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ABDUCTION PHENOMENON

In the 1980s the abduction phenomenon, a body of testimony by apparently sincere individuals who claimed (frequently under hypnosis) to have been briefly kidnapped by extraterrestrials, emerged as one of the two principal concerns of American ufology (the other was the alleged official cover-up of UFO evidence). Ufologists had known of the phenomenon since 1965, when a Boston newspaper reported on Barney and Betty Hill's soon-to-be-famous September 1961 experience. A year later a book-length account, John G. Fuller's *The Interrupted Journey*, attracted much attention, in part because it was serialized in the mass-circulation *Look* magazine.

UFO Abductions in the 1960s and 1970s: When first reported to investigators shortly after its occurrence, the Hills' story of a UFO sighting on a lonely New Hampshire road seemed to be a more-or-less-typical close encounter of the third kind (a UFO sighting in which occupants are reported); Barney claimed to have seen a being inside the object as it hovered over their car. What made the incident unique was the Hills' conviction that two hours had passed unaccountably following the sighting. Two and a half years later, when the couple, suffering from stress which they linked to the sighting, underwent hypnosis in the office of Boston psychiatrist Benjamin Simon, they related that gray-skinned humanoids with large heads and small mouths had taken them aboard the UFO and given them a medical examination.

Dr. Simon later expressed the view that the "incident" was a shared dream, an explanation with which all skeptics and even many ufologists were happy. Probably the story would have been remembered as little more than a curiosity if other, similar accounts had not begun to appear, notably a case involving a Nebraska policeman, Herbert Schirmer, whose December 1967 sighting and missing-time experience were investigated by no less than the Air Force-sponsored University of Colorado UFO project (usually known as the Condon Committee, after director Edward U. Condon). Under hypnosis Schirmer told of encountering five-foot humanoids with gray-white skin and long, thin faces. The two entity types described in the Hill and Schirmer cases—the big-headed, gray-skinned humanoids and the slightly taller, thin-faced, smaller- though also slant-eyed ones—would be noted in many subsequent reports. (The latter would figure in the majority of British reports, as Jenny Randles would document in her 1988 book *Abduction*.)

In the mid-1960s a Brazilian case, publication of which an American UFO group had suppressed because of its outlandish character, was recounted in a series of articles in England's *Flying Saucer Review* (FSR). The October 1957 incident, investigated by physician-ufologist Olavo T. Fontes and journalist Joao Martins, involved a young farmer named Antonio Villas-Boas, who said he had been grabbed by humanoids, dragged into a UFO and seduced by a short, mostly-human-looking female. Fontes and Martins, considered responsible investigators, took the story

UFOs in the 1980s

ABDUCTION PHENOMENON (*continued*)

seriously, despite its apparent absurdity. Other sexual-abduction cases from Brazil would be reported in the 1970s and early 1980s but received little attention outside the pages of *FSR*, which published translations from Portuguese- and Spanish-language accounts. English-speaking ufologists paid practically no heed to them and they are not rehashed in the UFO books of the period. Only later—in 1987, to be precise—would their significance become clear.

During the 1970s abduction reports were featured regularly in both popular and specialist UFO magazines. A handful—especially one at Pascagoula, Mississippi (October 1973), another in North Dakota (August 1975), and a third in Arizona (November 1975)—got nationwide press coverage. In the Arizona episode seven loggers reportedly saw a UFO. One of them, Travis Walton, ran toward the object and was struck by a beam of light emitted from it. His terrified companions fled. When they returned a few minutes later, Walton and the UFO were nowhere to be seen. Search parties failed to locate the missing man, who did not reappear until five days later. Walton claimed to remember only about two hours of his experience on board the craft. He said he had awakened on a table and seen big-headed, large-eyed, hairless beings (of the sort ufologists would come to call, with wry humor, "standard-issue humanoids"), then later met uncommunicative apparent humans with peculiar-looking eyes (Walton, 1978).

The Walton case generated by far the most controversy of the '70s reports. The reason was simple: if true, it meant that Walton's abduction (as well as by implication other such accounts) was a literal, consensus-reality, physical event, presumably involving extraterrestrial kidnappers. In other instances skeptics could grant claimants' sincerity while rejecting a face-value interpretation of their stories, which in doubters' minds could be laid to hypnotic confabulation, dreams or hallucinations. If this reading was to stand, those unwilling to concede the possibility of alien kidnappings knew they would have to demonstrate

that Walton and his coworkers had fabricated the story. Professional UFO debunker Philip J. Klass went after Walton with a vengeance and tried with no great success, though with an enormous amount of verbiage, to prove that he and the alleged eyewitnesses were lying. The case remains controversial, not because there is compelling negative evidence (if it exists, it has yet to surface) but because its implications were unacceptable even to many in the UFO community. Yet Walton's description of the UFO's interior and of the craft's occupants (including its not-quite humans) would be echoed in numerous subsequent accounts.

The 1970s saw the publication of a small number of books on abductions, among them *Encounters With UFO Occupants* (1976) and *Abducted!* (1977), both by Coral and Jim Lorenzen, directors of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO), David Haisell's *The Missing Seven Hours* (1978) and Raymond E. Fowler's *The Andreasson Affair* (1979). In 1980 writer D. Scott Rogo produced a paperback anthology, *UFO Abductions*, and cowrote (with Ann Druffel) *The Tujunga Canyon Contacts*, based on an investigation of a web of interrelated abduction experiences in California.

By this time the abduction phenomenon was a part of the ufological scenery, but it was not universally welcomed there. Not a few ufologists suspected abduction tales were the product of hypnotic confabulation, in which an individual replaces a gap in his or her memory with a created story that is then accepted as true. Hypnotic confabulation is a common explanation of past-life "memories." In an attempt to test this possibility, three California investigators devised an experiment in which student volunteers were hypnotized and directed to imagine abductions. In 1977, one of the investigators, Alvin H. Lawson, declared that there no longer could be any question: imaginary and "real" abductions are described identically. That being the case, the latter must be imaginary, too, in other words, subjective mental experiences which draw on images from popular culture.

UFOs in the 1980s

Critics charged that these conclusions were not supported by a careful reading of the data and that the experiments were flawed, owing to amateurish methodological errors on the experimenters' part. Also, they suggested that the imaginary and "real" accounts are distinctly different. Among other significant differences, the imaginary abductees "encountered" humanoids only 10 to 20 percent of the time, whereas humanoids figure in over 70 percent of the "real" encounters.

For a time, however (the first major critique was not published until 1981), Lawson's claims were received mostly uncritically—by debunkers, of course, but also by ufologists, including so sophisticated a one as Allan Hendry, whose otherwise-insightful *UFO Handbook* (1979) unqualifiedly endorses Lawson's dubious interpretation. Nonetheless, whatever the shortcomings of the California experiments, ufologists' caution in the face of hypnotically-elicited abduction testimony was warranted. True, consciously-recalled stories did exist, but these could be hoaxes, as debunkers believed, or hallucinations and visions, as proponents of the emerging "psychosocial hypothesis" theorized. True, nearly all those who underwent hypnosis had conscious recollections of UFO sightings, missing time and other suggestive anomalies. Still, in the middle of this were holes that could be filled only with hypnosis. And hypnosis, all authorities on it agree, is no royal road to the truth. People can lie under hypnosis; sincere people can fantasize under it without realizing they are doing so. The latter is particularly likely to happen if the hypnotist is incompetent and asks leading questions or otherwise directs his subject to give the desired answers.

These unresolved concerns led to an agnosticism about the abduction phenomenon even among many ufologists sympathetic to the extraterrestrial hypothesis. If abduction research was going to be anything more than the collecting of scary stories, serious problems and major questions had to be addressed. Researchers needed to address, for example, the questions related to the efficacy of hypnosis as a method for retrieving true memory

as opposed to confabulated fantasy. They needed to do formal psychology inventories of abductees to determine, to start with, whether there is a link between pathological states and the belief that one has been abducted by extraterrestrials. (Ufologists had informally observed little evidence of mental illness among abductees whose claims they had investigated, but critics could always claim, and did so claim, that ufologists lacked the professional training to make diagnostic judgments in this area.) They also had to determine, via standard objective analytical procedures, whether the patterns they sensed in the data stood up to searching inquiry over a large number of cases.

The Work of Budd Hopkins: All of this would be accomplished in the 1980s, owing in considerable part to the reinvigoration of abduction investigation that would follow the appearance of Budd Hopkins on the UFO scene. Hopkins, a New York City-based artist and sculptor, had developed an interest in the UFO phenomenon after a sighting of a daylight disc moving in and out of clouds over Truro, Massachusetts, in August 1964. By the mid-1970s Hopkins was privately collecting sighting reports, though he had no ties to the UFO community. But an investigation of a remarkable CE3, with independent witnesses confirming parts of the story, in North Hudson Park, New Jersey, in November 1975 led to Hopkins' meeting Ted Bloecher, a veteran ufologist who specialized in reports involving occupants. Through Bloecher, Hopkins met a young man known to the UFO literature as "Steven Kilburn." Kilburn had no recollection of a UFO sighting but, he said, "something has bothered me about a certain stretch of road I used to pass through whenever I left my girlfriend's house in Maryland."

Subsequently Hopkins and a psychiatrist who uses hypnosis in his practice, Dr. Robert Naiman, worked with Kilburn and others to explore periods of "missing time" which in most cases (unlike Kilburn's) were associated with UFO sightings. Later psychologist Girard Franklin became involved for a time. Active for a longer period was Aphrodite Clamar, a psychologist affiliated with New York University. For the first

UFOs in the 1980s

ABDUCTION PHENOMENON (continued)

time mental-health professionals were participating in the study of what by now was beginning to look like a phenomenon, not just a one-time fantasy experience a New Hampshire couple had just happened to share some years earlier. The apparent patterns were striking. The UFO beings the abductees described were virtually identical from case to case: little gray humanoids with large heads, big, slanting eyes, thin bodies. The beings subjected the abductees to apparent medical examinations and usually said little about themselves. In some cases abductees reported that small, ball-like implants had been placed inside them, usually through the nose or ear. Some abductees bore scars for which they could not account, resulting from wounds whose origin they could not explain even at the time of their occurrence. Under hypnosis they would relate these wounds to cuts inflicted on them by UFO occupants. Typically these events happened when the abductees were children and often the wounds were *under* clothing which was not ripped or torn. The resulting scars fell into two categories: a straight line (resembling, Hopkins suggests, a "scalpel cut") and a small depression in the flesh ("like a little scoop mark").

To the UFO community, and also to the small number of psychologists, psychiatrists and physicians who read the book and were intrigued by it, Hopkins' *Missing Time* (1981) was the most important work on abductions since Fuller's *Interrupted Journey*. It was the beginning not only of ufologists' decade-long obsession with the phenomenon but also of the professionalization of the investigation. Perhaps even more impressive than Hopkins' discovery of such aspects as implants and scars were the pronouncements of Clamar, who contributed an afterword in which she specifically rejected the idea that abductees exhibited pathological systems; rather she found them neither psychotic nor psychic, but very normal. She went on to conclude, "If there is anything that links these people to one another, it is that all of them are deeply perplexed and troubled by their experience. . . . [T]he events recounted by a variety of people from scattered

places are strikingly similar, suggesting that there might be more to the whole business than mere coincidence. . . . The content of these accounts is markedly different from most of the fantasies reported in psychological literature." Clamar confessed that she was puzzled, calling the abduction phenomenon a "mystery" and urging further investigation of what seemed to her a "real problem."

Clamar noted that abductees had "not been subjected to the kind of psychological testing that might provide a deeper understanding of their personalities." By the time her words had appeared in print, an effort was being made to arrange for such testing. In 1981 Hopkins, Bloecher and Clamar, having secured a grant from the Fund for UFO Research for the purpose, hired a psychologist, Elizabeth Slater, to administer five standard tests. Slater was told only that she was to "determine similarities and differences in personality structure as well as psychological strengths and weaknesses." She did not know that the nine individuals whose tests she was evaluating believed they had been taken aboard UFOs.

Slater found that while the subjects were otherwise quite different, they had in common a "relative weakness in the sense of identity" and consequently a "certain orientation towards alertness . . . interpersonal hypervigilance and caution. . . . Anxiety was prominent in all nine subjects, some of whom were simply flooded by it. . . . In addition to the relative propensity for emotionally disorganizing experience, another factor common to the nine subjects . . . is a modicum . . . of narcissistic disturbance. It is manifest along at least three dimensions: identity disturbance. . . . One spoke of 'somebody being crushed by something,' pointing to a sense of smallness and victimization in the face of overwhelming outer forces."

After turning in her report, Slater learned that the nine were UFO abductees. "She was, it is safe to say, flabbergasted," Bloecher, Clamar and Hopkins would write. When she had recovered from her astonishment, Slater was given a copy of

UFOs in the 1980s

Missing Time to read. (Some of the abductees she tested were among those whose stories were related in that book.) Afterwards she met with the three investigators. Reflecting on about the abduction phenomenon, she prepared an addendum to her original report. It says in part:

"The first and most critical question is whether our subjects' reported experiences could be accounted for strictly on the basis of psychopathology, i.e., mental disorder. The answer is a firm no. In broad terms, if the reported abductions were confabulated fantasy productions, based on what we know about psychological disorders, they could only have come from pathological liars, paranoid schizophrenics, and severely disturbed and extraordinarily rare hysteroid characters subject to fugue states and/or multiple personality shifts. . . . It is important to note that not one of these subjects, based on test data, falls into any of these categories. Therefore, while the testing can do nothing to prove the veracity of the UFO abduction reports, one can conclude that the test findings are not inconsistent with the possibility that reported UFO abductions have, in fact, occurred. In other words, there is no apparent psychological explanation for their reports. . . .

"From another, more speculative point of view, one can consider how UFO abduction . . . might affect the victim. . . . Certainly such an unexpected, random and literally otherworldly experience . . . during which the individual has absolutely no control over the outcome, constitutes a trauma of major proportions. Hypothetically, its psychological impact might be analogous to what one sees in crime victims or victims of natural disasters, as it would constitute an event during which the individual is overwhelmed by external circumstances in an extreme manner. . . . Psychological traits which arose consistently in the subjects first included a surprising degree of inner turmoil as well as a great degree of wariness and distrust. Logically, such emotional upheaval and accompanying caution about the world might certainly follow in the wake of an [abduction] experience."

