

HYPNOTIC REGRESSION OF UFO ABDUCTEES

HOW RELIABLE IS THE INFORMATION OBTAINED?

Ann Druffel

Well-known to readers of FSR, our contributor is associate editor of MUFON journal and organiser of Skynet, and is also a trained hypnotist

"SOMEBODY'S coming toward us...I don't know what's going on...A bunch of people just came into the house! They've got their arms on me and Jan!...They're shadowed...it looks like they're wearing, almost like a black ski mask but the whole thing is black and just their eyes are out... There's a little round, oh, I call it a 'ship'...it's above the water and we're headed for it!..."

As Sarah Shaw, a lovely woman in her forties, sat hypnotically entranced in the office of a Southland psychologist, the above story of a double-abduction by UFO entities unfolded. The date of the session was December 5, 1975. She was reliving events which happened to herself and her friend, Jan Whitley, in Tujunga, California, on March 22, 1953.

On May 18, 1977, Harrison E. Bailey, a black Baptist minister, was hypnotized by a California physician to bring out forgotten details of a close encounter with an oval, landed UFO just outside Orland Park, Illinois on September 24, 1951.

Under hypnosis, Bailey stated, "They're all around. Funny-looking eyes and face...I don't want to look them in the face!...Something sitting out in the field...remind me of a spinning top...I see a door open up!...I feel a little weird, like I was in a trance, and couldn't move..."

The term "regression" brings to mind a skilled hypnotist, guiding an entranced subject through some forgotten period in his past where every detail, however small, can be relived completely — mind and emotions co-operating in perfect harmony. However, UFO researchers who use regression techniques on persons claiming close encounters with UFOs are fast learning that hypnosis does not work quite this way.

Since the late 1960s, much study has been done with so-called "abductees". The term "abductee" refers to a witness who experiences an unexplained period of amnesia after seeing an unidentified flying object close at hand, then regains consciousness in time to see the UFO leaving the area. Hypnotic regression is used in these cases to uncover the details of what occurred during the time-loss.

Almost invariably, the witness brings out a vivid story about being taken aboard the UFO by alien occupants where 1, he is subjected to a strange physical examination; 2, he communicates with the creatures, generally by some sort of telepathy; 3,

he is shown the interior of the craft; 4, he is given a message which frequently relates to the UFOs' motives and their peaceable intentions.

Although all four of the sequential events noted above do not occur to all UFO abductees, they all without exception state unequivocally under hypnosis that they were forcibly taken aboard. This article pertains specifically to abductees who experience time-loss. Some abductees, however, consciously recall their experiences aboard the craft. The information here might well apply to them as well as to the time-loss abductees. For our purposes, however, in the limited space available, we refer exclusively to time-loss abductees in examining the question: How valid are hypnotic techniques in obtaining reliable UFO information?

According to commonly-held opinion, a hypnotized person is completely under the power of the hypnotist. He cannot lie or withhold any detail which he is asked to reveal. This is the popular view, but it is not necessarily true.

Anyone familiar with stage hypnosis knows that the creativity of the human mind is virtually endless. Persons can be made to lie, to create fantasy-situations under hypnosis and persuaded to perform acts which, in their normal waking state, they would consider unethical or foolish.

In UFO research, special care is taken not to ask leading questions, so that this normal creativity of the mind can be kept to a minimum. But the danger always exists, regardless how much care is taken, that the hypnotized person's mind will unconsciously create detail to fill in gaps where his memory processes throw up blocks. A person under hypnosis cannot ordinarily distinguish between what is objectively real and what might be created. What we are left with, generally, is an abduction tale where truth and fantasy, to greater or lesser degree, are inextricably mingled.

Not only do hypnotized persons unconsciously create details and present them in terms indistinguishable from objective truth, they can, contrary to popular opinion, withhold information from the hypnotist when strongly motivated to do so. For instance, Harrison E. Bailey, when first questioned under hypnosis about his September 24, 1951, experience, refused to tell whether the alien occ-

upants had taken him aboard. "Well, if they did," he replied cagily after a long pause, "you wouldn't talk about a thing like that. People have very peculiar ideas about people that see anything like that... I can't...I can't recall...going aboard. I don't want to be nowhere around. I don't want to know too much."

Bailey's block caused by fear of ridicule was eventually broken through. Even then the details of his abduction were sketchy. As Bailey said, "I really don't have any business being aboard. Someday someone might ask me about them, and I'd have a lot of explaining to do."

