was getting in the way. Next the doctor produced a needle, four to six inches long, and announced that he was going to conduct a pregnancy test. It would not hurt, he assured her. Suddenly he thrust it into her navel, and Betty writhed in agony, startling both the doctor and the leader. The leader waved his hand in front of her eyes, and the pain instantly disappeared. "At that moment I became very grateful . . . and lost all fear of him," Betty noted. The leader said that if they had known the test would cause her pain, they would not have done it.

The testing completed, the doctor left as the leader gathered up the samples and placed them in a drawer. He said the doctor had gone off to finish testing Barney. Soon the couple would be allowed to return to the car.

In the time that remained, Betty conversed with the leader, who said he would answer her questions if he could. The exchange was interrupted, however, when a number of crew members rushed into the room in a state of excitement or agitation. They talked with the leader in a language unknown to Betty, and he and they left. On returning shortly thereafter, he opened Betty's mouth and acted as if he were trying to pull her teeth out. When that didn't work, he asked why Barney's teeth were removable and hers weren't. The doctor then appeared, and he, too, looked at her teeth. Laughing heartily, Betty explained that Barney had dentures because human beings lose their teeth as they get older. The doctor, the leader, and the crew members took this all in with incredulous expressions on their faces.

After the others departed, the leader and Betty resumed their conversation. He wanted to know what she meant by "old age." She explained human mortality to him and mentioned that at least theoretically an individual person could live 100 years. The leader

asked what 100 years was. Betty could not get him to understand the concept.

She said that the experience was so fantastic that no one would believe her. Could she bring back some proof? The leader agreed, and Betty picked up a large book. Inside were symbols written in long, narrow columns. He jokingly asked if she thought she could read it. Betty said she wanted it not for its content but for the proof it represented. Then, according to Betty:

I asked where he was from and he asked if I knew anything about the universe. I said no but I would like to learn. He went over to the wall and pulled down a map, strange to me. Now I would believe this to be [a] sky map. It was a map of the heavens, with numerous size [sic] stars and planets, some large, some only pin-points. Between many of these, lines were drawn, some broken lines, some light solid lines, some heavy black lines. They were not straight, but curved. Some went from one planet to another, to another, in a series of lines. Others had no lines, and he said the lines were expeditions. He asked me where the earth was on this map, and I admitted that I had no idea. He became slight [sic] sarcastic and said that if I did not know where the earth was, it was impossible to show me where he was from; he snapped the map back in place. I said that I did not intend to anger him but had told him that I knew nothing of such things. But there were many people here who had knowledge of these things, and I knew that they would love to talk with him, and would understand him. Then I suggested the possibility of arranging a meeting between him and these people, that this would be a monumental meeting; a quiet meeting with scientists, or top people in the world. While I was saying these things, I was wondering if I could do this, but felt that it could be worked out some way. He asked why, and I said that most people did not believe that he existed; he would have a chance to meet us and to study us openly. He smiled and said nothing. I was in the middle of trying to sell him this idea, when several men appeared with Barney, who was still in a daze. I

spoke to him and he did not answer. I asked when he would be fully awake and the leader said as soon as we were back in the car.

As they were going out the door, one of the crew said something, and an excited exchange ensued. The leader and the crew apparently were arguing, and the leader represented the minority position. He broke from the group and took the book from Betty in spite of her protests. This was her only proof, she said. The leader replied that this was precisely the reason they did not want her to have it. He said he had no personal objection to her keeping the book, but he had been overruled; in fact, she would be prevented from even remembering the experience. Deeply upset, Betty swore that one day she would remember it, and there was nothing he could do about it. The leader laughed and agreed that maybe she would remember, but his orders were to do everything to keep her from doing so. In any event, he went on, nobody would believe her. Barney would never remember and would dispute her recollections so that the entire affair would always be clouded in doubt. For her own good it would be best if she forgot.

As they were led from the ship and through the woods, Betty kept saying that she *would* remember. She also pleaded with the leader to return one day. He said it was not his decision to make. Betty thanked him for the meeting and his kindness.

We came to the car, and the leader suggested that we wait and see them leave. We agreed. Barney seemed to wake up as we approached the car, and he showed no emotion as tho [sic] this was an everyday occurrence. We stood on the right hand side of the car. Barney was leaning against the front fender, and I was by the door. As we were waiting, I thought of Delsey. I opened the car door and Delsey was under the front seat. She was trembling badly and I patted her for a moment. She came out and I picked her up, and held her, again leaning against the car door.

Suddenly the ship became a bright glowing object, and it appeared to roll like a ball turning over about 3-4 times and then sailing into the sky. In a moment it was gone. . . .

ty exuberantly declared that this was the most wonderful experience of her life. Barney said nothing. They got into the car, and Barney drove off. "How do you believe in flying saucers?" Betty asked. "Don't be ridiculous," Barney snapped.

*Missing time, unanswered questions.* On November 25 two NICAP members, IBM engineers C. D. Jackson and Robert E. Hohman, visited the Hills and interviewed them at length. A retired Air Force major and old friend of the couple, James MacDonald, who had a personal interest in UFOs, sat in on the meeting. Jackson and Hohman had read Webb's report and had many questions. One concerned the length of time the trip had taken. It should not have taken nearly so long as it did, the investigators remarked. The question shocked Barney and Betty, who realized for the first time that the trip from Colebrook to Portsmouth should have taken less than four hours; yet they had not gotten home until seven hours later. "Even if I allowed more time than I know we took at those roadside stops," Barney told writer John G. Fuller, "there still were at least two hours missing out of that night's trip."

Betty was so upset that she put her head on the table. She searched her memory and got stuck on the vague, odd image of the moon on the ground. How could she have thought that, and where did she get the idea? She did not know, and Jackson and Hohman told her she could not have seen the moon, since it had set earlier in the evening. Maybe, they went on, the "moon" was not the moon but something else.

All that afternoon the Hills tried to reconstruct what had happened to them. Try as they might, they could recall almost nothing of the 35 miles between Indian Head and Ashland. Apparently they both had suffered amnesia. The subject of hypnosis came up. Perhaps hypnosis could unlock the missing memories. Betty thought of her dreams. Could they have been more than dreams? Barney was apprehensive about hypnosis, but it "might clear up Betty and her nonsense about her dreams," Barney said. No one knew a psychiatrist who practiced hypnosis, however.

Meanwhile, starting in February 1962, the Hills began making regular trips searching without success for the encounter site. They hoped that exposure to the setting of the sighting would trigger memories.

The trips were numerous and went on for months but nothing happened. (They would not locate the site until September 1965, and then it would be by accident [Hill, 1980].) In March they learned of Patrick J. Quirke, a psychiatrist who served as medical director of the Baldpate Sanitarium in Georgetown, Massachusetts, 10 miles from Portsmouth. They made an appointment with Dr. Quirke, who listened sympathetically to their story. Quirke, who was interested in UFOs, said he doubted that they had experienced collective hallucination. He discouraged them from trying hypnosis; the effect might be traumatic, he warned. It would be better to let the memories return naturally.

In February or March warts appeared in a neat perfect circle around Barney's groin. They were removed surgically. Their significance would not be apparent until later. Meanwhile other stresses, which Barney thought were unrelated to the UFO experience, plagued him. He had had problems with alcohol in the past, and now he was drinking again. He also developed ulcers. In the summer Barney visited a second psychiatrist, Duncan Stephens of the Exeter Clinic, Exeter, New Hampshire, and commenced therapy. Over the months Barney discussed many things, among them his UFO experience. Though he did not consider it central to his problems, he wondered at his seemingly inexplicable panic. Quirke before him, Dr. Stephens rejected the notion that the Hills had hallucinated simultaneously.

The Hills discussed their UFO sighting at a gathering in September 1963. It was the second they had talked about the event in a public forum; the first had been a less formal presentation at a study group in Quincy, Massachusetts, almost a year earlier), and that evening would prove to the resolution of the case (or its deeper resolution). Another speaker at the gathering, C. Swett of Pease AFB, was intrigued by the time aspect of the story. When the Hills told earlier suggestions that they try hypnosis, Swett was himself a practicing hypnotist, said that that was an excellent idea.

So Barney brought it up to Dr. Stephens in a session, and Stephens in turn contacted Simon, a well-known Boston psychiatrist





Betty and Barney Hill's encounter with a UFO and its crew alerted ufologists to a new aspect of the UFO phenomenon: the abduction.

long employed hypnosis in his practice. An appointment was set up, and the Hills showed up at Dr. Simon's office on December 14. Betty was the more anxious of the two, because she had a nagging fear that her "dreams" were in fact memories of what had happened to the two. Barney, on the other hand, was concerned mostly about whether he could be hypnotized at all.

Simon concluded early on that the UFO experience had more to do with Barney's problems than Barney was willing to acknowledge. This diagnosis had nothing to do with the psychiatrist's feelings about UFOs. He was a committed skeptic who rejected out of hand the notion that UFOs could be extraterrestrial spacecraft. As Webb would write, "He proved to be so skeptical of the spaceship hypothesis that he refused to read the literature and sighting reports I made available to him on the subject" (Webb, 1965). Nonetheless it was clear to Simon that the Hills *believed* they

had seen a UFO. Simon did not doubt that they had seen something, probably an earthly experimental aircraft, and this had set in motion an anxiety-provoking psychological experience whose sources it might be possible to uncover through hypnosis.

*Revelations under hypnosis.* Over the next six months, beginning on January 4 and ending on June 6, 1964, the Hills made periodic trips to Boston and Simon's office.

Barney was the first to undergo hypnosis. The sessions took place out of Betty's hearing, and after the sessions Barney was instructed not to remember what he had said. Betty underwent her first hypnosis on March 7. The experience was an emotional one for both of them. Barney in particular experienced intense fright; his testimony was punctuated with screams and sobs. As in his conscious recall of the event, in his present-tense recounting he firmly resisted the UFO identification; under hypnosis events forced him to confront an unimaginable alien presence—which he again rejected as soon as the amnesia set in.

The experience Betty related under hypnosis was essentially the one she had previewed in her 1961 dreams, except that this time the aliens had neither hair nor big noses. Barney's account was sketchier, perhaps because by both his testimony and Betty's he kept his eyes closed during much of the encounter. Barney reported that the leather strap holding the binoculars had broken as he ran from the field where he had been watching the hovering UFO. He spoke of driving off Route 3, guided there against his will. The same "mind voice" instructed him to take yet one more detour, this one taking him into a deep woods. After driving some distance, Barney spotted six men standing in the road. A bright orange glow illuminated the road, but he could not see its source. The figures, dressed alike in dark clothing, waved him to stop, and he did so. Three approached the car and told him not to be afraid. Their words soothed him slightly but did not alleviate all of his fear. The leader told him to close his eyes. With this instruction Barney had a peculiar impression: "I felt like the eyes had pushed into my eyes."

The men helped Barney out of the car. He felt weak and had to be assisted; two of the men positioned

themselves on either side of him. He could feel his shoes dragging along the ground.

His eyes still closed, he was walked up a ramp, and he stumbled over the bulkhead. Once inside he felt himself going down a corridor and entering a room. He opened his eyes to see three men and a blue, spotlessly clean, wedge-shaped "operating room." He saw a table and knew he was to lie on it. He rested there on his back, his feet hanging over the edge. He closed his eyes again. Soon thereafter he sensed his shoes being removed. A cup was placed over his groin. Barney believed it was used to extract a semen sample from him. One of the men scraped his left arm and looked into his ears and throat. Barney thought he heard other men coming in to the room. After rolling him over, the examiner inserted a cylindrical device up Barney's rectum. He could feel someone counting his vertebrae.

Eventually Barney's shoes were put back on. He got down from the table and was guided out the door and down the ramp. He walked for a short distance before he opened his eyes. The car was not far away. He was surprised to see its lights out because he remembered leaving them on. He looked over his shoulder and saw Betty coming out of the woods. He had no idea what either was doing there.

Their dachshund Delsey was cowering under the seat. Barney got into the car and sat on his pistol. Betty tried to persuade him to get out and watch "it" leave, but he did not know what "it" was supposed to represent. She said, "No one will believe this."

Suddenly there was a glow in the middle of the road. As they stared at it, it got brighter. "Oh, no, not again," Barney groaned. Betty said it must be the moon. As already noted, it could not have been, and apparently the Hills did not really believe it even at the time. This aspect of the experience, however, would never be clarified. At some point soon thereafter, they drove the 20 miles it took them to get back to Route 3. There they heard the beeping sounds again.

Their onboard experience had taken some 30 to 40 minutes, they would estimate, after Simon brought their accounts into consciousness through posthypnotic suggestion and then exposure to the 11 hours

of taped testimony. (Later, however, they would revise that figure to two hours.) Though Betty's "memories" were fuller and richer than Barney's, their accounts were consistent with each other in nearly all particulars. There were, however, a few small differences, mostly related to the appearances of the crew members. Betty saw caps on all of the crew, whereas Barney remembered that only the leader wore a cap. (Curiously, in his conscious, post-sighting account of what he had seen while looking up at the crew from his position on the field, he told Webb all the crew wore caps.) The leader also wore a black scarf over his shoulder.

They agreed that the beings were small, perhaps slightly over five feet tall, and had oddly shaped heads with broad foreheads. Their skin was grayish, and their eyes were large (in Barney's recall large enough to extend to the side of the head). They spoke to each other with a humming or mumbling sound, but Barney was sure that the relatively few messages he received were by thought transference. (He did not know the term "mental telepathy" until Simon explained it to him.) Betty at first thought that the leader and the examiner were speaking English to her but on subsequent reflection decided that she was "hearing" them inside her head.

Simon tried hard to persuade Barney that the abduction was a fantasy inspired by Betty's dreams. Maybe she had "hypnotized" him, Simon suggested. Though earlier he had resisted the idea of a UFO experience, Barney was not buying Simon's theory. For one thing, he pointed out, there were aspects of his testimony unique to him. For example, he said, "She did not tell me about being stopped by the men. She did not have this in her dreams." As for the idea that the abduction was just a hallucination, Barney remarked, "I wish I could think it was." The memories, if that is what they were, seemed too real, as real as any recollection of past experiences whose authenticity was not open to question.

Nonetheless Simon, who considered the extraterrestrial-abduction explanation "supernatural" and therefore not worth consideration, stuck by his contamination-by-dreams hypothesis, which would become the standard alternative explanation for the Hill experience. He later published a short piece on the case,

treating it as a psychological aberration, in a psychiatric journal (Simon, 1967).

However they might disagree about the nature of the experience, the Hills and Simon agreed that the therapy had been successful. The stress and anxiety that had plagued them since that night in September 1961 were gone. At the Hills's request Simon submitted a brief statement to the couple's medical insurance company; Simon noted that the Hills had come to him because of "emotional disturbance created by an experience with an Unidentified Flying Object." When the medical director of the organization responded with predictable skepticism, Simon replied that he had not meant this as a diagnosis, simply as an observation about what was for the Hills a "harrowing experience" which had caused them many psychological problems and which he had treated through hypnosis. The insurers paid up.

*Celebrity and beyond.* Life returned to normal for Barney and Betty. Barney was transferred to the Portsmouth post office, a move he accepted happily, and served as a rural mail-carrier. The couple continued to discuss their UFO experience with family, friends, and the investigators they had met earlier, but they had no desire to go public with a story they were certain few would believe. Then on the afternoon of October 25, 1965, the Hills and their story suddenly became known to the world.

Barney had completed his mail route and had just stepped into the post office when someone showed him a front-page article in the *Boston Traveler*. The headline read: "A UFO Chiller: Did THEY Seize Couple?" Reporter John H. Luttrell had been given a tape of remarks the Hills had given the Quincy UFO group in September 1962, during which Betty had talked about her dreams and her suspicion that she and Barney really had been captured by UFO beings. From other sources Luttrell learned that they had undergone hypnosis with Dr. Simon. He gained access to a tape of an interview they had given investigators after they had completed the therapy. The two tapes, not a direct interview (which the Hills had refused), provided the basis for the story. United Press International picked it up the same day.

The next day, speaking to a reporter for the *Manchester Union Leader*, the Hills were still in a state of shock.

They asked, "What is the effect of this on our lives going to be?" ("Captured," 1965). They considered legal action (for violation of privacy) against Luttrell and the *Traveler*, but their attorney told them they had no case. Like it or not, the Hills were about to become UFO celebrities.

In 1966 author and *Saturday Review* columnist John G. Fuller enlisted their and Simon's cooperation and wrote the best-selling *The Interrupted Journey*, also excerpted as a two-part article in the mass-circulation magazine *Look*. (Eventually the book would be turned into an NBC made-for-television movie, *The UFO Incident*, starring James Earl Jones and Estelle Parsons. It aired on October 20, 1975.)

Barney died suddenly of a cerebral hemorrhage on February 25, 1969. He was 46 years old. A friendly, outgoing woman, Betty recovered from her grief and went on with her life, settling comfortably into her new life as a near-household name. She became intensely interested in UFOs and other anomalous phenomena, spoke at gatherings of all kinds about her and Barney's experience, and—most controversially—started reporting numerous sightings at what she called a "landing area."

From 1972 onwards, Betty was drawn regularly—often as much as two or three times a week—to a rural area near Kingston, a small town about 20 miles southwest of Portsmouth. There, she said, she might see six or eight UFOs a night. Sometimes a UFO would come so close "I could have thrown a rock up and hit the bottom of it" (Clark, 1978).

Saucer-seeking pilgrims joined her on these vigils. So did some reporters and a few ufologists. Among the latter was Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) field investigator John Paul Oswald, who lived in nearby North Hampton. Oswald, who claimed he saw Betty mistake airplanes—and on one occasion a street-light—for UFOs, became an outspoken critic (Burke, 1977c). Walter Webb rejected her current claims, and another prominent New England ufologist, **Raymond E. Fowler**, asserted that the "'UFOs' that Betty is sighting can be readily attributable [sic] to aircraft, street lights, lighted trailers, etc." (Fowler, 1977a, 1977b). Betty, however, made no allegations about further face-to-face encounters with aliens or even glimpses of them inside passing craft. Her critics

believed that her status as a UFO celebrity had affected not her honesty but her judgment. Ufologists feared that her recent claims would adversely affect the credibility of her earlier experience.

A dispute also raged about whether or not radar at Pease AFB had tracked a UFO late on the night of the abduction. In the opening installment of his *Traveler* series, Luttrell wrote, "Although conceding that other persons reported sighting a UFO at the same time and place as the Hills, the Air Force says the UFO appeared on its radar as a 'shimmering'—an air mass phenomena [sic] that reflects light from the ground." In later statements and public appearances Betty would cite the radar tracking as evidence of the reality of her and Barney's experience. In the mid-1970s, when challenged to document the claim, Betty wrote Luttrell, who replied that he long ago had thrown out his notes. He wrote:

My best memory is that the Intelligence Officer at Pease Air Force Base told me conversationally that this strange object first appeared on their radar screen shortly after midnight, probably at or around 12:05 A.M. Perhaps a dozen individuals living in Franconia Notch area of New Hampshire also told me of sighting the brilliant object in the sky somewhere around midnight [Luttrell, 1975].

When investigator Oswald managed to secure copies of the relevant Air Force records, he learned that an unidentified target had been tracked in the sky just above Pease's landing-approach area. There was no corresponding visual sighting. If this was indeed a UFO (which is by no means certain, of course), it was to the south of the Hills's location and so presumably was not the same object. Oswald felt the evidence was ambiguous at best. "I do not see that the evidence available indicates anything other than that an unknown aircraft was officially reported as having been tracked in the Pease landing pattern by at least one and probably two radar sets," he wrote (Oswald, 1976).

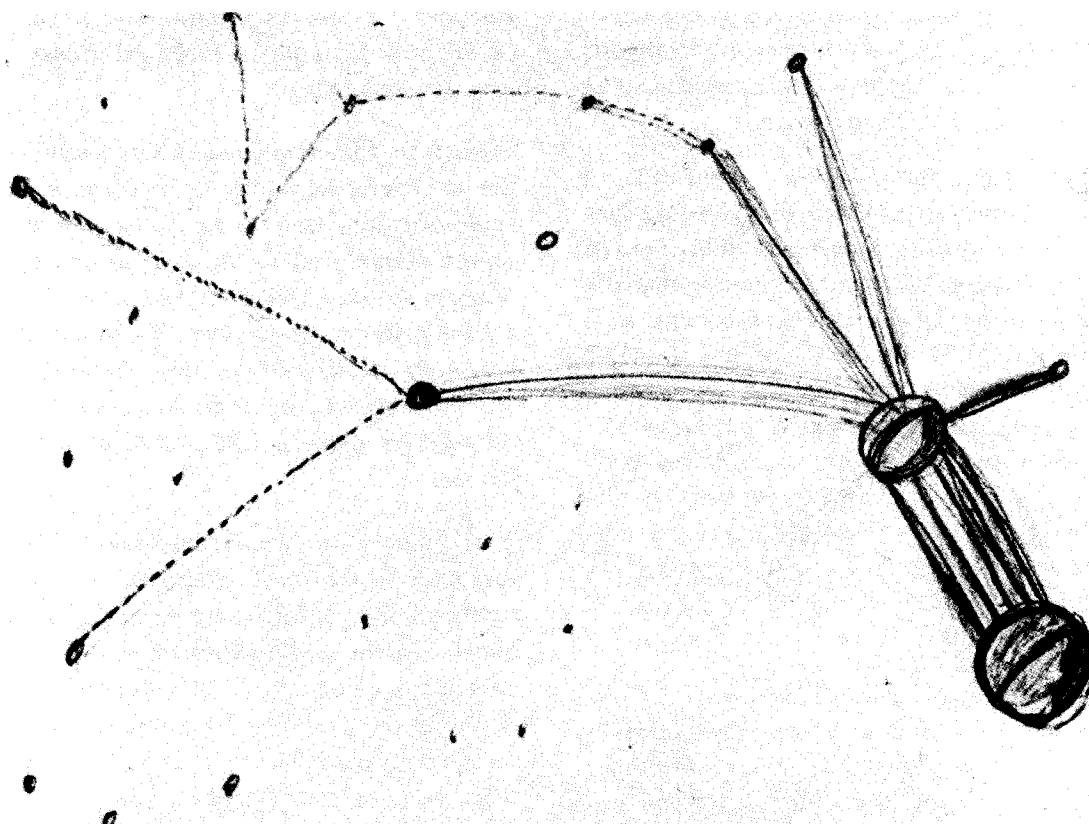
*The star map.* In 1968 an Oak Harbor, Ohio, third-grade teacher and amateur astronomer, Marjorie E. Fish, became so intrigued by the star map Betty allegedly saw aboard the UFO that she resolved to

decipher it. If she could figure out which stars were on the map, perhaps she could determine where the spacecraft came from.

Though Dr. Simon had urged Betty to draw the map, she had been reluctant to do so because she felt she could not draw well enough to render an accurate representation. So he gave her a posthypnotic suggestion that she should sketch it when she felt ready, and not long afterwards she drew 12 connected stars and a number of independent ones. The unbroken lines represented trade routes, broken ones expeditionary routes. The map was reproduced in *The Interrupted Journey*.

Fish had few clues to go on but assumed that our sun was one of the 12 stars. Eventually, with much difficulty and many failed attempts, she created a three-dimensional map (Betty described the map she had seen as like a holograph, three-dimensional in other words) using the sunlike stars within 54 light years of the earth. A pattern emerged strikingly like the one Betty had drawn. The sun turned out to be on the trade route. In Fish's analysis the points of origin—the two most prominent stars on the map—were Zeta 1 and 2 Reticuli, a pair of stars only light weeks' distance from each other yet far enough apart so that stable planetary conditions could evolve.

She published her results first in the January 1974 issue of *Pursuit*, the journal of the Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained, and later that year reported her findings in a lecture to the annual conference of the Mutual UFO Network. Walter Webb endorsed her conclusions. So did Stanton T. Friedman, another scientifically trained ufologist. In the December issue of *Astronomy*, editor Terence Dickinson, heretofore a nonparticipant in UFO debates, wrote an open-minded article and solicited comments from scientists who confessed that they were intrigued. Virtually every issue of the magazine the next year carried letters debating the pros and cons of the map. The most celebrated participant was Cornell University astronomer Carl Sagan, who with associate Steven Soter argued that the apparent pattern was in fact the product of chance. Proponents weighed in with counterarguments. In due course the



Betty Hill drew this star map based on her memory of what she saw on board the UFO that she believes abducted her and her husband Barney. One analysis suggests that the map indicates the craft came from the Zeta Reticuli system.

magazine abandoned the debate, presumably on the theory that everybody who was going to hold an opinion on the matter already held it.

The issue resurfaced several years later in *Fate*, where **Allan Hendry**, formerly CUFOS chief investigator, noted a claim by a French astronomer that recent observations had proven Zeta 2 Reticuli to be a binary (twin) star system. Fish had specifically eliminated all binary stars from consideration, on the grounds that the unstable orbits of any planets orbiting them are unlikely to sustain life over the billions of years it would take for intelligent civilizations to evolve. At the time Fish was reconstructing the map, astronomers believed Zeta 2 Reticuli to be a single star. Hendry wrote:

Remove Zeta 2 Reticuli from the group and the entire interpretation fails. What if one contrives to include sunlike binaries *ex post facto*? Fish herself acknowledged that she had omitted oth-

er sunlike double stars in that volume of space. To reintroduce them would totally disrupt the pattern. Without its special qualities (the absence of binaries, the use of all sunlike stars and so on) the Fish interpretation becomes no more valid than its rivals. Without a strong interpretation to give it meaning, Betty Hill's star map becomes what it was in the first place: an anecdotal curiosity [Hendry, 1982].

Subsequent observation, however, determined that Zeta 2 Reticuli is not a binary system, and Daniel Bonneau, the astronomer who made the claim originally, withdrew it (Bonneau, 1988).

*Theories.* When the abduction part of the Hill story came to light, not all ufologists rushed to embrace it. For example, NICAP—which had been willing to accept the idea that the couple could have seen UFO occupants from a distance—told Luttrell that the abduction was “highly questionable,” no doubt a

fantasy concocted under hypnosis. The following year, this unenthusiastic note appeared on the back page of NICAP's newsletter:

A new book by John Fuller, author of "Incident at Exeter," probing the alleged abduction of a New Hampshire couple by space beings in 1961, is scheduled for publication and newspaper syndication in October. The title is "The Interrupted Journey." Because this book will be receiving widespread publicity before the next U.F.O. Investigator is published, we regret having to comment on it without having read the book. . . .

We fear that Fuller's new book, in spite of his reputation as a careful reporter, will be misused both by the "contactees" and by UFO debunkers, resulting in bad publicity which would set back the current movement for a scientific investigation. Though NICAP's investigation found no evidence of dishonesty by the witnesses, neither did it find any objective evidence to support the story—brought out from the subconscious mind by hypnoanalysis—of being actually taken on board a landed spaceship. That the couple had a UFO sighting we do not doubt. They themselves are not sure about the reality of the "abduction," which first showed up in dreams, then was described under hypnosis.

Ruling out dishonesty, there are two possible explanations for the alleged abduction. Either it really happened as described (for which there is no objective evidence) or the story represents subconscious fears of what might have happened, triggered by a startling close-range sighting (some of the evidence suggests this) ["A Dream," 1966].

As late as 1973 Donald E. Keyhoe, NICAP's former director and otherwise a firm proponent of extraterrestrial UFOs, held to this view (Keyhoe, 1973).

The NICAP claim about their uncertainty notwithstanding, the Hills were long since convinced that the incident occurred just as they recounted it under hypnosis. NICAP, which devoted much of its time to the lobbying of Congress and the courting of respect-

able opinion, was notoriously skittish about **close encounters of the third kind**. In NICAP's view reports of occupants only contributed to the climate of ridicule in which ufology was seen as the pursuit of little green men. When even ordinary CE3s gave it pause, there was no possibility of its endorsing something so exotic as a claimed onboard experience.

On the other hand Webb, NICAP's own investigator, was more open to the possibility. In a long summary of the case he prepared for the organization in 1965, he made these observations:

When I first met the Hills shortly after their experience in the White Mountains, Barney appeared to be deeply concerned by the "leader" in the UFO (first encounter) and by his failure to recall events immediately after watching this figure. Both witnesses were perplexed that they had no conscious recollection of events between the odd beeping sounds nor of the route they traveled in that interval. They vaguely recalled seeing an orange object in the woods, but that was discounted as probably the moon. . . .

It is intriguing to this investigator that under hypnosis these gaps were filled in very nicely, like pieces of a puzzle, and both witnesses largely corroborated each other's accounts (the "inconsistencies" that Dr. Simon speaks of were minor, in my opinion, and would be expected in any experience as complicated and as detailed as this one; in fact, I would be suspicious if all details related by the witnesses agreed precisely). Barney Hill was able to uncover the cause of his block: the leader's eyes and a "voice" that instructed him to come closer. . . . As he obeyed, a ladder began to come down from the UFO. When Barney dropped his binoculars, the strap holding them around his neck broke. Prior to hypnosis, Barney could not remember how or where he had broken the strap. . . .

The end of the first encounter (consciously recalled) flowed smoothly into the beginning of the second encounter . . . and the end of the second encounter flowed into that portion of the trip where the witnesses were once again consciously aware. . . .

If we are indeed dealing with an actual abduction of earthlings by UFO entities and not with imagined events, it is clear that the Hills were *made* to forget parts of the experience by the imposition of hypnotic blocks on their minds. If Barney Hill made no effort to block this imposed amnesia, he would probably not recall the events or at least have great difficulty in recalling them. Similarly, according to this speculation, Betty Hill, in her account, attempted to fight this control and therefore might have recalled the abduction in her dreams. When Barney "recalled" the abduction under hypnoanalysis, he was told by the "voice" to keep his eyes closed and thus his description would not be expected to be as thorough as his wife's. The mysterious "beeps" appear to have had some significance in the controls exerted on the Hills.

Mr. Hill's inspection of his genitals after the sighting (for unconscious reasons) and the wart-like growths that developed later around the same area could have been, in this case, symptomatic of a real experience—the cup-like device placed at that spot on his body. At that time, prior to hypnoanalysis, only the witness's unconscious mind would be aware of the experience [Webb, 1965].

Also consistent with the hypothesis of a real abduction is such suggestive physical evidence as the scuff marks on the tops of Barney's shoes and the pink substance on Betty's dress (though analysis of the pink substance yielded no substantive results [Hill, 1994]). Their psychological stress and confusion were immediate, profound, and far in excess of what one would associate even with a close-proximity sighting, but which would become familiar to investigators as the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder manifested among the growing population of abductees (Wilson, 1990).

As noted earlier, nothing like the Hill abduction story was known in the early 1960s. Moreover, Betty's dreams occurred within days of the incident, weeks before she had any contact with any ufologist. Yet even after over two years of interactions with UFO investigators (from October 1961 to June 1964), the

story she told under hypnosis differed only in a few details about the aliens' facial features from the one she experienced in her dreams. Thus an allegation made in the debunking literature (Baker and Nickell, 1992), that ufologists "influenced" the content of the narrative, is simply baseless; nor could that influence have come from Betty's limited reading of the UFO literature, since nothing in that literature had anything to say about missing time, physical examinations, the pacification effect, rectal probes, semen samples, or other then unknown (though destined to be familiar) elements of the abduction experience.

All debunking treatments of the Hill case mention and endorse Simon's theory that Barney simply incorporated his wife's dreams into an abduction fantasy. All neglect to mention Simon's antipathy to the UFO subject. Debunker Peter Brookesmith actually represents Simon as "entirely unbiased about UFOs as such" and therefore to be trusted when he "concluded that their story was based on dreams, not objective reality" (Brookesmith, 1995). To the contrary, Simon reasoned implicitly that since UFOs do not exist, they cannot kidnap people; thus any other explanation, whatever its inadequacies, would have to do. It was not as if, in other words, he had carefully reflected on the UFO hypothesis, weighed its merits and defects, and at last found it wanting. It simply never entered into his thinking. As folklorist/behavioral scientist David J. Hufford, an articulate critic of such "traditions of disbelief," has written:

[T]here is one kind of logical error that is the peculiar property of disbelievers: i.e. the *a priori* exclusion of one whole class of hypotheses—the supernatural [anomalous] ones—as unnecessary to consider. "It can't be so; therefore it isn't." Very few believers ever categorically exclude material [conventional] explanations from consideration, because their world view includes both kinds of possibility [Hufford, 1982].

Thus Simon's willingness to embrace a theory that did not begin to account for the trauma the normally unflappable Barney experienced *immediately*—a week and a half before Betty even started to have her dreams or had a chance to tell him about them. That trauma still plagued Barney when he visited Simon well over two years later. Even Simon recognized the

connection between Barney's stress and the incident in the White Mountains. Yet Simon could only feebly speculate that Barney had been frightened by an experimental aircraft—one whose existence, one might add, has yet to be documented even now.

At least this identification of the object, unconvincing though it is, is rather more plausible than the alternative proposed by debunkers Philip J. Klass (Klass, 1983, 1988) and Robert Sheaffer (Sheaffer, 1976, 1981): that the Hills's terror and trauma stemmed from a sighting of the planet Jupiter—presumably, we are to suppose, piloted by humanoids who succeeded in flying their planet across the face of the moon.