Another explanation for the inner turmoil and suspicion abductees experience, Slater suggested, had to do with societal skepticism of such experiences, making them "something that cannot be readily shared with others as a means of obtaining emotional support. Consequently, one would likely find a deep sense of shame, secretiveness and social alienation among the victims. . . . The closest analogy might be the interpersonal alienation of the rape victim, who has been violated most brutally but somehow becomes tainted by virtue of the crime against her" (Bloecher, Clamar and Hopkins, 1985).

Slater's remarks anticipate a psychological model that would come into prominence late in the decade. The abductee would be seen as a victim of post-traumatic stress disorder, a category of diagnosis originally applied to the suffering of Vietnam-war combat veterans. This interpretation assumes that a real event, perhaps even of the kind the abductee reports, occurred. It does not seek to "explain" the precipitating event, only to treat its consequences. But because Slater also remarked that the subjects had a "richness of inner life that can operate favorably in terms of creativity or disadvantageously to the extent that it can be overwhelming," two ufologists in Australia would link abductees to another newly-proposed psychological type: the "fantasy-prone personality."

Alternative Interpretations: In the early 1980s two other psychological interpretations, both intended to explain abduction accounts as internally rather than externally generated, briefly attracted attention. The more modest of them was the "imagery hypothesis" of Keith Basterfield of UFO Research Australia (UFORA), who speculated that what percipients experience as close encounters are hallucinations which occur during false awakenings and other dreamy mental states. "The imagery content is visual, or auditory, in the main," he wrote, "but also include[s] sensation[s] of heat/cold, smell, or touch. They [sic] may be reproductions of the events of the day or strange, bizarre images of pleasing or frightening proportions. There seems to be little control over their appearance, and thus a person could

UFOs in the 1980s

ABDUCTION PHENOMENON *(continued)*

certainly be frightened by their sudden onset. Reality and images of this kind can be readily confused" (Basterfield, 1981). Ideas borrowed from folklore and popular culture cause modern persons to "see" aliens and spaceships instead of fairies and witches, he suggested.

If Basterfield's speculations were based on mental phenomena whose reality few psychologists would dispute (even if many would disagree that healthy persons are likely to sustain such images for a long period of time and continue to mistake them for external physical objects), the "birth-trauma hypothesis" of Alvin Lawson, an English teacher at a California state university, would go far beyond conventional psychological wisdom. To Lawson, convinced that he had already proven abductions to be fantasies, the only remaining question for researchers to address was the source of the images on which imaginary abductees, "real" abductees, and **contactees** (individuals claiming nonabduction encounters, physical and psychic, with angelic Space Brothers)—Lawson made no distinction among these groups—drew as they conjured up visions of extraterrestrials and spacecraft. In a paper delivered at a 1981 conference sponsored by the Center for UFO Studies (now the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies), Lawson declared, "The many imagery parallels among abduction analogs suggest that they have a common source. One of the most likely is the birth experience and its associated trauma . . . " (Lawson, 1981). In other words, abductees are reliving life in the womb and the terror allegedly associated with emergence therefrom.

Although the notion of birth trauma was not original with Lawson (it was suggested originally by Otto Rank, a contemporary of Freud, and picked up on by such modern figures as Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard and radical psychiatrist Stanislav Grof), its application to UFO experiences was Lawson's own inspiration. In arguing his case, he claimed not only that gray-skinned, large-headed humanoids look like fetuses but that "every human being who ever lived was—

for a few hours at least—literally shaped like a UFO. With that in mind one can speculate: perhaps the embryonic disc does manifest itself as a Jungian mandala or saucer archetype in everyone's sensibility during the embryonic stage; later it could emerge as part of a percipient's UFO-related imagery. Thus UFO witnesses might have been predisposed to perceive saucer-shaped 'somethings' in the presence of whatever psychophysical stimulus constitutes the UFO phenomenon—though what witnesses perceive may be an archetypal echo of experiential imagery from their own prenatal development." Later, as the embryo develops, it becomes oval- and then pear-shaped (Lawson notes that witnesses have described UFOs with those shapes, too), "and about day 22 the beginnings of the brain and spinal cord have formed a comparatively huge neural tube down the length of the tiny embryo." Abductees, Lawson said, have reported tunnels in UFOs.

"Many abduction/BT [birth-trauma] parallels are obvious," he said. "The fetus, taken from warmth and comfort and subjected to prolonged distress in the birth 'tunnel,' emerges into a strange world with bright lights, unconfined space, 'entities,' an 'examination,' and various sensory stimuli. Similarly, 'abductees' are levitated through a tunnel of light into a UFO's vast, brilliant interior where alien creatures examine and probe their bodies, often painfully. Additional parallels include such staples of CE-III reports as a loss of time, absurd events, womblike rooms, umbilical pain, sexual seduction, and a sense of ineffability about the experience. There are many, many others." So many, in fact, that when a questioner asked Lawson to describe an abduction story *without* "birth-trauma" elements, he could not answer. Lawson had presented his idea as "testable," but at least as he outlined it, it appeared unfalsifiable. He also failed to explain how a fetus, much less a single cell, would know what it looks like.

Even debunkers who had hailed Lawson's original claims about the supposed imaginary components of abduction stories would not endorse these sweeping speculations, which

UFOs in the 1980s

seemed at least as extraordinary as the theory that extraterrestrials are abducting people. Yet the birth-trauma hypothesis attracted a small, committed following at the fringes of ufology. Dennis Stillings, a New Age-oriented parapsychological theorist, would elaborate on Lawson's concept and add yet another extraordinary element to it: superpsychokinesis. He believes that images from birth memories may be projected into the world as "materialized psychisms"—what occultists call "thought forms."

Among the critics of Lawson's hypothesis was D. Scott Rogo, who emphatically dismissed it (along with the imaginary-abductions experiment which preceded it) as "utterly unconvincing." He wrote that the theory is "inconsistent with basic embryology. . . . The baby in no sense glides down a tunnel-like canal into the hands of welcoming figures. The infant would experience an unpleasant crushing, suffocating sensation while exiting from a totally dark environment out through the womb into a lighted area. The head of the child rests close to the opening of the cervix (i.e., a few inches), so the infant would not experience anything like a tunnel. . . . It could not even see very much." Besides these and other problems, Rogo complained that Lawson's methodology was flawed; "he never formally mapped out what should and should not be considered valid birth imagery before he undertook his survey of the literature. He seems merely to have read through several abduction accounts looking for such imagery, then reported—out of context—anything that struck him as suspicious. This procedure allows just about anything to be considered a birth image according to Lawson's very loose and unstructured criteria" (Rogo, 1985).

Another critic, folklorist Thomas E. Bullard, whose exhaustive survey of the abduction phenomenon is discussed below, found a "pretty poor" match between "birth imagery" and "actual descriptions in abduction reports. . . . A firm course of happenings in abduction reports has no parallel in birth events, since the witness enters into the ship before leaving from it, and the examination occurs inside rather than on

departure. . . . [T]unnel-like passageways appear in only 20 out of 125 ships, and these tunnels usually conform to the design of the craft rather than the patterns of anatomy. The multiplicity of the beings, their purposeful activities, interactions with the witness and role as examiner ill accord with an assumption that the witness remembers himself still unborn. And by what scale does a fetus understand its shortness while alone in the womb?" (Bullard, 1987a).

Nonetheless, one prominent proponent of a psychosocial approach to UFO phenomena, British ufologist Hilary Evans, developed a series of theories about what he called "entity encounters"—entities defined as everything from religious deities, discarnates, fairies, monsters and UFO beings—using Lawson's "persuasively demonstrated" claims as virtually his sole empirical support for the operating assumption that imaginary encounters and "real" ones are identical and that birth traumas are in part responsible for them. He writes that the encounter experience is "something like a self-administered rite of passage," including a "return-to-the-womb element." We have these experiences because inside our minds "there exists a creative, intelligent, sympathetic and understanding capability, whose function is to fabricate non-real scenes and scenarios. . . . This capability, which for the sake of convenience we may call the *producer*, may plausibly be conceived as a parallel personality to our conscious personality" (Evans, 1984).

As attempts to explain abductions by various real or hypothetical subjective mechanisms were outlined in UFO books and magazine articles, critics noted that the psychological theorizers were not themselves psychologists. The psychologists who were investigating the reports firsthand were perplexed by them and acknowledged that they could not account for them. As Hopkins continued his investigations, he consulted regularly with a number of mental-health professionals, some with international reputations. In 1985 he wrote, "I think it is fair to say that I have spent more time exploring the possibility of a psychological explanation for abduction accounts,

UFOs in the 1980s

ABDUCTION PHENOMENON (continued)

have consulted more psychiatrists and psychologists on the subject, and involved a wider array of these professionals in actual investigations than most researchers. And no psychological explanation, even tentatively, has resulted." Hopkins said that any attempt to explain abductions had also to deal with the physical evidence, such as scars and landing traces, as well as the extraordinary congruities in descriptions of the "perpetrators" and their basic *modus operandi*" (Hopkins, 1985).

The Work of Thomas E. Bullard: The most comprehensive study of the phenomenon—and the only rigorously objective one ever published—was undertaken by Thomas (Eddie) Bullard, a folklorist who had written his doctorate on UFO beliefs for Indiana University. After securing a grant from the Fund for UFO Research, Bullard collected every case he could find in the literature through 1985, some 300 cases, which he then compared and analyzed looking for common and dissimilar elements. As he remarks in the introduction to the 650-page, two-volume work that resulted from his inquiry, *UFO Abductions: The Measure of a Mystery* (1987), "If the beings look alike from case to case, if they do similar things in approximately the same order, if different witnesses report the same mental and physical effects over and over again, then abductions take on the appearance of a coherent phenomenon. The more unanimous the descriptions, the stronger our reason to believe that diverse witnesses experienced the same kind of event. . . . If differences predominate then chances are good that these narratives stem from purely personal fantasy rather than from a similar experience shared by many people." Yet even if alike, the stories may "originate in a subjective experience duplicated among independent witnesses" or perhaps "their narrators draw on other abduction stories for ideas." Bullard, who sees all these as testable hypotheses, devotes the next several hundred pages to an intensive scrutiny of the phenomenon, from its most obvious components to its most subtle.

Bullard found that abductions are a modern phenomenon, with no very specific precedent in history or folklore, that abductees comprise a wide variety of human beings, and that if "you once pass 30 without ever being abducted, you have little to worry about." The stories break down into a maximum of eight chronologically-consistent elements, beginning with "capture" and "examination" and ending with "return" and "aftermath." Bullard confirmed Hopkins' assertion that little gray men are the principal (though by no means the only) abductors. He said, "The standard being in an abduction has a bulging, hairless head often tapering to a pointed chin, large unblinking eyes, a hole or slit for a mouth, a tiny nose or holes only, and vestigial ears. With great consistency the skin is gray or pale and sunless. . . . The beings usually wear tight, featureless one-piece uniforms and expose at most only their hands and head region. . . . A leader seems in charge of the crew or at least of the witness when abductors number more than two or three, and a difference in height may single him out as distinct from the rest. The beings usually treat the witness with politeness and courtesy, but these manners are studied rather than spontaneous and hide an underlying insensitivity not altogether accountable as a result of ignorance, since these beings display some emotions of their own. Highly efficient and mission-oriented, the beings seem to sacrifice ethics for work and resort to any means at their command to manipulate the witnesses into cooperation."

Bullard uncovered other striking patterns, some never noted even by experienced UFO investigators, including "doorway amnesia"—the curious inability of abductees to remember passing through or out of the door of the UFO into which they were taken. This in itself put into question a favorite skeptical argument, one that figures prominently in Philip J. Klass' *UFO-Abductions: A Dangerous Game* (1988), which Bullard would review scathingly (*International UFO Reporter*, November/December 1987): that the similarities in abduction stories are more apparent than real, because ufologists ask hypnotized subjects leading questions, based on the investigators' knowledge of other accounts, and the

UFOs in the 1980s

subjects oblige them with the answers they are seeking. Bullard examines the issue further and determines that consciously-recalled abductions (one-third of the total) and hypnotically-recalled ones are identical in all important regards. Moreover (again contradicting a claim Klass would make), the similarities held up regardless of who the investigator or hypnotist was. Hypnotism, long said to be the "cause" of abduction "fantasies," turns out, Bullard says, to be irrelevant to it.

In the end Bullard comes to no firm conclusions, but he makes it clear that the abduction phenomenon is no trivial issue. He concludes, "At least something goes on, a marvelous phenomenon rich enough to interest a host of scholars, humanists, psychologists and sociologists alike as well as perhaps physical scientists, and to hold that interest irrespective of the actual nature of the phenomenon. If abductions are literally true, they are the greatest story of all time. If they are subjective, they offer a seldom-equalled opportunity to gain insight into human mental functions, the interaction of belief with experience, and the social transmission of ideas. . . . A darker side of human suffering lends urgency to the abduction problem, so no further arguments are necessary to justify continued and serious research."

By the late 1980s the aspect of "human suffering" to which Bullard alludes would more than anything else bring the phenomenon to the attention of mental-health professionals, many of whom were encountering abductees in their practice. Reasonable persons could disagree on the cause of abductions; no one could dispute that many who claimed to be abductees showed symptoms of acute anxiety, insecurity, even terror, which they believed had their origin in an all-too-close encounter with alien kidnappers. These were individuals who gave no evidence otherwise of suffering from delusions. Through them psychiatrists and psychologists started to realize a strange new phenomenon was making an appearance.

The Continuing Debate: In 1987 two major but

very different books, Hopkins' *Intruders* and Whitley Strieber's *Communion: A True Story*, brought the abduction phenomenon to the best-seller lists. *Communion*, from an investigator's point of view the less interesting of the two, nonetheless was the greater commercial success, a hugely popular work which sold voluminously in both hardcover and paperback and which went on, in 1989, to become a widely-panned and financially-disappointing movie.

