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An Interview with Jacques Vallee

by Brent Raynes



Dr. Jacques Vallee (L) and Brent Raynes at ARE UFO Conference

Jacques Vallee authored such UFO classics as Anatomy Of A Phenomenon, Challenge To Science (which he wrote with his wife Janine), Passport To Magonia, Messengers of Deception, Confrontations, Dimensions, and Revelations. This distinguished French-born scientist received his B.S. in mathematics at the Sorbonne, an M.S. in astrophysics at Lille University, and after moving to the U.S. received his Ph.D. in computer science from Northwestern University. Vallee worked closely with the late Dr. J. Allen Hynek, former astronomical consultant to the Air Force's Project 'Blue Book'. Their dialogues together in The Edge of Reality (1975) are a thought-provoking delight to read.

Vallee also co-developed the first computer-based map of Mars for NASA. He later directed a project to build Arpanet (the prototype for the Internet) and since 1987 has been a venture capitalist with Euro-America, serving as an early-stage investor and director of many companies including SangStat Medical, a biotechnology firm in Menlo Park, California and Nantes, France; Accuray, a medical device company specializing in robotic surgery; Ixys, a power semiconductor firm; and others.

For more information on Jacques Vallee and his extensive background, visit his website at: www.jacquesvallee.net .

[Editor]: In the October-November 2001, *UFO: The Science & Phenomena Magazine* (Vol. 16, No. 5), your attendance at the 20th annual Society for Scientific Exploration was detailed. In this article - which was a summation of a conference that also included perspectives of scientists in a variety of avenues toward unexplained phenomena including crop circles and parapsychology -- it was noted how your public appearance was a rare event. Furthermore, the article quoted you saying: "I'm not interested in talking to ufologists any more because I don't learn anything from them." Recently, you made another rare appearance to talk about UFOs. The UFO conference sponsored by the Association for Research and Enlightenment in Virginia Beach, Virginia, on December 2nd and 3rd, 2005.

Could you generally sum up for us the reasons why you have come to have little tolerance towards mainstream ufologists and avoid participating in their conferences, but would take part in these other 2 conferences just mentioned?

[Vallee]: There was another part to what I said at the time -- namely that I learned more from witnesses than I did from ufologists. That remains true today. When I began this research in the 1960s, I learned a lot from groups like NICAP and APRO that were trying to document and publish cases and promoted an open-minded approach. This changed in the late 1980s when ufology turned into a set of dogmas (e.g., Roswell, abductions) with little room for open-minded research and almost no field investigation any more. Much independent UFO research today has gone underground and is done by isolated individuals outside of the organized groups, as was the case with the Invisible College in the days of Allen Hynek. The ERA conference was a rare opportunity to compare notes with colleagues I respect in a sober setting.

[Editor]: Speaking of the A.R.E.'s UFO conference, what significant impressions, thoughts, or experiences did you perhaps come away with? And would you make any sort of suggestions or recommendations for future conferences of this nature?

[Vallee]: The phenomenon presented by UFOs is far larger than current speculation about "*aliens* from space". It raises questions about consciousness, the nature of reality, and human history on the Earth. I welcome every opportunity to meet specialists in these disciplines and learn from them. That was the case, for example, at the conference on "Consciousness, Science and Religion" held in Porto 2 years ago where **Dr. Eric Davis** and I presented a new model for the study of Unidentified Aerial Phenomena. The ARE conference in Virginia Beach was a similar opportunity because attendees brought a great deal of knowledge about *psychic* functioning and spiritual traditions. We must take this knowledge into account if we are going to make any progress.

[Editor]: During your A.R.E. presentation, you described how you became initially interested and aware of UFOs after you and your mother, as I recall, happened to see a UFO in your hometown in France when you were a teenager. Would you care to share with our readers that experience again, and how it may have shaped your later, evolving interest in things like astronomy and space exploration?

[Vallee]: Our experience was similar to that of thousands of witnesses in Europe during that period. The observation lasted about 10 minutes and was verified by a fellow student who saw the object from his own house a mile away. He had time to get his binoculars and described it in

identical terms: a silvery disk with a dome on top, hovering about 1,000 feet high. At the time, I convinced myself that the object was a prototype of some kind. Of course, we now know that there is no such aircraft! I was already interested in astronomy and physics. But the enigma presented by that sighting certainly influenced me: it taught me that there was much more to be discovered.

[Editor]: From your pioneering Passport to Magonia (1969) to Revelations (1991), your books have tackled a wide-range of controversial and complex aspects, taking in a comprehensive global, cultural, and historical perspective on these reported events, looking at *paranormal*, spiritual, folkloric, occult, and shamanic accounts. In Revelations, you presented alternatives to the popular *extraterrestrial* hypothesis (i.e., the Earth Light Hypothesis, Control System, and the Wormhole Travel Hypothesis). You've stated something to the effect that you'd be pretty disappointed if all of this activity recorded down through the centuries turned out indeed to be simply *ET* visitations.

Please explain.

[Vallee]: When you begin to study this phenomenon, the first-degree *ET* hypothesis (namely the idea that we are visited by aliens from another planet in our galaxy that have just discovered us) seems like the best one. With the passage of time and the accumulation of reports including those from people reported psychic effects, it becomes clear that it is too limited to explain the facts. As always in Science, when such a situation presents itself, you must go back to basics and re-examine the data.

We need to open the full spectrum of potential hypotheses instead of simply selecting data that fit our preconceptions. As you know, I have done quite a bit of study of psychical research and of older traditions -- including Rosicrucian and esoteric literature -- in search of related material. And it is all there, although modern adepts of these traditions seem to have forgotten all about it. Perhaps your magazine can reawaken them?