Two persistent myths permeate portrayals of the Hill case in the debunking literature. One is that Barney, unlike Betty, said the beings had no mouths (Klass, *op. cit.*). Apparently this notion is based on a remark Barney made to Simon, after the hypnosis had ended, that "I just can't remember any mouth." Quoted out of context, as it is here, the sentence creates a misleading impression; in fact Barney was discussing his observation of the occupants from the ground, when his attention was focused on the leader's eyes and his mentally communicated message, "Just keep *looking*—and stay there." Earlier, however, under hypnosis Barney did express an awareness of a mouth when, speaking of the leader, he said, "his lips are not moving." For lips not to move, of course, they have to be there. He would also describe the mouths this way: they looked "much like when you draw one horizontal line, with a short perpendicular line on each end. The horizontal line would represent the lips without the muscle that we have." Barney's sketch of the beings, drawn as he entered a trancelike state while listening to a tape recording of his account of the encounter, shows a slitlike mouth with no apparent muscles.

A second myth holds that at one point in her testimony Betty dropped a telltale contradiction into the discussion, of the sort that should have alerted any attentive reader to the dreamlike nature of her alleged experience. Whereas early in the account, according to Klass and other critics, the aliens had no concept of time, later—just as Betty was about to leave with the book—the leader said, "Wait a mi-

nute." How, critics asked, could someone who knew nothing of time know about a minute?

This only seems like a reasonable question. Let us consider three versions, in Betty's own words, of what happened at that moment in the encounter. The first of these is from Betty's record of her dreams, written about a month afterwards:

We started to walk out the door, when one of the men said something, not understood by me. They all stopped and were talking excitedly. The leader went back and talked with them. A disagreement had occurred, and the leader seemed to be the minority. He came up to me and took the book.

The next comes from Luttrell's article, quoting an account Betty gave UFO investigators shortly after they had ceased undergoing therapy from Simon:

We started to walk out the door when one of them stopped me and they all began talking excitedly. It was apparent there was a disagreement and I watched this battle, or whatever it was. Then the leader came over to me and took the book away.

And finally, from hypnosis with Simon:

And we are out in the corridor. . . . And I am all ready to go down the ramp when some of the other men—not the leader—but some of the men are talking. I don't know what they are saying, but they are very excited. And then the leader comes over and takes my book.

It is not clear where the "wait a minute" element entered the story, or who introduced it. It is not to be found in Betty's original testimony. Either it is a debunker's invention, or—a more charitable hypothesis—it is drawn from a later, casual retelling by Betty who possibly used the phrase as a kind of rhetorical shorthand without meaning to imply that the leader actually spoke it. Whatever the case, the employment of it to advance debunking arguments is dishonest and indefensible.

The debunkers, one cannot help noting, miss a larger and more troubling problem. It is *extremely* difficult to believe that a technologically sophisticated spacefaring civilization would not have a sense of time.



Another attempt to explain away the Hill encounter, or at least a portion of it, has been proposed by Martin Kottmeyer, a UFO skeptic and a student of popular culture. Twelve days before Barney underwent hypnosis on February 22, 1964, an episode of *Outer Limits*, a science-fiction television show, featured an alien with wraparound eyes. The alien is given these words of dialogue: "In all the universes, in all the unities beyond all the universes, all who have eyes have eyes that speak." Under hypnosis Barney says at one point, as he encounters the beings on the road, "Only the eyes are talking to me." Kottmeyer finds this significant and further observes that Barney said nothing about wraparound eyes in his earlier conscious testimony (Kottmeyer, 1990, 1994).

This is a point, but not much of one. For one thing, Kottmeyer did not trouble to inquire of Betty Hill, who is still alive, if she and her husband were in the habit of watching *Outer Limits*. (When asked by another writer, Betty said, "As for the *Outer Limits* program—never heard of it. Barney worked nights. If he was not working, we were never home because of our community activities. If we had been home, I am sure this title would not interest us" [Hill, 1995].) In his conscious memory, dating from that night in September 1961 (long before the airing of the show, in other words), Barney could recall seeing the beings only from a distance, from which perspective the precise shape of the eyes may not have been easily apparent. He did, however, remember vividly the intense stare and the apparent mental message that the beings were about to capture him. The sense of being caught in the stare, and of being the recipient of communication in that state, is consistent with his later testimony.

Under hypnosis, interestingly, Barney says something whose significance would be apparent only many years later. After expressing his fears about the talking eyes, he states, "All I see are these eyes. . . . I'm not even afraid that they're not connected to a body. They're just *there*. They're just up close to me, pressing against my eyes. That's funny. I'm not afraid." This aspect of the story was overlooked in virtually all subsequent rehash and analysis of the Hill case, but eventually strikingly similar testimony would emerge in the accounts of other abductees. As the abductees told it, the abductors placed their faces right up against theirs and stared into their eyes. David M.

Jacobs quotes these words from a woman under hypnosis:

I'm looking into those eyes. I can't believe that I'm looking into eyes that big. . . . Once you look into those eyes, you're gone. You're just gone. . . . I can't think of anything but those eyes. It's like the eyes overwhelm me. How do they do that? It goes inside you, their eyes go inside you. You just are held. You can't stop looking. If you wanted to, you couldn't look away. You are drawn into them, and they sort of come into you [Jacobs, 1992].

Another investigator, Karla Turner, quotes an abductee who says, "The ETs like to put their noses almost on my nose, and when they do this I just stare into their eyes. Sometimes that's all I ever see, their eyes, and nothing else that's happening" (Turner, 1994).

Even Kottmeyer refrains from contending that such accounts can be traced to a few overlooked sentences among the many Barney spoke during hours of hypnotic testimony. Having exhausted the argument, he retreats into "psychological symbolisms" which he professes to find meaningful and others may see as evidence of Kottmeyer's reluctance to entertain more heretical and disturbing possibilities.

In any event, Kottmeyer's assertions about wrap-around and speaking eyes, while of some interest, simply do not tell us anything about the nature of the Hills's experience. Instead we are given a small detail, taken out of the much larger context of a complex experience, and asked to think of it as the only issue of consequence, and then, what is more, to dismiss testimony from other persons about this same obscure detail as irrelevant to consideration of its reality status. What is missing in Kottmeyer's argument is a coherent hypothesis, though it is hard to imagine what that hypothesis would be.

The notion that the Hills encountered extraterrestrials and interacted with them aboard a spacecraft is unprovable, of course. The evidence supporting it is circumstantial and anecdotal. Only those who consider such an event at least *possible* will see it as one potential explanation for what happened that memorable evening. Perhaps its principal virtue is that it is the only explanation that is of a piece, that respects

the testimony, and that does not assign to the Hills irrational behaviors, lurid delusions, and impaired judgments of the sorts ordinarily associated with grave mental disturbance.

The resolution of the Hill case awaits the resolution of the UFO question itself. If UFOs do not exist, then Barney and Betty did not meet with aliens. If UFOs do exist, they probably did (in which case, it should be added, we shall likely have to presume that Betty misunderstood what the leader was trying to communicate about his people's relationship to time). The evidence available to us from this incident alone provides no answers surer than these. In other words, no answers at all. For now anyway.

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Later that year Hynek, Vallee, and other scientist/engineer/ufologists associated with the AIAA held a day-long UFO symposium in Los Angeles. Another symposium, held in January 1978 at the California Museum of Science and Industry, featured pro- and anti-ETH speakers. One observer complained that the meeting "added little to our knowledge" ("AIAA Symposium," 1978).

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**ANDREASSON ABDUCTION CASE**

The "Andreasson affair" is among the most complex of all abduction stories, and so fantastic that even those who believe UFO abductions to be possible have had a hard time crediting some aspects of it. Yet the sincerity of the participants seems beyond dispute. The account that follows draws on a variety of sources, most prominently the work of **Raymond E. Fowler**.

Betty Andreasson, a Massachusetts woman, became known to investigators when she wrote a letter to J. Allen Hynek, Northwestern University astronomer, former consultant to **Project Blue Book**, and now director of the Center for UFO Studies, after she read a newspaper article about him. The letter, dated August 20, 1975, read: "I am so happy to read someone is finally studying about UFOs. Now I can tell someone of . . . my experience . . . an encounter in 1967 with UFO occupants."

Some months later Hynek forwarded the letter to the Mutual UFO Network's Humanoid Study Group. Several of its most active investigators, including Fowler, Jules Vaillancourt, and David Webb, lived in Massachusetts, and they secured the services of Harold J. Edelstein, director of the New England Institute of Hypnosis. In January 1977 the investigation commenced with a preliminary interview with Vaillancourt.

*The story emerges.* When the experience took place, early on the evening of January 25, 1967, Betty's husband James was in the hospital recovering from a severe injury sustained in an automobile accident. Betty's parents Waino and Eva Aho had moved into their daughter's South Ashburnham house to help her take care of the seven children, aged three to 11. At 6:35, as the house lay wrapped in fog, the lights started to flicker, then blinked out. An eerie, vacuum-

like stillness fell. The children ran into the kitchen to find their mother. A pink light was shining through the window. As Betty took the frightened children back into the living room, her father looked into the backyard through a pantry window and was startled to see "creatures." Ten years later he provided this statement to the investigators:

These creatures that I saw through the window of Betty's house were just like Halloween freaks. I thought they had put on a funny kind of head-dress imitating a moon man. It was funny the way they jumped one after the other—just like grasshoppers. When they saw me looking at them, they stopped. . . . [T]he one in front looked at me and I felt kind of queer. That's all I know.

Betty's next conscious memory was of waking up the next morning. Everything seemed well except for a disquieting sense that something out of the ordinary had happened; yet she could recall little of it. Her daughter Becky, 11, thought she had had a bad dream. Over the next weeks, months, and years Betty experienced occasional flashes of apparent memories of humanoid beings and an otherworldly environment.

Placed under hypnosis on several occasions in 1977, Betty related that following the appearance of the creatures every member of the family except her entered a state of paralysis "as if time had stopped for them." Five humanoid beings appeared suddenly in the house, after passing through the closed front door moving in unison. About four feet in height, they were gray-skinned humanoids with large, slanted, wrap-around eyes and oversized heads with holes for nose and ears. Their mouths were slitlike, and their gloved hands had three digits. On the left shoulder of each being was an emblem resembling a bird with outstretched wings.

Betty, a Christian fundamentalist, thought they must be angels. Their strange appearance notwithstanding, they seemed friendly and addressed her (always telepathically) by name. The leader, slightly taller than the rest, identified himself as "Quazgaa"—a phonetic spelling subsequently developed by Betty and the investigators. Betty got the impression that the beings wanted something to eat, and she took them to the kitchen, where she proceeded to cook

meat. They told her, "But that's not our kind of food. Our food is tried by fire, knowledge tried by fire. Do you have any food like that?" Betty led them to the living room and showed them the Bible. In return Quazgaa handed her a blue book. Then

the leader put the book [the Bible] in his hand. . . . And he waved his hand over it, and other Bibles appeared, *thicker* than the original. Then he passed it to those beside him and they took the books and each one was spontaneous. They somehow flipped it, page by page, and looked down. Each page was pure white, luminous white. And then they stopped—and I started to look in the little blue book.

At this moment, Becky would testify under hypnosis, she briefly returned to consciousness. Talking in the voice of the 11-year-old girl she was at the time, she spoke of seeing little "clay" men with her mother. One was holding on to a "blue book." "The head, the tallest one looked right around across where the kids were and Gram was, right over to me, and then he stopped when he saw me standing there," Becky said. "And then he went from me, right back around, and started talking or looking at Mom. And then, all I can see is nothing but darkness—then nothing."

Betty remembered little of the book's contents, just that its "first three pages were snow white, luminous white." Other pages contained images which she would shortly and unexpectedly encounter again.

Questioned about their motives, the beings said they had "come to help . . . because the world is trying to destroy itself." They insisted she come with them, repeating the question "Would you follow us?" in deliberate, almost mantralike fashion, meanwhile staring hypnotically into her eyes. They assured her that neither she nor her family would be harmed.

Quazgaa instructed her to stand directly behind him. As if by "suction" they were pulled through the closed door. They floated weightlessly in a "swooping" motion through the haze. In the backyard they came upon a landed disc-shaped UFO. Quazgaa said, "See, you can trust me. Look over at the ship." According to Betty, "he made the bottom like glass. I could see through it!" Through the transparent bottom she saw rotating crystalline globes of the sort that

had produced the pulsating light she and the others had seen at the initiation of the episode. She noticed that the mechanism looked like some of the drawings in the blue book.

She and the entities floated inside the craft. As Quazgaa conferred with another being, two others took her to a domed room in an upper deck. The walls were covered with mirrors, shields, and symbols. As she stood paralyzed, a cameralike device emerged from the wall. Transported by elevator to the main deck, she was told to stand on a platform illuminated from above by "cleansing" lights. Then she was led to the door of a wedge-shaped room in which one of the entities told her she was to change into a white garment. She protested but eventually followed instructions.

In an examination room lighted from an unknown source, she was floated onto a table. Quazgaa, now dressed like the others in a silvery white uniform with gloves, entered the room and waved a fan-shaped device over Betty. "You are not completely filled with the light," he declared. "I believe I am filled with the light!" Betty retorted, apparently persisting in her religious interpretation of the experience and the beings' statements and actions.

Next Quazgaa pushed a long silver needle up her left nostril. It penetrated into her head and caused intense pain, which Quazgaa alleviated by touching her forehead. Another of the entities handed Quazgaa a webbed paper or roll which he opened and examined for a short time, then handed back to his companion. The needle was removed. At the end of it was a "little ball with little prickly things on it." Apparently the ball had been inside her head and the beings were retrieving it. Again paying no heed to Betty's protests, the entities stuck a needle into her navel. Once more a laying of hand on head stopped the pain Betty felt. They explained they were measuring Betty for "procreation." As Betty felt the device moving around inside her, Quazgaa and his companions seemed puzzled and talked among each other about "missing parts." They discussed further tests, but Quazgaa overruled them. Betty thought the confusion stemmed from the fact that she had had a hysterectomy.

Something that resembled a big plastic or glass eye descended from the middle of the ceiling, positioned

itself close to her stomach, examined it, then ascended. This part of the examination was painless, but Betty complained about her earlier discomfort. "I'm very sorry," Quazgaa answered. "It needed to be done." After conferring in another part of the room, he and three smaller companions returned to stand around the table on which Betty lay. Quazgaa waved his hands over Betty, who abruptly snapped to a sitting position and floated above the table. As the beings floated beside, behind, and in front of her, she assumed a vertical stance. She returned to the room where she had left her clothes.

After changing into them, she and the beings entered a corridor reminiscent of a subway tunnel. They floated into a room with eight glass chairs. She sat on one as the beings put a transparent cover over her. A sensation of cold enveloped her, and she felt as if moisture were being drawn from her body. Placed in a second chair with the same kind of cover, Betty had tubes inserted into her mouth and nostrils as a gray liquid poured down and immersed her. All the while she kept her eyes closed, as instructed. At one point she was directed to swallow a sweet-tasting liquid, delivered through the tube connected with her mouth. Betty felt soothing "vibrations" pulsing through her body.

Finally the vibrations ceased, and the liquid drained out. Betty would conclude that she had been placed in the chairlike apparatus so that her body could be shielded in transit. She was shortly to learn that she had gone somewhere else.

*Fantastic voyage.* When she opened her eyes, she saw two figures approaching her. They were wearing black hoods or cloths over their heads. They took her from the chair, positioned her between them, and floated through a door into a dark tunnel, in the opposite direction from which the trio had come earlier. As they moved past the chipped walls ("like a coal tunnel") just above a sort of track, Betty glimpsed large dark holes which she took to be the entrances to other tunnels. The only illumination was the soft glow cast by her companions' silvery suits.

The tunnel curved upward slightly, revealing a mirror-like obstruction from which an "infrared light . . . vibrated." The three passed through the glass without encountering any resistance, and they entered a

world of shimmering red color. Everything was red except for the black track. They were moving toward two square buildings, one on each side of the track. As they got closer, Betty was horrified to see bizarre-looking creatures crawling up and down the buildings and in and out of the windows. Though headless, the creatures, Betty said, had "two eyeballs" on the tips of stalks extending from the tops of their bodies. The stalks were able to move independently of each other. "And they've skinny arms and legs and kind of a full body. And their eyes can move every which way, and they can climb just like monkeys. . . . They are all around, and they keep looking at us." Betty's companions would not tell her who or what these creatures were.

The three passed by the creatures. The track curved upward once more, and now they went through a circular entrance and entered a universe of green colors, plants, and light of no discernible source. Of this place Betty would say:

It's beautiful here. . . . [T]hey are taking off those black hoods. And . . . going along and it seems like mist or sea or something off to the side there. Beautiful. And we're like on a narrow, narrow passage of land and we're gliding across it. And off to the side, I see—I don't know if they are fish or what. It looks like a combination of fish and bird. And it seems like it's haze all over, and fog, and yet it's light so I can see it. And we are going someplace.

In the distance, off toward a vague horizon, she could see buildings. Speaking under hypnosis, Betty had a hard time putting into words what she was seeing—"unless I'm just *feeling* or *thinking* the colors. Because it's green all around, and yet I can see the color in it." As they neared the city, the three stopped momentarily to allow something to pass by on one of the other sets of elevated tracks crisscrossing the area. What it was, she said, "I can't ever explain it!" It was "something white."

The track now rose to take them over a pyramid with a Sphinx-like head on it. The city was still distant from her, though now off to her side. Set against the green sky she could make out domes and buildings that were "a lot like science fiction."

Suddenly a bright light loomed in front of them. It turned out to be composed of geometrically shaped crystalline prisms through which beautiful colors reflected. They passed through the crystals and beyond them observed a vague light. When they got close enough, Betty—already reeling from all the incredible sights—could scarcely believe what she was seeing: a 15-foot-high birdlike apparition which looked something like a long-necked eagle. It was "standing with its wings and the lights in back of it," she related under hypnosis, and it was not a mere image or statue; it was breathing. As the three continued their approach, the temperature rose, growing almost unbearably hot.

Now Betty started to panic and grew ever more fearful as "rays . . . like little tiny gold specks" shot out from the light behind the bird. Betty felt "vibrations" in her hands and feet. The light started to blind her, and a small fire erupted where the bird stood. She closed her eyes, only to open them soon afterwards when the light dimmed and the temperature dropped. When she looked, the bird was gone, and the fire was burning down, dimming to a reddish glow and then a pile of gray ashes and red embers.

Not only had the heat been reduced, but now it was actually cold. As she shivered, Betty noticed a glowing coal in the fire. It dimmed and became more gray, then turned into a "big fat gray worm just lying there." At that moment a booming voice with no visible source spoke. "You have seen, and you have heard. Do you understand?"

"No, I don't understand what this is all about, why I'm even here," Betty replied. The voice said, "I have chosen you to show the world." Betty asked if the speaker were "the Lord God." "I shall show you as time goes by," it said. Asked "Are you my Lord Jesus?", the voice responded, "I love you. God is love, and I love you." Betty wanted to know why she was there and was told, "Because I have chosen you." Pressed for further information, the speaker said only that the time would come when her faith would be rewarded. Betty broke into an emotional declaration of her Christian faith, which the voice acknowledged by saying, "That is why you have been chosen." It spoke of her fear and said, "I can release you, but you must release yourself of that fear through my

son." At that Betty began sobbing uncontrollably and praising God, on the belief that "my son" was a reference to Jesus.

At the conclusion of the exchange, Betty was taken back through the green and red worlds. In transit she witnessed the same sights as before, including the stalk-eyed creatures and the mirror, and again she was put in a chair on which a liquid substance rained down and in which she was given a sweet fluid to drink. Everything was more or less the same on the return trip except that the beings were behaving with a "lot more sympathy." When Betty would start to feel fearful or uncomfortable, the beings would calm her simply by waving or laying on their hands.

She had a final conversation with Quazgaa. Putting his hands on her shoulders, he stared deeply into her eyes and said, "Child, you must forget for a while." Under his hypnotic gaze Betty saw, or imagined she saw, his eyes grow larger and his head become beelike. One eye turned white. Quazgaa told her that he and his companions loved the human race, which they had come to help; human beings would be healed of their self-destructive impulses only if they study nature and seek knowledge through their spiritual side. According to Betty:

He says that he has had others here. . . . Many others have locked within their minds, secrets. . . . He is locking within my mind certain secrets. . . . They will be revealed when the time is right. . . . Again, he's putting both hands up on my shoulders. And he's saying, "Go, child, now, and rest."

Two smaller beings, each holding a luminous globe, led her out of the ship through the backyard fog and into the Andreasson home. The other family members were still frozen like statues. Using the globes apparently as control devices, the two beings led all except Betty to their respective bedrooms. One of the entities, who identified himself as Joohoop when Betty asked his name, told her she could keep the blue book for 10 days. "There is writing that will be discerned only through the spirit," he said. "And it's the writing of light." He led Betty upstairs. She crawled into bed, and he leaned over, still holding the

ball of light, to wave his hand over her face. The last thing she was aware of was a roaring sound.

Three days later Becky came to her mother to tell her about a vivid, disturbing dream she had had. Betty took her aside and said it was no dream; to prove it, she took the blue book out of her bedroom closet. "Now, don't tell anybody," she said, "because it's very important. It's from Jesus." When she was alone, six days after this, she went through the book carefully for the first time. It consisted of some 40 pages of thin paper. Some pages were luminous. The book consisted of "strange writing," numbers, and symbols. "It was a book of initiation of mysteries of everything that is," Betty explained vaguely to investigators. "The written meaning to it cannot be written by our words."

Curiously, as she recounted this episode during a hypnosis session on July 23, 1977, Betty was suddenly gripped with the coldness and paralysis she associated with her abduction. She uttered sounds which the investigators interpreted as an unknown, unearthly language. The implication was that the beings were preventing her from revealing more about what was in the book. Through Betty a being named Andantio acknowledged his presence. Andantio refused to communicate directly, saying only that he was "from the same place as those that have been before him." Questioned as to what that place was, Betty pleaded that she could neither pronounce nor spell it. "It begins with Z," she said. "There's too many consonants and very few vowels in it."

"The question remained," Fowler would write, "as to whether we had actually communicated with an alien, or with Betty's subconscious mind" (Fowler, 1979).

*The further story.* This incident, complex, fantastic, and unbelievable as it may be, would be only the beginning of the Andreasson affair. The principal investigator, Raymond Fowler, would write four books on the case: *The Andreasson Affair* (1979), *The Andreasson Affair, Phase Two* (1982), *The Watchers* (1990), and *The Watchers II* (1995). What follows is a highly condensed summary of their contents:

Further hypnotic probing brought forth apparent memories of life-long interactions with extraterrestrials. On August 7, 1944, Betty, then a small child,



was struck in the head by something that looked like a luminous bee. She felt drowsy and soon passed out. Inside her head she heard voices which spoke of future encounters and told her she would forget this one. In the summer of 1949, while playing in the woods in Westminister, Massachusetts, she encountered a humanoid like those she would see again in her adult life. The being pressed a button on his suit, and a luminous globe struck her forehead. Mental voices said she would have an important experience but would not be ready for it until another year. She would not remember what had just happened.

In the fall of the next year, she saw a moon-shaped object land one sunny morning. She experienced paralysis, and suddenly she was inside a white room watching three small beings float toward her. They floated her into a room where she was suspended over a table. Light globes were placed by her head and feet, and another light enclosed her in a square. In another room she met taller beings, about five feet tall, but otherwise similar in appearance to the others. She was placed on a cushion, which began to spin. A mist fell on her, and lights flashed above her.

The craft plunged into a body of water, then rose above it. Next Betty was inside an icy cave, where within crystalline structures were various motionless human beings, sometimes in the company of domestic animals, from various periods of history, as if in a museum display. Leaving the craft, Betty and one of the taller beings floated in a vertical position into a dark, damp, misty place where she observed other beings standing near disc-shaped machines. She was put into a clam-shell-shaped device which brought her to a forest of clear glass in the company of a small being. When she touched a glass butterfly, it briefly came to life.

"We are drawing closer to home where the One is," the being remarked. In front of her, she saw a door in a glass wall. As she stood there, she underwent an out-of-body experience and in that state passed through the door. She would not tell investigators what happened after that, and her narrative resumed when she returned, in a happy state of mind, through the door. There she met a tall, white-haired man wearing a "long nightgown." He led her to a clam-shell transport. Betty was taken to what looked like a mine

tunnel, then put on another craft. She was floated onto a table, and the beings took out her right eye, then implanted a tiny device into her head with a luminous needle. Other objects were put into her spine and heels. In another room she was placed in a chair, and a gray jelly covered her. The beings took her to the whirling cushion.

The next thing she was aware of, she stood in a field with the craft, a sphere, resting on three legs. "Solid light" beams emanated from the top and then stopped as if they had been chopped off. She saw a door and an emblem which looked like a sunburst. Accompanied by a taller being and two smaller ones, the latter carrying luminous globes, they headed toward Betty's home. The taller being said they were watching over her, but she would not be permitted to remember them yet. The smaller beings held globes toward her, and her memories faded.

On September 24, 1961, Betty had a time-lapse experience. Hypnosis elicited a story of an encounter with a tall gray humanoid, who gave her a Christian-flavored message, told her she had a role to play in bringing others to salvation, and warned her evil beings sought to harm the human race.

Her next encounter with the beings was in 1967, as already described in detail. It was the first one in which Betty consciously recalled enough detail to know that some kind of UFO-related experience had taken place.

In 1973 Betty was abducted from her bedroom as her sleeping husband, whom she was unable to awaken, lay beside her. Taken into a craft hovering in her backyard, she saw a frightened young woman lying on a table, her legs up. Betty sought to comfort her as the woman gave birth to, in Betty's words, a "little fetus" with "big black eyes." The fetus was put into a container of gray liquid. A second fetus, this one with smaller, humanlike eyes, then emerged from the woman. The beings explained to Betty, according to her, "The fetuses become them—like them. They said they're watchers . . . and they keep seed from man and woman so the human form will not be lost." Later Betty was taken outside the craft and into a forest clearing, where she saw the woman again, along with another UFO, with hoses stretching into a

nearby lake, and globe-wielding humanoids. Betty heard a loud bang, and in her vision everything turned red. The inner part of her right eye hurt. Two beings floated Betty and the young woman into the original craft, where they were placed inside a glass cylinder and sprinkled with a thick, jellylike substance.

Subsequently they were floated, without clothing, back to the clearing. They saw a third, larger ship approach and hover overhead. A door opened on the second craft, and beings emerged carrying what looked vaguely like "house jacks," which they placed in the ground surrounding the first craft at a 10-foot distance. A naked human male floated out of the craft and sat on the grass a short distance away, looking embarrassed. Other beings came out and placed grapefruit-sized silver balls on top of the jacks. Then, in Betty's words:

And the man is all shiny, just like us [apparently from the liquid]. And all of that [sic] beings are stepping to the side. And there's beings beside me and beside that lady that they took the fetus from. And that huge craft is hovering silently right over that second craft on the ground, and . . . there's things like legs coming out, or arms coming out, from underneath the big craft. And they're coming down and they're clamping on the edge . . . of the bottom craft. And it's like sitting there. . . . [T]here's something coming out of the big craft on the bottom. And there's something coming up from the smaller craft underneath—in the center. And it's starting to move. It's starting to move counterclockwise. . . . The big ship and the small ship . . . they're not moving. But the thing in the middle is . . . starting to spin and spin and spin. . . . It's like clouds all around. And it's causing rainbows. And those balls of light hanging in the air over those jacks are turned, like, a blue color. Real bright blue. . . . That stuff is causing a fog all over now. . . . It's so warm, it's almost smothering. . . . And there's lightning coming all over the place. . . . It's even hitting those balls, those blue balls.

Rain started to fall, washing the shiny liquid off the three human beings. Betty felt "prickly" all over her body, as if from static electricity. The balls of light

turned to a white color, and the beings retrieved the balls and the jacks. Another brought Betty her nightgown and the young woman her clothes. The man, still naked, was led into the craft from which he had emerged earlier, and soon afterwards the woman was taken there, too. The cylinder that had been spinning between the large craft and the smaller craft—the one now holding the two humans—disappeared inside the latter's top. The clamps extending from the large craft were removed. Two beings from the small craft pulled in the hoses. They and other beings who had been outside returned to the craft, leaving Betty behind.

Suddenly the lights along the rim of the large craft went on, illuminating the small craft beneath it, which proceeded to shrink to the size of a car. Both rose into the air, and the small craft flew off over the lake. The big craft shot a light toward the one remaining jack in the ground, and when it hit the tip, tiny lights of many colors, like sparkles or fireflies, swirled around, then headed in a stream through a door on the still-landed first craft, the one Betty had been in.

Two beings, placing themselves in front and back of her, floated her into the craft. Having just seen the large craft position itself above it, she was worried that "they're gonna shrink us, too." Inside Betty witnessed various sights, at one point entering a sort of biosphere containing trees, ferns and a pond full of fish. While there, among the marvels she encountered were tiny, perfectly proportioned humanoids. Eventually Betty was returned to her home, walked up the stairs, and put to bed. A being instructed her to forget everything until "they" decided it was appropriate to remember.

Interactions with the beings continued over the ensuing years. In 1975 she was informed it was now time for her to start remembering, and the following year, in another bedroom encounter, the beings said her marital difficulties soon would cease. Her marriage to James Andreasson ended in divorce not long afterwards. In 1977 she had an experience which led her to believe, correctly, that tragedy was imminent. Other abductions and otherworldly journeys would occur periodically in the 1980s. In 1987 and 1988 she found scooplike scars on her body; she attributed these to the beings' taking of tissue samples.

*Bob Luca.* For a time in the late 1970s, Betty lived in Florida. There she met a Connecticut man named Bob Luca. Luca had learned of Betty's UFO experiences through a mutual friend. Having had a UFO experience himself, he sought her out, and the two began dating. Married on August 21, 1978, they bought a home in Connecticut, which soon became the site of weird manifestations, including apparitional appearances, unexplained sounds, and out-of-body experiences.

In June 1967, at 10:30 A.M., Luca was driving between Wallingford and Durham, Connecticut, when he saw two large cigar-shaped objects hovering over some woods. Two smaller oval-shaped devices dropped out of one of the cigars. One shot off as the other disappeared behind the trees a quarter-mile away. Luca had no memory of what happened after that. When he returned to consciousness, it was 2 P.M.

Fowler and his associates focused their investigative attentions on Luca. Under hypnosis he told of being taken into a UFO and subjected to a physical examination by large-headed, big-eyed humanoids. A later hypnosis session brought to light an experience from the summer of 1944, when Luca was five years old. While playing on a swing, he saw a disc-shaped object and beings with hairless gray skin and big eyes. The beings said they were there to prepare people; they had met others, and one day he might meet them. A light beamed into his eyes erased his memory.

In October 1977 Bob and Betty came up to New England on a visit. Their principal purpose was to move their respective belongings down to Florida, but they also spent time with the Massachusetts ufologists. On the evening of the nineteenth, the couple were conversing on the phone when suddenly a male voice, sounding furious and speaking rapidly in an unfamiliar language, broke in. Bob and Betty heard clickings and machine sounds in the background. Though Bob could understand nothing of what was being said, Betty thought she heard phrases such as "it is done" and "it is finished." Alarming images filled her head, and she felt a deep sense of sorrow. That night strange lights appeared in her home. The next day, talking with Fowler, Betty expressed the fear that something terrible was about to

happen. Twenty-four hours later her sons James, 21, and Todd, 17, were killed in an auto accident.

Bob and Betty believe that their meeting was no accident, that in some way the extraterrestrials have brought them together to fulfill a mission for them. This mission is to alert human beings to the presence of the "watchers." Speaking under hypnosis, Betty paraphrases a response she got when she asked who the beings are:

He says that they are the caretakers of nature and natural forms—the watchers. They love mankind. They love the planet earth, and they have been caring for it and man since man's beginning. They watch the spirit in all things. . . . Man is destroying much of nature. . . . They are curious about the emotions of mankind. . . . [Theirs] is a forever love—constant, continual. . . . [T]hey have been taking the form from man . . . [f]or hundreds and hundreds of years. . . . [T]hey have collected the seed of man, male and female. . . . And they have been collecting every species and gender of plant for hundreds of years.

On another occasion Quazgaa gave Betty this message:

We are coming to the earth. Man is going to fear because of it. We love the human race. We have come to help the human race. We do not want to hurt anybody, but because of great love we cannot let man continue in the footsteps he is going. It is better to lose some than to lose all. It is through the spirit, but men will not search out that portion.

In 1973, when she witnessed the births of the two babies, Betty was told that "as time goes by, mankind will become sterile. They will not be able to produce [sic]." For this reason the beings collect human "seed." By "seed" it is unclear whether the being meant sperm and egg samples or fetuses.

*Raymond Fowler.* In the course of his participation in the Andreasson investigation, Fowler was led to reflect on a number of odd occurrences in his own life, going all the way back to first-grade nightmares of paralysis and a dark figure. In later years he experienced UFO sightings and paranormal phenomena. In July 1988, with hypnotist Anthony Constantino, he



Abductees Betty Andreasson Luca and her husband Robert Luca believe themselves to be on a mission given them by benevolent extraterrestrials in the service of the "government of God."

sought to recover what he suspected might be hidden memories associated with these experiences.

According to the hypnotically elicited testimony, in 1938 or 1939, when he was five or six years old, a figure wearing a black coat or cloak and a hat entered Fowler's bedroom in Danvers, Massachusetts, on at least two occasions. The figure had a "pastel-white face" and no eyebrows. As it approached, the terrified boy tried to rise but could not move. His next memory was of waking up. The adult Fowler would have dismissed this episode as a dream except for the strange (and consciously recalled) experience he and his grown daughter underwent one day in 1981 while skating on a golf course near the Fowler residence. They saw a man standing under a tree in deep snow and looking at them. He caught their attention because the snow was difficult to walk in and also because his clothes, a long black coat and an odd

black hat, seemed somehow peculiar. They glanced at him occasionally over the next few minutes until suddenly they noticed that he had disappeared. Because the tree was in a wide-open space, they wondered how he could have escaped even by running without being seen. So they skated over to the tree and were astonished to find no tracks whatever in the fresh snow.