Strieber, a fairly prominent author of Gothic and futuristic fiction, declared, in a book that read much like a novel, that he had been abducted repeatedly over the course of his life, though he had not realized this until a spectacular December 26, 1985, event which took place at his family's cabin in a remote wooded area in upstate New York. A few weeks later Strieber phoned Hopkins, who he learned lived only a few minutes' walk from Strieber's Manhattan residence, and the two met. Hopkins referred Strieber to Dr. Donald Klein of the New York State Psychiatric Institute, and with Klein conducting the hypnosis, Strieber would recount a series of traumatic encounters with little gray humanoids (whom he would call "the visitors"). These "memories" would form the basis of *Communion* and Strieber would conclude that these hidden encounters explained much of the seemingly rootless anxiety, as well as the spiritual searches, that had characterized his life.

By the time the sequel, *Transformation: The Breakthrough* (1988), was published, the humanoids, for all the fear and disruption they had caused in Strieber's life, had become benevolent entities keenly interested in Strieber's spiritual development. "I do not now find the small, gray beings terrible," he writes. "I find them useful, as work with them is an efficient way to assault the dark battlements of fear and acquire the wisdom beyond." The visitors, he contends, "must be counted the allies of our growth." This was a message few abductees, who believed their kidnappers to be coldly indifferent to their well-being, would endorse, but it was one the contactee movement, to which Strieber rapidly became a hero, enthusiastically embraced, even though it

UFOs in the 1980s

ABDUCTION PHENOMENON (continued)

was different from the traditional view of kindly, loquacious Space Brothers. Strieber is the first, though probably not the last, to wed the abductee experience to the contactee message, in what might be called a shotgun marriage.

Even before *Communion* had appeared in print, Strieber and Hopkins had become bitter enemies, quarreling over this and other, more personal matters. Soon Strieber was criticizing not just Hopkins but virtually the whole UFO-research community, which had not exactly rushed to praise his optimistic reading of the abduction experience. Strieber, now a fixture on the New Age lecture circuit, warned abductees to stay away from ufologists who, being more in love with their theories than with the realities of the visitor experience, could only mislead them and, worse, even harm them.

On its most basic level Hopkins' *Intruders* is a journalistic investigation of a number of related abduction experiences, with attendant physical and physiological evidence, reported by one family and its friends and acquaintances in suburban Indianapolis. But it was more than that; it was a radical new view of the phenomenon, one that purported to answer the *why* of the experience. According to *Intruders*, abductions occur—or so testimony by a variety of independent persons suggests—because aliens, presumably extraterrestrials, are creating a hybrid race of human-humanoids, perhaps to replenish their own exhausted genetic stock. Female abductees like "Kathie Davis" (Debra Tomey), the book's central character, may experience pregnancies (following "dreams" or other shadowy events in which they experienced paralysis and then sexual penetration either by a needlelike mechanical device or by a humanoid being) which abruptly end after a missing-time experience. Under hypnosis memories of vaginal penetration by a suctionlike mechanism emerge and the woman immediately senses that her "baby" has been taken from her. A few years later the abductee may be taken inside a UFO and presented with a child, with both human and alien features, who she is led to

believe is hers and whom she is asked to hold, as if in a bonding ritual. The child is often described as delicate or sickly and it says nothing.

Male abductees also report bizarre sexual experiences involving either intercourse, a la Villas-Boas, with what usually seem to be more-or-less-human-looking females or a kind of mechanical rape, in which a sperm sample is taken after a device has been placed over the genitals. Neither of these experiences is in any way erotic. To the contrary, both male and female abductees compare it to rape.

After listening to abductee testimony, gynecologist John Burger said the procedure being described is called laparoscopy, in which ova are removed from women for, among other purposes, the production of test-tube babies. The procedure (along with the physiological responses) was described so precisely, according to Hopkins, that Burger suspected the women had undergone such operations in normal life and incorporated them into vivid dreams. But when asked, the women denied having such experiences in their medical histories. Burger confessed to bafflement and fascination. The only explanation that made sense to him, he said, was that the events occurred as reported.

From his research Hopkins uncovered a pattern in the reports: "An individual, male or female, is first abducted as a child, at a time possibly as early as the third year. During that experience a small incision is often made in the child's body, apparently for sample-taking purposes, and then the child is given some kind of physical examination. There will often follow a series of contacts or abductions extending through the years of puberty. In some cases sperm samples will be taken from young males . . . and ova samples taken from young females. . . . In the cases in which artificial insemination is attempted, the women are apparently re-abducted after two or three months of pregnancy, and the fetus is removed from the uterus. However, it seems that some of these same women have been taken at later times during ovulation for the removal of ova from the Fallopian tubes. Why these two

UFOs in the 1980s

very different reproductive procedures have been used on some of the same women is unclear. But in a parallel way some of the male abductees who have had sperm samples taken have also been subjected at later times to a kind of involuntary sexual intercourse. There seems to be no logical reason why two different reproductive methods have been employed with both male and female abductees, but this is what the data suggests."

Hopkins' findings would be replicated by other investigators both within the UFO community (David M. Jacobs, for example) and outside (Jo Kopeland Stone). Psychological studies of abductees undertaken by the growing number of mental-health professionals involving themselves in abduction research confirmed that such perceived experiences did not grow out of pathological states. Probably the most famous psychiatrist to acknowledge publically the seriousness of the issue was Yale University's Robert Jay Lifton, who said on an April 10, 1987, *Today Show* appearance that accounts such as those outlined in *Intruders* defied explanation and deserved serious investigation. Outlandish as the stories Hopkins told seemed to be, his book received largely respectful notices, most prominently in the *New York Times Book Review* and *Kirkus Reviews* (which said that Hopkins' subjects' "uniform similarities of description of their UFO abductions and of the aliens bear a sense of faithful fact that could sway many an ironclad skeptic").

Nonetheless, these new reports were not accepted uncritically by ufologists. No one disputed the evident sincerity of abductees, but scientist Michael D. Swords spoke for a number of cautious ufologists when he wrote that for a number of reasons (which he outlined in a *MUFON UFO Journal* article) the idea of human-extraterrestrial hybridization is biologically implausible, perhaps even impossible, even given an advanced alien technology. Other critics declared that an advanced extraterrestrial race would not need to abduct great numbers of human beings even if it could accomplish human-ET hybridization, that once the basic reproductive materials had been gathered, they could be

duplicated in cosmic laboratories.

Responding to Swords, Jacobs, whose own so-far-unpublished work had uncovered patterns identical to those recounted by Hopkins, wrote that it is the "abductees who say that the babies look like a cross between the two [humans and aliens] and they continually refer to the babies as 'hybrids' or 'cross-breeds.'" In any case, he argues, who can say that an extraordinarily advanced technology could *not* find a way to effect such hybridization? "Moreover," he said, "to suggest that aliens can or cannot do something is to pass judgment on their scientific capabilities and to display a rather thorough knowledge of alien biotechnology and psychology that is not found in the evidence" (Jacobs, 1989).

As for the argument made by others that the cumbersome duplication of abductions makes no sense, Hopkins responded with an analogy: "When we on earth make a scientific breakthrough, let's say we discover an antitoxin, it's manufactured in a laboratory, it is turned out in vast quantities, it is taught in medical schools, and so forth. But when we want to learn how to ride a bicycle, each one of us has to get on a bicycle and have Daddy give us a push and teach us how to ride. That can't be bottled in a laboratory or taught in classrooms. The weird thing about the UFO phenomenon is that we seem to be in a situation where the occupants of UFOs are behaving more like people trying to learn how to ride a bicycle, one by one, than they are like someone teaching in a university, bottling the material in a laboratory and handing out samples around the universe. We're dealing with a very peculiar one-on-one situation. It really makes no sense in terms of earthly science but it may in some other way" (Clark, 1988).

The debate about the likelihood or otherwise of human-ET hybridization was clearly not to be resolved any more quickly than the debate about the general cause and reality status of abductions. By the end of the decade, however, two psychological explanations for abduction narratives were cast into doubt. The first, proposed by Philip J. Klass in a debunking book on abductions

UFOs in the 1980s

ABDUCTION PHENOMENON (*continued*)

as well as by many other critics from *The Interrupted Journey* onward, held that such stories were the product of hypnotic confabulation; Klass elaborated on the theory to suggest that abductees patterned their stories to reflect the particular personalities of the hypnotist-investigators. But Thomas E. Bullard found that abduction reports told both by those with full conscious memory (some 30 percent of the total of reports, as critics seemed not to know or acknowledge) and by those under hypnosis are identical.

"Weighed and found wanting time and again," Bullard wrote in a long study published in the *Journal of UFO Studies*, "hypnosis cannot shoulder nearly as much responsibility for abductions as the skeptics have proposed. None of their appeals to confabulation, influence by the hypnotist, and experiments with non-abductees stand up under a comparative examination. In light of these findings, the burden of proof now drops on the skeptics. They can no longer repeat their old claims as meaningful answers. For any future rebuttals the skeptics must look deeper into the phenomenon itself rather than simply deduce the hazards of hypnotic testimony from scientific studies of hypnosis, or read theoretical interpretations into abduction reports from a safe distance. The skeptical argument needs rebuilding from the ground up."

A 1989 testing of the fantasy-prone-personality hypothesis by Kenneth Ring, a University of Connecticut psychologist who is skeptical of the extraterrestrial interpretation of abduction claims, found that abductees are no more fantasy-prone than nonabductees. Another psychiatrist investigating the abduction phenomenon, Rima E. Laibow, also rejected fantasy explanations, writing that the "abductee does not seem to be involved in the reworking of personal mythologies against the canvas of the [human] race's mythology. The details and contents of the scenarios seem, upon extensive investigation, to bear little thematic relevance to the issues inherent in the life of the abductee. Intensive follow-up investigation frequently yields no thematic, archetypal, primary

process symbolic meaning to the shape or activities of the abductors and the scenario of the abduction itself. Instead, therapeutic work in these cases centers around the issues inherent in the powerlessness and vulnerability of the individual even if this were not a prominent theme in his life before the putative abduction. In other words, the customary richness of association and creativity found in the examination of dreams and other fantasy material is lacking. . . ."

By the end of the decade all that could be said for certain about the abduction phenomenon was that it had resisted conventional accounting. If no one had yet suggested a persuasive psychological explanation, at the same time even those inclined to take seriously a literalist (extraterrestrial) interpretation were having a hard time believing that alien kidnappings could be taking place on so grand a scale as the volume of reports indicated. The evidence, in the form of multiple witnesses, scars, wounds, missing time (a genuine symptom not reducible, as early critics contended, to mere "absent-mindedness"), and the extraordinary similarity of reports over time and space, was certainly suggestive though, in the absence of physical artifacts such as recovered implants, hardly conclusive. (In 1989, however, an alleged implant would be uncovered and handed over for analysis, under conditions of great secrecy, to a physicist at a prominent eastern university. Presumably his findings will be reported in 1990.) No one could be blamed for suspecting that some extraordinary new phenomenon having nothing to do with alien body-snatchers is afoot, even if no one can explain what it is. In terms of the status of the debate, at the moment the proponents seem to have the better of the argument, but the controversy is far from over and the scientific investigation of the abduction phenomenon in its broadest aspects has barely begun.

The one thing all serious inquirers could agree on was that many abductees are hurting. David M. Jacobs has coined the phrase "post-abduction syndrome" to denote the "devastating" effects of the abduction experience. Going farther than most other investigators are willing to go, he says

UFOs in the 1980s

that the "vast majority of abductees wish that their experiences had never happened and most of them live in fear that it will occur again. They suffer a variety of physical and psychological sequelae that can be so harmful it often robs them of conscious, rational control of the course of their lives" (Jacobs, 1988). This is certainly true of *some* abductees. Working with a group of 18 abductees to whom she gave psychological tests, Jo Kopeland Stone determined that three-quarters of them "appear to have no conscious fear or phobic reactions concerning their direct UFO experiences." But those who did have such reactions "appeared traumatized. . . . [T]hey evidence many of the symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress syndrome: hypervigilance, denial and repression in the face of flashbacks which are traumatizing to them, and bouts of depression" (Stone, 1988). Their obsession with the experience sometimes negatively affected their family and professional lives.

In May 1989 a small, invited group of mental-health professionals and ufologists met at Fairfield University in Connecticut to spend a weekend discussing methodological and clinical issues related to the abduction experience. The meeting, organized by Rima Laibow, led to the creation of **Treatment and Research on Experienced Anomalous Trauma (TREAT)**. In the months that followed, TREAT was plagued by internal conflict and many of the original participants, including a European aristocrat who was the major financial backer, left the group amid plans to form a similar one more to their liking. Meanwhile Laibow announced a second meeting of TREAT to be held at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in February 1990.

Despite the problems, the prospects for meaningful study of the abduction phenomenon in the 1990s appeared excellent, as ufologists, physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, scientists, and others came together to address a bizarre human experience which so far remains one of ufology's deepest mysteries.

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Aerial Anomalies International, founded on June 26, 1989, by Robert D. Boyd, former head of the investigative network of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, and announced the following October, may be the most conservative UFO organization currently in existence. Although the term "UFO" has been in circulation since the early 1950s, AAI rejects it as too liberal an interpretation of what people report.

Boyd writes, "Observations by witnesses of truly enigmatic occurrences in the sky fall into two broad categories: (1) Natural aerial phenomena and/or (2) Unknown aerial phenomena (having an apparent intelligent source). Both categories deserve serious disciplined study. It is essential that we differentiate between the two categories and classify, when possible.

"Because of this crucial need, we do not go beyond the point of referring to anomalous aerial phenomena by other names such as spaceships, flying saucers and UFOs. To do so would be equivalent to stating that we study spaceships, flying saucers and unidentified flying objects, none of which would be accurate. We use such terms only as historical and reported references, not as verified identifiable nomenclatures."

AAI has not yet announced a publication (though Boyd has authored a biographical volume about UFO researchers) or opened itself to general membership, asking only that "investigators, researchers and serious students of aerial phenomena . . . share their work and findings with us. We endeavor to make as much factual information available as possible to both our associates and . . . the public at large."