[Editor]: Certainly over the years, you've written so many fascinating, important and thought-provoking books on the UFO enigma and have frequently gone to the scene of reported UFO encounters and personally interviewed witnesses and inspected the encounter sites for yourself. A task that you considered very important to perform when trying to get to the bottom of these mysteries and in trying to obtain valid information.

You've been to Brazil on three separate occasions to investigate incredible reports of close encounters and even human injuries and deaths connected with such reported encounters, as you described in your fascinating book Confrontations (1990). You also wrote the foreword to the late Bob Pratt's book *UFO Danger Zone* (1996). A U.S. journalist of great skill, integrity, and objectivity, he made numerous trips to Brazil also and his stories and pictures fill this awesome book. Though it may understandably not be too easy of a task, can you share with us the importance of what you perceive has happened in the remote regions of Brazil?

[Vallee]: Anyone who has traveled to that part of the World and has spoken to local witnesses returns with the feeling of having barely scratched the surface. Bob Pratt knew Brazil well and made more extended trips there than I did. But he would have told you the same thing. I am very sad when I realize that I won't be able to seek his advice any more. One has to experience the phenomenon in different cultures to really understand the true dimension of the problem confronting us. What we say about Brazil would also apply to Russia or China.

[Editor]: I was intrigued to also read in Confrontations of how all of the negatives of UFOs taken by Brazilian journalists and cameramen during the massive UFO wave in 1977 (in which many photographs were also taken by the Brazilian Air Force) had been purchased from the Brazilian newspapers afterwards by some "unnamed American firm". This information apparently came from the newspapers themselves? Do we have any idea as to who this firm was and where the valuable negatives ended up?

And how soon after the reports and photographs were first published did these purchases occur?

[Vallee]: There are multiple cultural and political reasons preventing much of the hard data from being published. I understood this when we were invited to spend an entire day at the main Amazonian base of the Brazilian air force, and could speak freely about the reports they shared with us.

[Editor]: Some of the classified Brazilian military reports have been leaked out over the years it seems. And presumably the military there is seriously interested in releasing these formerly-secret documents to the public. Are you encouraged by these developments? Or do you feel perhaps a guarded optimism considering how such "leaks" or reported public disclosures have gone in the USA?

[Vallee]: I am glad to see that some of the information is finally coming out, 25 years later. To the extent that the scientific community is not showing interest in learning more, however, I doubt if the full story will be available any time soon. There is no political or social incentive to raise the issue further.

[Editor]: At the ARE conference, I was interested to hear during your presentation of how back in the 1980s you had acted as a consultant to the Stanford Research Institute's **remote-viewing** program and learned that many remote-viewers (a fact that was never publicized) had ascribed their talents to what we call UFOs. Please tell us a little more about this and of your interest in the remote-viewing subject.

[Vallee]: I knew the founders of the project at the Parapsychology Research group in Palo Alto before they joined SRI. When their work began in 1971, I happened to be a senior researcher in one of the computer development labs there. So I became an informal (unpaid!) member of the team. When it turned out that many of their subjects had experienced UFOs, they brought me into the project on a strictly confidential basis to document that aspect of the problem.

Ingo Swann and I had many discussions when he first came to SRI and began structuring the program, interviewing some of the Institute scientists. I told him I thought the problem would be best approached as an **information processing** problem rather than a signal transmission problem as the physicists and engineers planned to do. I showed him how software specialists handle data either by direct addressing, indirect addressing, virtual addressing, etc. Ingo gives me credit for orienting him to the idea of coordinate remote-viewing where geographic coordinates constitute the "address". Later this was expanded to other forms of targeting.

But the project never explored what I thought could have been the real breakthrough research because they were under constant pressure from mission-oriented sponsors. 10 years later -- well after I had left SRI --I was asked to come back into the project as a

consultant. I was briefed on 'Grill Flame' and formally trained by Ingo. I think I'm the only one from that team who hasn't written a book about remote viewing! **[StealthSkater note: more on remote-viewing is archived at <http://www.stealthskaer.com/PX.htm#RV>]**

[Editor]: You have been very skeptical of the process of **hypnotic regression** being used to uncover presumably lost memories of UFO entity and abduction encounters. Can you explain why you feel this way?

[Vallee]: I have studied over 70 abduction cases in concert with psychiatrists trained in the use of the clinical hypnosis. These specialists were uniformly horrified when I showed them what some ufologists were doing and claiming on the basis of the regressions they were performing. In case after case, it becomes obvious that hypnosis is NOT a good way to bring back true memories. The psychiatric literature confirms this.

In his famous book The Fifty-Minute Hour, Dr. Lindner explains why he considered -- and then rejected -- the use of hypnosis when asked by the FBI to treat a senior engineer who claimed to travel *psychically* to other planets. Hypnosis can turn a possible fantasy into an experience that becomes irreversible. I have received pathetic letters from famous UFO abductees asking me to help them find a new form of treatment, because they continue to experience traumatic experiences that do not fit into the rigid abduction model. Unfortunately, these people cannot be re-hypnotized in a professional manner after they have been subjected to the ludicrous process routinely followed in ufology today in the name of "research".

Thousands of abductees have now been regressed hypnotically and we know nothing more about the nature of the phenomenon, the alleged craft, or the *entities* associated with them. I still believe the abduction experience is part of the witnesses' reality, as Dr. Simon told me when we spent 2 days with Betty and Barney Hill at their place in New Hampshire. But hypnosis in most cases is neither the therapy of choice nor the best way to explore what really happened to them. **[StealthSkater note: for more on this famous incident and the discovery of the Zeta Reticula star system as reported in Astronomy magazine, see => [doc](#) [pdf](#) [URL](#)]**

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