(On June 8, 1978, Betty and her daughter Bonnie, alone in their Ashburnham, Massachusetts, house, happened to look out a front window to see two odd men standing in the driveway. One was tall and dressed in black. His forehead was abnormally high, and his jet-black hair contrasted strikingly with his extraordinarily pale face. More than once he raised his arm without bending his elbow. His shorter companion wore a khaki jacket. Both walked with a stiff, shuffling motion which struck the Andreassons as unnatural. When cars came by, the two strangers ducked into some bushes. After they passed, they walked behind a nearby stonewall and sandbank. Soon afterwards two cars heretofore hidden from sight drove off. Incidents of this kind are reminiscent of lore associated with **men in black**, menacing characters who are said to harass UFO witnesses and researchers.)

Fowler consciously remembered an incident from 1941 or 1942 when he awoke to see light shining through the window from a luminous mass hovering in front of the house. An entity floated toward the window on a beam. Hypnosis brought forth an additional detail: a memory of floating upward, in a state of bewilderment and panic, with the entity.

Fowler had several UFO sightings over the years, including one in early July 1947, just a few days into the "flying saucer" era inaugurated by Kenneth Arnold's June 24 sighting over Mount Rainier, Washington. In August 1987, shortly after returning from a family vacation, he was showering when he discovered what looked like a scoop mark on the flesh of his right leg. "It looked like a miniature cookie cutter had removed a perfectly round piece of flesh," he wrote (Fowler, 1990). He had no memory of how such a striking wound, which he had not noticed till now, could have taken place. He had, however, seen comparable ones on Betty and other abductees. Un-

der hypnosis Fowler felt intense fear and caught fleeting images of an operation on his leg. The session ended with his pleading not to be forced to recall. "Not supposed to remember," he muttered. In Fowler's view the scar was the result of a "biopsy taken as part of the aliens' ongoing genetic research within families of human beings."

As evidence of alien interest, Fowler points to his family's long history of UFO and other unusual experiences. His mother saw a strange flying object in 1916 or 1917 and had other sightings over the years, the last of them in the 1970s. His father, also named Raymond E. Fowler, experienced mystical phenomena all his life, including a CE3-like vision which occurred while he was serving in the Navy in 1923. Other family members reporting UFO or paranormal manifestations include an aunt, two brothers, a daughter, and a son.

*Evidence and other problems.* "Meeting Betty Luca for the first time," a social worker remarked, was a bewildering experience. How could someone "so pure of heart, so innocent and uncorruptible," exist in this cynical age? "It is as if," she went on, "Betty has taken all the Sunday school teachings of love and brotherhood that we shared as children and made them work for her as a responsible adult" (Fowler, 1982). Practically no one disputes this characterization of her. Certainly no evidence has ever emerged to suggest that she is a hoaxer. And if Betty is not a hoaxer, there is no simple solution to the Andreasson affair.

With Betty Andreasson Luca we confront head on the eternal paradox of the high-strangeness case: a believable person tells an unbelievable story. Here, unlike some other cases, we are denied a second conventional explanation: that from start to finish her story was confabulated under hypnosis. It is true that *most* of the story was "recalled" under hypnosis, and under various hypnotists. But important portions of it were not. In the January 1967 encounter, for example, participants consciously remembered seeing lights and humanoids. Both Betty and Becky testified to the existence of a strange blue book which subsequently disappeared. If these claims are true, something out of the ordinary—something possibly

even *extremely* out of the ordinary—happened to Betty.

Nonetheless reservations about the hypnosis-derived portion of the testimony are eminently justifiable. Much of it was elicited through the services of trained professionals. The first of these, Dr. Edelstein, a man with no stake in UFO-related controversies, acknowledged a conviction—based on Betty's and Becky's behavior in hypnosis—that "a good share of this may be true" (Fowler, 1979). Eventually, however, Fowler and his associates became so overwhelmed by the quantity and complexity of Betty's claims that they turned over the hypnosis to her husband Bob Luca. Though excerpts from transcripts of these latter sessions indicate that Luca had the good sense not to ask leading questions, the possibilities for other types of information contamination in these intimate circumstances (Luca is not only Betty's husband, after all, but a fellow abductee) seem endless.

While investigation could establish with reasonable certainty that Betty *believed* her experiences to have been real events, it could not prove that they *were* such. The most fantastic parts of the testimony were by their very nature unverifiable. Fowler, who has a deserved reputation for investigative thoroughness, could only work at the edges. He could show, for example, that the weather conditions on the evening of January 25, 1967, were as described; he could also establish that a power blackout had occurred. To the extent that Betty made claims that could be checked, the claims checked out.

After her 1967 experience Betty sought out UFO literature and had been reading it for a decade before she underwent hypnosis. By this time the literature had begun to address the UFO-abduction phenomenon, then known in broad outline. In 1966 John G. Fuller's *The Interrupted Journey* recounted the September 1961 experience of Barney and Betty Hill who subsequently recounted what would become a standard abduction scenario: close encounter, missing time, odd effects, disturbing dreams, alien kidnapping "remembered" under hypnosis (see **Hill Abduction Case**). Other abduction claims, such as those by Nebraska police officer Herbert Schirmer (**Schirmer Abduction Case**) and Charles Hickson and Calvin Parker (**Pascagoula Abduction Case**), were featured

in several UFO books, including a popular paperback by Ralph Blum, *Beyond Earth: Man's Contact with UFOs* (1974). Fowler does not tell us which of these Betty may have read.

In the 1980s Betty appeared at a number of ufological conventions, where she would have been exposed to the explosion in abduction lore that characterized that decade, largely because of widely read and influential books by Budd Hopkins and Whitley Strieber. Hopkins's *Intruders* brought into popular consciousness the notion that gray-skinned humanoids are stealing human/alien hybrid fetuses from pregnant women. It may not be coincidental that this aspect of the Andreasson story does not show up in the testimony (concerning the alleged 1973 event related above) until a hypnosis session in 1987, the same year *Intruders* appeared.

On the other hand, a great deal in Betty's early testimony anticipates later abduction themes. In 1977, for example, no one had written of the placing or removing of apparent implants through the nasal cavity. After *The Andreasson Affair* the first book to discuss such experiences as an aspect of the abduction phenomenon is Hopkins's *Missing Time* (1981). In his books Fowler discusses further parallels between Andreasson's account and other abduction and CE3 reports, some fairly obscure or even heretofore-unpublished. Folklorist Thomas E. Bullard, author of a massive survey of abduction claims (Bullard, 1987), remarks on still others.

Some aspects of the story, while certainly not proof, at least are consistent with an interpretation of real experience. Someone who believes Betty's testimony about the removal of a fetus may describe an actual event might point out that it would be strange for someone to confabulate concepts she could neither understand nor articulate. Betty says of the beings' explanation for their action:

They're telling me that they have to extrapolate and put their protoplasma in the nucleus of the fetus and the paragenetic. [*Betty stops and sounds completely frustrated.*] I don't understand them. Something like the paragenetic will utilize the tissue and nutrients to—I don't know—transform the creature or something like that. I don't understand what they're saying. They're saying

also about man, that he gets so upset, and, and in the beginning that it meant for bringing forth children, not for pleasure. And they are taking the seeds so that the human *form* will not be lost—That they too are made of the *same* substance [*sighs*] and that some of the female fetuses don't accept the plasma very well and that they have to—I don't understand what they're saying—something about—I can't understand and I'm just trying to repeat what they're saying [Fowler, 1990].

It is also curious that neither Betty nor the investigators linked her story about the burning bird and the worm emerging from the ashes with the legendary phoenix. In fact, at the time Betty related the incident under hypnosis, none of them had ever heard of the phoenix. Fowler eventually learned that for early Christians the phoenix symbolized immortality and resurrection—underscoring, in other words, the beings' spiritual message in a way of which Betty herself was unaware.

Yet Betty's claims are extraordinary even by the standards of high-strangeness UFO reports. The evidence, what there is of it, sustains only a small part of them and is at best suggestive for some of the rest. No wise person would believe, on the basis of hypnotically elicited recitation alone, that Betty has traveled to other worlds in the company of extraterrestrials. And no knowledgeable observer could fail to notice how strikingly Betty's otherworldly journeys resemble—in UFO-age garb, of course—ancient and medieval visions in which the visionary ascends to heaven to learn he or she will be God's messenger (Zaleski, 1987).

Skepticism of Betty's extraordinary claims is best defended as a general principle. Skeptics who have sought to get more specific than that have not done well. Debunker Philip J. Klass, the only critic to intimate that Betty may be lying, suggests Betty used her imagination and her knowledge of UFO literature to "invent a tale that credulous UFOlogists find impossible to dismiss" (Klass, 1989). If by this he means she did so *consciously*, he offers nothing to support this conjecture. Another debunker, psychologist Ernest H. Taves, employed psychoanalysis to unravel what he identified as a "wealth of sexual

symbolism and imagery," including the "business of the nasal probe entering an orifice." Perhaps more cogently, he remarked on a possible inspiration for at least one image: "Walking through a glass or mirror into a strange place is a concept Betty shares with Lewis Carroll. Had Betty read *Alice in Wonderland* or *Through the Looking Glass*? These books have had an influence upon and have been well-remembered friends of generations of girls and women (and boys and men) of all ages" (Taves, 1979-1980).

Hilary Evans writes that the "'suspended animation' of her family [during the January 25, 1967, encounter] is hard to accept"; yet by the late 1980s ufologists had collected many comparable reports and belatedly recognized a pattern. Abduction investigator David M. Jacobs describes it thus:

When the abductee is near other people, they are usually rendered unconscious or immobile while the abduction is going on. . . . This "switching off" procedure presumably allows for secrecy to be kept and for minimal disruption in the life of the nonabductee. When the abduction is over, the nonabductee will be switched on once again and resume normal activities [Jacobs, 1992].

In other words, this aspect of Betty's testimony is more impressive than disconfirming. At the same time, however, Evans points to one of the fundamental implausibilities of the narrative when he observes:

The content of the messages, in so far as Betty was able to put it into words, does not seem to offer anything more profound than unexceptionable precepts which we humans have already thought out for ourselves, even if we have not yet found a way of living up to them. A phrase like "Love is the answer" is, as a statement, quite simply meaningless. So is the injunction that mankind must "study nature," or the promise that knowledge will be given to those who are "pure in heart" and "seek with earnestness" [Evans, 1987].

To the issue of what did or did not happen to Betty Andreasson Luca, nothing like a sure answer is possible. We may reasonably speculate, perhaps, that her testimony is a mixture of reality and fantasy: a core

UFO experience (or perceived UFO experience) at the bottom of a mountain of confabulation. But it is in the nature of such extreme claims—and a consequence of human ignorance in these matters—that no explanation, mundane or extraordinary, can provide full satisfaction and remove all puzzlement.

For Betty herself, the explanation for it all is as clear as her firm Christian convictions. In a 1991 interview she remarked that "my encounters with benevolent beings have strengthened my faith in the reality of the seldom-seen world of the government of God. His messengers have been sent to do His will, and although I have seen and heard yet not always understood, I can rest in His promises and faith" (Casteel, 1991).

In 1995 Fowler released a new book, *The Watchers II*. "Apparently the Andreasson Affair is a never-ending story," he said. "The experiences continue to happen, and new information continues to come forth" (Casteel, 1995).

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**SALT LAKE CITY SIGHTING.** *See Harris Sighting*

## **SCHIRMER ABDUCTION CASE**

Police Sgt. Herbert Schirmer, 22, first sensed something unusual in the air when cattle in the Ashland, Nebraska, sales barn panicked and kicked at their stalls for no apparent reason. Twice, at 1 A.M. and again at 1:35, he had gone to check on them, listening uneasily all the while to the howling of dogs. It was December 3, 1967, and Schirmer was minutes away from a decidedly strange experience.

At 2 as he was moving southwest on Highway 6, checking various facilities and business establishments along the road, he noticed red lights to his right, along Highway 63. He passed the intersection and turned around, intending to check on what he assumed to be a stopped truck. It was now 2:30. He drove a short distance up 63 and stopped, his headlights (set to bright) shining on the object, which turned out to be no truck. The red lights were blinking through the windows of a disc-shaped structure which was hovering at a slight tilt 150 feet away and six to eight feet above the road. Schirmer could discern a cat-walk around the object, which looked as if it were made of shiny, polished aluminum. It then ascended slowly with a sort of siren sound, and it emitted a flamelike substance from the bottom. His head sticking out the window, Schirmer watched it pass nearly overhead, then shoot up and out of sight.

He got out of the car and executed a quick inspection of the road surface with a flashlight. Then he drove back to the police station and wrote in the log book, "Saw a flying saucer at the junction of highways 6 and 63. Believe it or not!" He was puzzled to see it was 3

A.M., though in his conscious memory he could account for no more than 10 minutes. Before the night was over, he began to feel sick and nervous. "I had a headache," he recalled, "and there was a weird buzzing noise in my head. I'd start to doze off, and the noise seemed to get louder. I also had a red welt on the nerve cord that runs down below the ear. The welt was about two inches long, maybe a half-inch wide" (Norton, 1971).

In the morning Chief Bill Wlaskin went over the site and picked up a tiny piece of metallic material which he showed to **University of Colorado UFO Project** investigators when they came to interview Schirmer. It turned out to be composed of iron and silicon. The investigators speculated that it was "ordinary corroded earthly waste" (Gillmor, 1969).

On February 13, 1968, University of Wyoming psychologist R. Leo Sprinkle, Schirmer, and Wlaskin met in Boulder with project investigators. Dr. Sprinkle was to observe Schirmer and also to put him under hypnosis to determine if information about the missing time could be elicited. Schirmer told the group that he had suffered considerable stress following the incident. A buzzing would sound in his ear just before he went to bed, between 1:30 and 2 A.M., and he had trouble sleeping.

In a hypnotic state Schirmer indicated that a "white, blurred object" had come out of the UFO and communicated mentally with him, after the power in his car had failed and the police radio had gone dead. In some fashion he had been prevented from pulling his revolver from its holster. He could not or would not recall the substance of the exchange; it was "wrong," he said, to speak of these things; "this is not the right time nor place."



Once out of hypnosis, Schirmer volunteered further details. According to Dr. Sprinkle's summary:

[T]he white, blurred object seemed to be a living object, although he didn't remember anything about the object until the hypnotic session; communication with someone in the craft occurred at the time of the UFO sighting and the feeling of direct mental contact with someone was occurring at the time of the interview; information was obtained . . . which indicated that the craft was propelled by some type of electrical and magnetic force which could control the force of gravity; the craft was obtaining a power supply from nearby power lines in order to assist in communications; someone or something told Sgt. Schirmer that he was "doing a good job," that he should not talk further during the interview, but he could talk later this year and tell more about the events of the UFO sighting. Information given to Sgt. Schirmer indicated the following: the craft belonged to a "sister ship" which was like an aircraft carrier; the occupants of the craft were based on Venus or Saturn but were from another galaxy; the intentions of these beings were friendly, and their purpose was to prevent earth people from destroying the earth.

Sgt. Schirmer was unable to offer evidence or opinions about how he had obtained this information or whether the information was valid; nevertheless, he claimed that this information was given to him and that he believed it to be true as it was given to him [Sprinkle, 1968].

Unsympathetic to the idea that UFOs exist as piloted spacecraft, project officers would come to predictably skeptical conclusions: "Evaluation of psychological assessment tests, the lack of any evidence, and interviews with the patrolman left project staff with no confidence that the trooper's reported UFO experience was physically real" (Gillmor, 1969). Only Sprinkle, as an outside consultant with a longstanding interest in UFOs, felt otherwise (Sprinkle, *op. cit.*; Clark, 1976).

After the Boulder meeting Schirmer's life continued its descent into stress, confusion, and fear. Though he was appointed Ashland police chief on Wlaskin's

resignation, he kept the job for only two months. "I resigned because I wasn't paying attention to my job," he said. "I kept wondering about what happened that night. I was pretty jumpy" (Norton, *op. cit.*). Determined to solve the mystery, he got in contact with an Iowa man named Warren Smith, who had written some articles about UFOs in popular magazines. Smith in turn brought hypnotist and paranormal researcher Loring G. Williams into the case.

*The further story.* On June 8, 1968, Schirmer, Smith, and Williams met in Des Moines. Schirmer was regressed back to the early morning hours of December 3. A considerably more detailed narrative of the events emerged.

In this new version, as the car's electrical power failed, three legs shot out from under the UFO, which landed in the field near the highway. Beings came out of the object and approached his car. "Something in my mind" kept him from drawing his revolver. One of the figures, standing in front of the car, sprayed a substance "like a greenish gas" all over the vehicle. Then the same figure drew something out of a holster and pointed it at Schirmer. There was a brilliant flash, and the officer was instantly paralyzed. A moment later he passed out.

The period of unconsciousness apparently was brief. Schirmer next found himself rolling down the window on the driver's side. One of the figures grabbed the left side of his neck, just below the ear, from behind. The pain was intense. Schirmer next opened the door and stood beside the car as a being, apparently the one who had pointed the gunlike device at him, stared into his eyes and asked, "Are you the watchman over this place?"

The beings were humanoids, between four and one half and five feet tall. Their heads were long and thin, with gray-white skin, and their "catlike" eyes were slanted slightly and did not blink. They had flat noses and slitlike mouths. They wore silver-gray helmets, each with a small antenna on the left side in the ear area. Their uniforms and gloves were of the same color. At the left breast of each suit was the emblem of a winged serpent.

The first being, whom Schirmer understood to be the crew leader, asked him another question. He pointed

to a nearby power plant and said, "Is this the only source of power you have?" He also wanted to know about a water reservoir not far away. Schirmer, who had a hard time believing this was really happening, asked if the being was real. In response he squeezed the police officer's shoulder. Would Schirmer shoot at a spaceship? "No, sir," Schirmer assured him. The leader then said he could come aboard the craft for a few minutes.

They walked over to the underside of the ship. A circle opened up just above them, and a metal ladder dropped out. The metal was cold, and so, Schirmer shortly learned, was the craft's interior.

They entered a room that Schirmer estimated to be 26 feet by 20 feet. The lighting, which came from strips in the ceiling, was red. Above a control panel he saw a large "vision screen." Two triangle-back chairs were positioned in front of the panel. The leader explained that this was an "observation craft with a crew of four men." Schirmer had the curious sense that communication was occurring on two levels, both mental and physical. The latter came through their antennas and sounded strange, like a broken English spoken "from deep inside him rather than from his mouth," Schirmer said. He did not fully understand the process; he understood only that in some way earthly languages were studied and translated through computers.

The leader gave Schirmer a tour of the ship, though all the while Schirmer was more afraid than curious. He saw "things that look like computer machines" which seemed to put things in his mind. The leader said he was from a "nearby galaxy" and his people had bases on Venus, other planets elsewhere in our galaxy, and earth. The earthly bases were off the coasts of Argentina and Florida and in an unspecified polar region. Earthly radar had knocked some ships out of the air, but before they hit the ground, "the mother ship destroys them by a built-in mechanism that blows them up and burns them up." The "mother ships" were enormous "interplanetary stations," located far out in space; from them the smaller craft were dispatched to bases on earth. Using "light beams," both the large and small craft could see through walls and into any building. They also monitored earthly communication systems.

The leader showed Schirmer a disc six feet in diameter. It was a remote-control device, he explained, and transmitted sound and sight to the observation ship's vision screen. Flicking a switch, the being turned on the screen, then pressed a button. The screen was filled with an image of two humanoids outside the ship, walking in stiff, military fashion as if they were on guard duty. When another button was pressed, three UFOs of varying shapes were shown flying against a starry background. These were "war ships," the leader said. Another pressed button brought one of the mother ships into focus. The object was long and cigar-shaped.

Concerning the propulsion system, Schirmer had this to say:

The ship is operated through reversible electromagnetism. . . . A crystal-like rotor in the center of the ship is linked to two large columns. . . . He said these were the reactors. . . . Reversing magnetic and electrical energy allows them to control matter and overcome the forces of gravity.

The craft drew electricity from power lines, the leader said. He gave Schirmer a demonstration. An antennalike device on the ship pointed toward a power line on the ground. A "sudden white spurt of electricity . . . shot out of the electrical line and went right into the tip of the antenna. . . . He said that they didn't take much electricity, but they have a problem storing it so they take it from our power lines. Later, he put the electricity back in the power line. . . ." Schirmer was also told that the extraterrestrials drew power from water—the reason "we see them over rivers, lakes, and large bodies of water."

They had been watching the earth for a long time and planned to contact more people. The pattern of contacts would be random so that earthly governments could not discern patterns in these or other activities. "To a certain extent they want to puzzle people," Schirmer said. They were "being seen too frequently" and feared revealing themselves too soon. They wanted to reveal themselves only gradually after human beings were used to the idea and would not be afraid of them when they showed themselves openly. Their intentions were friendly.

The leader looked directly into Schirmer's eyes and said, "I wish you would not tell that you have been aboard this ship. You are to tell that the ship landed below in the intersection of the highways, that you approached, and it shot up into the air and disappeared. You will tell this and nothing more. You will not speak wisely about this night. We will return to see you two more times" (Blum with Blum, 1974).

He placed his hand on the police officer's shoulder and spoke a word Schirmer did not recognize. He directed him to the hatch. The two "guards" climbed inside, and Schirmer returned to his car. He watched the UFO ascend and vanish. He remembered nothing.

Later, reflecting on his observations aboard the ship, Schirmer would remark:

After my memory returned, I became quite impressed with their security. There was never a second when I was not under observation. People who claim to have been contacted are condemned because they do not produce an artifact or evidence of their experience. Believe me, I was frightened. You comply with their wishes. If they don't want a person to walk away with evidence, he won't. My impression is that these beings were like our astronauts, very military and very careful. You do as they say [Norton, *op. cit.*].

*Winged serpents.* Schirmer's story has much in common with other abduction reports recorded since then (Bullard, 1987). The only significant missing feature is the physical examination. In 1967 UFO-abduction claims were not unknown—*The Interrupted Journey*, John G. Fuller's best-selling book on the **Hill abduction case**, had been published the previous year—but they were exceedingly rare, and only the Hills's experience was known outside the small community of UFO enthusiasts. In short, hoaxers or dreamers had little on which to draw, consciously or unconsciously, should they conjure up visions of extraterrestrial kidnappings. Today, hundreds of far more outlandish tales later, a report like Schirmer's would attract only modest attention, however remarkable it seemed at the time.

Perhaps the most curious and interesting aspect of the Schirmer case can be found in one small, easily

overlooked detail: the winged-serpent emblem on the alien uniform. The appearance of such a symbol in a CE3 is surprising and intriguing. There is nothing alien about it. The image is ancient and ubiquitous, known everywhere from the Old World (to the ancient Greeks and Indians) to the New (to the Pueblos and Aztecs). Medieval chronicles even attest to "sightings" of flying dragons (Evans, 1987).

Serpent emblems would show up in at least three other claimed encounters with alien beings. In 1979 a South Carolina man reported meeting extraterrestrials with such patches on their uniforms, but the story is generally judged to be a **hoax** based on the claimant's reading of UFO literature (see **Hermann Contact Claims**). That same year a Florida couple allegedly met aliens; the witnesses' description of them reminded one knowledgeable commentator of Schirmer's ETs. The beings even wore a serpent emblem on the uniform; it is not clear, however, whether this was a *winged* serpent (Hendry, 1980). In a third case, occurring in the context of a complex series of abduction experiences focused on members of a family in Canada and England, a young woman found an image of a winged serpent on a chalk board in her bedroom, where she believed she had met aliens (Haisell, 1978).

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## SCORITON HOAX

George Adamski was the most famous contactee of the 1950s. Some considered him a great man, "earth's cosmic ambassador"; to others he was a crude charlatan. A metaphysical teacher since the 1920s, Adamski turned to flying saucers in the late 1940s, producing what he represented as photographs of spaceships in the earth's atmosphere and in outer space. On November 20, 1952, he allegedly met a Venusian named Orthon in the desert of southern California. The following year a 54-page account of the episode and its sequel (yet more spaceship photographs) appeared under his by-line in *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, otherwise the work of Irish occultist Desmond Leslie. In *Inside the Space Ships* (1955) Adamski recounted further space adventures, including a trip around the moon, in the company of benevolently inclined "Space Brothers" from Venus, Mars, and Saturn.

Though many scoffed and some hard-hitting critiques were published in the UFO literature ("Adamski's Latest," 1959; Moseley, 1957), Adamski's claims drew

a worldwide audience of uncritical enthusiasts. In time, however, his stories grew so extravagant as to challenge the sensibilities of even the most gullible. Many followers—but by no means all of them—abandoned him in 1962 after he asserted that he had flown to Saturn and attended an interplanetary conference. Adamski died in Silver Spring, Maryland, on the evening of April 23, 1965. In an obituary in *Flying Saucer Review*, Leslie wrote, "I don't believe we have by any means seen the last of him. If he is reborn on another planet he has promised to come back and contact us when possible. With George—anything could happen. And usually does!" (For a full account of Adamski's life and career, see *The Emergence of a Phenomenon*, pp. 1-12.)

In the summer of 1965, the Exeter Astronomical Society received a letter from a local man, Ernest Arthur Bryant of Scoriton, Devonshire, England. Through a newspaper the society, essentially a stargazing club for teenagers and young adults, had encouraged readers to send in their UFO sightings, and Bryant was responding to report his own experience. Late on the evening of May 20, he said, as he was preparing to go to bed, he heard an odd humming sound. As it grew louder, he stepped outside his house to determine its source, which turned out to be a pale blue light moving from west to east at a low altitude. After two or three minutes it suddenly stopped, vibrated, and vanished with a metallic knocking sound. On June 6, he said, he found several items near where the light had hovered. They looked like "equipment," he said.

In due course the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA) learned of the incident. On August 27 two representatives interviewed Bryant, a gardener and handyman who worked at an old people's home in nearby Newton Abbot. He now had revised the date of the sighting: June 7, not May 20. In the spot where Bryant had retrieved the items, bushes were scorched, and grass was burned in an oval pattern. A tree had died. The BUFORA investigators then spoke with Exeter Astronomical Society secretary Gerald Aspin, who already had been to see Bryant and taken away some of the physical evidence. The rest of it was in the possession of a Devonshire newspaper, the *Plymouth Independent*, which had run a story on the

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**BRYANT, ERNEST ARTHUR.** See **Scoriton Hoax**

#### **BUFF LEDGE ABDUCTION CASE**

Just after sunset, at around 8:10 on Wednesday, August 7, 1968, as a young man and a young woman watched from the end of a deck, a bright light appeared in the southwest sky and swooped down in a long arc until it stopped and assumed a horizontal position. It now resembled a white, glowing, cigar-shaped object, apparently distant, possibly (though not certainly) as far away as the Adirondack Mountains over 10 miles from the witnesses. Thus began an incident which would not only change the life of one witness but consume an investigator's attention for five years.

The witnesses, never publicly identified, have been given the pseudonyms Michael Lapp and Janet Cornell. At the time Lapp was 16, Cornell 19. They were employed at Buff Ledge Camp (since closed), north of Burlington, Vermont. Buff Ledge, a girls' camp named after a tree-lined, 15-foot-high bluff overlooking half a mile of isolated beach, sat in a clearing along the shores of Lake Champlain. The L-shaped deck on which Lapp and Cornell lay jutted 100 feet out onto the lake. Most campers and employees were away for a couple of days. A few counselors remained behind. The beach was largely shielded from view by the 15-foot-high bluff and the trees atop it.

According to Lapp's subsequent account, three tiny white lights emerged one at a time from the right-end bottom of the UFO. As soon as the third had been expelled, the cigar retreated along its original path and vanished seconds later. The three smaller objects then performed a series of spectacular maneuvers, all

the while moving closer until Lapp could determine that they were domed discs with an edge through the middle of each. After five minutes the objects assumed a horizontal-triangle formation, and two headed off in opposite directions, one to the north, the other to the south, making a sound like "thousands of different tuning forks," in Lapp's words. The remaining object, also emitting sounds, moved toward the witnesses.

Now the two witnesses were getting frightened. The UFO, "as big as a small house" (40 to 50 feet across), paused for a minute or so. Along its edge pulsating colored lights moved from left to right as if circling the object along the periphery. Then it ascended and vanished in three seconds, only to reappear moments later as it descended along the same trajectory and plunged broadside into the water. A sudden wind blew waves across the heretofore placid lake surface. Animals all up and down the shore howled and shrieked. All of this happened a mile or two from Lapp and Cornell's position.

A few minutes later the UFO came to the surface and moved toward the witnesses. It stopped 60 feet from them, hovering about 15 feet above the water. Through a transparent dome Lapp could discern two figures with large heads, oversized oval eyes, and small mouths. Visible to the waist, they were short and clothed in skintight gray or silver uniforms.

When Lapp turned to speak to his companion, he noticed that she seemed to be frozen in a trance. She did not respond to him. He then addressed the entities, asking who they were and what their intentions were. A voice inside his head—which for some reason he thought came from the being on the left—assured him, "We are not here to harm you." Startled, Lapp asked, "What is this?" The voice, which had a "feminine quality," replied, "This is what you call telepathy"—a word with which Lapp was then unfamiliar. The exchange went on for several minutes, with Lapp vocalizing his questions and the alien voice responding telepathically. It assured him he would not be harmed and went on to say that the alien race had "returned after the first atomic bomb exploded." The beings, who were seeking an unspecified source of energy, were also engaged in conflict with others of their race, identified as "evil." The

voice said they were from far away and uttered a name which Lapp did not understand.

Suddenly struck by the absurd improbability of what was happening to him, Lapp realized that he would not believe his own memories of the experience. He started to laugh, slapping his knee as he did so. To his astonishment one of the beings exactly mimicked his actions. Meanwhile the entity on the right stood still and stared at Cornell, almost as if in imitation of her frozen state.

The beings disappeared from the dome, then came back shortly afterwards. The UFO now appeared about 10 feet over the witnesses' heads. Lapp jumped up in an unsuccessful attempt to touch the bottom, but at the peak of his jump, a cone of brilliant white "liquid light" abruptly shone. Back on the deck he grabbed his companion by the shoulders, and the two of them fell to the dock. All the while the light kept shining. He had the sensation that somehow it was also shining inside his head. He experienced the strange feeling that he was leaving his body and hearing alien voices and machine sounds.

When full consciousness returned, Lapp found himself and Cornell lying on the deck. It was now dark. Two 15-year-old campers were standing at the bluff and shouting about the UFO, which rose up slightly and shot beams of light toward the two girls, other campers stepping out of their cars (having just returned from a swim meet elsewhere), and all the camp buildings. Then it shot up and disappeared in less than five seconds.

As Lapp and Cornell made their ways to their cabins, Lapp replied mostly noncommittally to those who asked him what had happened. One, however, told him he had seen "something really strange" through the upstairs windows of a cabin. The next evening he drove the 14 miles to his parents' house to tell them he had "seen a flying saucer up close." They were skeptical, and so was his girl friend when he told her not long afterwards. He returned to camp. He never discussed the incident with his fellow witness.

He could not get the experience out of his mind. Over the next decade he read a few books on UFOs. His outlook on the world started to change soon after the sighting, and he developed an interest in mysti-

cism and spiritual questions. He dropped out of college to drift through several Western states before returning to finish his degree in religion. He had dreams of being aboard the UFO and conversing with the entities. In 1978 he called **Walter N. Webb**, an astronomer affiliated with Boston's Charles Hayden Planetarium and an experienced UFO investigator best known for his work on the **Hill abduction case**.

*The web of evidence.* In April 1979 Webb wrote Cornell, who was living in Atlanta. Shortly after getting the letter, she called Webb to relate her memories of the event. She recalled only that a "big light" had approached them and that in response she and Lapp "sat down, lay down, or hit the dock." Beyond that her mind was blocked. Subsequently she mailed a statement containing further details which placed the sighting in early evening. Though she had been told nothing of Lapp's testimony, her fragmented memories seemed to confirm what her companion, whom she had not seen since the summer of 1968, had reported to Webb.

Subsequently, the two were separately put under hypnosis and told stories that were strikingly similar.

Lapp said that when the light hit him, he experienced something like an out-of-body experience. He next saw himself inside the UFO, standing on the upper deck with one of the entities. The two were looking out a transparent dome onto the earth, the moon, the stars, and a large cigar-shaped craft. Cornell lay on a table on the other side of the room in the lower level. Lapp and the entity walked down a flight of steps toward Cornell. Two of the aliens were looking into her eyes with a hand-held light and taking skin and blood samples as well as "fluid" from two body orifices. The entities stood slightly over five feet tall and had large, elongated heads with large oval eyes and shiny black pupils. They had no visible ears, and the nose consisted of two holes; the mouth was a thin slit. Their hands were webbed and three-fingered. Dark-green skintight clothes covered their bodies, which had a greenish-blue skin color.

Lapp was led to a table next to the one on which Cornell lay. At the same time he noticed that the smaller craft was now in the immediate vicinity of the cigar. He fell back on the table and blacked out, to revive in darkness a short while later. The small ship,

now in a kind of hangar inside the large one, opened at the bottom, and Lapp and his alien companion floated on a light beam and through a wall. An elevatorlike device took them up through a corridor and to a huge domed room which housed many entities like those he had already encountered. He was placed on a chair, and a helmet was put on his head. Meanwhile everyone stared at a bubble-shaped screen which showed something outside Lapp's range of vision. Whatever was showing, it obviously pleased its audience, which expressed its satisfaction by applauding and making sounds.