UFOs in the 1980s

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ANCIENT ASTRONAUT SOCIETY

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The Ancient Astronaut Society was incorporated in Illinois on September 14, 1973, as a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization operated exclusively for scientific, literary and educational purposes. Its founder and president, corporate attorney Gene M. Phillips, runs the organization to this day from his home in a North Shore suburb of Chicago. The organization has held conferences in the United States, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Brazil, West Germany, New Zealand and Austria. The most recent conference, held in Chicago between August 25 and 27, 1989, drew over 500 members from 15 nations. The society issues a bimonthly bulletin, *Ancient Skies*, reporting on new developments and theories. It is published in an English edition edited by Phillips and a German one edited by Erich von Däniken. Von Däniken operates the society's office in Switzerland.

Although von Däniken was not the inventor of the concept of "ancient astronauts"—the idea figures in 1950s books by George Hunt Williamson, M. K. Jessup, Desmond Leslie and others—his *Chariots of the Gods?*, published in English in 1969 and later, in 1970, in a mass-market Bantam paperback edition, was the first international best-seller on the subject of supposed extraterrestrial visitations in mankind's far past. Von Däniken's speculations about alleged archaeological evidence of space people and their superscience struck a responsive chord among many, including Phillips. He says, "Von Däniken presented challenges to the scientific community which appeared to me to be based on logic, and his explanations offered much more satisfying

answers to the questions of the origin of life and the foundation of religions than did the speculations of some scientists. It became obvious to me that a new organization was needed to investigate such matters from a completely different point of view and with an open mind, not controlled by scientists and not affiliated with any established doctrine or dogma. I wanted to afford the opportunity to interested people around the world to become actively involved in the quest for the truth about mankind's past" (Phillips, 1988).

The society hopes to establish a library and museum, publish a journal and inaugurate a professorship—a chair for ancient astronauts—at an American university. Meanwhile it sponsors regular expeditions to archaeological sites on six continents, where, Phillips says, "members may have an opportunity to examine the evidence firsthand." The "evidence," according to a statement prepared for the society by von Däniken, is everywhere, in the origins of earthly life, the emergence of intelligence, global mythology, the "vanishing of religious and mythological apparitions into 'Heaven,'" the "time-shift effects mentioned in old writings," and the "origins of the giant figures carved or drawn on the Earth's surface as if to be seen only from the air" (Phillips, 1988).

There is little overlap between the ancient-astronaut movement and ufology, even though the latter first saw print in the early UFO and contactee literature. As the ancient-astronaut movement came into its own, however, it drew few ufologists, who found von Däniken's speculations unconvincing. The first English-language, book-length debunking of ancient astronauts, Ronald Story's *The Space-Gods Revealed* (1976), prominently credited such ufologists as J. Allen Hynek and J. Richard Greenwell for their help, and Story went on to write two sympathetic books on the UFO phenomenon. The Ancient Astronaut Society's lists of speakers at conferences reveals few names likely to be familiar even to veteran ufologists. Yet society publications occasionally mention UFOs. To the extent that ufologists and ancient-

ABDUCTION PHENOMENON

1

In a field crowded with strange stories, abductions top the UFO strangeness scale. Abduction reports tell of alien entities that capture humans from their bedrooms, vehicles, or open air, transport the captives inside a UFO, and subject them to a bizarre physical examination before returning them to the capture site. Abductees seldom remember many details of their captivity but find an inexplicable period of "missing time" and a haunting sensation that something happened. These reports combine the testimony of people too credible to doubt with descriptions too fantastic to believe. For 30 years ufologists have investigated abductions, and they remain among the most hotly disputed claims in ufology.

The first abduction to receive widespread publicity came from Barney and Betty Hill, a New Hampshire couple of impeccable reputation, who drove home from a vacation trip one night in September 1961. A distant light grew nearer, enlarging into a pancake-shaped object with a row of windows. Through binoculars Barney saw figures inside and drove off in terror as one being stared down at him with compelling eyes. The object closed in, and the Hills heard a beeping sound, repeated soon after, by which time the UFO had disappeared. They reached home about dawn and later realized that the trip had taken about two hours longer than it should have. Betty suffered nightmares, and Barney's ulcers troubled him until he sought help from Boston psychiatrist Benjamin Simon.

Under hypnosis the Hills recalled the extraordinary events of their two missing hours, the time between the two sets of beeps. Entities about five feet tall with large hairless heads, gray skin, and large slanted eyes stopped the car and escorted the Hills to the landed UFO. The Hills submitted to a medical examination that included a needle in the abdomen for Betty, who also saw a star map on the wall. The leader warned the Hills to forget the experience, and their memories began to fade even as they watched the UFO take off and resumed their drive. Millions of people read the Hills's story in a 1966 book, John G. Fuller's *The Interrupted Journey* (see **Hill Abduction Case**).

Only one other little-known claim preceded the Hill case. The captive was Antonio Villas-Boas, a young Brazilian who reported in February 1958 that one night four months earlier, a UFO landed and several short beings dragged him inside to take a blood sample. An almost-human female then had sexual relations with him (see **Sex and UFOs**). This story, too sensational for the 1950s, was suppressed by the few ufologists who knew about it, until the Hill case provided a degree of confirmation.

Abduction claims remained rare in the decade after the Hill case. Nebraska police officer Herbert Schirmer recounted an abduction under hypnosis in 1967 (see **Schirmer Abduction Case**), while several cases emerged during the great wave of October 1973 (see **Pascagoula Abduction Case**). The next case to garner national publicity came from Arizona on November 5, 1975, when six woodcutters reported that a co-worker, Travis Walton, had disappeared after approaching a hovering UFO. Five days later Walton reappeared, confused and dehydrated, with fragmentary memories of small gray beings with large eyes, tall blond humans, and a vast hangarlike room full of UFOs (see **Walton Abduction Case**).

By the end of 1975 people began coming forward to report abductions old and new. One spectacular case investigated by veteran ufologist Raymond E. Fowler in 1976 concerned Betty Andreasson, a Massachusetts housewife taken from her home in 1967, with partial confirmation from her father and eldest daughter. She reported that short gray humanoids with large heads and eyes passed ghostlike through a closed door, placed her family in suspended animation, and carried her off for an examination and a journey to a strange, unearthly place. The examination included removal of a tiny object from her nostril, the first indication that the abductors inserted implants into their captives. She later recalled a lifetime of encounters. About the same time California investigators Ann Druffel and D. Scott Rogo explored 25 years of ongoing UFO experiences among a group of women, friends whose abduction experiences seemed to spread among them like a contagion. Cases from England, Australia, Europe, and Latin America affirmed that the phenomenon was not unique to North America.

By 1980 some few dozen abduction reports were published in the literature. This slender file began to swell when New York artist Budd Hopkins began the investigations that led to his seminal 1981 book *Missing Time*. The case of "Steven Kilburn" was typical among Hopkins's abductions. Kilburn was a young man with faint memories of an object in the sky and anxieties about a certain stretch of road.

Hopkins suspected that these conscious memories represented merely the tip of the iceberg, and with the help of a psychologist trained in hypnosis, an abduction scenario emerged in which short, large-eyed humanoids paralyzed Kilburn and took him inside a UFO for a physical examination. As Hopkins explored stories from other individuals with such indirect symptoms as memory loss for an hour or two, anxiety associated with a place, or emotional reaction to large-eyed animals, he uncovered a stream of abductions where other investigators felt lucky to find one or two in a decade. Whatever else abductions were, they were no longer rarities.

Abductions claimed pride of place in ufological interest during the 1980s, with the climax coming in 1987. That year Hopkins published a second book, *Intruders*, telling the story of an Indianapolis woman, "Kathie Davis," who experienced recurrent abductions throughout her lifetime. In one encounter the beings impregnated her, then returned a few months later to remove the fetus. Several years later the beings introduced her to a frail little girl, apparently half human and half alien, and told her this girl was her daughter. At the same time popular horror-fiction writer Whitley Strieber gave a gripping account of his several abductions and examinations in *Communion*, a book long on the bestseller list and graced with the cover illustration of a large-eyed alien, now so familiar that millions of people expect aliens to show this face.

If the first decade of abductions established the presence of a mystery and the second decade established its prevalence, the third decade witnessed a struggle for understanding. The reports continued to accumulate—some 300 in the literature up to 1985 nearly tripled by 1992. Several abductees turned author in the 1990s and told their own stories, while cases with multiple witnesses have occupied several key investigators. Media fascination with the subject has led to movies based on the Strieber, Walton, and Kathie Davis cases, innumerable television interviews and presentations, and a stream of advertisements, cartoons, tabloid tales, and T-shirt designs. Scholarly interest in the subject attracted Harvard psychiatrist John E. Mack, who published *Abduction* in 1994, and academic articles have appeared in the *Journal of UFO Studies* as well as in a growing number of mainstream psychological journals. Several scholarly conferences have treated the subject, culminating in 1992 with the Abduction Study Conference Held at MIT, a five-day meeting of some 150 academics, professionals, and experiencers recorded in *Alien Discussions*, a volume of proceedings some 700 pages long.

Abductees and their stories. Even with only a few cases to compare, ufologists realized that abduction reports shared striking similarities in events and descriptive content. Comparative work by Thomas E. Bullard, David M. Jacobs, and Dan Wright systematized the study of abduction content and confirmed the repetitiveness of abduction stories. How closely the proportions correspond can be seen on the next two pages in tables 1 and 2. The data are derived from Bullard's two studies—the 1987 percentages drawn from 103 high-information, high-reliability cases taken from the literature, the 1995 percentages provided by a survey of 13 abduction investigators based on their experience with some 1700 cases.

* = percentages calculated from cases that include descriptions of the appropriate category, not from the full sample of cases.

In cases where percentages do not appear, no data was available.

TABLE 1

Story Event		1987	1995
I. Capture		100%	
Restlessness, anxiety, premonition that something strange will happen		34	32
UFO appears		60	45
Vacuum effect, stillness, silence, absence of traffic		22	24
Paralysis, creeping lethargy		50	55
Missing time (loss of memory)		88	44
Full consciousness maintained		8	7
Beings appear		68	
Abductee floats or feels sensation of floating		36	37
Abductee enters craft suddenly or with momentary memory lapse		46	48
II. Examination		70	68
Abductee lies on examination table		77*	
Manual inspection (beings touch body or use handheld instruments)		37*	42
Eyelike device scans abductee		49*	
Instrumental examination (devices probe abductee's body)		34*	30
Beings take samples of blood or other bodily materials		29*	31
Reproductive examination, removal of genetic materials		24*	24
Implant inserted or removed; close attention to head		37*	45
III. Conference		46	38
Beings show abductee images of cataclysm		17*	19
Assignment of task or mission		32*	26
Warning against some human activity (e.g., environmental damage)		23*	29
IV. Tour of Ship		13	28
Visit to incubatorium, nursery			16
V. Journey or Otherworldly Journey		27	24
View of barren, desertlike, dim, or devastated landscape		30*	
View of bright, lush landscape that seems enclosed or underground		38*	
VI. Theophany (spiritual experience, observation of ritual)		9	9
VII. Return			
Beings say farewell or impart final message		23	20
Abductee sad to leave, feeling of rapture		17*	28
Abductee leaves the craft suddenly or with momentary memory lapse		33	
VIII. Aftermath		71	
Immediate or short-term aftereffects reported		48*	
Eyes irritated, watering, burning		18*	18
Dehydration, unusual thirst		11*	20
Dizziness, headache, problems with motility, balance		18*	17
Cuts, cars, puncture wounds		10*	37
Intermediate aftereffects reported		61*	
Vague anxieties, fear of specific situations (e.g., doctor's office)		15*	31
Nightmares, sleep disturbance		34*	36
Long-term aftereffects reported		63*	
Encounters with Men in Black		15*	14
Experiences with apparitions, poltergeist phenomena		33*	
ESP develops, psychic experiences increase		18*	39
Changes in interests, habits, personality, lifestyle		19*	28
Additional abductions, UFO sightings, entity encounters		55*	62

TABLE 2

Story Elements	1987	1995
Circumstances		
Taken from bedroom	23%	57%
Taken from vehicle	43	26
Abduction lasts 1-2 hours	36	43
Abduction lasts more than 2 hours	39	21
First abduction after age 35	21	14
Type of Being		
Beings are humanoid in form	78	76
Beings are short gray ("standard") humanoids	56*	66
Beings are short to average height	77*	74
Tall humanoids	23*	20
Nordic beings (tall, blond, graceful, attractive humans)	8	10
Hybrids (human-humanoid mix)		16
Monsters, oddities, robots, apes	6	7
Description of Humanoid Beings		
	83	
Head large, pear-shaped, with narrow or pointed chin	69*	74
Hairless	80	
Large eyes	84*	81
Eyes slanted, almond, "Egyptian," or wrap-around in shape	77*	
Nose is vestigial—holes only, slight protrusion, or nothing	79*	81
Ears are vestigial—holes, small structure, or nothing	74*	84
Mouth is small, lipless, a slit	94*	92
Skin is grey, pallid, white, ashen	86*	
Body build is thin, frail, lacking in musculature	62*	
Clothing is one-piece, coverall, jumpsuitlike	80*	
Behaviors of Beings		
Communicate with abductee by telepathy	83*	84
Control abductee with instructions to forget, coercive reassurances	42	48
One being serves as leader or liaison	80*	
One being (usually the leader) seems more caring than the rest	43	43
Beings behave in a cold, businesslike way toward the abductee	59	62
Beings are warm and considerate	15	14
Beings are polite and reassuring, but perhaps manipulative, insincere	53	48
The Craft		
UFO, object, or light recalled without hypnosis	73	
UFO is disk, domed, or Saturn-shaped	57*	59
Interior includes examination room	83*	86
Examination room is round, domed, smooth	84*	75
Examination room is square, wedge, or pie-shaped	16*	14
Lighting is diffuse, indirect, fluorescent	74	67
Atmosphere is chilly, damp, misty	59*	62
Examination room contains bed, table, or recliner	81*	82

ABDUCTION
PHENOMENON

* = percentages calculated from cases that include descriptions of the appropriate category, not from the full sample of cases.

In cases where percentages do not appear, no data was available.

The education of abductees in these two samples varies from high school or less to university and professional degrees. Employment ranges from unskilled labor to white-collar and professional workers. Males predominate in the 1987 sample, while the 1995 sample contains slightly more females, though the overall abductee population appears close to 50-50. Abductees appear to be a cross-section of society without the distinction of any obvious telltale characteristics. Reports come from people of all ages, from young children to the elderly, but one surprising pattern is a dropoff in the rate of abduction for individuals past age 35. Few people experience a first abduction beyond this age.