Dr. Benjamin Simon, who handled the case of Betty and Barney Hill, pointed out early in abductee research that the Hills might have experienced "shared fantasy" rather than an actual UFO kidnapping. However, in the past fifteen years, hundreds of abduction cases have come to light. The list lengthens weekly. Researchers worldwide are documenting them. Abduction cases seem to be an integral and important part of the entire UFO phenomenon. We cannot ignore them. We cannot dismiss them simply as "shared fantasies." They must be researched as objectively as possible, so that an answer can be found.

It is necessary to point out that only rational, honest persons reporting UFO encounters with accompanying time-lapses are selected for hypnotic regression. To apply the technique to people claiming encounters but who exhibit gross psychopathological symptoms is not only fruitless but often dangerous. Even though such persons may have had actual abduction experiences, it is even more difficult in their cases to tell truth from fantasy. Also, under hypnosis, their paranoid tendencies are often enhanced, endangering the investigators and causing no end of trouble.

From the beginning of hypnotic research on abductees, researchers such as Berthold E. Schwarz, M.D., Dr. Leo Sprinkle and Dr. James A. Harder have stated that various abductees "seem to be telling the truth as they know it in their own minds." *Most investigators took this to mean that the abductee accounts were objective reality.* However, the two things are not necessarily the same.

Even "physical or objective reality" is not "absolute reality". The desk on which I write looks like brown-grained wood, but only because it radiates certain colour wave lengths to my eyes. The colour "brown" has no absolute reality in itself.

More and more evidence is pouring in that the UFOs are able to directly influence all of the five human senses and the human mind itself. They are evidently able psychically to alert persons inside buildings so that they dash outdoors just in time to see a silent UFO manoeuvring overhead. They can produce euphoria in witnesses, where ordinarily the humans should be filled with reasonable terror. If they are able to influence persons who see them from a distance, it is reasonable to assume that during a very close encounter the influence on the witnesses would be even greater.

There are strange correlations in many abductee

accounts which seem to boil down to this: *some details described by abductees, related to the craft, the occupants, the medical examinations aboard the ship, etc., bear close resemblance to the details in the witnesses' own lives.*

The following examples from my own files are striking: Consider, for instance, the Bailey case which I have mentioned above, and which was published in *Fate* April and May 1978 issues. Concerning the interior of the UFO, Bailey recounted under hypnosis:

"The bright lights shine in my face. I feel afraid, but I've seen some machines that look like that before. Therefore, I don't have to be afraid of them."

Bailey was referring to the glow from blast furnaces in steel mills where he worked in 1951. Were the UFO entities he encountered deliberately mimicking a recognizable source of light to calm Bailey's fears?

The message the UFO occupants gave Bailey also contained striking correlations.

"They gave me a message concerning *them*. They don't want people to stare at them so much. They want better communication, but when people see them, they come running like they could tear them to pieces so they [UFO occupants] usually get out fast."

Bailey stated that the occupants compared their own situation to the plight facing Negroes in 1951. Neither were, in Bailey's own words, "wanted in our society."

The occupants themselves bore a significant resemblance to steel workers and welders with whom Bailey had worked.

"The fellows who did welding had a big shield that covers their face, covers all round their ears and... down by the chin...I see some men, look like men, come to the [UFO's] window. They got on a type of mask...like when they work in the steel mill."

Similarly, the Sarah Shaw case contained some of the same kind of correlative material. Under hypnosis, she derived a vivid description of the entities who abducted her and Jan Whitley.

"All of them are very slender. Even the shoulders are very slender, and their faces like long ovals. But in some of them, the lower part of the face is somewhat wider, that's the only difference. The ones with the wider jawlines I think are female. The rest are male." (Paraphrased from subsequent interview.)

At the time of her abduction experience, Sarah Shaw was experiencing difficulty in sexual identity. It seems significant that the UFO entities who guided her aboard their craft were barely distinguishable in regards to sex. Was Sarah's own problem reflected in how she perceived the entities? Or, conversely, were the entities using information drained from Sarah's own mind in *projecting images of themselves* to her?

This phenomenon, which I choose to call "detail reflectivity", is widespread in abductee reports where the material is obtained under hypnotic regression. Just as the colour "brown" is merely energy translated by my eyes, so might UFO entities be *energy beings*, perceived in various ways through the five senses of their human witnesses.

It is possible that this explains the wide diversity of UFO craft and occupants reported worldwide.

Since about 1974, snowballing doubt has been cast upon the reliability of regression techniques as a means of obtaining valid information from abductees, however honest and stable the witnesses are. The change in our attitudes began when researchers began to study the hypnotic technique itself and to learn its strengths and faults.