His alien companion took Lapp to another room. When the alien touched his hands, Lapp suddenly found himself in a strange landscape of trees, grass, fountains, and purple sky. All around him were other human beings, looking confused and distraught. He saw Cornell next to him. She was weeping.

He then seemed to fall asleep. On regaining conscious awareness, he was falling through space. In front of him was a globe of what looked to be innumerable television screens, each with a still image of him and Cornell on the dock with the UFO hovering just above them. After passing through one screen, he was back on the dock, with Cornell resting next to him. Almost inexplicably he had a keen emotional attachment to his alien companion, whose voice he heard in his head saying, "Good-bye, Michael."

Under hypnosis Cornell told of suddenly being on board the UFO, with no sense of how she had gotten there. She was lying on a table surrounded by humanoid entities. One entity communicated reassuring thoughts to her via telepathy. She was instructed to keep her eyes closed and not to move. She could feel the beings examining her arms and hair; she sensed that devices had been attached to her head and back. She also felt that she and Michael had been separated. Before the ordeal was over, however, she would see him twice, on each occasion as he sat in another room.

Her hypnotically derived testimony, less detailed than her fellow abductee's, was also filled with memory gaps. Nonetheless her description of the entities matched Lapp's to a striking degree, and so did her recollection of the vehicle's interior. At one point she said, trying to estimate the craft's size from her view inside it, "It must have been very big. When I looked at it [from the dock], I don't think I thought it was that big. . . . Maybe there was a big one and a little one. . . . [M]aybe there was a smaller vehicle . . . to get to the big one" (Webb, 1994).

Webb spent five years investigating this case and eventually published his findings in an impressively documented book, *Encounter at Buff Ledge* (1994). His background checks, buttressed by psychological analyses, convinced him there was no question of **hoax** here. Unfortunately none of the potentially confirming witnesses—those who had been at the camp at the time and whom Lapp and Cornell had mentioned—provided anything but vague memories of UFOs seen that summer, and even these seemed not to have anything to do with the Lapp/Cornell episode. In the end the evidence for the reality of the sighting/abduction came down to the largely conforming testimony of two evidently sincere individuals who had not seen each other for a long time or discussed the episode.

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**BURNS, HORACE.** See **Fishersville CE2**

# B

## **BEBEDOURO ABDUCTION CASE**

On the evening of May 3, 1969, a 24-year-old Brazilian soldier named José Antonio da Silva set off on a fishing trip. He boarded a bus at Belo Horizonte and got off sometime later on the Jaguara road, down which he hiked until he got to a place known as Bebedouro, in the municipal district of Matozinhos. By midnight he had reached his destination, a small lagoon. After setting up a tent along the banks, he fished for a while, then fell asleep. He resumed fishing in the morning, and matters went on uneventfully until mid-afternoon.

Around 3 P.M. the semi-dozing Da Silva suddenly became aware of figures who were approaching him, speaking in a language he did not recognize. Only when he heard a cry "seemingly like a groan coming from deep down in the chest" did he realize that he was in the presence of something out of the ordinary. But before he could move, a partially concealed figure shot a "burst of fire" from out of the bushes. It hit his leg but did not burn it.

The "fire," actually a beam of light, green in the middle and red at the edges, paralyzed him. A painful cramp gripped his legs, then a feeling of numbness, and he fell to his knees. Almost immediately two small figures with masks grabbed him under the arms and hauled him, his knees scraping the ground, through the tangled thickets, which they negotiated with no apparent difficulty.

Presently a third figure appeared. Da Silva was sure this was the one who had made the groaning sound before firing at him. All three of the beings carried "rifles" with large barrels rather on the order of a blunderbuss. In the center of the top side of each weapon was a trigger which when pulled backward caused the luminous beam to shoot out the barrel.

The beings, about four feet in height, were built more or less like small but robust human beings, though their legs were unusually thick. They wore shining, light-colored "spacesuits" and masks with two holes at eye-level. A tube of plasticlike material extended from the lower part of the mask, passed over the chest and under the armpit, and ended in a small metal container on each of their backs.

They carried Da Silva into a strange machine shaped like two saucers joined together by a thick, vertical cylinder. A series of rods, set at regular intervals, slanted down from under the upper plate into the base of the cylinder just before they reached the lower plate. The cylinder was gray, the plates were black, and the entire object stood about seven feet high.

Da Silva now found himself in a quadrangular room illuminated by a brilliant "mercury vapor" light whose source he could not discern. The walls were composed of a material that looked like smooth, dark-gray stone. His captors sat him down, forced a helmet on him, fastened him down, and positioned themselves one on each side. The third being entered and took the one remaining seat, in the center of the room. He pulled two levers, and abruptly the craft ascended.

Da Silva spent a considerable period of time—many hours, he thought, though he had no way of telling for sure—in growing physical and emotional discomfort. He listened as the beings conversed in an unpleasant guttural tone, and he wondered miserably what lay in store for him. Meanwhile he was having difficulty breathing, and the sharp edges of the helmet kept digging into his shoulders and the back of his neck.



Much later the machine seemed to rotate 90 degrees on its lateral axis, and the seats automatically adjusted themselves to the new position. After another long period the craft and seats resumed their customary position. Finally the ship landed with a jarring sensation.

As the beings rose to free their captive from his seatbelt, they silently placed a bandage over the holes in his helmet. Then they carried him out by his armpits. Though still numb, his legs had begun to recover their normal strength, and he thought he might be able to walk. But he did not dare to press the issue with the little men, who seemed strong for their size.

In the darkness he could hear footsteps and masculine voices all speaking in the same weird language of his companions, who themselves remained silent. At last Da Silva was put down on a small, backless seat and was relieved of the bandage that had obscured his vision.

Sitting there, the helmet still on his head, he surveyed his surroundings. He was in a large quadrangular room with four beings: his three captors, who now were removing their helmets, and one other, who was conversing animatedly with the trio. Da Silva took him to be their commander. Seeing him, the young man's spirits sank even lower. Now he was certain that he would never get back.

Like the others, the "commander" was extremely hairy. Both his red hair and his beard came down to his waist. His pale skin contrasted with his thick, wide eyebrows. His large, round eyes, greenish in color, were set deep inside his head. He hardly ever blinked, and he apparently had no eyelashes.

The being's nose was long, pointed, and large. His ears were unusually big, too, and more rounded at the top than a human being's. Of the mouths of this and the other humanoids, Da Silva would tell investigators, "They looked like fish's mouths. I didn't see a tooth in any of them. When they opened their mouths, I didn't see one."

The chief's seemingly happy disposition eased the young man's fears. Other little men came and went—at one point there were as many as a dozen in

evidence—conferring with the leader and taking orders from him.

Whatever passing comfort Da Silva derived from the scene was shattered, however, when he happened to glance to his left and gaze upon a terrifying sight. On a low shelf, evidently fashioned out of stone, lay four human beings stretched out side by side. Naked, rigid, and positioned on their backs, the bodies bore no visible wounds, but it was obvious that they were dead. One was a well-built black man, and another had light brown skin. Two others, more slightly built, were Caucasian, one blond "like a foreigner."

As the little beings went about their business, Da Silva gloomily studied what he could see of the room. Like the interior of the flying vehicle, it appeared to be made of stone and was uniformly gray-colored. And he recognized the same "mercury vapor" light again with no visible source. To the left of the corpses, he noticed color pictures of familiar earthly sights: nature scenes, a small town, transportation vehicles. On the floor not far away he saw a somewhat cylindrical apparatus which reminded him slightly of a racing car.

At this point a being carefully undid Da Silva's cloth bundle, the one the young man had used to carry his fishing tackle. He assumed that the third being of the abducting party had scooped it up from where it had been dropped and brought it with him.

The little men excitedly examined the contents. They set aside one of everything for which there was a duplicate and put what was left—except for an identity card, whose loss eventually would cause Da Silva some trouble—back into the bundle.

He wondered if the identity card had tipped them off that he was a soldier because as soon as they had seen it, one picked up his weapon and shot a beam of light against a wall, leaving a mark on the affected area.

Flourishing something that looked like a pencil, the commander tried to communicate with Da Silva using words and gestures. At last he drew pictures on a white slate, and the young Brazilian got the impression that the being expected him to provide terrestrial weapons for the humanoids. He responded negatively, but the chief would not drop the subject, much to Da Silva's discomfort.

Next one of the little beings handed him a heavy stone cube. The hollowed-out upper part contained a dark green liquid which the chief urged his captive to drink. Finally, after seeing someone else partake of the stuff, Da Silva complied. It tasted bitter, but somehow it made him feel better—and seemed to improve his understanding of what the commander was trying to tell him.

The commander went on to draw a series of sketches referring, Da Silva could see, to day and night, to the terrestrial year, and to two groups of years, one composed of three, the other of seven. He is proposing to take me to the earth, the young man thought, where I shall remain for three years, collecting information for him. Then he will send for me to come to them, where I shall remain studying for seven years. And then finally they will land on earth, with me as a guide.

Nervously fingering the rosary he had been wearing rolled around his waist, he gestured disapproval. Enraged, the commander ripped the crucifix out of his hand. A bead dropped to the floor and rolled away. A bystander retrieved it and then passed around it and the crucifix.

Then the most incredible part of an already incredible series of events occurred. Out of nowhere Da Silva saw appear in front of him a human figure who stood motionless, gazing at him in friendly fashion. The figure, five and a half feet tall, was Caucasian, slender, bearded with long fair hair, and dressed in a friar's cassock. Amazingly, the little men seemed oblivious to his presence.

Speaking in clear Portuguese, the apparition imparted revelations which he was to keep to himself until handed fresh instructions, which might not be for several years. Then the figure vanished.

The instant it had done so, the humanoids started to quarrel with each other. The commander stepped forward and with the two original captors, who had never left the soldier's side, saw to it that the bandage was again placed over the helmet's eye openings. Da Silva felt himself being carried away and taken somewhere else. Once there, the beings removed the blindfold, and he saw that he was inside the ship.

*The return and after.* Some considerable period of time afterwards the craft landed with a thump, and as his captors removed his helmet and unfastened his seatbelt, Da Silva nearly lost consciousness. He was aware only that the beings were carrying him through the darkness.

As dawn broke, perhaps an hour later, his head cleared at last. Hearing running water nearby, he crawled with his bundle to a stream, filled his water bottle, and drank heartily. Then he caught some small fish and ate them.

His surroundings were unfamiliar to him. All he knew was that the beings had deposited him on the edge of a stone quarry, beside a ravine. He limped away to the nearest paved road, flagged down a passerby, and found out that he was 20 miles from Vitoria, capital of the state of Espirito Santo. Astonished, Da Silva asked what the date was. It was May 9. He had been away four and a half days.

At first he considered going on to Minas Gerais, where the traveler had told him the road led, but then he decided against it, fearing trouble with the police because he had no identity card. He wondered if he should retreat to the woods and try to live on the wildlife.

As he walked, several motorists stopped and offered him rides, but he always refused, even though his right knee was swollen painfully and he was having difficulty staying on his feet. Moreover, he had three open wounds, caused by the helmet, on the nape of his neck and just below his shoulders. Finally he accepted a lift, which took him near the town of Colatina. There he approached some children to inquire about the nearest train station—he had vowed now to return home to Belo Horizonte regardless of possible consequences—but probably because of his strange appearance (he was dirty and unshaven) the children merely jeered at him, then added injury to insult by pelting him with rocks.

Da Silva followed the tracks to the Colatina depot where, waiting for the arrival of the train, he befriended the agent, who took him home for a meal with his family. The young man also met an old settler who kindly offered him a job which he could not

accept. Before he left for home, Da Silva bought a ticket for a youth who had no money. He noted that the beings had returned all but Cr\$100 of the Cr\$35,000 he had carried in his pockets.

At 7:25 A.M. the next day he got off the train at the Belo Horizonte station. Geraldo Lopes da Silva, a railway police officer, challenged him for his papers, which of course the young man could not produce. Lopes da Silva took him into custody and listened in disbelief to the incredible tale. The officer grilled him for a while, until at last, unable to get him to contradict himself, he reluctantly concluded that this evidently sincere young man really had undergone a bizarre experience. He called a reporter from the Radio Guarani local station. After the reporter had interviewed him, Da Silva was released to the barracks.

Maj. Celio Ferreira, deputy commandant of the Guards Battalion of the Minas Gerais Military Police, whom Da Silva served as orderly, was relieved to see the young man. The day before, the concerned major had even organized search parties to look for him. He took Da Silva into his own home for the next 24 hours in order to get him food, rest, and medicine. On the morning of May 11, the young man, still lame in one leg, rejoined his family.

That evening a group of ufologists, including Hulvio Brant Aleixo, interviewed the witness. On May 26 investigators from UFO organizations and the military police participated in an on-site reconstruction, with Da Silva, at the Bebedouro site. Though interviewed repeatedly on a number of occasions over the following weeks, he stuck to his story and did not elaborate on it. The first major press accounts appeared on May 16. All who dealt with the young man, including the individuals who met him in the hours following his return from what he claimed had been alien captivity, vouched for his sincerity.

Da Silva would have one last, brief encounter with the aliens. Around midnight on May 21, he rose out of the bed, guided by a sudden impulse to step outside. As he stepped out, he was startled to see a trio of little men, dressed in their flight suits, standing in the garden as if waiting for him. He immediately went back inside and bolted the door. When he next looked, in the morning, they were gone.

He related this second visitation to something the saintly apparition had told him during the abduction: that the earth was in grave danger, apparently either from this group of beings or from another one. Their appearance, coupled with other calamities, could threaten all of mankind and could be averted only if human beings changed for the better.

For weeks after his return from captivity, Da Silva complained of various physical afflictions. His eyes burned, and his vision was impaired. He suffered headaches and abdominal pains. In due course he was restored to full health.

All through May and June UFO sightings were reported in the Bebedouro region. Da Silva himself had a close sighting of a small, luminous sphere one evening. Ufologists, military officers, and academics busily interviewed witnesses and themselves saw some unusual objects. The most interesting incident they uncovered was one from a 60-year-old man named Antonio Rodrigues. According to Aleixo, the encounter occurred "at the same time as" Da Silva's, at the Constantino estate about 15 miles from Bebedouro.

Rodrigues, a deaf-mute, was fishing on the banks of the Rio das Velhas when he saw an object come out of the sky and land nearby. Several short, thick-set, bearded little men emerged and gestured to Rodrigues, who took to his heels. The beings chased him, and one drew something from his belt and pointed it in his direction. Something struck him in his right leg, and he was knocked off his feet. They gathered around him and spoke among themselves. One knelt down and felt Rodrigues's arm. The being shook his head, and he and his companions returned to the ship and flew away.

According to Aleixo:

Antonio Rodrigues became intensely excited at the sight of the *identikit* sketch of the little bearded men described by the soldier José Antonio da Silva of the Bebedouro case. . . . The points of coincidence between the Bebedouro and Constantino cases acquire even more particular weight when one bears in mind the utter cultural isolation of the deaf-mute. . . . For, in addition to suffering the sensory deprivations to which he is a victim, he lived away out there,

right in the middle of the bush, and has not the scantiest possible contact with civilization or, to be more specific, with the communications media [Aleixo, 1975].

Moreover, Aleixo wrote, even if Rodrigues had access to the newspapers, they would not have helped him much, since the coverage was incomplete and inaccurate.

*Bebedouro and other experiences.* The sorts of entities Da Silva and Rodrigues allegedly met are unique in the abduction literature, though generally similar entities figure in a handful of non-abduction CE3 accounts. The beings bear a resemblance to the hairy dwarfs reported in Europe and South America during a worldwide UFO wave in 1954. For example, in the early morning hours of October 5 a man drawing water from a well in Loctudy, France, watched a humanoid step out of a landed disc. The figure, whose face was covered with hair and whose eyes were "as large as the eggs of a raven," touched the witness on the shoulder and spoke to him in an unknown language before returning to the craft (Bowen, 1969). On the evening of the ninth, at Pournoy-la-Chetive, three children reported that "a round shiny machine came down very close to us. Out of it came a kind of man, four feet tall, dressed in a black sack. . . . His head was hairy, and he had big eyes. He said things to us that we couldn't understand, and we ran away." An adult resident of the village claimed to have observed the UFO's departure (Michel, 1958).

In his review of the episode, folklorist/ufologist Thomas E. Bullard takes note of numerous motifs from other abduction episodes, including the diffuse lighting, the paralysis-causing weapons, the otherworldly journey, the conference, and many more. Of particular interest is the apparent underground, cavelike setting—an aspect that "comes as a surprise even by the standards of UFO abduction stories," Bullard writes; yet it figures in a small subset of stories, including Betty Andreasson's (see **Andreasson Abduction Case**).

Also in common with Andreasson, Da Silva claimed an encounter with an apparitional religious figure. In both instances they seem to have had a specifically Christian identity. Da Silva refused to describe his because he was supposed to keep its name a secret

and even a physical description would provide all the information people need to know who it was. "Asked whether the vision was of Jesus," Aleixo said, "José Antonio promptly replied that it was not. As to whether it was some saint, he was unwilling to reply, merely smiling and changing the subject of conversation" (Aleixo, 1973).

The Bebedouro case is not the only one in which a religious figure manifests in the course of an abduction experience. In the other instances the figure is Jesus. For example, abduction investigator Karla Turner tells the story of an abductee she identifies only as "Pat." In the summer of 1954, Turner writes, Pat and other members of her family were floated into a UFO by large-headed, hairless gray humanoids. Early in the encounter, said to have taken place on a farm in Indiana, Pat, then 11 years old, perceived Jesus's appearance in a sparkling shaft of light. Standing amid the beings about to remove her from her bedroom, Jesus offered these comforting words: "Do not be afraid, my child. These are mine." After gesturing toward the entities, he added, "I am the light of the world," and vanished in the sparkling light. Christian figures and images also play a role in the Andreasson case.

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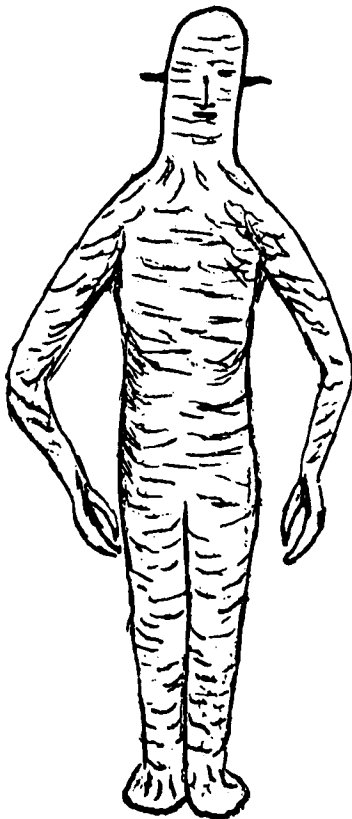
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### PASCAGOULA ABDUCTION CASE

The second most famous UFO-abduction case in history (the first being the **Hill abduction case**) took place on Thursday, October 11, 1973, at the southeastern tip of Mississippi. Compared to other such reports before and since, the Pascagoula incident was neither especially dramatic nor singularly interesting. Yet it received enormous publicity, owing perhaps in good part to its having been reported at the onset of the great American UFO wave that erupted that month. Less well known are the principal witness' subsequent alleged telepathic interactions with extraterrestrials.

Sometime around nine in the evening (neither man wore a wristwatch) Charles Hickson, 42, and Calvin Parker, 19, were fishing from the dock of an abandoned shipyard along the Pascagoula River when a "zipping sound" alerted Hickson to the approach of a domed, football-shaped object. Thirty feet long,



Charles Hickson said the entities that allegedly abducted him and Calvin Parker had "wrinkled" bodies and were gray-colored.

eight to 10 feet high, it had two windows and two blue lights. It descended until it was about two feet above a clearing some 30 to 40 yards behind them. A door opened on the nearer end, and a brilliant light glowed from the interior. Moments later three figures floated out of the opening, heading in their direction. Hickson would describe them as follows:

The head seemed to come directly to the shoulders, no neck, and something resembling a nose came out to a point about two inches long. On each side of the head, about where ears would be, was something similar to the nose. Directly under the nose was a slit resembling a mouth. The arms were something like human arms, but long in proportion to the body; the hands resembled a mitten, there was a thumb attached. [Hickson would later compare them to claws.] The legs remained together and the feet looked something like elephant's feet. The

entire body was wrinkled and had a greyish color. There could have been eyes, but the area above the nose was so wrinkled I couldn't tell [Hickson and Mendez, 1983].

The beings were slightly over five feet tall. Two of them positioned themselves on either side of Hickson and grabbed his arms. Momentarily Hickson felt a stinging sensation on his left arm. Then he became paralyzed and numb. The third being held Parker, who lay limp; he had fainted. The still-conscious Hickson wondered if the two of them would be killed or permanently kidnapped.

The two men and the three entities entered the craft. Something like an "eye," the size and shape of a football, floated from the wall to within six inches of Hickson's face. Hickson lay suspended in the air in different positions (once at a 45-degree angle) as the eye moved around his body. At this point Hickson could no longer see the beings, who he thought might be behind him; because he was still paralyzed, he could not determine that for himself. He tried to utter the words, "Please don't take me away," but could not get his mouth to function. Then the entities entered Hickson's line of vision again. Two of them took him outside in the same configuration as before. The three glided to the pier, with Hickson's feet dragging along the ground all the while.

When they arrived at the spot from which they had abducted Hickson, they let him go. His legs gave way beneath him, and he fell. He looked up to see Parker, who was standing there motionless, with his arms outstretched, as if in deep shock. Hickson started to crawl toward him but then found that he was able to stand. He heard the zipping sound again, and he turned to see the blue flashing lights which had first caught his attention. Just as they disappeared, a voice spoke inside his head: "We are peaceful. We meant you no harm."

For his part Parker, who had lapsed in and out of consciousness, remembered being taken toward the ship, hearing a whistling noise and a click, then seeing the bright interior lights just before he was floated outside. He was left standing, though unable to move, and looking out on the river. He saw the UFO shoot upwards and vanish at about 50 feet.

The entire episode had lasted probably 20 minutes.

*Other sightings.* At about 7:40 the same evening three persons in a car—Parole Officer Raymond Broadus, Pascagoula City Councilman E. P. Sigalas, and an unidentified woman—were driving on U.S. Highway 90 just west of Gautier, the small town near Pascagoula where Hickson and his family lived, when they saw something. What it was depends on which version one prefers to believe.

On October 13 writer Ralph Blum, who was covering the Pascagoula story for *Cosmopolitan*, interviewed Broadus over the phone. Broadus said, “First, I thought it was a large helicopter. Then I figured if it was a helicopter, it wasn’t doin’ anything. Evening star [Venus]? Not in that position. We drove on six, seven miles, saw it again. It was eerie, perplexing beyond words. . . . I’d say it had an oblong shape” (Blum, 1974). Interviewed by the Pascagoula newspaper six years later, Broadus recalled a fast-moving object descending so rapidly that it seemed headed for imminent impact with the earth. Then it stopped a few hundred yards above the ground and meandered toward the Pascagoula River (Broadus, 1979).

More impressive is a sighting which occurred close to the onset of Hickson and Parker’s alleged encounter. At 9 P.M., at the conclusion of a television show he had been watching, Larry Booth of Pascagoula got up to check the front door prior to retiring for the night. He noticed a “huge object” of some sort hovering five to eight feet above a nearby streetlight. As he recalled in an interview in August 1974:

This object was standin’ still, it wasn’t movin’ at all when I seen it. But all the lights around the outside of it were turnin’—clockwise motion. And they were all red. . . . I would say it was larger than the props on a helicopter, you know how the big helicopters are with the large props? I would say that it was bigger around than that.

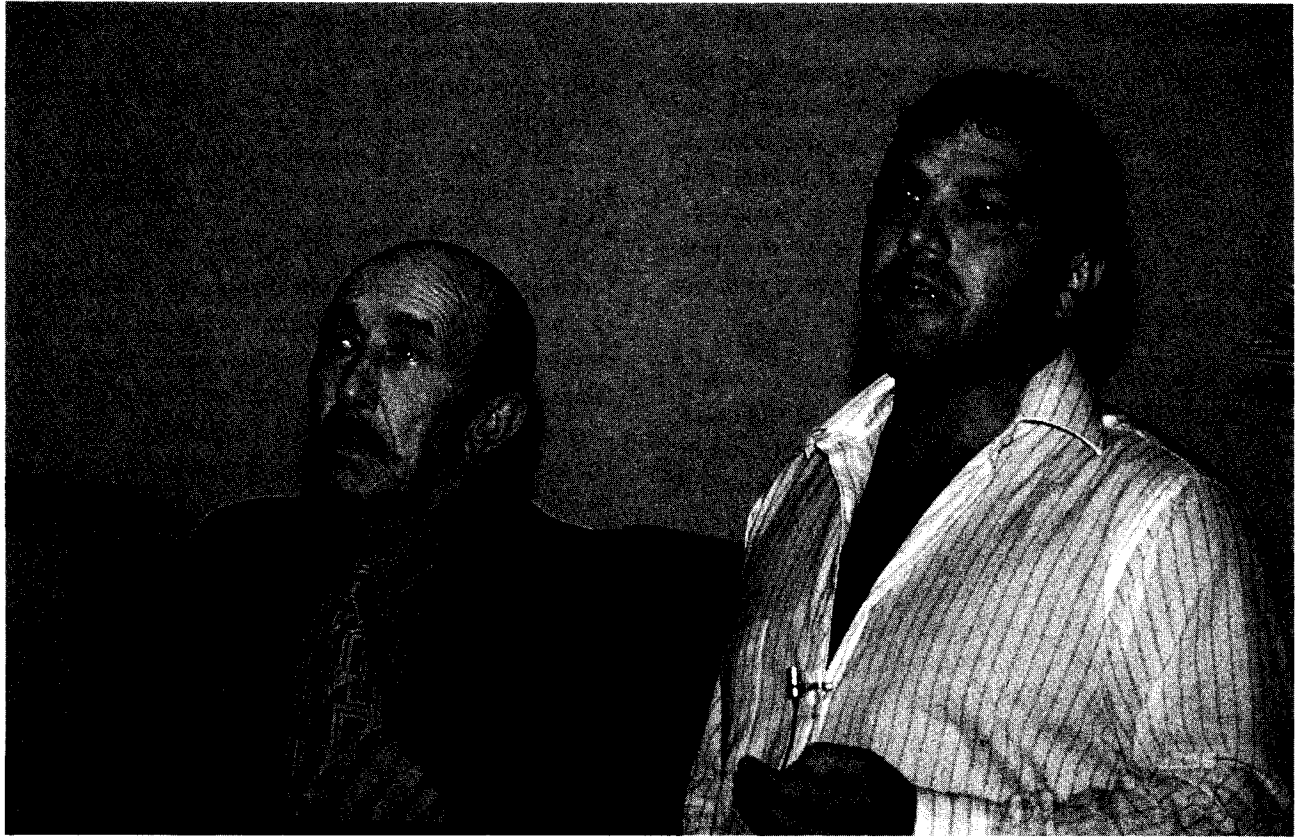
[T]he lights all the way around it, a lot of them, [were] close together . . . circling . . . slower than an ambulance light turns . . . about half that fast. . . I couldn’t hear a sound. A helicopter would’ve jarred everybody in here out of the house.

The object began to move slowly away in the darkness. Booth thought he detected a dome atop it. The light inside the dome “was sort of reflected up from the inside.” Booth could see that the object was round. At the time he thought he was viewing some kind of “experiment” run out of a local military base (Hickson and Mendez, *op. cit.*).

*Investigation and hoopla.* Hickson and Parker sat in a car for the next 45 minutes trying to calm their shattered nerves and to decide what to do next. Hickson drank whiskey out of a bottle. In due course Parker suggested that they contact the military. Hickson located a pay phone and called Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, 30 miles west of Pascagoula. A sergeant there told him that the Air Force did not handle UFO reports; he should tell his story to the police. Instead they drove to the office of the *Mississippi Press Register*, just a few blocks away. Parker, who was driving, got out, explaining to his companion that there was a clock in the building and he wanted to know what time it was. But the building was locked. So Hickson and Parker called the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office, where the deputy who took the call urged them to come over and talk in person. Hickson thought he detected a touch of amusement in the officer’s voice.

Nonetheless at 10:30 P.M. the two witnesses showed up. They brought with them two catfish, apparently to prove as much of the story as they could, which was that they had been fishing earlier in the evening. Hearing that one of the men had liquor on his breath, Sheriff Fred Diamond ordered his deputies to administer breath analysis. Two hours of intense grilling followed, but Hickson and Parker stuck to their stories, saying early on that they wanted to take lie-detector tests. They also insisted that they wanted no publicity. Parker, who was barely coherent, seemed particularly shaken.

At one point Hickson and Parker were left alone in a room where, though they did not know it, they were being taped. Sheriff Diamond assumed that if they were lying, that fact would become immediately apparent when the two spoke privately. Instead the men’s demeanor changed not at all. They continued to talk in the voices of the terribly distressed:



In October 1973 two Mississippi fishermen, Charles Hickson (left) and Calvin Parker, claimed to have been taken into a UFO by robotlike entities with clawed hands. This photograph was taken in 1986.

*Parker:* I got to get home and get to bed or get some nerve pills or see the doctor or something. I can't stand it. I'm about to go half crazy.

*Hickson:* I tell you, when we [get] through, I'll get you something to settle you down so you can get some damn sleep.

*Parker:* I can't sleep yet like it is. I'm just damn near crazy. . . . I passed out. I expect I never passed out in my whole life.

*Hickson:* I've never seen nothin' like that before in my life. You can't make people believe—

*Parker:* I don't want to keep sittin' here. I want to see a doctor.

*Hickson:* They better wake up and start believin'. . . . they better start believin'.

*Parker:* You see how that damn door come right up?

*Hickson:* I don't know how it opened, son. I don't know.

*Parker:* It just laid up and just like that those son' bitches—just like they came out.

*Hickson:* I know. You can't believe it. You can't make people believe it.

*Parker:* I [was] paralyzed right then. I couldn't move.

*Hickson:* They won't believe it. They [are] gonna believe it one of these days. Might be too late. I knew all along they was people from other worlds up there. I knew all along. I never thought it would happen to me. . . .

Soon Hickson left the room. All alone, Parker began to pray: "It's hard to believe. . . . Oh God, it's awful. . . . I know there's a God up there. . . ."

When Hickson and Parker went to work the next day (at the Walker Shipyard), they did not discuss their



experience at first, but their co-workers could see that Parker was disturbed about something. Then the sheriff called. He wanted the two to come right over; his office was full of reporters who wanted to interview them. Surprised and annoyed, Hickson reminded him of his promise not to leak the story. The sheriff protested his innocence but noted that it probably would be impossible to keep a story like this quiet.

Hickson's foreman overheard the conversation and asked Hickson what had happened. In short order Hickson was repeating the story to the shipyard owner, Johnny Walker, who urged him to get an attorney. Walker notified a prominent local attorney, Joe Colingo, who was both the company lawyer and Walker's brother-in-law. Reportedly Walker told him the UFO story might be "worth only about a million dollars" (Eszterhas, 1974). Colingo arrived shortly and accompanied his new clients to the sheriff's office. Diamond said his office did not have the facilities for the polygraph test Colingo and the witnesses wanted. Meanwhile Hickson expressed concern that he and Parker possibly had been exposed to radiation; would it be possible to have them tested?

Colingio and Detective Tom Huntley took the two to a local hospital, which said it lacked the equipment to conduct radiation tests. Huntley then spoke with Keesler, and the group headed off to the air base. There, under heavy guard, Hickson and Parker were led to a building where a team of doctors conducted an extensive examination. (Huntley would recall that "they looked like space creatures—all wrapped up in white and masked and gloved" [Blum, *op. cit.*].) Afterwards the "whole base command" (in Huntley's words) sat in as the Keesler intelligence chief interrogated Hickson and Parker. The officer, Huntley remembered, acted "cool" as if "he'd heard it all before." Huntley noticed that when Hickson mentioned the beings' clawlike hands, two colonels exchanged glances.

Late that afternoon Colingo met Hickson, Parker, and Parker's father in his office and drew up a contract. Colingo promised to protect their legal and financial interests. By now the witnesses were feeling overwhelmed, and they were relieved that so important a man—as they saw Colingo—was interested in

them. Subsequently debunkers would intimate that Hickson and Parker had invented the UFO story to make money (Klass, 1974). No evidence of hoaxing would ever emerge, however. To all appearances the idea that the story could be exploited for financial gain was Colingo's alone, and Hickson and Parker would never see any significant amount of money from it. (Hickson later dismissed the attorney because, he said, "Colingo just wanted to make a buck" [Peters, 1977].)

That day Hickson's left arm bled from what looked like a small puncture wound, at the precise spot where the beings had grabbed him.

By the next day Pascagoula was crawling with journalists. Two scientists had also flown in, separately. One was James A. Harder, a professor of engineering at the University of California at Berkeley. Harder was also a consultant to the Tucson-based Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO). The other was J. Allen Hynek, Northwestern University astronomer and for 20 years (until 1969) the principal scientific consultant to the Air Force's **Project Blue Book**. Harder would try without success to hypnotize the two, who were too shaken and distracted for the procedure to work. Later that day Hynek and Harder would speak at a press conference in which they expressed their confidence in Hickson and Parker's sincerity. All who dealt with the two in the aftermath of their alleged encounter—whether they were police officers, investigators, friends, or acquaintances—shared that view. The sincerity of the two seemed palpable. Those who could not believe in the existence of aliens sought alternative explanations (such as vivid hallucination) which acknowledged Hickson and Parker's genuine distress without forcing the theorists to adopt an unacceptably extraordinary interpretation.