80-90% of abductions happen at night to single individuals. In the early days most reports came from people captured while they drove in remote areas, but now the most common account tells of beings intruding into the bedroom and removing the captive to a UFO. Encounters may last from 20 minutes to five days, but one to three hours is the usual duration.

A fixed sequence of events recurs from one abduction report to another. The story consists of eight possible episodes—capture, examination, conference, tour of the ship, journey or otherworldly journey, theophany, return, and aftermath. Few reports contain every possible episode, but when it appears, it usually assumes the same relative position. That is, examination precedes conference, and conference precedes otherworldly journey. Fidelity to this sequence characterizes 84 of the 103 reports in the 1987 study.

This rigid order extends to events in the capture, examination, and return episodes as well. In a sequence of escalating strangeness, the subject sees a UFO in the sky or a light streaming into the bedroom window, then notices a stillness or silence, then begins to lose volition and mental control as paralysis or uncharacteristic behaviors take over. Beings appear and escort the abductee to the craft, often with a sense of floating off the ground. Entry into the ship is frequently sudden or, often, the occasion for a momentary lapse of consciousness.

The examination begins soon after entry, as though the beings are impatient to carry it out. The captive lies on a table while a party of beings performs a manual examination by poking or touching the abductee from head to toe, with either fingers or handheld instruments. An eyelike lens or X-ray device scans the captive's body; then the beings may attach tubes or wires and collect samples of blood, skin, hair, or other bodily materials. A key element of the examination is inspection of the reproductive organs, a process that may include extraction of sperm from males and apparent removal of eggs from females by means of a needle inserted into the abdomen. Only the reproductive and neurological systems seem of interest to the examiners. They may insert or remove a tiny implant from the head or spine of abductees, and a being may stare intently into their eyes. Performance tests or staged psychodramas presenting illusory scenes may follow as an apparent way to probe human emotions and behaviors.



Examinations progress with businesslike, even ruthless efficiency. Afterwards the beings relax and sometimes converse with the captive or draw him or her into a formal conference. Sometimes informative or instructive, conferences often include a message warning of some future cataclysm such as ecological collapse, while abductees sometimes understand that they are learning to perform a future mission of an unclear nature.

The remaining shipboard episodes are much less common than examinations or conferences. The captive may tour the ship, and in the past decade these tours may include a visit to an incubatorium where fetuslike forms float in jars or tanks, or a nursery with cradles containing small, sickly babies. The beings encourage abductees to touch and hold the listless infants, or to interact with older, seemingly hybrid children. Abductees may observe an otherworldly environment, either dim and desolate or lush and green under a bright but sunless sky. On rare occasions the onboard experiences close with observation of or participation in a scene of religious, spiritual, or ritualistic significance.

Returning from the abduction usually reverses the capture, though the beings may wish the captive farewell and promise to meet again. Feelings of joy and rapture or a sadness at having to leave are common among abductees at this time. Replaced in bed, the abductee goes back to sleep; reentering his or her car, the abductee drives off. In both cases everything that happened since early in the capture sequence fades out of mind to leave only a vague and troubling impression that something strange occurred.

The aftermath of abduction divides into three stages. Immediate aftereffects last for days or weeks and are mostly physical, such as irritated eyes, unusual thirst, scooplike cuts, nausea, nosebleed, or sunburn. Intermediate aftereffects set in weeks or months later and are largely psychological, with nightmares and flashbacks common, as is an obsession to return to the abduction site or anxiety when passing such a spot. Specific situations like a doctor's office or the sight of a large-eyed animal may provoke a panic attack incomprehensible to the subject before recalling the examination room of the UFO or the large eyes of the beings. Long-term consequences begin only after months or years have passed. Abductees may change their outlook and lifestyle, often acquiring new interests, developing new skills, giving up bad habits, becoming more humane and spiritual in interactions with others. Some abductees report apparitions, **men in black**, and the development of psychic powers, while more than half of all abductees claim repeated alien encounters.

Recurrent abductions may last a lifetime, beginning in infancy and continuing into old age. The activities of these serial abductions seem geared to the life cycle, with the beings carrying on a friendly, even playful relationship with young children. Examinations are mild at this time, and encounters often include admonitions to study and learn. With the onset of puberty a harsher regimen sets in as examination becomes the focus, and a businesslike preoccupation with the genitals

continues through young adulthood, until the abductee passes the prime reproductive years. For older abductees the sense of a mission or a need to help others grows strong.

Consistency in abduction reports persists into descriptions of the craft and its occupants. When abductees observe the craft before they enter it, the typical report describes a familiar flying saucer—a circular disc thin or thick, sometimes domed or Saturn-shaped. Alternative shapes include cigar, cylinder, sphere, cube, and a delta or boomerang, but these variants are few. Abductees taken from their bedrooms may see nothing more than light pouring through the window.

The interior includes an examination room and sometimes a conference room or lecture hall, an incubatorium or nursery, and a control room or engine room. Furnishings are sparse, and no one reports living quarters for the crew. By far the largest number of abductees see an examination room, usually circular with a domed ceiling and smooth surfaces without sharp corners, though on rare occasions this room has a wedge or “pie slice” shape. Lighting comes from indirect sources, as though the walls or ceiling are fluorescent, though a bright light from a specific source may shine in the abductee’s face and prevent close inspection of the room. It is often chilly, with a damp, misty, or heavy atmosphere. These rooms may contain equipment stored against the walls or a scanner attached to an armlike extension, but the only noteworthy item of furniture is an examination table or bed. These tables are nearly universal and usually appear one to a room, but in rare instances abductees have reported as many as 250 in a single chamber.

The most common occupants are humanoid beings of short stature, from two and a half to five feet tall, with a bulging hairless cranium, narrow jaw, and gray skin. Enormous elongated eyes described as catlike or “wrap-around” dominate the face, while the other features are unremarkable—a narrow, lipless slit for a mouth, and only holes or vestigial structures for nose and ears. These beings have a frail build and dress in a one-piece jumpsuit or uniform, often so tight-fitting the beings appear nude. They communicate with the abductee by telepathy and show no signs of gender differences.

These “standard” gray humanoids appear in most abduction crews, but other types also man the ship. Taller humanoids similar to the standard grays seem to serve as leaders or examiners while the shorter beings perform menial duties. Variants on the humanoid type include “reptiles” or “praying mantis” forms in a few cases. In other reports more human-looking occupants appear, sometimes entirely human, sometimes hybrids, though a more distinctive type is the “Nordic,” a tall, blond, blue-eyed entity of beautiful appearance and friendly demeanor, common in British reports but rare in the American sample. Monsters, robots, and bizarre creatures prove quite scarce in abduction reports.

The humanoids usually behave in a manner that leaves abductees feeling like guinea pigs. Emotions are scarce among these beings, and any politeness or consideration they express is usually manipulative in purpose, part of the effort to

coax the captive along and complete the examination with speed and efficiency. Only Nordics and the leader humanoids ever strike abductees as genuinely warm or considerate.

Strange sensations envelop abductees and lead to uncharacteristic behaviors suggestive of elaborate mental controls. As the UFO and beings approach at the onset of capture, abductees become passive and lose the will as well as the ability to resist. They compare the feeling to stupor, euphoria, or that of being "on Valium," but by any name this condition means the beings take complete control. A premonition or restlessness may precede the first visible signs of impending capture, while some people find themselves lured or guided into a remote area against their will. If the beings want to take only one individual from a household or vehicle, they may "switch off" the other people, leaving them immobilized and unconscious during the abduction of the target subject. Paralysis and lethargy are common sensations throughout the abduction experience. The beings exert this control with penetrating, hypnotic eyes, sometimes with repeated instructions, at other times with a mere touch. A touch to the head can also relieve pain during examination procedures. During the latter stages of the abduction, the beings may instruct their captive to forget, but with or without such instructions, a memory lapse ("missing time") steals away recollections of the encounter as it comes to an end.

Several surreal physical effects also cluster around the experience. Abductees seldom walk aboard the ship. More often they float over the ground in the company of escorts, or rise toward the craft in a beam of light. Leaving the house sometimes includes passing through closed doors or solid walls. Illusory scenes may appear to abductees while on board, and the encounter seems to take place inside a vacuum, with all natural and manmade sounds ceasing and even traffic disappearing or passers-by taking no notice (see **Oz Factor**).

What are abductions? One effort to explain abduction accepts it as a literal experience; another attempts to reduce it to conventional terms. Between these two extremes lies an imaginative profusion of speculations over the nature and purpose of this phenomenon. The literalists list their reasons to take these claims seriously:

(1) Abductees are credible people. They are ordinary, to all appearances normal and highly functional individuals who tell their stories with sincere conviction.

(2) Most abductees have no motive to deceive. Few seek publicity, and most prefer to avoid it; in fact they risk their jobs, reputations, and social relationships to report such experiences.

(3) Children describe key elements of the abduction experience even when too young to have fallen under media influence.

(4) Psychopathology has no answer for the phenomenon. No known mental aberration accounts for these reports, and abductees score within normal ranges on the usual psychological scales. The only distinctive characteristics of abductees are



those related to post-traumatic stress disorder, a condition found among victims of abuse and emotional shock but known to originate only from actual experience.

(5) Multiple witnesses report some abductions, and their descriptions corroborate or complement one another.

(6) Physical evidence in the form of ground traces, body marks, and disappearing pregnancies confirms the reports.

(7) The reports maintain a consistency of sequence and content over time and distance. For all the Hollywood imagery, the variety of science-fiction plots, and the sheer potential for creative fantasy inherent in a theme as bizarre as alien abduction, the fact remains that abductees tell curiously impersonal and unimaginative stories. The abductee is not the hero of his own tale, rather he is a victim, the passive pawn in a drama so devoid of idiosyncratic features the reports interchange with little difference but the captive's name. A story that begs for elaboration and alteration receives little. This stability sets abduction reports apart from urban legends or personal fantasies and suggests that diverse individuals share a similar experience.

The literalists' favorite explanation for abductions is the **extraterrestrial hypothesis (ETH)**—aliens arrive in spaceships to examine humans and deploy "magical" technology to accomplish this purpose. In the early days the "tagged bear" analogy seemed appropriate. Curious visitors surveying life on earth could hardly ignore human life and might drug, examine, and tag specimens in much the same way that humans study wildlife. As the number of cases burgeoned, the credibility of abduction as a purely scientific enterprise diminished in proportion. How many examinations did these aliens need to understand human biology? Budd Hopkins and David M. Jacobs fostered a darker vision when they noted that hints like preoccupation with the reproductive system, the gathering of genetic materials, rejection of the elderly, and images of sterility or a dying planet converge to indicate a singleness of purpose. These aliens seem bent on gathering genetic material from captives numbering perhaps in the millions, and using the DNA to create hybrid beings apparently on an industrial scale. The ultimate purpose of the project and fate of the hybrids remain unknown, but the relationship between aliens and humans is one-sided; the aliens exploit us as a resource for their own ends, indifferent to our well-being and dignity.

An opposing interpretation among literalists stresses educational and spiritual dimensions of the experience and finds personal as well as collective transformation to be the ultimate goal of abduction. Psychologist R. Leo Sprinkle recognizes an educational cycle through a lifetime of UFO encounters, beginning with preparation in childhood, advancing to initiation through intensive contacts in young adulthood, and culminating in service for the good of humanity during maturity. If the process is sometimes unpleasant, the goal is benevolent as the aliens guide us toward an enlargement of compassion and concern, a metamorphosis of planetary persons into cosmic citizens. Whitley Strieber acknowledges the terror and pain of



the experience, but he also senses communion with a larger reality. For him the visitors are "allies of our growth," concerned to rebuild rather than destroy us. John Mack sees changes of consciousness and personal transformation as fundamental consequences of abduction. The beings "offer the possibility of openings to an inclusive, more expansive worldview that is powerfully internalized by many abductees."

Some ufologists follow the mental and spiritual dimensions of the phenomenon far enough to leave the nuts-and-bolts UFO behind. These researchers remain literalists in the sense that they accept physical effects as part of abduction, but they replace the conventional ETH with concepts borrowed from Jungian psychology and theories of parapsychical realities. According to Michael Grosso, "The 'visitors' take on many guises and disguises. . . . Forms familiar from folklore and mythology, they strike me as too volatile, symbolic, and archetypal in character to be taken as aliens from the stars." Dennis Stillings writes, "The putative ETs have all the earmarks of human psychic components in symbolic form, which are in the process of manifesting in the psychic economy of a person undergoing a psychological transformation of a typical sort—perhaps that very transformation traditionally referred to as 'rebirth'."

The parapsychical theorists envision a world of unfamiliar dimensions, encompassing many more strange phenomena than UFOs alone. Jacques Vallee in *Passport to Magonia* (1969) argues that the fairies of folklore shared much in common with UFO entities, including a habit of kidnapping humans for reproductive purposes. He proposes some vast, obscure intelligence that reconditions humans by presenting us with otherworldly phenomena to shake up the intellectual status quo and force us to think in different ways. UFO beings belong to this sequence of appearances, each manifestation assuming an appropriate cultural guise and adapting to current fashions of belief, but all related under the skin and all subversive of our everyday understanding. Psychologist Kenneth Ring suggests that persons with experience-prone personalities tap into an alternative universe or imaginal realm, a place as real as the everyday world but hidden to the conscious mind. Often visited by shamans and psychics, this realm opens to less gifted individuals when they enter altered states of consciousness, such as the quasi-hypnotic state associated with abduction or the mortal distress surrounding near-death experiences. For the duration of this opening, the symbolic, disorienting content of this otherworld floods into the experiencer's awareness and reconfigures his or her consciousness. Still other theorists reorient this otherworld from external to internal sources and identify it with the unconscious mind.

Wherever they map its source, the paranormalists agree that the changes implied in UFO encounters arrive in the nick of time. Humanity has become a self-endangered species and faces a crisis of transformation. Says Mack, "We are a species out of harmony with nature, gone berserk in the indulgence of its desires at the expense of other living beings and the earth that has given us life."