All hypnosis is auto-hypnosis. The hypnotist is merely a guide. In fact, many people go into light stages of hypnosis often during the day — while watching TV, while daydreaming, or driving a familiar highway. The *deepening* of trance, however, depends on the skill of a hypnotist and the cooperation of the witness. The depth of trance is determined by the ability and motivations of the subject. The hypnotist has practically no control over depth of the trance. It is estimated that most abductee material is derived from witnesses in moderate or fairly deep trance — about value 4 to 6 on a scale of 10 — 10 representing the very deepest somnambulistic state. Some clinical hypnotherapists question the ability of persons to bring out forgotten memories in moderate or fairly deep trance, preferring to believe that a somnambulistic state is necessary to achieve this. UFO researcher-hypnotists, however, disagree.

Although many scientists have tried to define the hypnotic state, no definition has yet been universally acceptable. For the purposes of this article, we can state that hypnosis is an unusual state of mind in which concentration on internal thoughts and mental stimuli predominates, and surrounding stimuli are disregarded. It brings about a relaxed body state, increased susceptibility to suggestion, and the ability to tap the subconscious and sometimes unconscious levels of the mind.

However deep a subject may go, however, he never completely loses contact with reality, and the depth of trance varies spontaneously from minute to minute.

Abduction experiences which seem to flow less easily from the subconscious mind of the hypnotized witness are possibly more objectively true than the complete stories which pour forth like buckets of water. In these, normal creativity is suspected. Even under ideal circumstances, however — an honest, stable and careful witness and a skilled hypnotist — *truth tends to mix with normal creativity, and the witness is not able to distinguish which is which.*

Two types of verification techniques which have been used in abduction cases are the PSE (Psychological Stress Evaluator), which measures inaudible stress on the hypnotized person's tape-recorded voice, and the lie-detector, which measures stress through changes in pulse rate, respiration, etc. Though controversial themselves, these two scientific instruments are accepted in some states as evidence in court trials. When all three techniques are applied to an abduction case — hypnosis, PSE, and lie detector — and the witness' statements hold up well, we are inclined to accept the abduction experience as real.

When independent correlative detail is brought

out in witnesses' accounts, we consider this indicative that the abductions actually occurred. For instance, Sarah Shaw described "mittened" hands on the entities who kidnapped her. She also stated that she was "floated" up to the hovering UFO, her feet barely touching a "beam of light". These were exciting correlations to other abduction stories of which Sarah had no knowledge.

However, as stated above, differences in details in abduction cases far outweigh any similarities. They remain a collection of puzzling stories. *Our only real criterion in judging their validity is the basic honesty of the witnesses themselves.*

In 1976 a series of experiments was conducted by researchers Dr. Alvin Lawson, W.C. McCall, M.D., and John de Herrera. They hypnotized a number of "verbal, creative types" who had little or no knowledge of UFOs and asked each a set of eight situational questions involving an *imaginary* close encounter with an unidentified flying object.

These experimenters had no preconceived notions what sort of material the "imagines" would produce. They half-expected that *imaginary* abduction stories would differ considerably from "real" abductee accounts. However, they learned that an *averaged comparison* of real and imaginary cases indicated almost no essential differences. "Many presumably obscure 'patterns' from UFO literature emerged in the imaginary narratives," reported Lawson in his May 2, 1977, report.

However, these imaginary narratives were devoid, for the most part, of the vivid emotional content found in actual abduction cases; they involved no time-lapse, and lacked the physical, psychological, and psychic upsets which often accompany "real" abductee experiences.

The studies produced much controversy among researchers, many of whom criticized the study for its protocol. Other researchers praised the study, inasmuch as it proved a catalyst in forcing other researchers to re-examine UFO material obtained under hypnosis. We began to sharpen our skills.

At present, the reliability of information obtained from abductees remains very much in doubt. But certain clues are beginning to surface. One of these clues has been pointed out by Berthold E. Schwarz and James A. Harder, among others — *that during close encounters, the witnesses themselves might already be in a hypnotized state.*

Harder states that "similarly described experiences could have a similar origin." He is saying that hypnosis, or something akin to it, might have been used by the UFO entities themselves in feeding information into a witness' mind. When re-hypnotized by researchers, the witness repeats back what has already been fed to him.

Schwarz states a similar hypothesis thus: "The contactees that I have studied are either in or out of a trance half the time anyway, and they are usually easy to hypnotize. As stated elsewhere, that might be one of the real clues regarding parts of their experience."