The excitement continued for weeks afterwards. Unable to come down from the experience, Parker returned to Jones County, Mississippi, his and Hickson's home 130 miles north of Pascagoula. There he suffered an emotional breakdown and was placed in Laurel's Community Hospital for a time. Meanwhile reporters and curiosity seekers kept bothering Hickson. On October 30 Hickson took a polygraph test administered by Scott Glasgow of the New Orleans-based

Pendleton Detective Agency. "I am convinced that he believes he saw a spaceship and that he believes he was taken into the spaceship by three creatures," Glasgow told the press. In January 1974 Hickson appeared on Dick Cavett's late-night television show.

*Further experiences.* The Cavett appearance came at the tail end of Hickson's brief moment of international celebrity. From then on, except for an occasional retrospective newspaper article, discussion of the Hickson/Parker experience would be confined to UFO books. Nonetheless Hickson would have other experiences which he linked to UFOs.

In January 1974 Hickson went hunting on a tree farm near Gautier. Sitting on a hillside eating his lunch, his shotgun across his lap, he suddenly noticed that all was still around him. There was neither movement nor sound. Then, in a clearing 75 yards away, he saw what he thought was the craft he had encountered three months earlier. A message spoke in his mind:

We mean you no harm. We mean no one any harm. You may communicate with us later. You have endured. You have been chosen. There is no need for fear. We will communicate again.

Hickson felt as if he had abruptly been relieved of a terrible burden. As soon as the message was delivered, the UFO "seemed to just disappear."

One evening the following month, while Hickson was in the backyard of his apartment building, he "heard" another message:

You must tell the world we mean no harm. Your world needs help. We will help in the future before it's too late. You are not prepared to understand yet. We will return again soon.

On May 12, on his way home from a visit to his parents, who farmed near Sandersville in Jones County, Hickson saw the UFO again. This time so did a number of others: his wife Blanche, son Curt, son-in-law Kenny Gurley, daughter Sheila Gurley, and Kenny's brother Ernest, plus two infants. All were in the car, with Kenny driving, when the object approached from behind them to the left, then moved ahead, took a right turn and descended as if it were about to land in front of them. Kenny Gurley, who stopped the car to get a better look, recalled that it was a

brilliant, big white light, oval-shaped "kind of like a football." Toward the top were four or five "windows" from which light shone. The UFO was 100 to 200 yards away.

Hickson wanted to step out of the car and meet the occupants, but his wife was screaming hysterically and weeping. Sheila pleaded with her father not to upset her mother any further. At that point Hickson "heard" these words inside his head: "Go. There will be another time, another place."

As Gurley fled the scene at over 90 mph, the object remained in place until it was lost to view.

William Mendez, a Michigan college instructor, interviewed all the witnesses and collected their statements in the course of an extensive investigation of all aspects of the incident. Eventually he would bring Detroit hypnotherapist John Kraus into the case. In February 1976 Kraus had Hickson and Parker separately relive the October 1973 incident under hypnosis. Little of consequence came out of this new attempt to shed light on the encounter. Perhaps the most interesting detail was Hickson's "memory" of seeing the "ears" retract into the head of one entity, leaving a round hole; then the "ears" reemerged. These sorts of details seemed in line with a conclusion to which Hickson had come sometime earlier: the entities were robots.

Hickson collaborated with Mendez on a book-length treatment of his experience, *UFO Contact at Pascagoula*, issued in 1983 by a small publishing house specializing in contactee materials. Mendez, who was not a ufologist and had no particular background in the subject, first visited Pascagoula in August 1974 out of intellectual curiosity. He returned on many occasions to interview dozens of persons connected in one way or another with the incident. He also came to know the Hickson family well. The resulting book addresses various objections raised by critics. One was that the UFO should have been visible to passers-by on a nearby bridge. According to Mendez:

Although the Highway 90 bridge is relatively close to the abduction site, it would have been extremely difficult for a motorist to have seen anything. Test drives over the bridge have shown that when one is leaving Pascagoula (heading

west) the site is only visible for a few seconds before arriving at the crest of the bridge. The site then becomes obscured by a heavy concrete guardrail which runs the entire length of the bridge. This is true for both left and right westbound lanes.

As one approaches the bridge driving in an eastward direction, into Pascagoula, the site is off to the right, but is not visible because of very high marsh grass. . . . When [one is] driving upon the bridge the abduction site is not visible until one passes it. Then, it is necessary to look backward in order to see the site. This is possible just before reaching the crest of the bridge[;] however, in the next few seconds one drives over the crest and the site is again impossible to see. This is the case in both right and left eastbound lanes.

Traffic usually moves over the bridge at about thirty-five to forty miles per hour. Therefore, a driver or passenger would have only a second or two to view the abduction site [Hickson and Mendez, *op. cit.*].

The most serious attack on the case appears in Philip J. Klass's *UFOs Explained* (1974). A committed debunker who often portrays UFO witnesses and investigators as individuals of dubious character (Clark, 1981), Klass focused on Hickson's personal history. As evidence of Hickson's untrustworthiness Klass noted that Hickson had been fired from a previous job (as a shipyard foreman) amid charges of financial irregularities. Hickson protested his innocence; he had resigned, not been fired, and the reason was not dishonesty but petty office politics. Whatever the truth may or may not have been, the relevance of this to the subsequent abduction claim is not overwhelmingly apparent, and no one besides Klass—who did not interview Hickson or Parker—has ever professed to see a connection between these two matters. Klass's own treatment of the case leaves something to be desired. It neglects, for example, to mention such relevant evidentiary issues as the secret taping which so impressed the sheriff and other observers.

It took Parker years to recover from the incident. He moved from Pascagoula to Louisiana and stayed away from reporters and investigators, though Mendez

managed to win his trust. Hickson occasionally shows up at UFO conferences but otherwise maintains a low profile.

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## PORTAGE COUNTY SIGHTINGS

Portage County Deputy Sheriff Dale F. Spaur reported for duty at the sheriff's office in Ravenna, Ohio, at midnight, prepared to work the early-morning hours of Sunday, April 17, 1966. An hour or two later he hooked up with Wilbur "Barney" Neff, a mounted (auxiliary) deputy who ordinarily worked as an airport mechanic. Their routine police duties brought them to the southern part of the county (located in northeastern Ohio, just to the east of Cleveland and Akron) and to a road near Atwater Center where a motorist had collided with a utility pole. They sent the man to a hospital, arranged for the car to be towed, and called in a repairman to fix the pole. Because the morning was chilly, they drove east to Deerfield to buy coffee for themselves and the repairman. They arrived back at the accident scene around 4:45 A.M.

As they drank coffee and chatted with the repairman, they overheard radio traffic between Portage and Summit counties. Radio operators and deputies were chuckling about an Akron woman who had called in a report of a bright object "as big as a house" flying at an alarmingly low altitude over her neighborhood. The three listeners joined in the laughter.

Shortly thereafter Spaur and Neff headed west on Route 224, intending to file an accident report at a nearby hospital. At a spot three or four miles east of Randolph, they passed a rusty 1959 Ford parked on the highway's left shoulder. They turned around and parked behind it. Both got out, and Spaur approach-

ed the vehicle while Neff stood by the front of the patrol car. It was just after 5 A.M.

As he walked, Spaur glanced over his right shoulder and observed a moving light visible through trees at the top of a small hill along the road. The light was coming in from the west, heading in their direction. The deputy, who just a few minutes earlier had snickered at the Akron "flying saucer," was surprised to find himself thinking, "That must be the UFO that's been talked about." He pointed it out to Neff.

Within moments it came near the trees, then ascended, turned sharply to the right, passed over the road, and hovered 50 to 100 feet in the air. A perfect oval in shape, it was a brilliant blue-white "almost as bright as a flashbulb." It was hard to gaze at for more than a few seconds at a time; looking at it caused Spaur's eyes to water. It lit up the ground around the cruiser as if it were "high noon." Whenever it moved, it tipped forward in the direction it was going.

Suddenly, without saying a word to one another, the two broke for the cruiser at the same moment. When Spaur's hand touched the door handle, he had the strange thought that the car would vanish. The encounter was so shockingly at variance with any reality Spaur knew of that on some level he felt as if he had stepped into a dream where anything could happen. Once inside, Spaur gathered his wits sufficiently to radio the sheriff's office and speak with a sergeant, who ordered him to wait there until a car with a camera got to the site.

As they watched, they heard "a whisper behind a humming noise, which seemed to come from the object," Spaur would recall later that day. "This thing went straight up to about 250 or 400 feet and came back to the south side of the highway, directly overhead." When the UFO rose, the sound got louder and the light got brighter. It drifted 150 feet ahead, then hovered motionlessly above the center of the road.

Spaur drove cautiously toward it. He and Neff now had a better view of the object. It was 18 to 24 feet thick, 35 to 45 feet in diameter, with a rounded bottom and a top barely visible in dim silhouette. The UFO started to draw away from them, ascending to 500 feet and speeding up whenever Spaur accelerat-

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### ROACH ABDUCTION CASE

In October 1973 Pat Roach, a divorced mother of seven, moved into an isolated house on the far outskirts of Lehi, Utah. On the night of the sixteenth, as six of the children slept in their beds, Mrs. Roach dozed on the living-room couch with five-year-old Kent. Around midnight Kent woke up screaming that he had seen a "skeleton." Pat herself had some vague impression of an intruder and a bright light shining through the window from an open field. Though there were no signs of either, the yowling of the family cat and a nearby dog's barking did nothing to relieve her anxiety. Suspecting a prowler, she phoned a neighbor, who notified the police at 12:10 A.M. A few minutes later officers arrived, spoke with Pat, and checked the house and immediate area. After finding nothing out of the ordinary, they left.

Two of the children, Bonnie and Debbie, then told their mother that the figure had not been a prowler but a "spaceman" who had stood in a corner. Six-year-old Debbie said that a creature had come into the house and they had gone into a spaceship. Bonnie, the oldest daughter, confirmed the description of the being. "They didn't make me forget," Debbie said. "They told me not to tell anyone except those in my family." She spoke of seeing a "line" of persons waiting to "get on the machine."

Pat had a hard time believing any of this, but she knew something strange had happened. She was sufficiently disturbed that she and her children spent the rest of the night at a friend's house.

A year and a half later, when Pat read an article about an abduction case in *UFO Report*, a newsstand magazine, she wrote the editor, who gave the letter to ufologist Kevin D. Randle. Randle, then a field investigator for the Tucson-based Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), made some phone calls. He talked with the Lehi police, whose records confirmed the midnight visit in October 1973 and who spoke well of Mrs. Roach.

On July 8 Randle and APRO's research director James A. Harder met with the Roaches in their home. Following interviews with family members, Harder placed Pat under hypnosis. Under hypnosis this story slowly emerged:

Pat woke up with a bright light shining on her and two thin humanoid figures standing over her. The figures, dressed in shiny "uniforms," were between four and five feet tall and had pasty-white skin, big eyes, and gloved hands with two long fingers and a clawlike thumb. They had slits for mouths but no noses. Reaching down, they picked her up by her upper arms. Their grip caused her discomfort. She looked to see what was happening to her children, and she saw three of them—Bonnie, Debbie, and Shawn—in the living room "fighting" other humanoids. She could not see where Kent was.

The beings tried to give the impression that they were friendly, Pat said, but in fact they seemed cold-blooded and "businesslike." Pat found herself in a round, bright room with four or five of them. The room contained computerlike devices, liquid-filled glass containers, and something that resembled a clock. All of these were somewhat fuzzy because Pat, who was near-sighted, did not have her glasses on. The beings communicated to her, apparently via telepathy, that they wanted her to undress. She did so unhappily, and then they placed her on a table and attached wires to one arm and one leg. A gynecological examination took place, and a needle was shoved painlessly into her abdomen. Another needle was inserted into her head, to "take my mind, my thoughts," Pat said.

One of the figures was not an alien but an individual who looked in every way like a bald, 55-year-old man

wearing horn-rimmed glasses. He was dressed in black clothing.

At some point, apparently during the examination, Pat found or imagined herself to be on a cliff looking out on the ocean and the waves rolling into the shore. As she related this episode under hypnosis, her voice became a quiet monotone. Randle and Harder wondered if she were not describing a hypnotic technique. In other words, under hypnosis she was recalling being hypnotized by the UFO entities. They were asking her questions about "what I love, what I hate, what animals I like. They asked me about my family. . . . They need us. . . . I don't know why they need us. They're very intent. They need information quickly. I don't know if it's my imagination but they limit time." The investigators thought she meant to say the beings had a "limited amount of time," but Pat insisted, "Not amount of time. I don't know what it means. Just that they limit time." She said they were curious about human emotions and the workings of the human mind. They were indifferent to her feelings because "they don't have an understanding of emotions like ours." She disliked them intensely.

The examination over, Pat was wiped clean with a cloth. She put her clothes on as the beings watched. When Pat asked where her children were, they did not respond, and she began to cry. Soon afterwards, however, she was floated back into the house. The children were already there, having been returned before her. The beings retrieved a briefcase-sized machine they had brought into the house. The next thing she knew, Pat was waking up with Kent screaming next to her, and she was experiencing vague recollections of a light and an intruder.

Randle interviewed Debbie, described as a remarkably intelligent girl. Debbie, who had the fullest conscious recall, spoke of seeing Bonnie and two small neighbor boys in the "line." She also saw a floating table. Onboard the "machine" she had seen an "Indian girl" wearing a "long dress." The beings "thought at me with their heads" when they communicated with her. At the initiation of the episode, she said, "The one that stood in the corner asked my name. And he said that I wouldn't be sick anymore." Pat confirmed that Debbie had been ill (she did not

specify with what) but that she had suddenly recovered after the night of the "proowler."

Curiously, Randle noticed that "the more I questioned her, the less she remembered. I had the impression that she had been programmed to forget if anyone outside the family began to press her about her experience."

After two failed attempts Bonnie fell under hypnosis. She talked of being inside the craft. Deeply frightened, she saw humanoids standing around a floating table on which her mother lay naked. She also said, "I see a human with them. He was taller and he had an ear like a human." Though relatively brief, her account contradicted nothing in her mother's story.

According to Randle:

One of the major problems had been pinning down the time of the sighting. Pat had said that she had seen her clock, inside the house, that showed the time as five minutes after twelve. Bonnie insisted that everything had taken place at one o'clock. And then I realized that the near-sighted Bonnie glancing at the clock after the frightening experience might misread it and five after twelve looks like one o'clock. That was the kind of detail that hoaxers would not make up [Randle, 1988].

Randle and Harder were impressed with the Roaches's intelligence and manifest sincerity. Inquiries conducted in the community indicated that they were well thought of. In 1975 Mrs. Roach was completing her college education and soon afterwards received her teaching certificate. At first she did not want her real name used, and some early accounts (Randle, 1976; Lorenzen and Lorenzen, 1977) give her the pseudonym "Pat Price."

The Roach abduction case is also interesting because it anticipates elements of the abduction phenomenon either obscure or entirely unknown in 1975, such as the aliens' coldness ("They treated me like a guinea pig," Pat said, the first of numerous abductees to express what would become a stock phrase) as well as their curiosity about human emotion and their interest in gynecology. Reports of human figures participating in physical examinations of abductees, nonexistent at the time of the Randle/Harder investigation, are ubiquitous today (Turner, 1994). Folklorist Thomas E. Bullard calls such reports "a chilling mystery within a mystery."

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three-foot opening where the original hole had been. Distant observers thought they saw the searchers retrieve a black object and place it inside a van, which quickly left the area.

State authorities acted quickly to deflate the story. By the end of the day, a statement from the governor's office declared that more sophisticated equipment had found no abnormal radioactivity in the pond and the surrounding area. The black object witnesses had seen, the authorities contended, was a container filled with soil and stone samples collected for analysis.

Media accounts treated the incident as a UFO case, even though no one reported any anomalous aerial phenomenon which might arguably be related to it. The reality of whatever may have happened was quickly buried underneath piles of rumor, speculation, and sensationalistic reporting. On the other side, attempts were made to explain the pond's curious melting as the effect of "water currents from springs." No springs, however, flowed into the pond, which McCarthy had created and which was filled by runoff water from rain and snow.

Whatever its cause, UFO-related or otherwise, the mystery of the hole in McCarthy's pond remains unsolved.

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#### WALTON ABDUCTION CASE

Few abduction reports have generated so much controversy as an incident that began on Wednesday, November 5, 1975, in a remote area of east-central Arizona. Two decades later the dispute still rages. To all but a very few combatants the stakes seem high. If Travis Walton and other participants are telling the truth, so it is assumed, UFOs exist; UFO abductions are physical, not imaginary, events; and UFOs are piloted by alien, presumably extraterrestrial beings. No wonder, then, that the Walton case has become one debunker's particular obsession. By now, after years of wildly conflicting claims and charges, a mass of confusion surrounds the episode. Thus the sorting of the reasonable conclusion from the unreasonable inference, much less the certifiably true from the undeniably false, is no simple task. It is not, however, entirely impossible. This account draws on many sources, including the two books that have been written on the case.

*The disappearance.* Travis Walton, 22, worked on a wood-cutting crew in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, set in a high mountainous area 15 miles south of Heber. The crew's foreman, Mike Rogers, had contracted with the U.S. Forest Service to thin out 1277 acres of scrub brush at Turkey Springs. In practice that meant that brush six inches or less in diameter was to be cleared with chainsaws. While half of the crew wielded the saws, the other members dumped the debris into slash piles behind them. Besides Walton and Rogers, the crew consisted of Ken Peterson, John Goulette, Steve Pierce, Allen Dalis, and Dwayne Smith. All were young men, ranging from 17 (Pierce) to 28 (Rogers). All of them lived in Snowflake, a small Mormon town 33 miles east of Huber.

Rogers had been doing contract work for the Forest Service for nine years. The Turkey Springs contract was the most lucrative he had landed so far, but he was late in fulfilling it. He already had secured one extension, and he and his crew were working hard and long to catch up. Thus the men labored until after sunset. When they quit for the day at 6 P.M., darkness had begun to fall.



Ten minutes later the exhausted workers piled into their battered pickup to begin the return trip to Snowflake. Rogers, Walton, and Peterson, the three nonsmokers, sat in the front seat, the others—already puffing away—in the back. As Rogers drove, Walton sat by the right window, bouncing up and down as the vehicle, its shock absorbers long worn out, negotiated what passed for a road. It had gone no more than 200 yards before something unusual came into view.

Either Walton or Dalis (accounts vary) saw it first. It was a glow shining through the trees on the right, about a hundred yards ahead of them. As the truck drove up the hill, the men fell silent. Forty yards away, the light bled over the road, but a dense stand of trees still obscured its source. Then they passed a small clearing to their right, and the source was now clearly in view. It was a luminous, disc-shaped structure, hovering 15 to 20 feet above a slash pile and casting a milky yellow glow through all of the clearing. Approximately 100 feet from them, 20 feet wide and eight feet high, it was divided by dark-silver vertical lines, longer than they were wide, into panel-like geometrical forms on its surface. A thin band with an outer protruding ring encircled the middle. Someone blurted out, unnecessarily at this point, "That's a UFO!"

Rogers was bringing the truck to a stop when Walton jumped out and walked briskly toward the UFO. Later he would explain his action thus: "I was suddenly seized with the urgency to see the craft at close range. I was afraid the thing would fly away and I would miss the chance of a lifetime to satisfy my curiosity about it." When his co-workers, whose reactions to the UFO's presence ranged from intrigued to petrified, saw what he was doing, they shouted at him to get back. Walton paused for a moment, turned to glance over at the truck, and reflected briefly on the wisdom of his course before deciding to proceed.

In short order he was standing on the perimeter of the dim halo of light the object was casting on the ground. He was only six feet away from being directly underneath the object. Mesmerized by the "unbelievably smooth, unblemished surface of the curving hull," he at first did not realize that the UFO was

beginning to emit sounds. The men in the truck were hearing low beeps. Then Walton heard them, too, only they were mixed somehow with a distant rumbling, an industrial sound reminiscent of a "multitude of turbine generators starting up." The UFO started to wobble slowly, one side tipped toward him. Then it wobbled faster, and the sounds grew louder.

By now thoroughly shaken, he ducked down behind a log which was jutting from the slash pile. He had to get away. He rose to his feet, and just as he was turning away from the UFO and toward the truck, he felt a "numbing shock . . . like a high voltage electrocution." It hit particularly in his head and chest, but he could feel it all over his body. He heard a cracking or popping sound, and then he heard, saw, and felt no more.

Walton did not know what had hit him. Those looking on, however, saw a bluish-green beam strike him. He rose a foot into the air, his arms and legs outstretched, and shot stiffly back some 10 feet, all the while caught in the glow of the light. His right shoulder hit the earth, and his body sprawled limply over the ground.

Rogers and his crew were beside themselves with fear at this point, and amid much shouting and cursing they fled the scene, leaving their fallen comrade behind. Rogers was driving dangerously fast, though he could barely see the road; he was certain that the object was coming up behind him. A quarter of a mile later, he swerved to avoid hitting a pine tree. The truck slid sideways and stopped, stuck crossways in a bulldozed pile of hard dirt.

As one of his passengers screamed at him to get going, Rogers looked around and saw that the UFO was gone. The sky was quiet and empty of anything but stars. No one spoke for some moments. Then everyone began to talk at once, not necessarily coherently. Peterson and Rogers argued that they should go back to rescue Walton. At first the others rejected the idea, but over the next few minutes, as the discussion continued outside the truck and nerves calmed, they changed their minds. As they piled back into the truck, Rogers thought he saw a flash of white light in the woods, something like a streak ascending into the air. No one else saw it, but then none had been looking in that direction at that moment. Rog-

ers believed he had witnessed the departure of the UFO.

Rogers drove around in the gathering darkness in search of the spot where they had seen the UFO. There were a number of clearings and any number of slash piles in the vicinity, and one looked pretty much like another, so it was not easy. But eventually they found it. Rogers drove into the site. His headlights revealed nothing except the slash pile their companion had been standing beside. He shined a flashlight through the clearing. Then he stepped out of the cab, and his crew reluctantly followed. The panic they had suffered had made them feel almost physically ill.

Twenty minutes of searching failed to uncover any trace of Walton. As the enormity of the evening's strange events began to sink in, some of the men, including Rogers, who considered Walton his best friend, wept. When they pulled themselves together, they headed for Heber and the initiation of the police investigation.

*Five days.* The authorities first heard of the incident just after 7:30, when Navajo County Deputy Sheriff Chuck Ellison took a call from Ken Peterson, who said only that one of the crew was missing. Ellison met the group at a Heber shopping center. The men were in a highly emotional state. Two were crying. Even as they related the bizarre and unbelievable UFO story, Ellison could not help reflecting that if they were acting, they were awfully good at it.

Ellison quickly notified Sheriff Marlin Gillespie, who ordered him to wait with the crew until he could get to Heber. Gillespie was in Holbrook 40 miles to the north. Within the hour he and Undersheriff Ken Coplan arrived and commenced their own interview of the witnesses. Rogers, who wanted to get back to the site as quickly as possible, urged the sheriff's men to bring bloodhounds to aid in the tracking, but none were available. Pierce, Smith, and Goulette said they had no desire to return, and so they went off in Rogers's truck to Snowflake to notify Rogers's wife of what had happened.

At the site the six men stalked the clearing and surrounding area with flashlights and a searchlight mounted atop a four-wheel jeep. The understandably suspicious law-enforcement officers focused a

good part of their attention on the trail that would have led Walton from the pickup to the slash pile. There were no prints in the hard ground. The pine needles that covered the clearing floor looked undisturbed. There were no broken twigs. There were no burn marks or other unusual effects in the slash pile or in the trees. Nothing, in short, to back up the story.

When last seen, Walton had been wearing no more than a light jacket. As the evening progressed, the temperature plummeted. If Walton was somewhere out in the woods, the bitter cold could represent a direct threat to his life. Ellison went back to Heber to collect additional searchers, but even with the further manpower the mystery of Walton's whereabouts remained unresolved.

Finally around midnight Rogers remarked that Travis's mother, Mary Walton Kellett, ought to be notified. She was staying in a remote cabin on a ranch in Bear Springs, about 10 miles in the woods to the east. (Kellett lived there part of the year and spent winters at her home in Snowflake. She was shortly to return to town.) Rogers and Undersheriff Coplan set off to see her. They showed up at her door around 1 A.M. Mrs. Kellett knew Rogers, of course, but had not met Coplan before now.

Still visibly shaken, Rogers related the circumstances of her son's disappearance. Apparently not quite comprehending what he was telling her, Kellett asked him to repeat the story. Then, after some moments' pause, she asked him if he had told anyone else.

Coplan, who had expected Kellett to respond more dramatically, did not like the way she was acting, and he—as well as later critics of the case—would make much of Kellett's apparent composure, interpreting it as evidence that as a party to the **hoax** she knew her son was all right and hidden away somewhere. In fact, those who knew Kellett far better than Coplan would insist that a hard life—she had raised six children on her own under difficult economic circumstances—had long since taught her not to fly to pieces in the face of crises and tragedies. It was part of her personal code not to display emotion before strangers. Yet in the days ahead, as events overwhelmed her, she would show emotion before friends, acquaintances, and strangers alike—a fact that would go unmentioned in debunking treatments of the Walton episode.

At 3 A.M. Kellett called Duane Walton, the second oldest of the Walton sons and the one who, owing to strength of personality, typically took charge when circumstances called for it. Duane left his home in Glendale, a western suburb of Phoenix, almost immediately.

By morning yet more volunteers, including local Forest Service personnel, had joined the search. The three crew members who had stayed away the night before had not returned in the morning, so again only Rogers, Peterson, and Dalis participated in the renewed effort. Already the sheriff's men and other area police officers were entertaining dark suspicions that the UFO tale was a story concocted to cover something far more sinister, such as murder. But at the same time Mike Rogers, who presumably would have been in on this hypothetical murder plot, was as insistent as Duane Walton, who presumably would not have been, that the search be continued. The two of them showed up together at Sheriff Gillespie's office on Saturday in an explosively angry mood. They had just been to the site, they said, and had detected not a soul. The search resumed that afternoon. This time it included a helicopter, riders on horseback, and four-wheel jeeps.

That day also brought the outside world into this obscure corner of America. Along with hordes of reporters and curiosity-seekers, UFO investigator Fred Sylvanus showed up, sought out Mike Rogers and interviewed him in the late afternoon and early evening. Duane Walton, who sat in on the interview, repeatedly interjected with comments of his own. These comments would come back to haunt him and to take a permanent place in the controversy surrounding the case. Duane claimed to have seen a UFO "almost identical to what they described, for a period of about 30 minutes, in broad daylight, about 12 years ago." He went on to assert, "Travis and I discussed this many, many times at great length. . . . We both said that we would immediately get as directly under the object as was physically possible. . . . The opportunity would be too great to pass up, and at any cost, except death, we were to make contact with them. . . . [Travis] performed just as we said we would . . . and he's received the benefits for it." Not nearly so sure, Rogers said, "You hope he has." Duane said he was sure his brother would be

brought back because "they don't kill people." He and Mike denied, however, that they were UFO buffs. "I follow it like I do a lot of other things," Duane said.

Later in the interview Rogers expressed concern about another sort of problem: "This contract that we have is seriously behind schedule. In fact, Monday [November 10] the time is up. We haven't done any work on it since Wednesday because of this thing; therefore, it won't be done. I hope they take that into account, this problem." He then returned to a prominent theme in the interview: his frustration with what he saw as a less than adequate search for his missing friend. "Nobody seemed that interested in searching that extensively. No bloodhounds were brought in. And now it's too late. I've been mentioning it every day." Duane also complained bitterly about the lackadaisical nature of the search.

It certainly seemed, Sylvanus thought, as if the two were genuinely concerned about Travis. Yet at the same time Duane's remarks about UFOs and the intentions of their occupants made him uneasy; so did Mike's expressed concerns about the lateness of his Forest Service contract. As would soon become clear, the foundations for an alternative interpretation of the case had been laid.

Meanwhile Snowflake Town Marshal Sanford (Sank) Flake was telling the press of his certainty that the story was a hoax "staged by Travis and his brother Duane to make some money. I believe the other kids did see something, but they were hoaxed, too." The Walton brothers, he said, had "lit up a balloon and launched it at the appropriate time." Flake's wife dissented. "Your idea is just as farfetched as Duane Walton's." Marshal Flake had a longstanding grievance against the Walton family stemming from a dispute with Travis some years earlier, and he had no specific evidence to support his charge, though he was poking around the Bear Springs ranch where he suspected Travis was hiding. On one occasion he brought a London television crew with him to the site, presumably so that it could film the live capture.

Flake was not the only officer hoping to crack the case by breaking down one of the supposed conspirators, who so far were sticking resolutely to their story. Some officers made repeated visits to Kellett's house to interrogate her at length. Finally one evening

Duane arrived from the sheriff's office at Holbrook, where he had sat in on yet another interview of the six witnesses. His mother was crying as an oblivious deputy kept plying her with questions. Furious, Duane took him to the porch and told him not to return unless or until he really had something to talk about. Then Duane told his mother that from now on she should not allow investigators into the house; she should talk with them on the porch, which would allow her to end the discussion any time she wanted to.

The next morning Marshal Flake showed up to deliver a message. Because Kellett had no phone, all communications between her and the authorities had to be carried out in person. Kellett stepped out to the porch, closed the door behind her, took the message, and went back inside. Flake and other skeptics would later conclude that she was hiding something. Or someone.

On Monday morning Rogers and the crew met in Holbrook to undergo polygraph testing at the sheriff's office. The examiner, Cy Gilson, worked for the Arizona Department of Public Safety and had been brought up from Phoenix for the occasion. While reporters milled around outside, each of the witnesses underwent four 20-minute tests which consisted of variously phrased versions of four basic questions:

- (1) Did you cause Travis Walton any serious physical harm last Wednesday afternoon?
- (2) Do you know if Travis Walton was physically injured by some other member of your work crew last Wednesday?
- (3) Do you know if Travis Walton's body is buried or hidden somewhere in the Turkey Springs area?
- (4) Did you tell the truth about actually seeing a UFO last Wednesday when Travis Walton disappeared?

One of the variants of this last question was, Do you believe that Travis Walton was actually taken aboard a UFO last Wednesday?

In his official report Gilson wrote:

Each of the six men answered "No" to questions #1, 2 and 3, and they each answered "Yes"

to question #4. The test results were conclusive on Goulette, Smith, Peterson, Rogers, and Pierce. The test results on Dalis were inconclusive.

Based on the polygraph chart tracing, it is the opinion of this examiner that Goulette, Smith, Peterson, Rogers, and Pierce were being truthful when they answered these relevant questions.

These polygraph examinations prove that these five men did see some object that they believe to be a UFO, and that Travis Walton was not injured or murdered by any of these men on that Wednesday. If an actual UFO did not exist and the UFO is a man-made hoax, five of these men hid no prior knowledge of a hoax. No such determination can be made of the sixth man, whose test results were inconclusive.

Even Flake did not make much of Dalis's test results. Dalis, after all, was a man with much to hide: a criminal past and (as we shall see) a criminal future. He had behaved with hostility all through the polygraph process, as if fearing secrets he had every reason not to wish revealed would accidentally come to light. Flake remarked, "I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him. Since he's the only one who didn't pass the lie test, I'd almost have to believe the opposite with him. Not passing means he's probably telling the truth. He saw it, the UFO." After the test Sheriff Gillespie pronounced himself satisfied. "There's no doubt they're telling the truth—right down the line," he said. "I feel sure that all six of them saw a UFO."

Close to midnight a phone rang in Taylor, a small town two or three miles south of Snowflake and 30 miles east of Heber. When Grant Neff took the call, he heard a faint, confused-sounding voice mutter, "This is Travis. I'm in a phone booth at the Heber gas station, and I need help. Come and get me."

Neff, who was married to Travis's sister Allison, told the caller he had the wrong number. From his point of view, Neff had no reason to take the message seriously. The voice did not sound like Travis's, for one thing. For another, the Waltons and their relatives already had been subjected to too many prank and crank calls. But just as he was preparing to hang up, Neff heard the voice screaming. The hysteria

sounded genuine. "It's me, Grant," the caller said. "I'm hurt, and I need help badly. You come and get me."

It was Travis, all right. Neff promised to get Duane and to be in Heber as soon as possible.

*The reappearance.* Neff drove to Snowflake and picked up Duane, who had not left the sheriff's office until 10 that evening. From there Duane had gone to Snowflake and to his mother's house. The two were talking when a white-faced Neff walked in and broke the news.

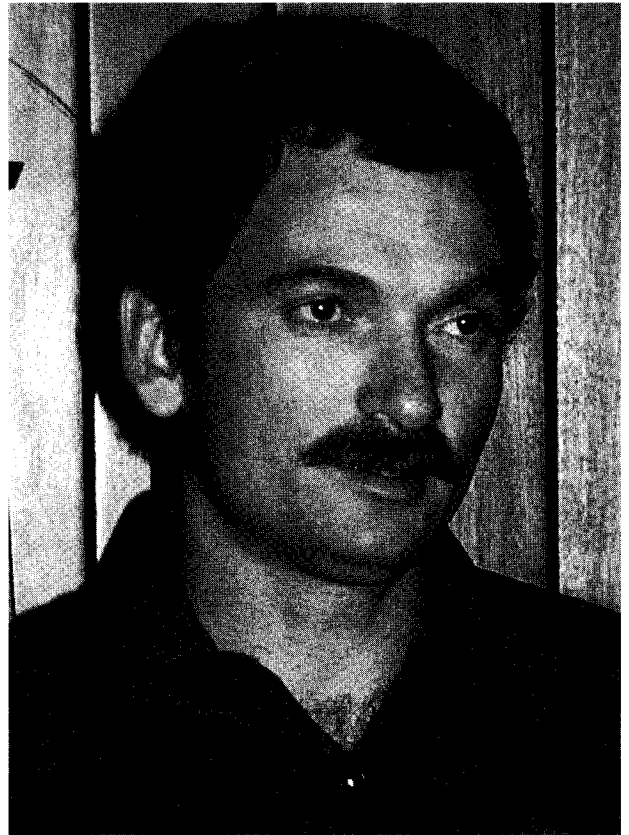
Grant Neff and Duane Walton found Travis hunched over in the second of three phone booths at a service station on Heber's outskirts. Though conscious, he seemed to be in shock. He had five days' worth of beard on his face, and he looked thinner than he had been when last seen. (Later, members of the family would claim that he had weighed 165; weighed not long after his return, he was 154.) Clothed in the levi shirt and jeans and cotton shirt he had been wearing at the time of his disappearance, he was shivering in the 18-degree cold.