Abductions bring a message urgent with apocalyptic themes. Our wasteful, polluting ways imperil life on earth, ourselves included, but we ignore the threat. Enter into our consciousness the imagery of pallid, sickly aliens from a barren, devastated planet to forewarn us of our own future. Yet abductions are more than warnings; they are also agents of change. Examination symbolizes the sickness of mankind and the need to heal, as well as the painful, perilous process of ego death necessary for rebirth. Hybridization, whether literal or symbolic, personifies the unification of alien and human, the fusion of separate states into one. Abductions are strong medicine for the collective psyche, an active force that compels all mankind to expand its awareness and embrace all living things in a fellowship of cosmic wholeness.

The skeptical perspective. Criticisms of the case for abduction and its various interpretations have stemmed from ufologists and skeptics alike. The paranormal hypotheses remain popular for their explanatory power but never gain much leverage to move researchers toward a consensus. These theories remain speculative, dubious, untested and untestable, grand gestures that never engage the details of evidence or show much reason to prefer one interpretation over another.

A more substantive debate surrounds the seven points of evidence cited as the best case for a genuine abduction mystery. The physical proof an abduction claim demands has never come to hand. No photograph or videotape has caught the aliens in action; alleged implants recovered from the bodies of abductees have turned out to be conventional or ambiguous. Everyone acquires body scars over a lifetime, and even scooplike marks are too vague to be convincing. Soil traces and ground markings are equally indefinite. The claim of stolen fetuses would seem to offer the best hope for verification, but the claims remain numerous while the documentation remains nonexistent. One abduction report with a missing-fetus claim unraveled under investigation by a veteran ufologist, and two medical doctors sympathetic to abductions explored the claims but found no support for them. In a few cases a witness saw a claimant at home asleep during the time of a supposed abduction.

Lacking physical proof, the case for abduction depends on the anecdotal evidence of abductees. Though numerous and diverse, these people deviate from the psychological norm in several suggestive ways. One group demonstrated artistic and creative abilities along with weaknesses in self-identity; another group reported abuse or neglect as children, dissociative skills, and a proneness to paranormal experiences other than UFOs. Abductees may in fact have psychological distinctions that predispose them to vivid fantasy or odd subjective experiences, despite their appearance of normality. The testimony of children in support of abduction carries little weight, given the possibility that their parents have planted ideas or that the investigator has led them to confirm his or her expectations.

Even the consistency of abduction stories is far from perfect. Abductees do not produce carbon-copy stories to begin with, and over the years some systematic changes have appeared. Descriptions of the beings have standardized into the

familiar gray humanoid, the messages have exchanged the nuclear threat for more up-to-date fears about ecological catastrophe, and elements like the hybrid children entered the reports only after Hopkins introduced the idea in 1987. National differences appear in the sample, with British reports rich in Nordic beings and South American abductions more likely than their North American counterparts to report monsters.

If the positive case for abduction proves weaker than it first appears, skeptics build a case of their own to reduce the apparent mysteries of the phenomenon to conventional terms:

(1) Anecdotal evidence is unreliable. Even honest people are subject to error and self-deception no matter how convinced they feel.

(2) Not all abductees are honest. Some seek publicity, recognition, or profit through **hoaxes** or fantasies.

(3) Many abductees possess a fantasy-prone personality, having exceptional ability to create imaginative narratives and mistake their fictions for truths.

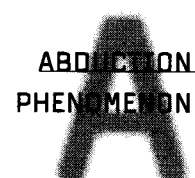
(4) Most abduction accounts emerge under hypnosis. Students demonstrate that memories recovered by hypnosis mingle truth and fantasy, while hypnotized subjects are highly suggestible and confabulate a story borrowing cues from the investigator.

(5) Media and cultural influences provide all the necessary raw materials for an abduction story.

(6) Abduction claims are implausible, unfeasible, and against everything we know. For instance, aliens that breathe our air with impunity contradict the principles of adaptive evolution, while flotation and passage through solid walls belong in ghost stories rather than in credible accounts of alien visitation.

Debunker Philip J. Klass disputes some famous abduction reports on a case-by-case basis. He explains the Walton claim as a hoax inspired by a television movie of the Hill abduction, aired a suspicious two weeks before the logger disappeared, and by the need of a logging crew to excuse its failure to meet schedule on a work contract. Contradictions in the Pascagoula case lead him to brand it a hoax as well. The Hill case proves to be a tissue of truth and fantasy, with Jupiter responsible for the initial UFO sighting and Betty's nightmares the source of the encounter story she and Barney told under hypnosis. Other people claim abductions out of the age-old motives of money or fame.

Few doubters insist all abductees are liars but see them rather as fluent fantasizers, members of that fraction of the population with exceptional abilities to internalize a theme like abduction and spin from it a personal fantasy vivid enough to delude both self and others. Readily hypnotizable and capable of dissociation, deep concentration, and role-playing, these people possess a fantasy-prone personality. An inspection of biographical data for 152 abductees found 87% did



indeed show at least one strong marker of fantasy-proneness. Believing their own creations, people who fantasize abductions then step forward to report them and become the self-selected purveyors of this fiction.

Dissociation goes hand in hand with such key features of the abduction experience as periods of amnesia, anxiety, false pregnancy, sleep paralysis, and sensations of a strange presence. An abusive childhood promotes dissociative skills, and abuse might also lead to screen memories, in this case with the trauma of childhood sexual abuse deflected from family members onto impersonal aliens as a way of coping with a very real form of betrayal. Other strange but conventional experiences that might feed abduction fantasies are sleep paralysis and hallucinations associated with entering sleep and awakening.

Critics have targeted the hypnotic techniques of abduction investigators for some of the harshest condemnation. Hypnosis helps reconstruct rather than recover memories, according to experts, but in the process it distorts recollections and debases them with falsehoods until little semblance remains of what really happened. With abduction investigators largely untrained in hypnosis and committed to a specific agenda, they lead their subjects to combine suggestions, fantasies, and prior knowledge into pseudomemories of an abduction. Hypnosis seals the fantasy with a sense of conviction and creates trauma where none really existed. An experiment with hypnotized non-abductees confirmed that subjects could tell a story that matched "genuine" abduction reports to a surprising degree. Interrogations including hypnosis recover past life and future life memories, dubious recollections of childhood sexual abuse and satanic ritual abuse. Accusations stemming from recovered memories have led to several sensational trials and recognition of a false memory syndrome created by the confabulation of pliant subjects with overzealous investigators. With similar methods in use, why accept abduction and reject the rest?

Skeptics are equally anxious to point out that abduction stories are familiar cultural baggage and contain nothing new. The whole story from its broad outline to its obscure details traces to widespread cultural beliefs and literature. Well-known 1950s movies such as *Invaders from Mars*, *Earth Versus the Flying Saucers*, *This Island Earth*, and *Killers from Space* introduce familiar abduction motifs like the dying planet, physical examination, domed interior, thought control, and implanted devices. In fact, all major abduction themes and images appear time and again in the science-fiction magazines of the 1920s and 1930s. The antecedents extend backwards into folklore, mythology, and religion, where diminutive supernatural beings are commonplace as fairies or demons, visits to enclosed otherworldly places for ordeals similar to examinations are frequent, and the supernatural lapse of time in fairyland or the transvective flight of witches through the air parallels missing time or flotation in abduction stories. Proponents of such **psychosocial hypotheses** argue that these cultural influences stock the abductee's memory and surface in dreams or under prodding by investigators to create the abduction story.

The triumph of uncertainty. If the case in favor of abduction teeters and creaks under close examination, similar inspection proves the skeptical structure to be just as ramshackle. Hoax explains some reports, but others weather competent investigations. Comparison of reliable versus unreliable reports—those investigated and seemingly legitimate as opposed to those never investigated or clearly false—betrays a notable contrast. The “bad” reports scatter further in their variety of descriptions and sequence of events than the “good” reports, meaning that the least reliable reports show signs of imaginative license where “good” reports reveal a coherency less compatible with creative origins.

A good example of resistance to criticism is the Hill case. If Barney borrows the idea of onboard experiences from Betty’s dream, the problem remains that he fails to copy her story. In fact, he complements her description by recounting his separate and independent experiences. Martin Kottmeyer recognizes an antecedent of the wrap-around eyes of the aliens in an entity appearing in “The Bellerio Shield” episode of *The Outer Limits*. What makes this identification so persuasive is the fact that the episode aired just two weeks before Barney underwent hypnosis and described the aliens as having elongated eyes. This close proximity between a cultural influence and the introduction of an abduction motif seems striking at first glance, but is less persuasive in the context of Barney’s earlier, conscious recall when he remembered a being with compelling eyes looking down at him from a UFO. If he saw the *Outer Limits* episode (which his widow Betty says he did not), he might have borrowed the wrap-around eyes as a metaphor, but his preoccupation with the staring entity and its eyes began years before this television image could have influenced him.

In most other efforts to establish media or cultural influences, standards of evidence are most conspicuous by their absence. After fishing expeditions amid folklore, science-fiction literature, and movie imagery, psychosocial theorists satisfy themselves to draw isolated motifs out of context, select favorable examples but ignore the rest, and never worry whether the obscurity of sources limits the likelihood that an abductee might have seen them. Movies are a plausible source because they enjoy mass exposure, but why abductees choose the same narrow selection of movie elements when Hollywood has offered so much variety remains an unanswered question. Skeptics have also trumpeted Steven Spielberg’s 1977 film *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* as the source of the standard gray humanoid; yet Walton, Andreasson, and many other abductees reported this form prior to 1977.

Uncertainties cloud the arguments for fantasy-proneness and hypnotic confabulation as well. Standardized tests fail to identify abductees as a group having above-average fantasizing abilities, or any psychopathological characteristics. Some abductees are psychologically different, many are not, but they all tell similar stories. For all the good reasons to beware of hypnosis, its influence on the abduction story seems intangible. The content of stories recovered through hypnosis differs little from stories recovered by spontaneous recall; predictions that the personality or opinions of the investigator should influence story content have not

borne out. Those experiments with hypnotized non-abductees drew a different description of the beings from each subject, whereas "real" abductees describe gray humanoids most of the time.

Any final weighing of the evidence must settle with uncertainty. Claims of abduction remain fantastic and unverified by any convincing physical evidence, even though such evidence should be forthcoming. Issues of sample bias, false memory, and the psychological profile of abductees still demand adequate investigation as possible sources of conventional solutions. On the other hand, abduction stories remain more consistent than we would expect, given how readily narrators improvise on folk narratives such as urban legends, varying them with exuberance even when media sources stress only a single version. A comparable burst of creativity never strikes abduction reports. The multiple-witness cases curl up another question mark at the end of deliberation about this phenomenon, leaving this most bizarre of UFO phenomena where it began—still a mystery in need of a solution.
—Thomas E. Bullard

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ADAMSKI, GEORGE (1891-1965)

Contactee George Adamski was born in Poland on April 17, 1891. When he was one or two, his parents emigrated to Dunkirk, New York. The young Adamski received little formal schooling and educated himself, influenced by his parents' strong religious beliefs.

By the 1930s Adamski had become a minor figure on the California occult scene, founding the Royal Order of Tibet and lecturing on "Universal Law." His pupils began to call him "professor." When he took up residence in Palomar Gardens, on the southern slope of Mount Palomar, and set up a small observatory, "Professor" Adamski was sometimes mistaken for a professional astronomer associated with the celebrated observatory a few miles away.

In 1949 Adamski published a science-fiction novel, *Pioneers of Space: A Trip to the Moon, Mars and Venus*, under his own by-line (the book was actually written by his secretary Lucy McGinnis; all of Adamski's books would be ghostwritten). It would come back to haunt him in later years, when critics pointed out that portions of it bore a striking resemblance to subsequent claims he would make of interplanetary contacts and travels.

According to Adamski's account, as he and associates were watching a meteor shower on the evening of October 9, 1946, they spotted a "gigantic space craft" hovering overhead. Some weeks later he and customers at the restaurant at which he worked discussed the sighting, and a military officer who overheard the conversation assured Adamski that the object was indeed from another world. The following summer, when reports of "flying saucers" attracted wide attention and comment, Adamski saw 184 UFOs pass overhead in squadrons of 32 each. On another occasion Adamski produced two pictures of alleged spaceships said to have been taken through his six-inch telescope.

Adamski gave his first lectures on flying saucers in 1949. In them he made fantastic claims, such as that government and science had established the exis-

number of the latter kinds of reports, and since the 1950s many comparable ones have been recorded. Most have resisted explanation even after intense study.

It is cases like these (as well as others involving physical traces associated with close encounters) that will eventually settle the UFO question, since by now it is clear that no amount of eyewitness (a.k.a. "anecdotal") testimony – which by now exists in staggering quantities – is going to persuade those in position to render the judgments to which all scientists will adhere. And it will probably take a new generation of elite scientists who, not having staked their positions in concrete, will be able to take not only a fresh look but the vital step of seeing to it that funding for real scientific inquiry is at last made available for UFO research.

UFO abduction and other fascinating reports

Nonetheless, the eyewitness testimony is what has always gripped popular attention, for understandable reasons. As stories go, it is hard to beat tales of grotesque, gray-skinned humanoids who abduct people and do odd things to their bodies inside UFOs. This characterization of them is not intended to poke fun at such reports, some of which are genuinely puzzling, nor at the real trauma some "abductees" suffer. But abduction reports, like other high-strangeness narratives, make the most extraordinary sorts of claims in support of which they produce only circumstantial evidence. Such evidence, which never rises above the consistent-with-the-hypothesis variety, ranges from unaccounted-for marks on abductees' bodies to patterns in the data that appear explainable neither by chance nor by cultural contamination. Few knowledgeable investigators, whether ufologists or mental-health professionals, doubt that the abduction phenomenon is an enigma; neither would many argue that the evidence so far available is sufficient to do anything more than keep the question open.

Abductions are just one variety of a class of reports the late astronomer/ufologist J. Allen Hynek called "close encounters of the third kind." Such reports first surfaced in press accounts at the very beginning of the modern UFO era, in the summer of 1947, and eventually forced themselves on reluctant investigators who, even if sympathetic to the hypothesis of alien visitation, felt discomforted by these fantastic, even absurd-sounding accounts. In due course it became evident that witnesses to humanoids were for the most part no different from witnesses to safely distant nocturnal lights or daylight discs. Thus, where anecdotal reports were concerned, there was no *prima facie* reason to take the former any less seriously than the latter.