Thus, the material which abductees "recall" under hypnotic regression may have been planted in their minds by the UFO entities. No real exper-

ience aboard a physical craft would be necessary to induce an abductee experience. The witnesses may have been influenced subconsciously (or unconsciously) to "perceive" — with no clue as to what they perceive is objectively true or false. Some researchers, indeed, suspect the motives of UFO entities as boding ill for mankind, while they "de-lude" us into considering them benevolent. No one knows where the truth really lies.

However, there is another train of thought which may throw a different light on the puzzle. Some researchers speculate that UFOs are from a higher realm of being than ourselves, from a dimension where "physical reality" as we know it does not exist. These entities would be logically more intelligent than us and even concerned with our welfare. Slowly they may be educating us about the higher realms of the universe. Thus Frank Salisbury refers to the phenomenon as "the UFO display." Leo Sprinkle speaks of "cosmic consciousness conditioning."

There is another hypothesis which might explain many elements of the abductee phenomenon. During the past year, John de Herrera and I have conducted studies into the reliability of hypnosis in obtaining valid information. In the few times which we have consciously combined "remote viewing" with hypnosis we have found that the hypnotic state heightens psychic abilities to a remarkable degree.

"Remote viewing" as used here, refers to the studies conducted at the Stanford Research Institute by Professors Puthoff and Targ. Their experiments proved that ESP exists and that *under strict laboratory conditions ordinary persons could obtain otherwise inaccessible information over kilometer distances.*

Berthold Schwarz agrees that hypnosis heightens the psychic abilities of the mind. He wrote, "the [hypnotist] can not only implant thoughts consciously or unconsciously, but can also influence telepathically the one he is questioning in hypnosis."

It is evidently something about the hypnotic

state which produces the "imaginee" phenomenon discussed above. It also seems to be something about the hypnotic state which produces real abductee experiences. The difference is that in the actual abduction incidents, there seems to be an alien stimuli interacting with the witnesses' minds.

Hypnotized persons can not only be in telepathic contact with the hypnotist and other persons in the room but are probably at times in touch with the "collective unconscious." The collective unconscious is the linkage of all men's minds together in the psychic realm, and in it, time as we know it does not exist. Past, present, and future are all available in a timeless now. A mind tapping the collective unconscious is capable of precognition as well as clairvoyance, telepathy and theoretically, the entire range of psychic perception.

We do not yet understand these things clearly. They are in the realm of parapsychology, which is still in its infancy. But the tapping of the collective unconscious through hypnosis may well be the stimulus for the initial abduction experiences of selected UFO witnesses. It may also be the means by which these witnesses are able to provide added detail, under hypnosis, to interested researchers.

The above hypothesis is tenuous. Its logic is difficult to express in limited wordage. But follow it out a little further, and consider the following: The collective unconscious is the linkage of all minds. There is no reason to suppose that it is composed only of *human minds*. Any intelligence in the universe — including UFO entities — should have access to it. Somewhere, somehow, the abductee in hypnosis is tapping a source which wants him to know minute details about UFO occupants, their motives and their purposes. The witness is "remote viewing" information concerned with the UFOs.

The entire subject of the reliability of UFO information obtained under hypnosis is tenuous indeed. Further research is desperately needed. The UFO field has generally been hampered by lack of funds for adequate study. Investigation of the paranormal aspects of the phenomenon, such as is evident in the abductee phenomenon, suffers even more.

World round-up

of news and comment about recent sightings

Spain

Caravelle makes emergency landing at Valencia after encountering UFO(s)

The following extracts come from UPI reports datelined (1) Valencia, November 12, 1979, and (2) Madrid, November 15, 1979,—

(1) "A Caravelle jet with 109 pass-

engers aboard made an emergency landing here Sunday after its pilot radioed he was being 'pursued' by four unidentified flying objects, airport officials said Monday.

"Transport Minister Salvador Sanchez Teran travelled to Valencia and ordered an investigation into the alleged air chase, which started when the Spanish plane was flying over the

island of Ibiza en route to Tenerife in the Canary Islands...

"The crew said the objects pursued them for some four hours, deciding them to abort their long flight south... they said the objects peeled off some 30 miles from Valencia..."

(2) "...a reported UFO sighting in Spanish air space must be one of the best documented on record.

"The case involves a pilot who diverted his plane with 109 passengers and seven crew to make an emergency landing, claiming UFOs were buzzing him and threatening collision.