On the way back to Snowflake, Travis spoke vaguely of encountering creatures with eyes that had terrified him. He was still frightened. He was startled to hear that five days had passed; he thought it had been only a couple of hours. When he heard that, he shook his head and ceased speaking altogether.

At his mother's house he took a bath and drank quantities of water. When he tried to eat cottage cheese and pecan cookies, he threw up.

Duane decided that someone in his brother's fragile condition needed to be shielded, at least for now, from harassment by police officers, journalists, and busy-bodies. Travis himself was saying over and over again, almost as if reciting something from memory, "Don't let the police know I'm here. . . . I've got to have a doctor. . . . Don't let the police know. . . . Get me some medical help."

But the police already knew, or at least suspected, that something was up. At 2:30 A.M. Gillespie got a tip from a phone company informant that someone had called the Neffs from the Heber gas-station booth. Gillespie alerted Deputy Ellison and Lt. E. M. Romo,



Travis Walton's five-day disappearance and alleged UFO abduction in November 1975 generated two books, a motion picture, and two decades of controversy.

who went to the station and began to dust for prints. There were no prints at all on the phone in the third booth, perhaps because no one had used it since the serviceman had emptied the till and wiped the instrument clean. The other two had prints, but so far as Ellison and Romo could determine in the cold and dark, none was Walton's.

Meanwhile officers on duty in the early-morning hours were looking for cars owned by Walton family members. Deputy Glen Flake (Sanford Flake's brother), who had been positioned in Snowflake at the junction of Highways 77 and 277 so that he could see Walton vehicles heading to or from Taylor (on 77) or Heber (on 277), saw nothing. In due course the sheriff told him to drive over to Mary Kellett's house.

Travis was there, but Deputy Flake would not know that till later. When he pulled up, he observed lights on inside the house. Duane was in the front yard

siphoning gas from a friend's truck. He explained that he had driven from Holbrook too late to refill his tank for the trip back to Glendale. He did not add that Travis would be accompanying him there, and Flake asked no further questions. Not long after he left, Duane left with Travis. By the time they got to Phoenix, the Walton abduction case would be in danger of collapsing into farce.

*Travails and tests.* Among the ufologists whom Duane Walton met prior to his brother's return was a Phoenix man named William H. Spaulding, head of Ground Saucer Watch (GSW). A frequent lecturer at UFO conventions, Spaulding specialized in photoanalysis; he claimed to have developed a computer-enhancement technique by which he could distinguish phony and authentic UFO photographs with something approaching certainty. In speeches and articles in popular UFO magazines, he spoke and wrote in a sort of pseudotechnical jargon which puzzled (and therefore usually impressed) the technically untrained even as it entertained the technically sophisticated, who found idle amusement in the enumeration of the malapropisms that habitually permeated Spaulding's discourse.

During Travis's absence Spaulding had introduced himself to Duane, and the two had spoken at length. Spaulding boasted that as a scientific organization GSW had access to all kinds of professionals, including physicians. The Waltons, who had the good fortune of being healthy and the bad luck of being poor, had no family doctor. But Duane knew that Travis would require medical attention on his return (assuming he did return). Spaulding assured him that GSW had a local physician who could take care of Travis and perform "all the scientific testing he'll need."

On his arrival in Phoenix, Duane called Spaulding, who directed him to GSW's medical consultant, Dr. Lester Steward. He and Duane would meet him at his office at 9 A.M. Duane and Travis then went to sleep at the former's Glendale residence, awakening just after 9. They hurried to Steward's office, which they were disconcerted to learn was located in a rundown hotel not far from the airport. Nothing about the office itself inspired confidence either. It looked as seedy as its surroundings. The curtains were yellowed; there

was no air-conditioning, and the deafening roar of landing and departing jets blew through the open windows. Worse, the room was devoid of medical equipment and textbooks. Even more ominously, the sign on the door identified Steward simply as "Hypnotherapist."

Duane immediately wanted to know if Steward was a medical doctor. At first he insisted he was, then eventually admitted that he was not licensed to practice in Arizona. (A subsequent inquiry determined that Steward's degree was from a California-based correspondence school without academic accreditation.) He said he would call a doctor friend and arrange for a full physical examination, but his "friend"—so Duane and Travis judged from hearing Steward's side of the conversation—did not appear to know who he was.

The Waltons walked out soon afterwards. The amount of time they spent in Steward's office itself became a part of the controversy. Steward and Spaulding would assert that the brothers had been there for two hours, during which Steward questioned them thoroughly. This is certainly false. The Waltons showed up half an hour late for their appointment; afterwards they went out to eat in a nearby restaurant before driving on to Glendale. At 10:45 Duane took a call from another ufologist, Coral Lorenzen of the Tucson-based Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO). Thus the time with Steward probably did not exceed 45 minutes.

By the time they got back to Duane's, the two learned that the world now knew about Travis's return—till then a secret known only to the family, Spaulding, and Steward. In their absence Duane's girl friend Carol had been fielding phone calls from reporters. On their return both Spaulding and Steward called, but Duane bluntly informed them that they should bother them no more. This action, as the Waltons soon found out, made Spaulding—who till now had been telling the press of his confidence in the case—a sworn enemy and the source of a great deal of future trouble. Other inquirers were told that Travis had gone to a private hospital in Tucson and could not be reached.

Nonetheless Mrs. Lorenzen managed to get through when she phoned. She spoke with Duane and man-

aged to persuade him that she could arrange for an examination by local physicians—*real* ones. So at 3:30 that afternoon Duane and Travis met two Phoenix APRO members, Drs. Joseph Saults (a general practitioner) and Howard Kandell (a pediatrician), at Duane's home.

This was well and good—the first step toward a real investigation—but between Lorenzen's call and the physicians' examination another party would enter, and hugely complicate, the story. At noon Lorenzen heard from the *National Enquirer*. In exchange for APRO's cooperation and access to the Waltons, the tabloid offered to pay all expenses. To start with, it would pay for a hotel room in which the brothers could be sequestered; it would also dispatch a team of reporters to the scene. Since APRO could not match the *Enquirer's* financial resources, Lorenzen agreed.

Travis's examination went well. Saults and Kandell found that he was in good health. There were only two out-of-the-ordinary physiological symptoms. As Kandell, who wrote the medical report, would note:

There were no bruises or evidence of trauma, except for a two-mm red spot in the crease of his right elbow, which was suggestive of a needle puncture; however, it was not overlying any significant blood vessel. He denied being aware of its presence and did not know what it might be due to. . . .

Urinalysis—volume 560 cc; normal, with good concentration [SpG 1.032]; however, there was no acetone present, which is unusual, considering that any person who is without adequate nutrition for twenty-four to forty-eight hours will break down his own body-fat stores, which should result in ketones [acetones] being excreted into the urine. The absence of ketones in his urine, considering a ten-pound weight loss, is difficult to explain.

Duane had given the doctors a bottle of urine—the product of Travis's first post-return micturition; early on Spaulding had urged Duane to make sure such a sample was preserved. Of course there was no way to prove this was Travis's specimen. The physicians had to take the brothers' word for it.

Travis would speculate that the red spot was probably something he had picked up in the course of his work, probably from a thorny bush. On the other hand, as we shall soon see, some critics would charge that the mark was evidence that Travis had injected drugs, probably LSD, into his right elbow. While this latter theory is hardly plausible, Travis's defenders would never be able to offer an explanation for the curious absence of bruises, which one would expect in the wake of Travis's alleged beam-driven collision with the ground.

Meanwhile Duane was maintaining the pretense that his brother was hospitalized in Tucson. He told this untruth—or, as he thought of it, cover story—not only to press inquirers but to Sheriff Gillespie, who had learned of Travis's return only through media accounts. On Tuesday, however, he found out that Travis was staying with Duane near Phoenix. He drove to Glendale and confronted Duane and Travis near midnight.

Gillespie listened as an exhausted Travis related what little he remembered of what happened after he awoke in a hospital-like setting inside what he assumed was an alien spacecraft. After hearing him out, the sheriff wondered aloud if Travis had not been hit with a club or baseball bat, then drugged and taken to an earthly hospital. Travis disagreed, pointing out that the physical tests he had just undergone had detected no trace of drugs or bumps on his head. The incident had occurred just as he said it had, and he would take a lie-detector test to prove it. Duane added that Travis would take any kind of test, not just polygraph but truth serum, voice stress analysis, or hypnosis, to prove that he was telling the truth. Gillespie said a polygraph test would do.

By the next day, Wednesday, November 12, Spaulding was being quoted in the press as saying that he and his group had found unspecified "holes in this story." Spaulding, who had directed the Waltons to "Dr." Steward, also stressed that the investigation required more than anything "competent scientific personnel conducting scientific tests." Later that day he told reporters, "We're going to blow this story out today."

On Thursday, Travis and Duane slipped away to nearby Scottsdale, where the *National Enquirer* had a

room at the Sheraton Hotel waiting for them. There they met APRO scientific consultant James A. Harder, a professor of engineering at the University of California at Berkeley. Harder, who had a particular interest in hypnotizing UFO witnesses, soon regressed Travis, who proceeded to tell for the first time all that had happened, or supposedly happened, aboard the UFO. Heretofore he had been reluctant to discuss it and had given it out piecemeal even to his brother. Unlike many other abductees, however, Walton's conscious recall and unconscious "memory" were the same, and he could account for only a maximum of two hours, and perhaps even less, of his missing five days. (The onboard experience will be discussed later.)

Sheriff Gillespie had arranged for polygraph examinations for Travis and Duane, to be administered by Cy Gilson, the same man who had tested the logging team earlier in the week. All concerned agreed that it must be done in secrecy, to eliminate the media circus that had afflicted the previous polygraph episode. Unfortunately someone leaked news of the intended examination. On Friday morning, as the sheriff left his office, he saw clear signs that reporters were following him. Around that time a reporter phoned Duane's house and wanted to know when Duane and Travis planned to go to Holbrook for the test. When Duane heard about the call, he exploded. He cancelled the test and accused the sheriff—who was in fact as innocent as the Waltons themselves—of bad faith.

At this stage everybody's nerves were on edge. The Waltons also were angry and upset at the many rumors and accusations in circulation. Some of these saw print. The next day, Saturday the fifteenth, the *Phoenix Gazette* ran an uncritical piece on "Dr. Lester H. Steward, director of the Modern Hypnosis Instruction Center." After spending "two hours with Walton and his brother Duane," the article reported, Steward stated, "He [Travis] was out hallucinating on some drug, probably LSD." He further claimed that the Waltons had come on like a couple of freeloaders who wanted a physical examination without having to pay for it; yet when he arranged for just such an exam, the two young men fled his office. The article went on to recite other false and dubious allegations:

Steward said Duane Walton called him Tuesday about regressive hypnosis [not true]. . . . The hypnosis never came off [it was never asked for], Steward said, and he believes the reason is that the Waltons fear exposure.

Steward challenged the alleged infallibility of the lie-detector tests. . . . Five reportedly passed, but Steward said he would be unconvinced that they were telling the truth unless they went through regressive hypnosis [as, in fact, Travis Walton already had].

"The polygraph is only a machine, and I think they got together and beat it," he said. "But they can't beat hypnosis. If they did go into hypnosis, they can lie, but I can show they are lying, and they can't control it. [Nothing in the professional literature of hypnosis substantiates these claims. Lies told under hypnosis are indistinguishable from truths.]

"They're afraid of the tests," he added [without evidence].

He said that Travis appeared upset at first, but he was completely calm when the two brothers left, and Steward described that reaction as symptomatic of drug use [Lowe, 1975].

These were extraordinarily irresponsible charges. To start with, no evidence whatever existed to support the allegation that Travis was under the influence of drugs at any time. According to all available testimony, not just Travis's but other people's, Travis so opposed drug use that he did not consume alcohol or even coffee. True, he had taken drugs in the past, in common with many other young people of the period, but he had stopped doing so two years previously. Whatever one makes of the UFO claim, the drug accusation was and remains a canard, though would-be debunkers would keep it alive for years to come.

The *National Enquirer* wanted Travis to take a polygraph examination as soon as possible, while it still had him available and before another publication was able to scoop it. Harder thought Travis was still too nervous and distraught to take a test which, strictly speaking, measured stress, not lies. Travis might or might not be lying (though Harder was convinced of his truthfulness), but there could be no question that



he was exhibiting plenty of stress. Three psychiatrists who had been brought into the case concurred, insisting that any results would have no meaning. One psychiatrist, Jean Rosenbaum, spoke with particular authority here; he was a court-accepted expert on polygraph use.

But the *Enquirer* persisted. A positive polygraph result would bolster the impact of its story; besides, reporter Paul Jenkins argued, the results would not be released without Travis's permission. Travis finally consented, and APRO director Jim Lorenzen (Coral's husband) contacted John J. McCarthy, director of the Phoenix-based Arizona Polygraph Laboratory. McCarthy said he would be willing to administer the test. When Harder expressed concern about Travis's emotional state, McCarthy assured him that he would take it into account.

Unfortunately, when they met in the Waltons's room at the Sheraton, McCarthy did nothing to reassure Travis. Instead, in the pre-trial interview McCarthy got Travis to admit to two episodes about which he was deeply ashamed: his past drug use and a 1971 scrape with the law. In the latter instance he and Charles Rogers (Mike Rogers's younger brother) had pled guilty to the theft of blank payroll checks which they had cashed using a forged signature. Apprehended almost immediately, they were given two years' probation and ordered to repay the stolen money. That was the beginning and end of Travis's criminal history. Not even Sank Flake, who did not like Travis and openly accused him of hoaxing the UFO story, deemed this anything other than a youthful mistake, but it was deeply embarrassing to have to admit to it, and Travis talked about it only on the understanding that the matter would be kept confidential.

Yet McCarthy, whose occasionally sarcastic and sometimes abrasive remarks betrayed his skepticism, went out of his way to remind Travis of the incident a few minutes later. After McCarthy had used the word "collusion" and Travis admitted that he did not know the word, McCarthy snapped, "That means acting in concert with somebody else, one or more people to perpetrate a hoax, acting in collusion with somebody else, you know, to set this thing up. Just like you acted

in collusion with this friend of yours to burglarize the office, steal the checks, and forge them, right?"

A few minutes later McCarthy announced, "Travis, your responses are deceptive," and declared that he had failed the polygraph test. Flabbergasted, Travis protested, "There must be some mistake." He asked for another test. McCarthy refused. "There's no need to go any further," he said. "I've got my answers."

He concluded his official report thus:

His reactions on the control test were normal. He appeared to be lucid, and prior to testing he stated that he understood each of the questions to be asked and that he would answer each with a "Yes" or "No." It was obvious during the examination that he was deliberately attempting to distort his respiration pattern.

Based on his reactions on all charts, it is the opinion of this examiner that Walton, in concert with others, is attempting to perpetrate a UFO hoax, and that he has not been on any spacecraft.

Duane expressed his enormous displeasure with the results to McCarthy. The psychiatrists reiterated their conviction that under the circumstances the results meant nothing. Dr. Rosenbaum spoke for his colleagues in a formal statement:

[O]ur conclusion, which was absolute, is that this young man is not lying, that there is no collusion involved. The full test results show that he really believes these things, that he is not lying. He really believes that he was abducted by a UFO.

Rosenbaum then went on to offer his own distinctive interpretation of the episode:

But my evaluation of the boy's story is that, although he believes this is what happened, it was all in his own mind. I feel that he suffered from a combination of imagination and amnesia, a transitory psychosis—that he did not go on a UFO, but simply was wandering around during the period of his disappearance. But I'm unable to account for five witnesses having the same basic story and passing lie-detector tests about it.

Nor would Rosenbaum's hypothesis explain how Travis could have maintained relative good health, or even stayed alive, over five nights of well-below-freezing temperatures—especially considering that the clothes he was wearing were manifestly not suited to such bitter cold. Moreover, formal psychological testing of Travis by APRO-affiliated psychologists Harold Cahn and R. Leo Sprinkle would uncover no evidence of emotional abnormality.

In any event, it was apparent to just about everybody except McCarthy that the polygraph test had been a bad idea. Then the Waltons, *National Enquirer*, McCarthy, and APRO signed on to another bad idea: they agreed to keep the test and its results confidential. Hardly anyone else would hear of the incident until eight months later, when the Walton case's most intense and persistent critic exposed it to the world.

On February 7, 1976, Duane took a polygraph test administered by George Pfeifer of Tom Ezell and Associates. Travis hoped to be there as well, but APRO had not made an appointment for him because he was having car trouble and it was by no means certain that he would be able to negotiate the 160 miles between Snowflake and Phoenix. But as it happened, Travis made it. He asked if he could take the test after Duane was through. Drs. Harold Cahn and R. Leo Sprinkle and APRO director Jim Lorenzen drew up a list of questions, and later Travis added some others. Travis wanted the test to cover other accusations that had been leveled at him.

Pfeifer concluded as follows:

[I]t is the opinion of this examiner that Duane Walton has answered all questions truthfully according to what he believes to be the truth regarding this incident, and he has not attempted to be deceptive in any area. . . .

After a careful analysis of the polygrams produced, there are no areas left unresolved, and it is the opinion of this examiner that Travis Walton has answered all questions in a manner that he himself is firmly convinced to be truth regarding the incident commencing 11-5-75.

Pfeifer also conducted a polygraph examination on Mary Kellett. Those who thought Travis's disappearance had been staged suspected that his mother

would almost certainly know of the hoax; some speculated that he had hidden in her Bear Springs cabin. So Pfeifer asked her if she had participated in a hoax, if she had concealed Travis, and if she knew where Travis was between November 5 and 10. She answered no to these questions. Pfeifer also wanted to know if she believed Travis was telling the truth. She said yes. Pfeifer wrote:

After a very careful analysis of the polygraphs produced and comparing the polygraph tracings with the Known Lie pattern, it is the opinion of this examiner that Mrs. Mary Kellett has answered all the questions truthfully according to the best of her knowledge and beliefs.

*The controversy.* Even in the absence of clear evidence of a hoax—as well as in ignorance of the suppressed McCarthy test—Spaulding continued his assault on the case, telling journalists and ufologists that the Waltons were lying. Persons knowledgeable about the case sometimes found his logic hard to follow. He wrote, for example, “Walton never boarded the UFO. This fact is supported by the six witnesses and the [Gilson] polygraph test results.” Spaulding did not elaborate on this curious contention.

Nonetheless other UFO groups were willing to take Spaulding at his word. The National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) inaccurately characterized the incident as a “contactee case,” complained about the “undue excitement and interest” it had generated, and remarked that “either a hoax has been committed or . . . a psychological phenomena [sic] is involved.” It cited as authority its “investigator,” an Arizona university professor. Later the “investigator” acknowledged that he had not done any actual investigating (“Alleged Arizona Abduction,” 1976). The Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) also treated the case cautiously, citing both sides of the dispute without taking sides (“APRO, NICAP, GSW,” 1976). APRO's treatment, the most comprehensive, was the wholly positive one (“The Travis Walton Case,” 1975; Lorenzen and Lorenzen, 1975); though it made much of the Pfeifer tests, it failed to mention the failed examination with McCarthy.

So did the *National Enquirer* in its December 16, 1975, issue, even though its reporters had privately voiced their disenchantment with the case to the Lorenzens

a day after the McCarthy examination. One of them, Jeff Wells, prepared a 16-page memorandum urging that the story be killed. Unlike McCarthy, the reporters did not believe Travis had perpetrated a hoax; they were persuaded by Dr. Rosenbaum that he had had a psychological experience. As Wells recalled in 1981, "He had seen something out there in the woods, some kind of an [sic] eerie light that had triggered a powerful hallucination that might recur at any time" (Wells, 1981).

A far more formidable and serious attack on the case was launched by Philip J. Klass in June 1976. Klass, by profession an editor of the Washington weekly *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, issued 17 pages' worth of accusations against virtually everyone—investigator, polygraph examiner, and alleged witness—who in one way or another supported the case. A ferocious UFO debunker who seldom hesitated to hurl hoax charges against witnesses ordinarily deemed reliable (including police officers and members of the clergy), Klass approached the Walton episode less as an investigator than as a prosecutor.

His most damaging revelation concerned the McCarthy examination and APRO's role in covering it up. Jim Lorenzen would subsequently defend his organization's actions, saying that the results were meaningless—probably true, but hardly the point. Klass got the story from McCarthy, who had decided to speak out because of the continuing attention Walton's claims were receiving. (In July Travis and the six witnesses would split a \$5000 award from the *National Enquirer* after its Blue Ribbon Panel on Unidentified Flying Objects judged the case the most important UFO event of 1975.) He also learned from McCarthy of Travis's past drug use and run-in with the law. Klass used these, along with the claims of Lester Steward (charitably referred to as a "psychologist and hypnotist whose Ph.D. is from a small private school in Southern California"), to charge that Travis was befuddled with drugs, possibly from "LSD injected into the spot where the puncture mark was found." Readers of Klass's paper could only conclude that Travis was both a substance abuser and a criminal.

Drawing liberally on speculation, the darkest possible interpretation of every remark and action, and regular use of capital letters, bold type, italics, and under-

lined sentences (and sometimes combinations thereof), Klass told a complex tale of deceit, conspiracy, and incompetence. He portrayed the Waltons as UFO buffs who seemed oddly unconcerned by Travis's disappearance. To get around the positive polygraph results, Klass argued that McCarthy's experience and qualifications were greater than Gilson's and Pfeifer's; moreover, Travis had "dictated" the questions Pfeifer had asked him.

The November 10 Gilson examination of the crew members proved nothing, according to Klass, except that the loggers had not murdered Travis. The one UFO-related question, Klass wrote, went, "Did you tell the truth about actually seeing a UFO last Wednesday when Travis Walton disappeared?" Klass noted, "The question did *not* ask whether they saw Travis being 'zapped' by a UFO, nor whether they really believed that Travis had been abducted by a UFO." He then made this rather strange observation:

Celestial bodies are sometimes mistaken for UFOs. At the time of the Walton incident, the planet Jupiter was very bright in the early evening sky and would have been visible at 6:15 P.M. This is *not* to suggest that Rogers and his crew honestly imagined that Travis had been "zapped" by Jupiter. But if they were all partners in a prearranged hoax, all might be able to answer "yes" to this one UFO-related question without displaying overt signs of telling a significant falsehood.

Such strained conjecture did little to advance Klass's argument. It was, moreover, unfair to conflate Travis's youthful troubles into evidence of a continuing pattern of criminal behavior, including substance abuse. Of this charge Lorenzen said, "The arresting officer [in the forgery episode] will write Travis a letter of recommendation and the people that he robbed will do the same" (Clark, 1977). No area law-enforcement people, even those who did not especially like him, considered Travis a criminal (Barry, 1978).

It was not true that Travis had "dictated" the polygraph questions to Pfeifer, Lorenzen would argue. Pfeifer himself would characterize the verb as less than accurate; "suggest" would be closer to the truth. In any event, as Klass neglected to mention, the questions Travis wanted asked were potentially dam-

aging ones if he was trying to perpetrate a hoax. In suggesting them, Travis was trying to address the accusations made against him, never imagining that his action would be turned into yet another accusation against him.

No one denied that the Waltons had discussed UFOs in the past. In common with a number of area residents, including Sheriff Gillespie, both Duane and his mother claimed to have seen them in the past (Duane reporting a close encounter, Kellett distant lights). By Duane's own testimony he and his brother had talked about the prospect of entering a UFO. It is not unreasonable to incorporate these elements into a hypothesis which sees the Waltons therefore as logical suspects in a flying-saucer hoax. To call them UFO buffs, however, is to overstate the case. They were not consumers of UFO literature, and Travis had never heard of J. Allen Hynek, Northwestern University astronomer, former **Project Blue Book** consultant, and then the world's most famous UFO investigator. Travis learned of him only when Hynek proposed a meeting. Travis refused, thinking that Hynek was someone associated with Spaulding's group.

Duane maintained that his repeated talk of Travis's return, including his insistence that his brother was safe with the UFO people, was done to reassure his mother and himself. Here, of course, we have to take his word for it, and Klass was not the only critic to wonder.

In Klass's rendering of the incident, the witnesses had a strong financial motive for perpetrating a hoax. Mike Rogers was far behind on the timber-trimming operation for which he had contracted with the Forest Service. The completion date on the original contract, awarded June 26, 1974, was for the summer of 1975. Rogers managed to get an 84-day extension, and the new deadline was November 10, 1975. But as that date neared, he realized that he was still nowhere near completion. The Forest Service withheld 10 percent of its payment on the contract until the job was finished. As Klass had it, Rogers knew that he was risking that penalty, which he could ill afford, and so he decided to make use of the "Act of God" clause in the contract. Thus the "UFO abduction" came at a convenient time for him. On November 18 he wrote

the Forest Service to explain that he could not complete his contract because the UFO incident "caused me to lose my crew and [made] it difficult to get any of them back on the job site."

This claim, seemingly plausible, was repeated in subsequent Klass white papers and in two books he would write years later. It would be accepted as a reasonable explanation even by some UFO proponents. It is, however, almost certainly false.

To start with, the seven crew members were unlikely conspirators in a scheme to commit what amounted to fraud against the federal government. Rogers's men were all temporary employees, picked up for the specific job and paid by the hour. Only Travis and Mike Rogers were personally close. Dwayne Smith barely knew the other crew members; the incident took place on his third day on the job. Later, when Allen Dalis, by all accounts the least-liked member of the crew (and thus arguably the one most likely to inform on his fellows), fell afoul of the law, he confessed to crimes with which the authorities had not thought to link him; yet he resolutely insisted that the UFO story was true. One individual, never publicly identified, offered money—\$10,000, according to one account—to crew member Steve Pierce if he would admit that the incident was a hoax. He refused. In the early 1990s the Walton story was back in the news because a feature film had been made about it; if any of the presumed conspirators had wanted to sell an exposé to a tabloid newspaper, he certainly could have done so—and no doubt laid claim to a sizeable check. None did so.

Moreover, as the *A.P.R.O. Bulletin* observed:

The facts are that Rogers was behind on the contract in question since he had been working on three other contracts simultaneously. He had collected on the other contracts and therefore was not in financial trouble.

Also, it was to his advantage and to the advantage of the crew to work as long as possible on the contract. Rogers knew from experience that a small time overrun would be tolerated provided they were making good progress. In addition, a contract could be defaulted without serious penalty or prejudice without going to all

the trouble of creating an excuse. Rogers knew this because he had defaulted a contract a few years earlier.

Rogers had requested an inspection from the Forest Service to take place on November 7th, which would enable him to collect for the past three weeks' work. The UFO incident prevented the inspection and held up monies already earned ["The Walton-Klass Affair," 1976].

APRO pointed out that Rogers had not mentioned UFOs as the reason for his not being able to complete the contract on time. Rogers's failure to finish the job in the required period caused no serious difficulty with the Forest Service; not long afterwards Rogers was awarded another contract with it. This time, however, he used a two-man machine and no longer needed a six-man crew. After a while Rogers rehired Travis Walton. The other five who had comprised the original crew were left out in the proverbial cold. "Are we to believe," APRO asked, "that [the] men who perpetrated a hoax for Rogers's benefit are now going to remain silent while Rogers collects the best acreage rate he has ever received without them?"

No one connected with the contract took Klass's theory seriously. Maurice Marchbanks and Junior Williams, the Forest Service officers who contracted with Rogers, rejected the idea as absurd. So did Sheriff Gillespie. So did journalist Bill Barry, who extensively investigated all aspects of the Walton story as he gathered material for a popular magazine article and then a book (Barry, 1977, 1978). Yet Klass persisted, and the notion that the Walton case was a hoax cooked up to excuse an overdue contract entered the folklore of ufology.

In 1993 Arizona ufologist Jim Speiser, at that point no partisan of either side in the debate, conducted his own inquiries. After examining contract documents, he discovered that Rogers had not drawn on the "Act of God" clause to get out of the contract. "The words 'Act of God' were never mentioned by him, by Marchbanks, or by anyone in connection with the default of his contract," Speiser wrote. He observed:

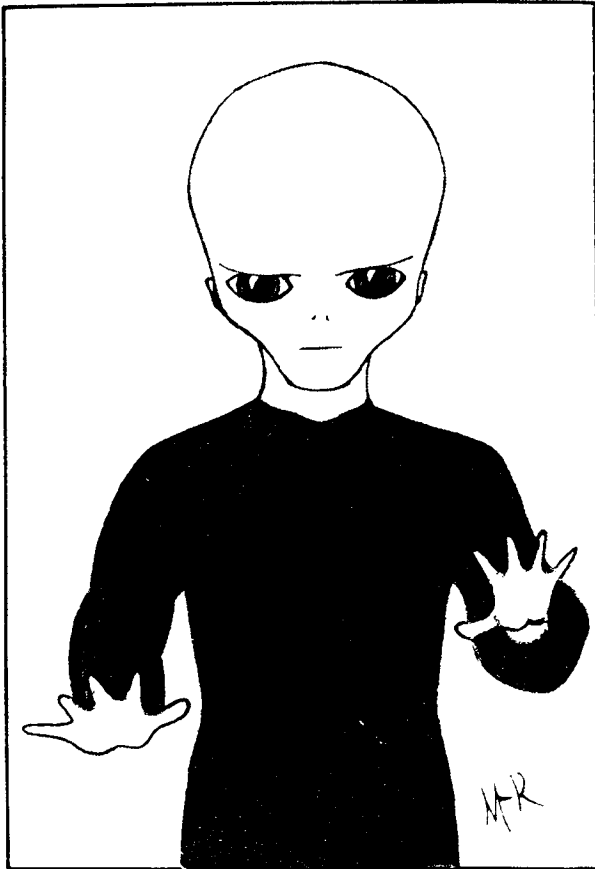
Throughout my conversations with Rogers it became clear that an in-depth knowledge of

Forest Service contracting practices would be necessary for anyone to evaluate Klass' argumentation[,] and that it would be a simple matter for Klass to exploit this complexity, knowing full well that the casual reader would be hard put to distinguish what passes for in-depth research from what is really half-knowledgeable sophistry. Indeed, Klass' behavior is not unlike [that of] a shrewd prosecutor, familiar with all aspects of the case, but sifting through the clues for the elements that would present the defendant—Rogers—in the worst light [Speiser, 1993].

*Aboard.* Nearly lost in the complicated human saga that the Walton episode quickly became was Travis's account of what he claimed happened to him during his disappearance. Real or imagined, the story is relatively sedate and simple compared to some other abduction claims of the period (see, for example, the **Andreasson Abduction Case**). If not for the circumstance that initiated the episode, if not for the undeniable fact of Travis's mysterious absence for five days—if, in other words, like most other abduction reports it was simply an anecdote told by one person and unrelated to anything verifiable—it would not be nearly so well known as it is. As folklorist Thomas E. Bullard, a scholar of the abduction phenomenon, puts it, "As abduction stories go, the Walton case was neither lengthy nor complex, but the literature of charges, countercharges and explanations arising out of the investigation has outgrown the literature describing the incident itself" (Bullard, 1987).

Yet Travis's story is interesting in its own right. Part of that interest lies, for all its simplicity, in its eerie and otherworldly quality. More important, it anticipates aspects of the abduction phenomenon, just beginning to come into prominence in the mid-1970s, which were then obscure or unknown altogether.

As the story he would relate consistently over the years went, he returned to consciousness in a hospital-like room. His whole body ached, his vision was blurred, and he felt weak and thirsty. A metallic taste filled his mouth. Above him a luminous rectangle, three feet by one and a half and composed of seamless metal, gave off a soft white glow. A plastic, rocker-shaped device extended from his armpits to his rib



While allegedly on board a UFO, Travis Walton encountered two types of alien beings, including short figures who, Walton said, "looked like fetuses." This sketch was drawn by Mike Rogers based on Walton's description.

cage. The air was wet and heavy, and he had some difficulty breathing it. Still, his first impression was that he was in a conventional earthly hospital, even if he could not understand why the nurses had not removed his clothing.

Travis saw three figures dressed in loose-fitting orange one-piece suits standing near him, one to his right, the other two to his left. As his vision cleared, he recoiled in shock and horror as he realized these were not human beings. He would describe them this way:

They were short, shorter than five feet, and they had very large, bald heads, no hair. Their heads were domed, very large. They looked like fetuses. They had no eyebrows, no eyelashes. They had very large eyes—enormous eyes—almost all brown, without much white in them. The creepiest thing about them were [sic] those

eyes. Oh, man, those eyes, they just stared through me. Their mouths and ears and noses seemed real small, maybe just because their eyes were so huge [Barry, *op. cit.*].

Their hands had five fingers. The beings looked frail, with soft marshmallowy skin.