Furthermore, witnesses in the thousands, from bus drivers to nuclear physicists, were insisting that the "flying saucers" they saw looked like craft (structured vehicles built by somebody); that these craft's performance characteristics indicated a technology far in advance of anything known on Earth; and that these objects had windows, presumably so that somebody inside could look out. In short, if appearances were to be believed, these were extraterrestrial spacecraft with occupants.

And what of those occupants? In the sighting reports investigators deemed credible, they were, with practically no exceptions to speak of, humanoid in appearance – as indeed intelligent, technology-building extraterrestrials would almost certainly be. This is a conclusion shared by anti- and pro-UFO scientists alike. For example, skeptic John L. Casti writes (in *Paradigms Lost: Tackling the Unanswered Mysteries of Modern Science* [1989]) that “bilateralism and the presence of large ganglia of nerves near the front of the body and close to the primary sense organs are essential characteristics of intelligent creatures in the convergent evolution scheme of things.... [O]ne comes up with an ETI whose physical forms would be remarkably humanoid; in fact, remarkably like the kinds of forms reported by people who are abducted by the occupants of UFOs.” And proponent Michael D. Swords, developing a similar argument but in much greater detail, contends that viewed in the context of current astronomical knowledge and evolutionary theory, ufology’s extraterrestrial hypothesis (abbreviated ETH), including witnesses’ reports of humanoids, is “eminently defensible and scientifically respectable.” (Dr. Swords’s case is developed at length in “Science and the Extraterrestrial Hypothesis in Ufology,” *Journal of UFO Studies* 1 [1989] and in “Does the ETH Make Sense?”, *International UFO Reporter*, September/October 1992.)

Ufology as science

Seen in this light, the UFO phenomenon looks like something science can deal with. Even those who insist that eyewitness testimony alone is insufficient to validate so fantastic a notion as extraterrestrial visitation cannot fail to wonder why, given the array of alien forms witnesses could have borrowed from popular culture, they so persistently report exobiologically credible entities. Beyond this suggestive testimony is intriguing hard evidence (radar trackings, soil samples from landing sites, photographs, and films) of a sort consistent with the hypothesis of anomalous, technologically advanced craft in the Earth’s atmosphere. One does not have to be a crackpot to deem it at least possible that somebody from somewhere far away may be calling on us.

If this seems sensible enough, be advised that this is not the end of it. Some phenomena associated with UFOs take us over the edge of reality and into a void of unreasonableness and surreality. Men in black – the not-quite-human, not entirely coherent agents who allegedly threaten some UFO witnesses and investigators, or at any rate babble at them, and who navigate the landscape of the twilight zone in shiny black Cadillacs – seem more demonological than ufological, and about as easy to believe in as fairies and merfolk.

There is also what British ufologist Jenny Randles has called the “Oz factor,” recorded in a surprising number of UFO-sighting accounts; according to Randles, it is the “sensation of being isolated, or transported from the real world into a different environmental framework ... where reality is slightly different.” For example, a witness may observe a spectacular UFO display on a well-traveled highway during rush hour and note the utter absence of other traffic. In at least one instance, of particular interest because the percipient was himself an academic

UFOs in the 1980s

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BULLARD, THOMAS EDDIE (1949-)

Thomas E. Bullard, a folklorist and one of the most widely respected figures in ufology, is best known as the author of a massive comparative analysis of abduction reports, the two-volume *UFO Abductions: The Measure of a Mystery* (1987), based on a study financed by the Fund for UFO Research. *UFO Abductions* is the only rigorously objective book-length examination of this controversial phenomenon ever published. Bullard's Ph.D. dissertation was titled *Mysteries in the Eyes of the Beholder* (1982) and examined UFO phenomena from a folkloric point of view. He also compiled *The Airship File* (1982), a comprehensive collection of late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century newspaper articles reporting apparent UFO sightings. His articles on the abduction phenomenon and other UFO questions have appeared in *Flying Saucer Review*, *MUFON UFO Journal*, *Magonia*, *International UFO Reporter*, and *Journal of American Folklore*.

Born in North Carolina in 1949, Bullard received his undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his masters and Ph.D. (1982) in folklore studies from Indiana University.

Over his years of research, Bullard developed an opinion frequently encountered among ufologists—an underlying "faith" that UFO reports can be explained in a conventional manner juxtaposed beside a well-considered conclusion that some cannot. Reflecting on his research, he says, "One conclusion I feel certain about is the absence of anything unknown during the airship waves. Here is a cautionary tale to show that people can believe they saw something out of the ordinary, when in fact they saw only Venus or fire balloons. The power of social and cultural expectation to

influence reports is beyond doubt, and I suspect that most UFO reports can be explained this way. Yet like J. Allen Hynek, I cannot dismiss that residuum of detailed, well-observed, well-investigated reports that continue to stand despite all efforts to explain them.

"Abductions belong to this category, but they combine a bedeviling mixture of implausible, surrealistic elements with seemingly physical events. As a folklorist, I am impressed by the many parallels between abductions and fairylore, shamanic initiations, near-death experiences and the like. I could easily conclude that these parallels 'prove' a common and probably psychological origin. But as a folklorist, I am also impressed by the consistency of the accounts, even when variation is the hallmark of folklore. If parts of a story can vary, they probably will. The parts in an abduction story do not, so I have little confidence that these narratives belong to oral tradition.

"My personal faith is that abductions are probably psychological in origin, but the evidence I have seen—the consistencies, physical evidence, multiple-witness cases—leave me with no choice but an objective event for the answer. The explanation of extraterrestrial activity serves the evidence well enough in most cases, so I have to give this explanation serious consideration. Questions of the ultimate nature and purpose of these visitations hold only secondary interest to me, as long as the answers rely on speculation rather than evidence for their substance. Piling one mystery on top of another just doesn't appeal to me, and I prefer the less imaginative course of following the evidence where it leads, with only short excursions beyond it."

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UFOs and the 1980s

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JACOBS, DAVID MICHAEL (1942-)

David Michael Jacobs is an American historian who has written extensively on UFO-related matters. His Ph.D. dissertation in history, *The Controversy Over Unidentified Flying Objects, 1946-1972*, was the second ever written on the subject. It formed the basis of Jacobs' 1975 book *The UFO Controversy in America*, considered a classic work in the literature. He has spent the last several years investigating the abduction phenomenon and has completed a book-length manuscript, *Secret Life: The Structure and Meaning of UFO Abductions*, on his findings.

Born in Los Angeles in 1942, Jacobs got his B.A. in history from UCLA in 1966. His graduate degrees in history (M.A., 1968; Ph.D., 1973) were from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He is married and is the father of two young boys. He is an associate professor at Temple University, where he teaches the only regularly-scheduled undergraduate course in America on the UFO phenomenon. He is the first person to give a paper on the abduction phenomenon to a scientific organization, the Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE), when it met at Cornell University in 1988. His articles on ufological issues appear frequently in the *MUFON UFO Journal* and *International UFO Reporter*.

He says, "The UFO phenomenon is the abduction phenomenon. Sightings of the outside shells of objects were early indications of the objects' validity. The meaning of what was happening inside the UFOs eluded researchers until the importance of abductions became evident. Abductions have cracked open the UFO mystery like a cosmic egg. Inside we see alien life, the creation of bizarre life, and the

exploitation of human life. We did not expect to discover this. The majority of societal theorizing about contact with extraterrestrials foresaw initially tentative but friendly meetings of aliens and humans for an interchange of ideas. Some darker-thinking science-fiction authors imagined evil aliens using humans as food or bent on death and destruction. The abduction scenario does not reveal either of these scenarios. But it is unfortunately closer to the latter than to the former.

"The content of abductions make this evident. Victims are rendered without will or physical control. They are subjected to a series of mental, physical, and reproductive procedures calculated to satisfy an alien agenda. They are then made to forget immediately what has happened to them. This occurs again and again over the course of their lives from childhood through adulthood, as if the aliens were using their bodies as a physiological mine from which they can remove the ore at will.

"Abductees described activity not far removed from human treatment of animals needed for medical and scientific purposes. It is the animal basis of our lives, rather than the rich tapestry of our society and culture, that is the subject of fascination and exploitation.

"The effect on the abductees can be severe. They desperately wish that it had not happened and that it will cease. Their lives are diminished, disrupted, and sometimes ruined. They find no metaphysical or tangible benevolence in their predicament.

"The entire abduction phenomenon is depressing. It was not this way before. There was intellectual sport in studying sightings and speculating about the purposes for their appearance. There was even a degree of comfort in not knowing what it was all about; our ignorance precluded our fear. But research into UFO sightings advanced as far as was possible. All reports that did not involve occupants simply heaped on monotonous confirmation. The occupant reports had an amazing, yet ingenuous, quality about them—aliens

UFOs and the 1980s

JACOBS, DAVID MICHAEL (continued)

seemingly avoiding human beings and going about their business. Without knowledge of the occupants' motivations and purposes, theorizing about them was a mind game innocently played.

"Now we have knowledge. Now the UFO phenomenon has assumed the realistic dimensions that early and incomplete abduction material only hinted at. Now I am frightened."

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JAL SIGHTING

One of the most publicized UFO encounters of the 1980s occurred on November 17, 1986, over Alaska. The witnesses were the captain, first officer and flight engineer of a Japanese Airlines Boeing 747 cargo plane on a flight from Paris to Tokyo.

At 5:10 p.m. local time, as the aircraft, at 35,000 feet, was passing over northeastern Alaska, Capt. Kenju Terauchi, a veteran pilot, noticed some unusual lights to his left and about 2000 feet below him. He decided that they were probably from military aircraft on a special mission. But a few minutes later, when the position of the lights had not changed, suggesting they were

keeping pace with the 747, Terauchi and his crew began to suspect that they might be something out of the ordinary.

As Terauchi completed a left turn, the lights abruptly were directly in front of the aircraft, and much closer. Now they resembled two pairs of rectangular-to-square arrays of "amber and whitish" lights, with "jets" pulsating in the direction of a dark vertical panel at the center of each object. After several seconds the jets ceased shooting fire and became "small circles of lights" like "numerous exhaust pipes." The two UFOs, between 500 and 1000 feet in front of the 747, were "about the same size as the body of a DC-8 jet" (Maccabee, 1987). After about five minutes the objects positioned themselves side by side.

At 5:19 Terauchi contacted Anchorage flight control to ask if it was tracking anything above the aircraft. It wasn't. A conversation ensued in which efforts were made to identify the lights. The transmission, however, was sometimes garbled. As the captain reported later, "The VHF communications, both in transmitting and receiving, were extremely difficult for 10 to 15 minutes while the little ships came close to us and often interfered with communication from Anchorage."

The Anchorage controller notified the Air Force at Elmendorf Regional Operational Control Center (ROCC) and asked it to try to see what its radar was picking up.

Meanwhile the two lights moved off to the left. Terauchi saw an object, apparently a third UFO, some seven or eight miles away. The two other, smaller lights were flying toward it. He was able to pick up the distant object on the aircraft's radar. Although it was barely visible to the eyes of the crew, the radar indicated it was quite large. It remained on the screen for several minutes.

On the ground the ROCC radar controller reported to Anchorage that he was getting some "surge primary return," meaning a radar signal unaccompanied by a transponder signal. (A transponder is an airplane transmitter that sends

UFOs in the 1980s

HESSDALEN LIGHTS (continued)

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HOPKINS, BUDD (1931-)

Budd Hopkins, a specialist in the UFO abduction phenomenon and one of current ufology's most visible figures, is the author of such important books as *Missing Time* (1981) and *Intruders* (1987).

Hopkins was born on June 15, 1931, in Wheeling, West Virginia. After graduating from Oberlin College in 1953, he moved to New York City, where he has lived ever since. A painter and sculptor whose works are in the permanent collections of the Whitney, Guggenheim and Hirshhorn Museums, as well as the Museum of Modern Art, the Carnegie-Mellon, the Brooklyn Museum and many others, he has been awarded fellowships by both the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. His articles on painting and sculpture have appeared in most major American art magazines and he has lectured frequently at universities, colleges and art museums. He is married to art historian April Kingsley. The couple has one daughter, Grace, born in 1973.

Hopkins' interest in the UFO phenomenon was sparked by a 1964 sighting, with two other witnesses, of a daylight disc which remained in view for two or three minutes. Intrigued, he joined the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) and began reading the UFO literature. In 1975 he investigated a multiply-witnessed landing in a park in New Jersey directly across the Hudson River from 88th Street in Manhattan. His article on the case was published in *The Village Voice* and from it he found himself at the receiving end of other, similar reports, some involving periods of unexplained missing time. Working with ufologist Ted Bloecher, psychiatrist Robert Naiman and psychologist Aphrodite Clamar, he investigated a

number of cases in which previously-unrecalled UFO abductions came to light. He wrote two books based on these investigations and is currently at work on a third.

Through his public work he hopes to bring the abduction phenomenon to the attention of an ever-wider audience of physicians, scientists and mental-health professionals as well as the lay public. In 1989 he founded IF—the Intruders Foundation—as a means of intensifying and supporting these educational efforts. To help possible abductees deal with their disturbing experiences, IF has established a network of cooperating therapists and hypnotist/investigators in many cities across North America. IF also publishes a quarterly bulletin dedicated to abduction research and emotional support of those reporting such experiences. Since 1976 he has worked personally with nearly 300 abductees, investigating their cases and often conducting hypnotic-regression sessions. The IF databank contains a huge amount of pertinent information and functions as a resource for other investigators in the field.

Hopkins' letters and articles have appeared in a number of publications such as *The New York Review of Books*, *Omni*, *Discover* and *Cosmopolitan* as well as the *International UFO Reporter*, *MUFON UFO Journal* and *UFO*. One of the early investigators of the Gulf Breeze sightings, he wrote the introduction to a book on the episode, Ed and Frances Walters' *The Gulf Breeze Sightings*, published in 1990. Hopkins' latest book, written with Penelope Franklin, will be titled *A Crack in the Universe: The Psychological Impact of UFO Encounters*.

He says, "From the beginning I've held few preconceptions about the UFO phenomenon, and as any scientifically-inclined investigator would do, I've gone simply where the data led. I was originally suspicious of UFO-abduction accounts, but the sheer preponderance of credible people reporting these events and the accompanying physical evidence persuaded me that these accounts were generally truthful. The data unavoidably make clear that UFO abductions—

UFOs in the 1980s

like UFO sightings of any sort—have a physical dimension as well as a paranormal dimension.

"The specific patterns I have discovered in my years of investigation of abduction cases are central to my overall view of the phenomenon. It might be helpful to list them here:

"(1) Unlike the classic Betty and Barney Hill, Travis Walton, or Hickson and Parker cases, an abduction can easily occur with little or no conscious recall on the part of the abductee, who may not even remember having seen a UFO. The evidence shows that the phenomenon is vastly more widespread than had been thought in the first 3½ decades of UFO investigations and involves hundreds of thousands of persons across the globe. The sheer scale of the phenomenon is staggering and the number of abductees literally unknowable.

"(2) The phenomenon almost invariably entails decades-long abductions of the same individuals at irregular intervals. The abductee becomes, in effect, a 'tagged animal' whose earliest experiences begin in childhood, even as early as the first year of life, and continue afterwards with special frequency in the first ten years or so of adulthood.

"(3) A 'cell-sampling' operation is often inflicted upon the abductee, leaving scars of two types: a round, shallow depression or 'scoop mark' or a long, thin, scalpel-like cut. (These discoveries were detailed in my first book, *Missing Time*. The following were stated for the first time and expanded upon in *Intruders*.)

"(4) The central focus of the entire UFO phenomenon is the 'study and laboratory use' of human beings with special attention to our physical, genetic and reproductive properties.

"(5) If individuals are 'tracked' very nearly across their entire lifetimes, these individuals' bloodlines are apparently of equal interest to the UFO occupants. Members of the same family are often abducted in what seems to be a longitudinal genetic study or experiment.

"(6) Apparently at the center of this ongoing genetic experiment is a systematic attempt to create a hybrid species, a mix of human and alien characteristics.

"(7) A widespread use of advanced artificial insemination techniques results in human pregnancies. During subsequent abductions these pregnant women are abducted again so that the developing embryos can be removed and grown in laboratories or nurseries within the UFOs themselves. As a corollary, many men are abducted and sperm samples are taken from them, presumably to be added to alien ova in the converse of the artificial-insemination procedures.

"(8) The final event involves the reabduction of the ostensible human 'mother'—and sometimes the 'father'—so that the human being can hold the infant or child in a kind of bonding procedure.

"(9) The alien personality, if that is the word for it, seems to lack emotions of the most basic human sort, such as maternal or paternal feelings, human sexual needs, humor, nuanced emotional variety and richness, and so forth. Abductee accounts suggest that the aliens are interested in acquiring, or at least understanding, the basic human emotional spectrum and that this interest is behind some of the incidents that occur during abductions.

"In the years since I first published these nine characteristics of the abduction phenomenon, they have been encountered again and again—replicated—by many other investigators in this and other countries. As to what all this portends, I can only guess. If I have not seen any signs of malevolence or acts of deliberate harm on the part of the UFO occupants, neither have I seen any signs of consistent, believable good will. I see no evidence that different groups of aliens are working at cross purposes or from different moral standpoints. All seem to be doing the same thing. I see vast psychological damage and an inexcusable level of physical harm resulting from these alien 'experiments' upon innocent human beings, and for those acts they deserve our heartfelt anger and condemnation. We are given no opportunity to

71

UFOs in the 1980s

HOPKINS, BUDD (continued)

refuse these often frightening procedures, or any explanation as to why they are being inflicted upon us. I have dealt with too many terrified little children ever to condone the UFO occupants' blithe disregard for human rights and feelings, however desperate their needs may be.

"Though they are not cannibals or body snatchers bent on invasion and war, as certain imaginative and paranoid writers would have us believe, they are most certainly not benign 'visitors' or Space Brothers either. They seem to be coldly following their own private agenda, though with a routine attempt to lessen the pain and psychological suffering they inevitably inflict. One gets the idea that they are desperate, that they do need to revivify their own species from our ostensibly more primitive and more vital genetic pool, but that explanation is only a guess. I also sense an escalation of their abduction activities, a widening of scale, and a lessening of the attempt to operate covertly. I do not know where all this is leading, but I am not encouraged.

"Speaking optimistically, I can suggest that what the future may bring is a heightened sense of the richness of our own species and the value of the love we human beings share with one another. Other men and women in other times of crisis have been brought together this way by these same shared feelings. But this time I fear the crisis may be deeper and more profoundly wrenching than human history has ever known."

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HYNEK, JOSEF ALLEN (1910-1986)

For 20 years, from the mid-1960s until his death in 1986, astronomer and former Project Blue Book scientific consultant J. Allen Hynek was the world's most famous and influential proponent of UFO research.

Hynek had been involved in the subject practically from the beginning, since 1948, when representatives of Project Grudge, the Air Force's UFO project, asked Hynek, director of the MacMillan Observatory at Ohio State University, to examine the reports they had received and to alert them to those that resulted from misidentifications of stars, planets and other astronomical phenomena. Hynek later would write that, where UFOs were concerned, he was the "innocent bystander who got shot" (Hynek, 1972). By the time he and the Air Force parted company, in 1969, they were expressing very different views about the significance of the UFO phenomenon.

Born on May 1, 1910, in Chicago, the son of Josef and Bertha Hynek, Josef Allen Hynek graduated from the University of Chicago with a B.S. degree. In 1935, having achieved a Ph.D. in astrophysics at the university, he left Chicago to join the Ohio State University faculty. There his work on stellar spectroscopy won him the respect of his scientific colleagues. From 1950 to 1953 he served as assistant dean of the OSU graduate school. Hynek's fame spread outside scientific circles, however, when in 1956 the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory at Harvard was given the task of training observers to track the manned satellites the U.S. government planned to launch in the near future. Director Fred L. Whipple appointed Hynek associate director, with the responsibility of putting the proper instrumentation into place and disseminating information. Hynek organized an international

UFOs in the 1980s

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STRIEBER, WHITLEY (1945-)

Whitley Strieber was the most popular writer of UFO books in the 1980s—he wrote three of them—and all landed on the best-seller lists for varying periods of time. By far the most successful was the first, *Communion: A True Story* which stayed on the *New York Times* list for most of 1987. *Communion* and its sequel, *Transformation: The Breakthrough* (1988), were deeply personal, autobiographical works which recounted the author's abduction experiences with beings he called "the visitors." *Majestic* (1989) is a science-fiction novel based on the Roswell incident and on Strieber's theories about the meaning of UFO visitation.

Before 1986 Strieber was unknown to the UFO community, though to the larger world he was known as the author of horror and futuristic novels. He was born on June 13, 1945, in San Antonio, the son of Karl and Mary Strieber. Strieber's father was a prominent lawyer who had amassed wealth through investments in oil and gas. His mother was the daughter of a local construction magnate. He attended the University of Texas. After a semester of work at the law school there, he set off for Europe, then moved to New York City to take up what proved to be a financially-rewarding writing career. His life

UFOs in the 1980s

STRIEBER, WHITLEY (continued)

changed dramatically after a bizarre event on the evening of December 26, 1985, when a series of strange encounters of which he did not have full conscious memory took place. Later, under hypnosis, he related an encounter with humanoids who inserted a needle into his brain.

Strieber subsequently learned of Budd Hopkins, a famous abduction investigator who lived not far from Strieber's Manhattan apartment, and through Hopkins met psychiatrist Donald F. Klein, who gave him a series of tests and concluded he was psychologically normal. Through hypnosis Strieber began to explore other puzzling events in his earlier life and concluded he had been interacting with "visitors" since he was a child. Soon he was writing *Communion*, which was published in January 1987, to generally favorable (and often bemused) reviews. (By far the most hostile was written by fellow science-fiction writer Thomas M. Disch in *The Nation* on March 14, 1987. Disch accused Strieber of making up the story. But most other reviewers, including those not prepared to accept the literal reality of "the visitors," echoed *People's* sentiments: "Strieber is hardly the sort to risk his reputation in the service of mere sensationalism; there are easier ways for him to make money than chronicling his bizarre encounters with what he suggests are intelligent nonhuman beings" [Green, 1987].) Two other UFO books came out not long afterwards, Hopkins' *Intruders* and Gary Kinder's *Light Years* (the latter dealing with the controversial claims of Swiss contactee Billy Meier), and they and the Strieber book were often reviewed together and treated as evidence of renewed popular interest in UFOs.

Strieber and Hopkins fell out, partly for personal reasons and partly because of their differing interpretations of the abduction phenomenon. Despite the terror and trauma he chronicles in his books, Strieber sees the visitors as essentially benevolent beings who are aiding in our spiritual education—essentially a contactee interpretation, though without the blond-haired Space Brothers of traditional contactee lore.

Hopkins, on the other hand, rejected this view, saying that it was not true to the almost wholly negative experiences reported by other abductees, who felt the UFO beings were coldly indifferent to their welfare. Strieber gave an emotional address to the 1987 conference of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) in Washington, D.C., but after that he and the UFO community mostly went their separate ways, though not particularly amicably. He gave some financial support to the Fund for UFO Research and maintained friendships with Fund president Bruce Maccabee and California ufologist William L. Moore, but in his lectures and writings he tended to disparage ufologists for their generally suspicious view of "the visitors" and warned abductees and contactees to stay away from them. In 1989 he set up the Communion Foundation, a New Age-oriented group, one of whose major purposes is to establish a productive relationship with the UFO intelligences.

In November 1989 William Morrow, the publisher of *Communion* and *Transformation*, released a thick book by San Antonio writer Ed Conroy, *Report on "Communion,"* dealing with Conroy's extensive investigation of Strieber's claims and also with his controversial interactions with the UFO community. Conroy concluded that Strieber was telling the truth; he also said he had had bizarre abductionlike experiences while working on his book. Conroy was not alone in alleging such things. Guests at Strieber's cabin in upstate New York, where many of his encounters are said to have occurred, also claim to have witnessed out-of-the-ordinary phenomena.

Undoubtedly the wildest story told in association with *Communion* and Strieber was first chronicled in *New York* magazine. A man identified only as a "senior editor at William Morrow" said he had seen the aliens in Womrath's bookstore on Lexington Avenue. "A man and a woman, bundled in mufflers, hats, and long overcoats, rushed over to the rack and picked up *Communion*," he was quoted as saying. "I heard them say, 'He's got it all wrong—look at that.' They spoke rapidly in what sounded like educated Upper East Side Jewish accents." The editor said

UFOs in the 1980s

today—the cost of a new particle accelerator is measured in the tens of millions of dollars. It is very likely that the key explanation of why there does not exist substantial and reliable evidence for the existence of UFOs, such as spectra, instrumented photos, and well-analyzed soil samples, has to do with the lack of money and facilities for UFO research and investigation. What progress could be made today in studying earthquakes without instrumented recording stations? Very little, to be sure, and supplying the appropriate instrumentation to geophysicists is costly. The same principle applies to the UFO phenomenon.

"If UFOs have appeared to be a jealous phenomenon—and they have—that is because the means were not available by which a systematic study of their properties might be undertaken. GEPAN has proven this to be true. Given the means by the French government, it was able to produce a thorough and revealing report about *one* UFO event. Imagine what we would know today if there had been sufficient funds to investigate 100 physical trace cases to the depth attained by GEPAN in their work."

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TREATMENT AND RESEARCH ON EXPERIENCED ANOMALOUS TRAUMA

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Treatment and Research on Experienced Anomalous Trauma (TREAT) is the brainchild of Rima E. Laibow, M.D., a Westchester County, New York, psychiatrist who seeks to bring the mental-health community into the investigation of the abduction phenomenon, which she prefers to call (as the organization's name suggests) "experienced anomalous trauma." Laibow, who does not regard herself as a ufologist, sees the abduction experience not as a symptom of pathology but as an unknown, an event that may be outside the realm of conventional psychological explanation. If its cause remains mysterious, therapists can at least treat its effects, which Laibow contends are indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder. As a psychiatrist, Laibow became involved with a family of abductees who reported that they were victims of child abuse.

The first TREAT conference was held between May 12 and 14, 1989, at Fairfield University in Connecticut, bringing together about 50 invited specialists from the sciences and ufology under conditions of anonymity and confidentiality for private discussions of how appropriate methodologies could be developed to study the abduction phenomenon. Discussion about the nature of the phenomenon was proscribed, held to be outside the conference's purpose. The meeting, with financial support from the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), the Fund for UFO Research and the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) as well as by a member of a European royal family, was regarded as a success. TREAT established a broadly-based program

UFOs in the 1980s

TREATMENT AND RESEARCH ON EXPERIENCED ANOMALOUS TRAUMA (continued)

which was delegated to committees on ethics, research protocols, data collection, interdisciplinary relations, professional training, clinical issues, funding, and public relations.

In the weeks and months following the conference, a schism developed between TREAT members over a variety of issues, including Laibow's leadership (especially in her decision to throw two leading ufologists and abduction experts, Budd Hopkins and David M. Jacobs, out of TREAT), her assertion that mental-health professionals should have the primary role over, not just a cooperative association with, ufologists in abduction investigation, and her controversial interactions with several individual abductees. There was also serious disagreement over the structure and purpose of the next TREAT meeting, set for February 1990 at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute. As the dispute grew more bitter and more personal, most ufologists and many mental-health professionals left TREAT, taking much of the organization's original funding with them. Laibow was able, however, to secure other funding and made plans for the next meeting, with a largely new group of invited participants.

Meantime disaffected TREAT members were securing financial support for a new organization to deal with many of the issues TREAT was intended to address. At the same time Toronto psychotherapist David A. Gotlib, M.D., onetime member of TREAT's ethics committee, created a newsletter, *Ratchet Patrol: A Monthly Networking Newsletter About Experienced Anomalous Trauma for Interested Scientists*, as a forum for psychiatrists, psychologists and other professionals interested in "experienced anomalous trauma."

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