Travis staggered to his feet and shouted at the beings. He struck out and pushed one of them into another. From the ease with which he was able to knock them back, he deduced that they weighed relatively little. Then he grabbed a cylindrical tube off a shelf which jutted from the wall. Assuming from its appearance that the tube was made of glass, he tried to break the top off so that he could threaten the beings with its jagged edges. But the object proved unbreakable. Nonetheless Travis waved it threateningly in their direction. Keeping their distance, they "just stopped and kind of thrust their hands out, like they meant no, or stop, or I don't know what." After a short, tense standoff, the beings turned around and exited quickly out the door immediately behind them.

Shortly thereafter Travis himself ran out of the room and headed left into a curving corridor three feet wide. In short order he came to an open room on his right. It was round, domed, and apparently empty of anything except a high-backed metal chair in the middle. The chair was supported by a single center leg. Since its back was to him, Travis could not be sure that someone was not sitting in it, but he decided to take a chance. Moving slowly and quietly with his back pressed up against the wall, he positioned himself so that he could glimpse the chair's occupant, if there was one. There wasn't.

When he stepped toward the chair, the light began to fade. He stepped back, and the light returned. He stepped forward again and suddenly was surrounded by stars. He could not tell whether the walls, ceiling, and floor had become transparent, revealing the deep space through which the craft presumably was moving, or starlike points of light had been projected, planetarium-fashion, on all surrounding surfaces. Except for the fact that the walls were still vaguely visible, "the effect was like sitting in a chair in the middle of space," Travis would write (Walton, 1978).

There was a panel of buttons on the right armrest, along with a screen with vertical black lines. The left armrest held a lever. Travis pushed a couple of the buttons, but nothing happened. Then he sat on the chair and pushed the lever forward. The black lines on the screen moved, and the stars started rotating, though keeping their relative positions all the while. Frightened and disoriented, Travis pulled his hand off the lever, which then returned to its original position on its own. The stars stopped rotating and were frozen into their new positions.

Soon he was fooling with the lever again, and now more radically, pushing it in all directions, hoping that he could open one of the doors whose thin rectangular outlines he thought he could see on the wall in front of him. The stars again whirled around. Travis let go once more, fearing that if he kept playing with the instruments, he might cause some real damage.

He got to his feet and walked over to the wall. The stars faded away, and the room lighted up. Travis ran his fingers along the outline of what he thought might be a closed door, then walked back to the chair. As he was standing beside it, he heard sounds and looked to the open doorway behind the chair. There he was startled to see a human figure wearing a transparent bubble helmet over his head. Shock followed relief as Travis reflected that he was among his own kind.

The man looked like a deeply tanned, muscular Caucasian, about six feet two inches tall, perhaps 200 pounds. He had sandy blond hair long enough to cover his ears, and he was dressed in a tight-fitting, bright blue coverall suit with a black band or belt across the middle. He wore black boots. In his excitement Travis failed to appreciate just how odd the man's eyes looked. A "strange bright golden hazel," they were not really the eyes of a human being.

The figure motioned to Travis, who approached with a series of frantic questions to which the only response was a "tolerant grin." Travis thought the man had said nothing because his helmet blocked out his hearing; maybe they were going some place where the man would remove the helmet and then they could talk. Led by the arm, Travis was taken into the curving, narrow hallway, the man in the lead, until

they came to a closed door to their right. It opened into a tiny "metal cubicle" of a room which the two entered as the door closed again behind them. Travis asked where they were going, but his companion again ignored the question.

They then entered an enormous room which Travis thought of as an airlock or a hangar. Inside it the air was fresh and cool with gently flowing breezes, almost as if they were outside, and the light was as bright as sunlight. Travis descended a short, steep ramp and looked around him. He would recall:

The ceiling was sectioned into alternating rectangles of dark metal and those that gave off light like the sun shining through a translucent panel. The alternation of the light and dark panels reminded me of a checkerboard. The ceiling itself curved down to form one of the larger walls in the room. The room was shaped like one quarter of a cylinder laid on its side [*ibid.*].

The craft Travis and the strange man had just left looked like the one he had seen in the woods except that it was considerably larger, perhaps 60 feet in diameter and 16 feet high. To his left were two similar but smaller vehicles (40 to 45 feet in diameter) parked close to the wall. A silver reflection nearby looked as if it could have come from a third craft, but he was not sure because its source was mostly obscured by the large ship.

The two walked across a floor of springy green rubberlike material to a door in the hangar room. It opened from the middle and brought them into a hallway six feet wide and eight feet high. They walked some 80 feet past a number of closed double doors. "When do we get to go home?" Travis wanted to know. "Where are we going now?" As usual his companion acted as if he had not heard him.

They finally came to another pair of doors at the end of the hallway. As they slid silently open, Travis saw two men and a woman sitting in the room. They were dressed like his companion and even bore a family sort of resemblance to him. Like him, they were good-looking and perfectly featured. The woman, who appeared to be wearing no makeup, wore her hair longer than the men did.

The three were not wearing helmets, which gave Travis false encouragement. "Would somebody *please* tell me where I am?" he asked desperately. The beings only looked at him with pleasant expressions on their faces, and the helmeted man sat him down in a chair before leaving through another door, entering a corridor, and departing to the right.

As Travis continued to talk, the woman and one of the men stepped over to him, one on each side, and took him by his arms to a nearby table. Though initially cooperative, Travis grew less so when he realized that they were not going to tell him anything. He shouted at them, but they continued to look on him with the same silent, kindly look, which amounted to a small, toothless grin. Even as he struggled, the beings managed to force him on his back. Once he was down, he noticed that the woman had in her hand something that "looked like one of those clear, soft-plastic oxygen masks, only there were no tubes connected to it. The only thing attached to it was a small, black, golfball-sized sphere." She placed it over his mouth and nose, and as Travis prepared to rip it off his face, he lost consciousness.

The next thing he knew, Travis was lying on his back on the highway just outside Heber, 10 miles from the place where he had seen the light in the woods. In the darkness he saw

one of those round craft hovering about four feet over the highway. It was hovering there for just a second. I looked up just as a light went out, like a hatch closing, or just a light going out. A white light just went off on the bottom of it. The craft was dark, and it wasn't giving off any light at all [Barry, *op. cit.*].

Travis ran to the gas station and tried the first of three phones. It didn't work, and he panicked. Maybe all of them were out of order. But he got through on the second, and his brother-in-law Grant Neff answered.

*Walton and the abduction phenomenon.* By 1975 ufologists had collected and investigated a small number of abduction reports. The first case to come to their attention was the **Hill abduction case**, a 1961 close encounter whose abduction aspect, subsequently recovered through hypnosis, first saw print in 1965 and the following year became the subject of a best-

selling book. At the time of the Walton disappearance, John G. Fuller's *The Interrupted Journey* was the only full-length treatment of an abduction episode. The next, Coral and Jim Lorenzen's *Abducted!*, would not be published until 1977.

On October 20, 1975, NBC television broadcast a docudrama, *The UFO Incident*, on the Hill case. Klass and other critics would make much of this. Travis insisted neither he nor any other witness had seen the show. In any event, there is not much similarity between the Hills's story and Walton's. There is, moreover, not a great deal of similarity between Walton's and any other abduction narrative that would have been known to him from the UFO literature as of November 1975.

What Jim and Coral Lorenzen found particularly fascinating, however, was the curious fact that at the time the Walton story broke, they were working on an abduction investigation Walton could have known nothing about. The claimant, Air Force Sgt. Charles Moody, reported a close encounter on August 13, 1975, in the New Mexico desert (*see Moody Abduction Case*). APRO's investigation began the following month and continued for some months. In a letter Moody wrote the Lorenzens early in November, he described the UFO's occupants in this way:

The beings were about five feet tall and very much like us except their heads were larger and hairless, their ears very small, eyes a little larger than ours, nose small[,] and the mouth had very thin lips [Lorenzen and Lorenzen, 1977].

Moody's entities were to all intents and purposes identical to the ones Walton allegedly encountered in the period just after he recovered consciousness. Unlike Walton, Moody described communications (via telepathy) between himself and the beings. Moody was told that the ship he had boarded "was not their main craft, but only one used for observing . . . their main craft was about four hundred of our miles above the earth." Furthermore, these beings worked in cooperation with other extraterrestrial races—though Moody, unlike Walton, reported encountering no representatives of these.

Entities like these were unknown to ufologists prior to the Moody and Walton reports, but as abduction



cases proliferated in the years ahead, they would become staples of close-encounter lore. So would reports of onboard encounters with humanlike or near-human beings associated with smaller entities (Bullard, *op. cit.*).

*Continuing controversy.* The Walton case was the subject of two paperback books published in 1978. In *Ultimate Encounter* a journalist's investigation into the tangled affair, author Bill Barry found Klass's and other critics' charges to be without merit, and he concluded that to all appearances Travis and the others were telling the truth as they saw it. Travis's own book, *The Walton Experience*, told the story from his perspective and defended himself against the would-be debunkers. It is worth mentioning that Travis, not a ghostwriter, was indeed the author. Though not college-educated, Travis was and is intelligent and articulate.

The witnesses went their own ways. Travis remained in Snowflake and married Mike Rogers's sister Dana, with whom he had four children. He kept a low profile. His UFO story did not expand in the telling; he claimed no further memories of what happened to him during those five days. He reemerged into public view in March 1993, when *Fire in the Sky*, a feature film based on his book, appeared in the theaters, to modest success, mixed reviews, and ufologists' complaints about its inaccuracies (Drasin, 1993; Johnson, 1993). The film starred D. B. Sweeney as Travis and Robert Patrick as Mike Rogers; Robert Lieberman directed from a script by Tracy Tormé. To promote the film, Walton and Rogers made the rounds of the talk shows. On March 12, the day the movie was released, the two appeared on CNN's *Larry King Show* in a fierce debate with Klass, who at one point lost his temper and called Rogers a "goddamned liar."

Two decades later, what are we to make of the Walton case?

In the end how one views the Walton controversy depends on how one feels about UFOs in general and alien-abduction claims in particular. If one believes it is possible that UFOs exist as piloted extraterrestrial vehicles, one can accept that Travis Walton boarded a spacecraft and interacted with its occupants. If one believes such things are not possible, one has little

choice but to insist that a heretofore-undetected hoax scheme underlies the claim.

Nearly all of the available circumstantial evidence would lead one to the conclusion that Walton, his family, and the logging crew are not hoaxers. If there is compelling evidence to the contrary, it has yet to emerge—which is not to say, of course, that it could *never* emerge. In the end Klass's case rests on a single dubious polygraph result and a mass of lurid but apparently baseless speculations. Should the Walton episode turn out to be a hoax, we may be confident that it will not be the kind of hoax Klass says it was. In the end Klass's reckless and emotional attacks have only done damage to the skeptical case. As long as it remains *the* skeptical case, there is no skeptical case.

To be sustained, the critics' argument needs to be rebuilt from the ground up. It would start with three small details, or at least two of them. The least of them is the absence of Travis's fingerprints on any of the phones at the Heber gas station. This absence may be explainable as an oversight by country cops as they fumbled about in the early-morning cold and dark; in any event, nobody disputes that *someone* called the Neffs around midnight on November 10 from a Heber phone booth, and nobody has proposed a candidate other than Travis.

More difficult to rationalize, however, is the absence of any bruises on Travis's body even when the beam slammed his right shoulder into a collision with, as he writes in his book, "the hard, rocky earth of the ridgetop." If there is anything suspicious to be found in the story, one finds it here—as well as in the coincidence of Duane and Travis's having talked about boarding a UFO prior to the latter's "actually" doing so.

Against this anthill of small but disturbing details, of course, stands a mountain of circumstantial evidence which so far even the most committed debunkers have been unable to topple. In its five decades ufology has seen its share of hoaxers, and Travis Walton, to every appearance a modest and decent man, acts like none of them. If his story is a fabrication, it is among the most skillfully and intricately executed in UFO history. If it is not, then its implications—for all of us—are extraordinary indeed.

tified himself as an independent witness to the November 5 encounter. The stranger, then allegedly an Army Intelligence officer, said he and his wife had been hunting in the area when they saw the craft and witnessed the beam. Later, he asserted, he had told his superior officer about the UFO but was told to keep silent unless the crew were about to be convicted of murder.

The man had the details generally right and sounded "genuine," in Walton's estimation. He notified Tormé, and soon afterwards Paramount—without notifying Walton—flew the informant to Los Angeles to interview him. On March 11, 1993, in Phoenix, Cy Gilson administered a polygraph test in which the man was asked two series of questions. The first concerned the sighting and his claim to having a high security clearance. The second asked him if he was conspiring with anyone to discredit Walton's story (Klass and the debunking Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal [CSICOP] were mentioned specifically), if he had a current military affiliation, and if indeed a military supervisor had ordered him not to speak of what he had seen.

The results were curious. In Gilson's reading they indicated that the man was lying. More than that, however, there was evidence of "a deliberate attempt to produce countermeasures." In other words, it looked as if someone who may have been trained in beating polygraph tests had tried, and failed, to mislead Gilson and Paramount. As Walton saw it:

The intent of the scheme seems to have been to fool Paramount into believing they [sic] had a corroborating witness, while deliberately providing enough incorrect details to justify claiming later that Paramount had disregarded accuracy to a negligent or even to a conspiratorial degree. The corollary plan was apparently to deceive Cy Gilson, then confess later to discredit the rigorousness of his methodology, and therefore discredit his tests on all seven of us.

To Walton the logical suspects were Klass and CSICOP. Walton noted the possibly suggestive circumstance that though King's program and Klass's residence are in the same city—Washington, D.C.—Klass had flown in from CSICOP headquarters in Buffalo, New York, to participate in the show. "Perhaps," Walton wondered, "from a panicked strategy rehearsal, a hasty tactical session?" Though Walton was unaware of it, the incident—if indeed it was an unsuccessful plot to discredit his case—was not without precedent. In the early 1980s James Randi, a magician/debunker associated with CSICOP, engineered a hoax under the code name Project Alpha and sent two young sleight-of-hand artists to a parapsychological laboratory, with the intention of convincing experimenters that they possessed psychokinetic metal-bending powers. The purpose, of course, was to prove Randi's long-standing contention that parapsychologists are easily fooled. Though observers disagreed about how well Project Alpha succeeded, it generated much attention, and debunkers made a great deal of it.

Klass and CSICOP have not commented on Walton's charges.

WALTON  
ABDUCTION  
CASE

In 1996 *Fire in the Sky*, a much-expanded version of the 1978 book, saw print. For the first time Walton answered Klass's charges in meticulous detail. In an 85-page appendix drawing on a considerable amount of original research, Walton ripped into virtually every allegation, large or small, Klass had made over the years, and he tore into the logic, consistency, and even honesty of the debunker's case. He also raised serious questions about McCarthy's professional competence and qualifications. To most readers Walton's refutation would seem itself virtually irrefutable.

Two decades later, what are we to make of the Walton case?

In the end how one views the Walton controversy depends on how one feels about UFOs in general and alien-abduction claims in particular. If one believes it is possible that UFOs exist as piloted extraterrestrial vehicles, one can accept that Travis Walton boarded a spacecraft and interacted with its occupants. If one believes such things are not possible, one has little choice but to insist that a heretofore-undetected hoax scheme underlies the claim.

Nearly all of the available evidence would lead one to the conclusion that Walton, his family, and the logging crew are not hoaxers. If there is compelling evidence to the contrary, it has yet to emerge—which is not to say, of course, that it could *never* emerge. In the end Klass's case rests on a single dubious polygraph result and a mass of lurid but apparently baseless speculations. Should the Walton episode turn out to be a hoax, we may be confident that it will not be the kind of hoax Klass says it was. In the end Klass's reckless and emotional attacks have only done damage to the skeptical case. As long as it remains *the* skeptical case, there is no skeptical case.

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A dozen or so personnel had seen the object or objects. One of them, TD-AA Carol Snyder, told a newspaper reporter, "We saw three very blurry lights—red, white, and green. We watched them for about 30 minutes. We couldn't see how fast they were traveling. We were holding the binoculars, and the lights appeared to be bouncing" (Lounsberry, 1978).

The Navy conducted an investigation out of the Jacksonville center but came to no conclusions. **Allan Hendry** of the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) interviewed several of the witnesses and gathered radar, meteorological, and astronomical data. He considered, then rejected, various prosaic alternatives before declaring this a case of "high merit" in the CUFOS publication *International UFO Reporter* ("Navy Radar-Visual," 1978). Later, in *Second Look* magazine, Hendry defended his investigation and interpretation against two debunkers, Robert Sheaffer and Philip J. Klass, who claimed—Collins's testimony notwithstanding—that the radar tracked only an "ambiguous" target. Sheaffer argued that the witnesses had first seen Venus, then Jupiter, and finally Capella. Hendry responded:

Once Jupiter set, Sheaffer has Capella take over as the new "second UFO," even though it is positioned twice as far to the north as the witnesses estimated. He started with Venus at magnitude -3.4, demoted to Jupiter at -1.5, and now shifted to Capella at magnitude +0.2 (all dimmed by the atmosphere near the horizon). These UFO candidates are fading fast! . . .

So Sheaffer and Klass are wrong. There *was* an unambiguous radar confirmation of a visual sighting of a stationary light source only three miles away and only 0.09 degrees above the tower, a position which *could not* be achieved by Venus and Jupiter . . . since neither planet can come closer to the tower than eight or nine degrees and still be "directly over" it (since they were descending in the west at a 61-degree angle to the ground) [Hendry, 1979b].

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**OCCULT THEORIES ABOUT UFOs. See Hairy Bipedes and UFOs; Men in Black; Paranormal and Occult Theories About UFOs; Ultraterrestrials**

**OWLMAN. See Hoaxes, 1960-1979**

#### **OXFORD ABDUCTION CASE**

David Stephens and Glen Gray, both in their early twenties, were night persons. Each worked at a late night-early morning job, Stephens in a poultry-processing plant, Gray at a wool mill. Thus it was not unusual for them to be up at odd hours, even when they were not working. And so at 3 A.M., October 27, 1975, they were sitting in the trailer they shared in Norway, Maine, listening to the radio. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary—until something exploded outside.

The two young men rushed to the door but saw nothing. Briefly puzzled but soon dismissing the matter from their minds, they decided to go for a short drive to nearby Lake Thompson. About a mile down the road, the vehicle abruptly turned on a back road heading directly into the town of Oxford. Gray, who had a firm grip on the steering wheel, was

startled. The car seemed no longer under his control but someone else's.

Two minutes later, after a strangely smooth ride, they passed through Oxford. Under ordinary circumstances the trip over the rugged five-mile stretch of road would have taken them from seven to 10 minutes. The car continued through the town and down the eastern side of the lake.

A mile south of Oxford, Stephens and Gray saw a herd of cows resting on the ground and shaking their heads from side to side. The two thought this was peculiar.

A few moments later they looked to their left and saw two white lights shining across a cornfield and onto the road. Suddenly the lights rose into the air. Thinking they had just seen a helicopter, Gray stopped the car and turned off the engine. He and Stephens rolled down their windows and listened for the familiar sound of a helicopter engine. But there was no sound. And when they got a clear look at it, they realized it was like nothing they had seen before.

Twenty to 30 feet from their vehicle, the object was large, long, and cylinder-shaped. Around its body were assorted green, blue, and yellow lights, but these suddenly went out as the mysterious craft ascended above a row of trees in front of the field.

This was too much. Gray started the car and roared down the road, the UFO in pursuit. The car was bathed in brilliant, almost blinding light.

The next thing they knew, Stephens and Gray were a mile farther down the road. The car was stopped, their windows were rolled down, and the doors were unlocked. Their eyes felt as if they were on fire. Gray's eyes, according to Stephens, were "all just orange." Stephens's eyes, Gray later told investigators, were orange except for dark pupils. The UFO was still visible in the eastern sky.

Numb and confused, they drove into nearby West Poland, turned around, and headed back up the road they had just come down. Two miles later, much to their relief, the UFO disappeared. Stephens suggested they turn back. Gray agreed. On their way south again, for no reason he could understand, Gray turned off on to a gravel road leading to Tripp Pond,

located on the southern part of Lake Thompson—where the car engine suddenly stalled and the radio faded out. In the sky, about 500 feet away, the cylinderlike UFO hovered. As they watched it, the object moved to a new position 500 yards away.

Forty-five minutes later, two disc-shaped objects with colored lights appeared, and a thick "fog" rose out of the pond. But most unsettling, though Gray and Stephens knew they were half a mile from the pond, it seemed to be no more than two dozen feet from them. Not only that, but at one point it seemed to stretch out as far as they could see. In reality, the pond is fairly small, and the hills on its other side are clearly visible. In the middle of this "ocean" stood an island, over which one of the UFOs hovered. The real pond has no such island.

The strange fog from the pond engulfed their car, and as it did, the radio abruptly blared on, and a voice announced incongruously that the day would be bright and clear. But to Stephens and Gray all that was clear was the light of the largest UFO—the "mothership," they would call it, and the first object they had seen. The mothership was rising higher into the air and taking the fog with it.

As the two men drove, they received a mental "impression"—not a worded message—that communicated something like "we're not done with you yet. We're coming back for you."

It was now 6:30 A.M. The weird episode had taken three and a half hours.

Half an hour later, at 7, they arrived at Stephens's parents' home in Oxford. The two were not in good shape. Both felt light-headed and suffered from burning eyes and sore throats. Their teeth hurt, and they had trouble maintaining their balance. Their bodies, despite heavy clothing, were chilled, and they could not speak coherently. Their mouths were dry. The elder Stephens noted with alarm that both men had yellow discoloration around their eyes.

Later that day, David Stephens was alone in his parents' house when an ash tray rose a foot into the air before crashing down on the table. That evening, as the two young men watched television in the Stephens home, Gray saw—or imagined he saw—a "black cube" tumbling through the air and disap-

pearing into the wall. Not long afterwards "golden wires" materialized over the television set—or so Gray perceived. Stephens could see none of this.

At eight the next morning the men heard something walk across the roof of their trailer in Norway. They were unable to find the source of the disturbance.

*Strange effects.* That was where matters stood when Shirley Fickett and Brent Raynes, two Maine ufologists, heard of the episode. On the evening of October 28, Raynes phoned the elder Stephens, who said the two young men were still there. Mrs. Stephens told Raynes that earlier, acting on a suggestion by Fickett, they had checked the car and the witnesses with a compass and the needle had swung wildly.

Raynes, accompanied by James Carey, met the Stephenses and Gray in Oxford at 9:45 that evening. The young men were, Raynes subsequently wrote in a *Flying Saucer Review* article, "quite visibly shaken and upset." David Stephens excitedly informed the investigators that three UFOs were at that moment hovering overhead. All concerned rushed outside to see Jupiter, Mars, and Betelgeuse. Stephens refused to believe these were merely astronomical bodies until Carey produced a star map and proved it.

In the course of the interview that followed, a local Civil Defense official arrived to check the automobile with a Geiger counter. The device registered nothing out of the ordinary.

Raynes and Carey were informed that an hour before their arrival, David Stephens's oldest sister had answered three knocks at the front door, only to find no one there. Gray, standing about eight feet away, supposedly heard a male voice intone the initials "U F O," but no one else heard the sound.

But at nine the next morning Stephens, alone in the trailer, heard someone knock. When he answered, he encountered a strange man of stocky build with a crew cut and sunglasses. He was dressed in dark blue clothing. The stranger asked Stephens if he had seen a "flying saucer." Then he snapped, "Better keep your mouth shut if you know what's good for you." This said, he scurried away, rounded the corner of a nearby building, and was not seen again—at least by Stephens.

Fickett suspected that hypnotic regression might reveal more information about the original UFO sighting, especially the part that seemed blocked out of the witnesses' conscious memory. She contacted an Old Orchard Beach, Maine, physician named Herbert Hopkins, who occasionally used hypnosis in the treatment of his patients.

*Hypnosis.* Over eight hypnosis sessions conducted between December 1975 and March 1976, a story of UFO abduction emerged. Early on, Gray became so upset about the entire matter that he refused to discuss the experience any further, and soon after that he moved to Oklahoma with his family. So investigators had to depend solely upon Stephens's testimony concerning what happened during the missing minutes.

As he reviewed the episode under hypnosis, Stephens said he had found himself standing in a room approximately 15 feet high and 55 feet in diameter. The walls, a shiny gray, curved inward as they rose. There was a door but no furniture. Stephens was looking out a window through which he could see the car sliding sideways. Gray was still inside the vehicle.

A bizarre-looking being entered the room. Four and a half feet tall, it had a hairless "mushroom-shaped" head with two large, slanted, unblinking eyes. It had a small, round nose but no visible mouth. It walked on two feet in shoes that appeared to be made of paper. On each hand it had three webbed fingers, and it was dressed in a flowing black robe.

Through "brain waves" (Stephens's expression, apparently meaning telepathy) the entity assured the young man that he would not be harmed. Stephens was startled to discover that the being already knew his name.

Stephens was led into an "operating room" with apparent "medical equipment." Four beings similar to the one he had first met were waiting for him. They extracted two needlefuls of blood from the elbow of his right arm. Afterwards they asked him to lie down on the table for further examination.

In a sudden rage Stephens struck one of the creatures in the face. Though he scored a solid hit, the being only stared at him. Concluding that further resistance was useless, Stephens lay down and let the

beings remove his clothing. He watched as one of them scanned his entire body with a small machine. At one point samples of his hair and fingernails were taken and placed in an empty container. A button from his shirt was also taken.

After about 45 minutes Stephens was allowed to dress himself. Then the beings told him telepathically that they had been watching him for some time and had wanted to study him. They would see him again, they said. Then they gave him an injection of some kind in his right shoulder. Stephens was escorted back to his car, where he rejoined his friend.

*A menacing visitor.* At 8 P.M. on September 11, 1976, Dr. Hopkins was home alone. His wife and children had gone to a drive-in movie.

The telephone rang. When the doctor answered, the caller introduced himself as vice president of the New Jersey UFO Research Association (an organization Hopkins subsequently found to be nonexistent). He asked if the doctor was alone and then wanted to know if he could come see him to discuss the David Stephens case. Hopkins consented, telling him to come right up.

"I did not even ask his name, which is very uncharacteristic of me," Hopkins later related to Fickett and psychiatrist Berthold E. Schwarz. "I never see anyone alone since my home and office have been broken into twice and since there is a great deal of illicit drug activity in this town."

As soon as he had put down the phone, Hopkins went to the back door to turn on the light so that the stranger could see his way from the driveway. But the moment he switched on the light, the doctor saw a man in dark clothing walking up the porch stairs.

"I saw no car," Hopkins recalled, "and even if he did have a car, he could not possibly have gotten to my house that quickly from *any* phone. Strangely, at the time I didn't think of this but opened the door for him without even asking who he was. I don't do things this way ordinarily."

The stranger, five feet, eight inches tall and weighing 140 pounds, looked like an undertaker, Hopkins thought: black derby, black jacket, black tie, white shirt, gray gloves, black trousers and shoes. "His

clothes fit him like a clothing store dummy," Hopkins remembered. "The crease in his pants was razor sharp. The suit looked as if he had just put it on. Everything about him seemed to be superperfect."

The man never introduced himself. When he sat down and removed his hat, the doctor saw that he was completely hairless, devoid even of eyebrows and eyelashes. His face was smooth and "dead white." His lips, however, were a vivid red; when at one point he put the back of his glove to his slitlike mouth, Hopkins was unsettled to see lipstick marks where the glove had rubbed against the lips. As Hopkins would recall, "He spoke in a monotone. . . . He spoke English, flawless, with no accent, but no sentences, no phrases, just a series of words. His voice was completely neutral and passive. . . . His head seemed to blend into his collar. He had a receding chin, and he didn't move his head at any time. He didn't turn his head, nod, or anything. His head was perfectly stationary with the upper part of his body. As a matter of fact, I'd say his entire body seemed of a piece, fixed, except his legs."

After Hopkins discussed what he knew of the Stephens case, the man remarked, "That's just what I thought," and abruptly changed the subject. "You have two coins in your left pocket," he said.

Hopkins acknowledged that he had a dime and a penny in that pocket. The visitor told him to take one of them and hold it in the palm of an open hand. "Don't look at me," the man said. "Look at the coin."

When he did, Hopkins was shocked to find its color had changed to bright silver. Then it turned light blue. Then it grew blurry and fuzzy and finally faded away in a sort of vapor. All the while Hopkins felt nothing unusual in his hand. "That was a neat trick," he said. "Now can you bring it back?"

The stranger replied, "Neither you nor anyone else on this plane will ever see that coin again." Hopkins was certain that the man had said "plane," not "planet."

"Do you know why Barney Hill died?" the man asked, referring to the famous New Hampshire abductee (see **Hill Abduction Case**). "He died because he knew too much. He died because he had no heart, just as you have no coin."

For the first time Hopkins was frightened. The conversation had taken a decidedly ominous turn.

"He ordered me to destroy the Stephens tapes and any correspondence or literature I might have pertaining to UFOs in any way," he told Fickett and Schwarz, "or I would suffer the same fate as Barney Hill. He said he would know when I had done this but did not say that he would come back."

Now the visitor's words were coming out more slowly as if he were having difficulty speaking. He rose unsteadily to his feet and said, "My energy is running low—must go now—good-bye." He seemed barely able to get down the stairs. He gripped the rail tightly and moved slowly and deliberately, one foot at a time. Hopkins watched him as he inched his way to the driveway. As Hopkins would recall:

I saw a very bright light shining up the driveway and thought it must be coming from his car, but there was no light there when he arrived. The light was actually brighter than automobile headlights and was bluish-white in color. I immediately rushed to the kitchen window and looked out to watch him, but I didn't see or hear anything, and the light was gone. I rushed out to the front porch, but the man and the light had disappeared.

He walked in a different direction from the driveway—180 degrees opposite. I can't remember seeing his shadow. And walking out that way there is no way he could get out because the house is on one side of the driveway and the hedge is on the other. The hedge is dense, and he'd have a hard time getting through it, especially in his weakened condition. I stood on the front porch looking for some time, watching the driveway, waiting for him to come out, but he didn't appear, and no car left the driveway.

An hour and a half later Mrs. Hopkins and two of their sons arrived home from the movie to find all the lights in the house on. After a badly shaken Dr. Hopkins told them what had happened, he and the older son went out to examine the driveway with a flashlight. According to Hopkins:

In the very middle of the driveway we found a series of marks that looked like a small tractor tread. The marks were about four inches wide and continued for only about a foot and a half. There was nothing except this single set of marks. No automobile could possibly have made them because the driveway is too narrow for a car to get over far enough so that its wheels would be in the middle of the driveway. And they were too deep and distinct to have been made by a motorcycle. . . . The marks were gone the next day. No one had used the driveway in the meantime.

At his family's urging and in spite of his own reluctance, Hopkins burned all his tapes, correspondence, and literature just as he had been directed to do. Later he was relieved—and chagrined—when Betty Hill told him her late husband had died of a stroke, not a heart attack.

*Further visitors.* On Friday, September 24, 13 days after his father's weird experience, John Hopkins, the eldest son, would have his own bizarre encounter. So would his wife Maureen.

At 7:30 P.M. Maureen answered a phone call from a man who seemed to know her. He said he was a friend of John's, though he mentioned no names except his own—"Bill Post." He said he was from Conway, New Hampshire, and was calling from a department store in Biddeford, Maine, near where John and Maureen lived. He asked if he and a companion could meet them at a fast-food restaurant near the Hopkins home. He said he would be there in five minutes. In fact, a trip from the store in question to the eating place should have taken almost half an hour. "Bill" said he was driving a car with temporary New Jersey license plates.

As it happened, "Bill" was there in less than five minutes. Three minutes later, when John pulled into the driveway, "Bill," a casually dressed young man about five feet, eight inches tall and 160 pounds, with dark, slicked-down hair and sunglasses, came up to shake his hand. During the short conversation that ensued, John noticed that "Bill's" license plates read "Temporary, N.J., 1975." The plates, in other words, were a year out of date.



They agreed to meet for further discussion at John and Maureen's house. Once there "Bill," who spoke in a high-pitched, nasal voice and who seemed nervous most of the time, introduced his companion, a distinctly unattractive, considerably overweight woman whom he identified as "Jane." Like "Bill," "Jane" wore clothing that looked 20 years out of date. Her lipstick was smeared on heavily, and her body seemed "off-center"; there was something peculiar about the way her legs joined her hips. She walked hunched forward with short steps.

"Jane" spoke little. "Bill," who did most of the talking, displayed virtually no social skills, and his conversation was filled with remarks that were naive, ignorant, inappropriate, or embarrassing. Curiously, he expressed knowledge of an upcoming New Jersey trip John planned to make but had not mentioned. At one point "Bill" said he knew where John's father lived. He asked what they talked about, and he would not let the point go. He kept asking, "Well, did you talk about anything else?" John said nothing about his father's involvement with the Stephens case.

Then "Jane" stood up and announced she wanted to leave. "Bill" rose to his feet but otherwise showed no sign of departing. Because he was standing between "Jane" and the door, she could go no further. She repeated her request several times, but "Bill" continued to ignore her until finally she pleaded with John, "Please move him. I can't move him myself."

John politely urged "Bill" to leave, and finally he did so, reluctantly. "Bill" and "Jane" walked out the door in a perfect straight line. They did not say good-bye.

Some weeks later "Bill" called to apologize for his behavior and promised Maureen it would not happen again. He asked if he and "Jane" could visit them again. Maureen responded with a firm no. That was the last the Hopkinses heard from the strange couple.

*The case in retrospect.* Except for the somewhat atypical appearance of the entities, the Stephens case is more like than unlike other abduction cases. It perfectly follows, for example, the "capture" pattern folklorist/ufologist Thomas E. Bullard gleaned from a study of over 300 cases through 1985:

1) *Alien Intrusion.* A UFO, beam of light, peculiar bank of fog or strange being appears to the witness.

2) *Zone of Strangeness.* Certain strange but seemingly objective changes then occur in the physical world.

3) *Time Lapse.* Certain peculiar changes follow in the consciousness, thinking, behavior or motor control of the witness.

4) *Procurement.* Alien beings take control of the witness and bring him into their craft [Bullard, 1987].

It is unfortunate that Glen Gray opted not to continue with the investigation. Hypnotically elicited testimony is necessarily suspect even with honest witnesses—and there has been no suggestion that Stephens or Gray hoaxed the sighting—but a second account, independently rendered, would provide at least a rough check on the accuracy of the first. It should also be emphasized, of course, that the *entire* episode is not a "memory" triggered through hypnosis.

Dr. Hopkins's subsequent encounter with a menacing stranger echoes *men in black* (MIB) stories which long have occupied a shadowy area of UFO lore even as conservative ufologists have tended to ignore or downplay them. His son and daughter-in-law's meeting with the grotesque "Bill" and "Jane" is less certainly placed in that category, but it has enough in common with the elder Hopkins's experience that a relationship may be reasonably inferred. John A. Keel, the leading chronicler of the MIB phenomenon, has written of other claimed visitations by unusual individuals who looked and behaved much like this bizarre couple (Keel, 1970, 1975).

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hypnosis, which Fuhr refused (*ibid.*). But the 1974 statements of both Fuhr and his mother are more likely to be reliable, and they hint at no time discrepancy. Fuhr's mother had gone to church just after 10 that morning and had just returned "when Edwin came in," she told Phillips (Hynek and Vallee, *op. cit.*).

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### **LARSON ABDUCTION CASE**

At 3:15 A.M. on August 26, 1975, three persons left Fargo, North Dakota, on their way to Bismarck, 200 miles to the west. All sat in the front seat: driver Terry O'Leary, 20, Terry's girl friend Jackie Larson, 15, and Jackie's mother Sandy Larson. The three planned to arrive in Bismarck around 7 A.M. and to enjoy a leisurely breakfast before Mrs. Larson, a divorced cocktail waitress and sometime country singer, took a state real-estate test at 8:30.

Forty-five miles into their trip, on Interstate 94, they saw a brilliant flash light up the sky. Immediately afterwards they heard sounds reminiscent of thunder, only louder. To the left, at about 50 yards in the distance, they observed eight to 10 orange, glowing objects heading from south to east. The highest object was significantly larger than the others; the effect, Jackie would remark, was like "little balls coming out of a big one." They all looked as bright as the sun with "puffs of smoke around each one." The lights, in alignment, descended at a 30-degree angle

until suddenly they stopped just over a grove of trees. At this point one of them apparently split into two, and—as the witnesses put it—"three and a half" of them shot away.

At that moment Terry had an odd sensation. "It seemed like I was standing still when I looked at it," he recalled. "It seemed like I was hardly moving in the car and I was doing at least 50. Just seemed like I was frozen for a second." Sandy felt something "strange" inside her head. But in the most peculiar aspect of the situation, Jackie, who heretofore had been sitting between Terry and her mother in the front seat, found herself in the middle of the back seat. The strange lights were no longer visible.

Thoroughly shaken, they drove up alongside a camper truck, and O'Leary called over to its occupants, a middle-aged Texas couple. "Did you see that?" he asked. They said they had.

The three went on to Tower City, North Dakota, and stopped at a service station. Terry phoned the highway patrol, but the officer who took the call laughed at the story. Meanwhile Sandy was looking at a clock on the wall and wondering at the time: 5:23—more than an hour later than she thought it should have been.

Sandy Larson thought a great deal about the sighting over the next weeks and discussed it with a number of friends, but she said little about the time discrepancy, which seemed to make even less sense than the lights. Then on October 20 she watched *The UFO Incident*, an NBC television dramatization of the Hill abduction case, in which a New Hampshire couple witnessed a UFO, experienced a period of missing time, and later, under hypnosis, reported being taken aboard the craft. The movie disturbed her greatly, and she talked about her own missing-time experience to a friend, Bob Becker, a musician interested in UFOs.

Becker subsequently called a friend of his, Jerome Clark, coauthor of a recently published book on UFOs. Through Becker, Clark was introduced to Larson and her daughter. After interviewing them and, separately, O'Leary (by now living in the Twin Cities and estranged from the Larsons), Clark spoke with R. Leo Sprinkle, a University of Wyoming psychologist who had used hypnotic regression in the

investigation of UFO-abduction cases. Arrangements were made for Sprinkle to fly to Fargo in early December.

In the course of three hypnotic sessions, Sandy related sketchy details of what seemed to be an abduction experience. She had no memory of being taken inside a UFO, but she spoke of a figure she called a "mummy"—a six-foot-tall entity with three-inch "bandages" or tape wrapped around its face. A glowing wire about an inch above the body ran from its shoulders and around its head. It had eyes shaped like a cat's, though with a marble appearance. At one point, as the figure stood with its back to her, the back of its head lit up. It also had metallic arms half an inch thick and three inches wide. At the end of each was a "clamp" instead of a hand. Though Sandy did not say so explicitly, she appeared to be describing a robotlike entity as opposed to a biological one.

Sandy repeatedly complained of a sensation of nausea or dizziness during the experience. She expressed the conviction that the entity, which she characterized as male for reasons she could not explain, had removed her clothing and taken an X ray "through my tummy." It had also stuck something up her nose and made it sore. At some point, either then or soon after, it felt as if, she said, "they're separating me. . . . Feels like they reached their hand on the top of my head and took the brain and set it beside me." This may have been more an impression than a literal fact, however. Sandy said she did not actually see her brain.

Sprinkle also hypnotized Jackie. She recalled seeing lights which descended, then vanished from sight. Suddenly she felt "dizzy," soon replaced by a sensation of numbness:

Something's there, but I don't know what. . . . It's holding me back. . . . A force. . . . It won't quit holding me. . . . I'm just stuck there. . . . Outside. I was standing in the field, and I couldn't move. . . . I just stayed there. . . . until they let the force go. . . . I was alone.

Jackie saw nothing but the green field around her and, far away, a few trees. She had no idea how she had gotten there.

On December 2, two days before Sprinkle's arrival, Sandy claimed to have awakened at 6:30 A.M., convinced that something had happened during the night. "It's like just before I woke up," she said, "it was like I was supposed to never tell anyone and never repeat." She had fleeting "memories" of a "mental" exchange about such topics as people and soap. The evening before, at around 10, she had seen a meteorlike object from which she thought a hissing or buzzing emanated.

At the end of a third hypnosis session, on December 6, Sprinkle asked Sandy what she remembered of this "dream." What emerged were fragmented images of a familiar-looking field at "about Third Street North and 15th Avenue." She felt as if she had been drawn into a "black ball" and taken on a journey which took her to a place of sand, moonlight, and "real skinny" trees.

On January 17, 1976, Sprinkle returned to Fargo, and J. Allen Hynek, Northwestern University astronomer, former **Project Blue Book** consultant, and director of the Center for UFO Studies, flew up from Evanston, Illinois. Accompanying Hynek was a television personality employed by Chicago's ABC affiliate and at work on a UFO piece. That evening, at a Fargo motel, Jackie underwent hypnotic regression but added nothing to what she had already said.

The following day Sandy was more forthcoming. Now she spoke of seeing the UFOs land, or at least hover just above the ground. As they did so, "the car stopped automatically" and then in some fashion was "pulled" to within 200 feet of a UFO the size of a "big round house." She was now aware of only two UFOs and had nothing to say on what may have happened to the others.

She felt as if somebody or something had taken control of her body, which became numb as it floated somehow (she did not remember how) into the vehicle. The next thing she knew, she lay naked on a long, narrow table. Across the room Terry was strapped against a vertical table attached to the wall. Jackie was nowhere in sight.

An alcohol-like substance was rubbed on her body, making her feel cold, and something scraped the interior of her nose. Sandy was vague on whether this

was done by an "instrument" or by the being; perhaps it was an instrument held by the being. She indicated there was only one of them; nonetheless she sometimes used plural pronouns such as "they" and "them." She remarked on the "glaring of the eyes. It seemed like their eyes can control my brain." Of the apparent brain operation she had this to say:

It's like they opened my head and examined my brain. . . . They started to put something numb on me. . . . It's like they could just draw [the brain] right out. . . . Like there's just plugs that they can unplug and pull it right out. . . . It's like they wanted to connect something back different, when they put it back.

The only communication Sandy felt was a sense, "like a thought between two people," that she would be free to leave in a short while. She also felt that she would see the entities again.

Soon she found herself floating out of the object, after what she thought was half an hour or so inside it. She was next aware of being in the car with Terry and Jackie. The car now was in the ditch along the side of the highway. When they got it back on the road, all memory of the abduction experience vanished, and the trio, according to Sandy, had no idea they had even stopped.

(Unfortunately, Terry O'Leary refused to undergo hypnosis. Therefore Sandy's memories, if that is what they are, remain uncorroborated.)

*Otherworldly journey.* Sprinkle urged Clark to continue the probing into the December 2 experience and taught him some hypnosis techniques. On February 8, in what appeared to be a deep state of hypnosis, Sandy recounted an otherworldly adventure. It began, she claimed, at 2:30 A.M. when she awoke to see two beings, identical to the one she had encountered in August, standing beside her bed. When they positioned themselves on either side of her, she seemed somehow "magnetized" between them. With them she floated through the wall in what she maintained was a physical state. They took her to a field several blocks away, where a bright orange UFO—like the one she had seen in the first episode—hovered just above the ground. Frightened, she closed her eyes to block out sights she did not want to see as she was

taken aboard. Suddenly she felt as if she were "spinning," and dizziness and nausea followed. During the ensuing trip she had a sensation of brilliant light through her closed eyes.

Something that felt like a "cube of ice" molded to her body shape seemed to enclose her, and suspended her inside it. The two beings, which she regarded as "soldiers" or "messengers," were carrying her in the cube toward an "experimental place . . . a square building with something on each end of it, like a 'V' coming out. . . . One building in the middle of a desert."

She was suddenly outside the cube after "my whole body kind of snapped when they undid the pressure." Beneath her feet she noticed white sand. Then she was inside a room, apparently within the building, with a high ceiling and walls made of a gray metallic substance. Though the room was not lighted in any conventional sense, nonetheless many objects she saw were visible because they gave off a kind of luminosity. She was chilly all the while, perhaps because she was wearing no clothes.

In the room she had an exchange with a third being. Communication was not verbal but mental, and she thought, without knowing exactly why, that it was connected with the "glow around his head." Though she wanted to know who they were and why they had come to her, the being provided no answers, saying that she would know in due course. Meanwhile he asked her about, in Sandy's words, "people's minds. . . . It's like I have to show them that every mind is different." She was to "give him a report on everybody I meet." He said she would meet an "important man" in the near future. The interview concluded with the being's warning her, in a tone neither friendly nor unfriendly, that she ought not to talk about her experience, since nobody would believe it.

The two original beings reappeared and floated her into the UFO through a door which they pushed open. They laid her on the cube. Sandy recalled little of this trip, except that she saw no more than the two beings aboard the craft; they communicated only once, to repeat the statement that no one would believe her if she talked about her experience. She remembered passing through a tunnel of brilliant

light, apparently the source of the light she had sensed through her closed eyes on the original voyage. Finally, once they had emerged from the other side of the tunnel, she could see the earth.

The UFO came down just above the field from which it had taken off when Sandy first boarded it. The beings floated her home and through the closed door of the house. As this was happening, Sandy was thinking uneasily of how much she wanted to take a shower, just in case she had contracted "alien germs." Apparently picking up on her thoughts—perhaps an image of her scrubbing herself—the beings asked what soap is. In reply Sandy led them into her basement (by now the three had resumed normal movement and were walking) and ran some laundry soap through her fingers. She then filled a green cup with the detergent and handed it to the two. They accepted it without comment. Sandy would later claim to find the cup missing.

*The Larson case in retrospect.* The abduction phenomenon first came to popular attention in 1966, with the publication of John G. Fuller's *The Interrupted Journey*, a book-length treatment of the Hill case. A few scattered accounts of generally similar claims appeared in the UFO literature in the next few years, but the next incident to attract national publicity was an October 11, 1973, report from Pascagoula, Mississippi (see **Pascagoula Abduction Case**). In November 1975 the five-day disappearance of forestry worker Travis Walton made headlines around the world; on his return Walton related his alleged encounter with humanoids aboard a UFO (see **Walton Abduction Case**).

It is unlikely that any of this—except possibly the already mentioned viewing of *The UFO Incident*—had any influence on Sandy Larson, a ninth-grade dropout with little interest in UFOs or, for that matter, anything outside immediate personal concerns. There seems little doubt, moreover, that she, Jackie, and Terry had a UFO sighting which they associated with odd sensations and missing time. What makes the Larson story interesting in retrospect, however, is its anticipation of many abduction motifs which, though barely noted or entirely unknown in 1975, had become repeatedly demonstrated aspects of the experience by the late 1980s.

For example, abduction investigator David M. Jacobs writes, drawing on his own investigations in the latter 1980s and 1990s:

[A]bductees frequently report going directly through walls. . . . Floating can be extremely unpleasant. Many abductees experience nausea and dizziness. . . . [They] report floating . . . and then coming down in a field or secluded area. The UFO is in a clearing and the abductee and aliens walk to it. . . . When the abductee is near other people, they are usually rendered unconscious or immobile while the abduction is going on. . . . [the aliens have the] ability to make nontargeted people unconscious during an abduction, [while] entire cars—abductees and other passengers as well—have been lifted off the road. . . . During the entire abduction experience, communication between aliens and abductees is telepathic. . . . [An abductor] helps [the abductee] take off her clothes. . . . [D]uring the first moments of an abduction . . . an alien stares into her eyes, calming her. (Jacobs, 1992).

In a massive survey of abduction reports through 1985, folklorist Thomas E. Bullard remarks on "otherworldly journeys" which figure in a small number of abduction narratives, including Larson's. One "striking theme running through many reports," he says, "refers to the barrenness of the planet, its desertlike surface, darkness, unpleasantness or stunted plant growth" (Bullard, 1987).

As commonly conceived (especially in the 1980s, when the abduction idea, as the subject of several much-read books and innumerable talk shows, gripped the popular imagination), the abducting alien is a small, gray-skinned humanoid with wrap-around eyes, of the sort memorably portrayed on the cover of Whitley Strieber's 1987 best-seller *Communion*. While there is no doubt that many abductees describe such entities, other types of aliens can be found in abduction accounts. Bullard notes, "One small but modestly coherent group consists of mummylike creatures . . . beings with gray skin like wrappings or bandages" (*ibid.*).

The Larson story also anticipates the abduction phenomenon's most bizarre and problematical elements. If it is hard enough to believe that alien beings are

kidnapping human beings (or, worse, taking them to other planets), it is virtually impossible to credit the notion that physical bodies can pass through walls or that such occurrences can take place on city streets or interstate highways and not be independently observed even if they happen in the middle of the night. Nearly as improbably, tales of temporary brain removals have figured in some subsequent accounts (Turner, 1994).

In common with other abduction claims, this one is filled with the sorts of troubling ambiguities that would frustrate investigators looking for positive answers.

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### LAS VEGAS CASE. See Crashes and Retrievals of UFOs, 1960-1979

#### LAVONIA CE2

Late on the night of June 29, 1964, driving near the Georgia-South Carolina border on his way back from a business trip, Beauford E. Parham noticed a brilliant light in the sky. It was moving directly toward his car at a 45-degree angle. In an instant it appeared right in front of his headlights, no more than five feet away and a foot above the ground. Shaped like a giant top, it emitted a "hissing sound like a million snakes," Parham would report. "The top part of the object was moving in a clockwise direction and the bottom part was moving in a counterclockwise direction. Bright flames seemed to be sucking in through small openings underneath the object."

Amber-colored, six feet high and eight feet wide, the UFO had a sharp, steeplelike cone rising from its top midsection. A dark band surrounded the cone at its base. Evenly spaced "vaness" ran from the tower base halfway down the top half of the object. According to the witness:

It stayed in front of my headlights for only a moment the first time it came down. The second time it came down, it stayed direct [sic] in front of my headlights for at least a mile, never touching the car but spinning just in front of my lights. When the object left the second time, it suddenly went up over the top of my car leaving a strong odor which seemed to me like embalming fluid and a very gaseous vapor which left an oily substance all over my car. Just as fast as it disappeared, it reappeared again coming direct [sic] toward the car for the third time out of space. My only thought at this moment was it was not after me nor [sic] my car, but after the headlights. I at this time stopped my car and turned off my headlights. I looked up again and this object was spinning like crazy and turned and went back toward space which seemed like in a split second's time. By this time my arms were beginning to burn and my only thought was to get somewhere and let someone know what I had seen [Parham, 1964].

Parham drove on to the next town, Lavonia, Georgia, and woke the mayor to tell him what he had just seen. The mayor urged him to report the sighting to personnel at the airport in Anderson, South Carolina, an hour away. There Parham met with local representatives of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). They checked the car for radiation. "Readings were obtained where the paint on my automobile was marred by this oily substance which this flying object left," according to Parham. "They also obtained readings on both my arms from the shoulder down" (Parham, 1964). The FAA people, Albert Myrick and Dean Carpenter, notified the *Anderson Independent*, which interviewed the witness.

He continued toward his hometown of Wellford, South Carolina. He had the car washed at a local service station, but the oily marks remained. As of July 8, he wrote an inquirer, "I have had the car

# J

**JOHNSON, VAL.** *See* Marshall County CE2

# K

## **KENTUCKY ABDUCTION CASE**

January 6, 1976, marked the thirty-sixth birthday of Mona Stafford of Liberty, Kentucky. Just after 11:15 P.M., as she and two friends, Louise Smith and Elaine Thomas, were heading home, driving southwest on Route 78 from a late birthday dinner in Lancaster, they spotted an intense red glow high in the eastern sky. The glow grew larger and more intense, then descended rapidly at an angle until it was positioned to the right of the car at tree-top level. As it hovered, the witnesses discerned a disc shape with round windows; around each of them, blinking red lights rotated in a counterclockwise direction. A row of yellow lights stretched beneath these. The object was topped with a luminous blue dome.

Stafford recalled, "The dome was blinding, and it reflected on a metallic surface which I'm sure was more than one hundred feet wide. It was much bigger than the biggest airliner I've ever seen—and it made no sound." The object moved toward the car, executed a tight half-circle maneuver, and flipped on its side, revealing a round shape. Now just to the left of the car, it flashed three shafts of bluish-white light on the road. Then one shined into the vehicle, illuminating the interior as if it were daylight.

From that point on, things got both vague and strange. Smith, who had been behind the wheel, stopped the car and got out. She looked "petrified," according to Stafford, who pulled her back inside. Smith would have no recollection of this part of the episode. Stafford noticed a "dead silence. Even the wind stopped." Back inside the car, Smith felt weirdly "deserted." Tears were flowing from all their eyes. Their skin tingled, and then severe headaches set in.

The UFO's lights switched off, starting with the dome light with the rest following. The car was moving at 85 mph, Smith was horrified to discover. But even when she took her foot off the accelerator, the vehicle continued at this reckless pace. It was no longer under her control. She asked Stafford, who was sitting next to her, to help her steer. Stafford, who could barely see at this stage, tried, to no avail. "It felt like we were traveling over road hurdles or flying in air pockets on an airplane," Smith recalled. "All I could see was a long, straight road ahead, with no lights, no houses, nothing I could recognize. I'm not even sure if my headlights were on." To Stafford it felt as if the car were "being pulled and we were going over a long, straight road"—though Route 78 is not straight. Even more weirdly, the engine was not even running.

Then, in what seemed like no more than a moment, the landscape was familiar again. They were just outside Hustonville, eight miles from the location (one mile south of Stanford) where they had been when they first saw the UFO. Their eyes were still tearing, and their heads still hurt. They were desperate to get home. Finally, when they got to Smith's trailer house, they went inside and, intensely thirsty, gulped down glasses of cold water.

Smith happened to glance at the kitchen clock. It read 1:25. She was shocked; it should have taken no more than 50 minutes to make the trip between Stanford and Liberty. Another shock hit when she looked at her wristwatch. Not only did it indicate 6 o'clock, but the minute hand was moving as if it were a second hand. She and her friends checked the bedroom clock, which confirmed the kitchen-clock reading. Smith, who still had a hard time comprehending any of this, woke up a neighbor and asked him what the time was. Finally she had to accept that something close to an hour and a half was unaccounted for.

The three stayed in Smith's trailer and tried to reconstruct the night's events. Stafford called the state police, who expressed no interest. The burning sensation continued, even intensified. Smith was further distressed to find that her beloved parakeet Greensleeve, which ordinarily liked to perch on her finger, acted terrified whenever she got close to it.

Eventually Stafford and Thomas returned to their respective residences. The next morning, all three woke up to continuing physical discomfort, including raw skin, burning eyes, blisters, and headaches. Later Stafford would see her physician, who listened to her UFO story without comment and prescribed eyedrops. They did not help.

*Investigations and investigators.* After news of the incident leaked (without the witnesses' permission) into local media in February, ufologists tried to interview the women, who said they desired no publicity. Eventually they were persuaded to cooperate, and on February 29 a team of investigators associated with the Texas-based Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) met personally with the women. Veteran ufologist Leonard H. Stringfield noted that "the effects of the close encounter were still painfully apparent." The

three looked drained and tense. All complained of sudden weight loss. Stafford's eyes showed "strong traces of inflammation." Smith lifted the hair on the nape of her neck to reveal what Stringfield described as a "round pinkish-gray blotch the size of a half dollar."

After hearing Smith's testimony about her parakeet's peculiar behavior, Stringfield and fellow investigator Jim Miller separately put fingers into the bird cage and got little response. But when Smith approached it, the bird flew into a panic. It died in March, apparently never reconciled with its master.

The missing time was a particular source of distress to the women. As Thomas put it, "We live in fear of what we don't know." Stringfield suggested that perhaps hypnosis would be able to peel away the layer of amnesia. Eventually, on March 7, Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) consultant R. Leo Sprinkle, a University of Wyoming psychologist, attempted hypnosis on Stafford, who recounted the consciously recalled parts of the episode but became hysterical as Dr. Sprinkle's probing brought her to the unrecalled part. Before leaving to catch a plane in Louisville, Sprinkle told Stringfield that Stafford was in a posthypnotic state in which it might still be possible to elicit further memories.

Though so far the women had said nothing about encountering UFO occupants, Stringfield queried Stafford about the object's close approach, then produced a drawing which depicted beings reported in various **close encounters of the third kind**. Stringfield said nothing, but Stafford quickly pointed to one of the pictures and declared, "This is it." He asked, "Is this what you saw after you mentioned the light coming into the car?" Stafford replied that she had a mental image which "comes and goes . . . fades and reappears like fog." (Later, according to Stringfield, Thomas would independently point to the same figure.)

Stringfield's action would leave him open to criticism that he had helped shape the subsequent testimony by planting ideas and images into the psyche of a woman in an impressionable psychological state ("The Kentucky Abduction," 1976). Such criticism is justified, but it must also be said that by 1976 the abduction phenomenon, with its characteristic missing time





Louise Smith, Elaine Thomas, and Mona Stafford figure in a dramatic 1976 abduction case.

and interaction with humanoids, was widely known. The simple fact that a witness was being hypnotized to “recall” what had happened during a UFO sighting had implications no one, including Stafford, could have failed to understand.

At this stage the investigation bogged down over funding problems. None of the participating UFO organizations—APRO, MUFON, or the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS)—was able or willing to spend the money to send a qualified professional back to Kentucky to continue the hypnotic regression. Then one of the MUFON team, Jerry Black, took it upon himself to bring the *National Enquirer* into the story, notwithstanding a pledge the investigators had made to keep the story out of the newspapers, and especially out of the *Enquirer*. Black negotiated a deal which brought Sprinkle to Kentucky and paid the women for their cooperation.

The *Enquirer* also secured the services of James Young, a detective with the Lexington police department

and an experienced polygraph examiner. On Friday, July 23, each woman took the test. The results indicated, Young said, that the women were sincere. This was hardly surprising. All three were devout Christians—Smith even performed in a gospel band—and had good reputations locally.

Over the weekend the three women separately underwent hypnosis. No full or entirely coherent account emerged, though their stories were generally compatible. Stafford “remembered” being taken from the car and finding herself on a white table or bed in a dark, uncomfortably hot room. A bright white light from which a “power” or energy emanated seemed to be holding her down as an eyelike device examined her. Her right arm felt as if it were being pinned down. Her left leg was forced back under her, and something squeezed the fingers on her left hand. Several small figures wearing “surgical masks” and “surgical garments” observed her. A weblike structure was before her, and a burning liquid substance covered her. A sensation of pressure against her

eyeballs was so intense that they felt as if they were being pulled out.

Under hypnosis she made a cryptic reference to a sensation of "being in a volcano." Subsequently, in normal consciousness, she explained what she meant:

It was a long tunnel, dark inside with an opening at the top. It's clear now; at the end I can see an operating room. Everything is white, a white, round light shining on a white table, and I can see four small beings around the table. They have a tube on somebody's stomach. . . . It's a woman there on the table, but I can't tell who it is. Maybe it's me on that table being examined [Stringfield, 1977].

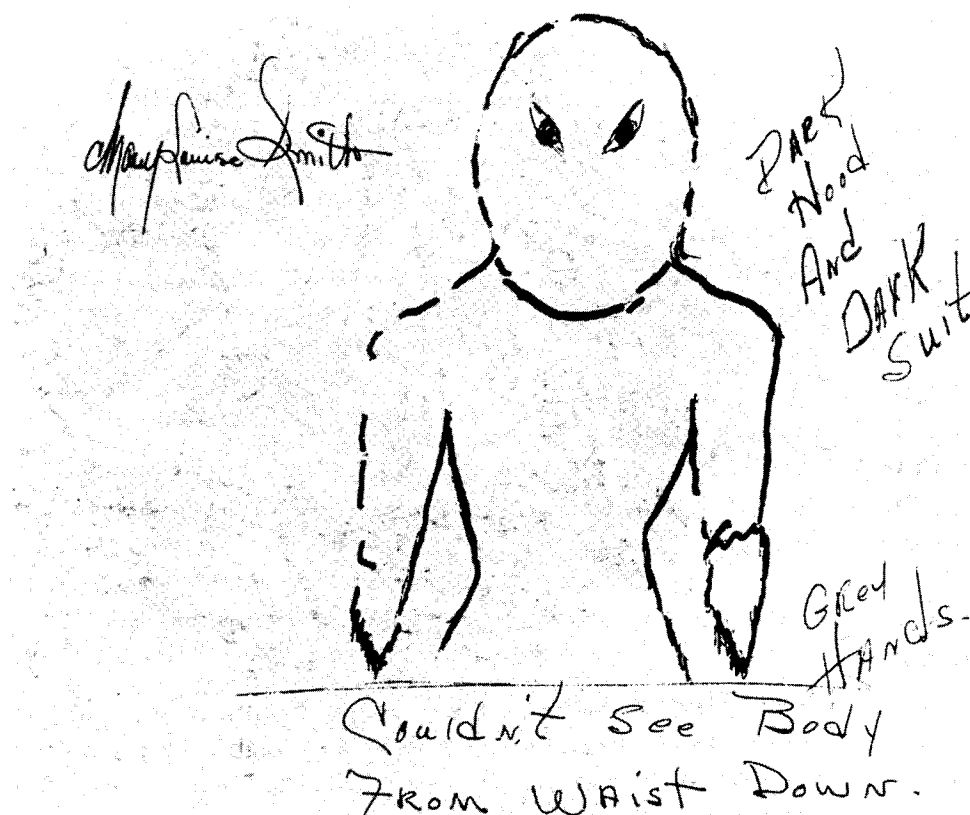
Thomas "remembered" leaving the car and being in a "chamber" with a window. She could see humanoid beings, four feet tall and gray-skinned with dark eyes, walking back and forth. A cocoonlike device was wrapped around her neck like a noose. When she tried to speak or think, the noose tightened and

choked her. For a time a bullet-shaped object was placed above her left breast.

Smith's "memories" were the vaguest of the three. She spoke of feeling the car's being tugged backward. Next she was surrounded by a "strange darkness," with intense heat burning her flesh. A scalding liquid was poured on her, and she had the impression that she was being examined. Her throat was dry. She could not move her arms. Later that weekend she would refuse an offer to undergo hypnosis again.

In a report on his observations and conclusions, Sprinkle wrote:

Mrs. Smith suffered much as she relived the experience. The behaviors, e.g., weeping, moaning, tossing her head, shuddering, and shaking . . . were evident . . . especially as she seemed to "relive" an experience of a fluid material covering her face. . . . [Mrs. Stafford] experienced a great deal of emotional reaction. . . . Each woman seemed to experience the impression that



Louise Smith drew this sketch of an alien she believed she and two companions encountered.

she had been taken out of the car and placed elsewhere without her friends and without verbal communication. . . . Differences were noted in that each woman seemed to have a somewhat different kind of "examination" and in a different "location". . . . In my opinion, each woman is describing a "real" experience. . . . An interesting subsequent event is the concern of the women that they were "re-experiencing" the physical symptoms which had been experienced for several days following the January 1976 sightings. . . . When I called them on July 26th, the women said that they were re-experiencing some of the same kinds of symptoms, e.g., fatigue, listlessness, sensitivity to skin, burning feeling on the face and eyes, fluid discharge, etc. ["The Kentucky Abduction," *op. cit.*].

On the evening of January 6, numerous area residents reported seeing an object generally described as "oval-shaped and large, with a brilliant circle of lights." It traveled silently and would stop to hover occasionally, then shoot away "at great speed." One sighting was of particular interest. It took place at 11:30 P.M. just a few hundred yards from the site of the three women's encounter. From the window of their home, a couple observed a brilliantly lighted object shaped like a light bulb. It was heading toward the south. Stringfield checked out rumors that an advertising plane had been in the area that night. After consulting all airports in central Kentucky, he learned that the plane did indeed exist, but its first flight had been on the nineteenth (Stringfield, *op. cit.*).

*Aftermath.* On July 29, when Stringfield called Smith to ask how she was doing, she said she was in bed, too ill to go to work. Moreover, she added, something "terrible" had happened within the last 24 hours. Late the previous night, something—"a voice or whatever it was"—had caused her to awaken from a sound sleep, put on her clothes, and drive alone to the encounter site. She had stood there for some time, feeling severely frightened but unable to leave. Once she felt a tugging at her hands. Suddenly, at 3 A.M., she ran to her car and headed for nearby Stanford. Along the way she noticed that two rings were missing from one hand and another ring from the other. None of them could have come off by accident;

on those rare occasions she took them off, she had to moisten her hands with soap. In Stanford she called Thomas in Liberty and asked her to drive up and be with her, but Thomas's car did not have enough gas in it to make the trip.

The following morning she and a police officer looked for the rings without success. In September, however, two of them mysteriously reappeared near the door to her trailer home.

Over time the women's "memories" of the missing period grew somewhat more elaborate. Stafford said, "The aliens separated us, and I can remember leaving one ship and finding myself aboard another, with three floors, and there was a dome over me. . . . Somehow, I also had the feeling I was in a cave or volcano—underground somewhere." Smith recalled that the aliens wore hoods and their bodies were covered. Their eyes were "frightening . . . large and pointed towards the temples"; their hands were "like a bird wing would be if you could stretch it out" (Gansberg and Gansberg, 1980).

Stafford claimed to have had another encounter with an alien being. As part of the emotional fallout from her UFO experience, she moved in with her parents for a period of time. One evening, however, she decided to return to her trailer. She turned on the radio and was lying on the couch when a mental "voice" directed her to turn around. A being, five feet tall and bathed in light, stood near her kitchen counter. Dressed in a shiny robe, the figure "looked the way they were described in Biblical days," she reported. He wore a shiny robe, and his hair and beard were of a reddish-gold color.

Stunned and fascinated, Stafford ignored the figure's command (again telepathic) to look into his eyes. She obeyed the second command, knowing she could not fight it. She had already tried to pick up the telephone, but a "force" prevented her from getting close to it. She would be uncertain about what happened immediately thereafter. She did recall an odd remark: "Buree, the mind is still hungry." Afterwards the figure "just vanished." Fleeing to her parents' house, she tried to find "Buree" in the dictionary and the Bible. She was certain she had "heard" right, but there appeared to be no such word.

The women did not soon recover from their encounter. For a while Sprinkle took frequent phone calls from them as they sought information and reassurance. Each had several **paranormal** experiences that, though they did not involve UFOs or aliens, each associated with the UFO experience. Smith eventually moved to Las Vegas, and Stafford lived for a time in Florida before returning to Kentucky. Thomas died in 1978.

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During the 1950s and until the mid-1960s, when astronomer and **Project Blue Book** consultant **J. Allen Hynek** took up the cause of UFO reality, Donald E. Keyhoe, a retired Marine Corps major, was the world's most famous UFO proponent. To mainstream ufologists—those who rejected the claims of **George Adamski** and other **contactees** but who were otherwise sympathetic to the possibility of interplanetary visitation—Keyhoe was widely regarded as the leader of the field.

Born June 20, 1897, in Ottumwa, Iowa, he left high school to attend the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Annapolis, Maryland, before entering the Naval Academy proper. In 1919 he received a B.S. degree and was commissioned a lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Three years later a plane crash in Guam and a resulting arm injury sent him to the U.S. Naval Hospital in Washington, where he began writing to pass the time. Still troubled by the injury, he retired from the Marines in 1923. Between 1924 and 1926 he did editing work for the Coast and Geodetic Survey. In 1926 he was appointed chief of information of the Civil Aeronautics Branch of the