

**UFOs AT FIFTY: SOME PERSONAL
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ABSTRACT

Since I have been researching the UFO phenomenon, we have had a steady increase in our knowledge of it. There have been setbacks, wrong tracts, and enemies, but our understanding of the phenomenon has grown. As the new knowledge accrued, we have had to reorder our assumptions and engage in new paradigms to understand the phenomenon. We must continue to work for clarity free from New Age entanglements, upgrade our profession, and engage the expertise of others as we enter into the twenty-first century.

PART ONE: THE PAST AND THE UFO PARADIGM**Personal Involvement**

I have been thinking about UFOs on a daily basis for nearly all of my adult life. It is now the fiftieth anniversary of the public's awareness of UFOs, and I am taking the liberty to discuss some thoughts about a few aspects of UFO research that I have had recently. I would like to make it clear that these are my personal thoughts, rambling and somewhat disconnected though they may be, and are not intended to denigrate the work that dedicated and serious UFO researchers have been doing.

I first became involved with studying UFOs in the mid-1960s while an undergraduate at UCLA. We were both in our youth; the public UFO phenomenon was about eighteen years old and I was twenty-three. I am not sure why I became so interested in flying saucers, perhaps they satisfied a need for fantasy in my life. Whatever it was, the subject took hold of my imagination. One of my earliest forays into the UFO world came about when I took my wife and some friends to Frank Stranges' "Phenomenon 7.7" convention in Los Angeles in 1966. We sat in the balcony while several speakers talked about UFO sightings and Air Force cover-up. After the intermission, the main event finally came-- a film of an actual flying saucer. And there it was on the screen; big, shining, spinning, and splendid. If you squinted hard enough you could almost avoid seeing the string that suspended the flying saucer. It was all quite embarrassing and by rights I should have given up my interest in UFOs and gone about having a normal life. But in spite of the embarrassment, I was hooked. I read Frank Edwards, *Flying*



Saucers: Serious Business, and was extremely taken by it not knowing that most of the information in that book was, to be kind, unreliable.

In August, 1966, my wife and I moved to Wisconsin for graduate school and I became determined to read everything ever written about UFOs and become an "expert" in the subject. In those days it was actually feasible to read everything, and being an expert could be accomplished without that much difficulty. I read all the books and articles that I could get my hands on. I still remember the joy of getting my copy of *Flying Saucer Review* in the mail and reading it from cover to cover--every word. In those days it was the best UFO publication in the world and even debunkers wrote articles for it. Every article and book I read stimulated me to new pathways of thought. And I thought about the subject constantly. I bored my friends with endless tales of its wonders--I am sure they thought my overwrought passion was evidence of mental instability.

By 1970 I was a member of APRO and NICAP and fashioned myself a field investigator. In June of that year my wife and I raced through a violent rainstorm from Madison, Wisconsin, to Peoria, Illinois, to hear what would become the first Midwest UFO Conference. At lunch we angled to sit at the table at which Coral Lorenzen, Walt Andrus, and Allen Hynek were sitting. I don't remember much about that lunch except that Hynek graciously asked me a few questions about my interest and my graduate career. What I remember the most, however, was the thrill of talking with the best UFO researchers of the day and being inspired by them. Allen Utke, Coral Lorenzen, Ted Phillips, John Schuessler, Robert Smulling, and J. Allen Hynek were speakers at that wondrous event. All the papers were good, but Hynek's made a lasting impression on me. He called for UFO researchers to divide up the UFO phenomenon into smaller components and specialize. He also warned that we should pay close attention to the data to fashion our hypotheses about it rather than having speculation guide our view of the data. As I look back now, this advice seems more relevant today than ever.

I was so taken with the potential importance of the UFO phenomenon that in 1971 I elected to give up my dissertation topic on which I had worked for six months--the image of women in pre-1915 motion pictures--and pursue a dissertation in a UFO-related topic. Once the topic was approved I enjoyed the unique luxury of being allowed to spend the next two years doing nothing but researching UFO history. I went around the country interviewing some of the leading researchers and figures of the day, Donald Keyhoe, Jim and Coral Lorenzen, Al Chop, Bob Friend, Ed Ruppelt's wife Elizabeth, and others. The history of the country's involvement with the UFO was almost as fascinating as the phenomenon itself, but the sightings were at the core of the phenomenon.

Sighting Investigation

In those days sightings occupied all of our attention. UFO researchers centered their activity on three considerations: verifying the sightings, speculating about their appearance and purpose, and convincing the public and the scientific community of the phenomenon's legitimacy. Verification was difficult. People who saw them could be mistaken and early on the credibility and reliability of the witnesses became a major concern. This was all the more important because of the infamous "contactees," led by "Professor" George Adamski, "Dr." Daniel Fry and others. They showed us that



people will dishonestly use UFOs as a vehicle to get money and fame. The ridicule they inspired in the public is a legacy that still is with us.

But other problems of accuracy and verisimilitude existed in addition to contactee tales. Honest people could be imperfect witnesses getting things wrong because of mistakes of memory. We expended much time and energy working out criteria for believability. This was important because most "raw" reports of UFOs turned out to be identifiable. Lurking behind the unidentified reports was a curious problem: when two witnesses saw an object at close range, they often varied considerably in their descriptive details. The variation was to be expected because memory is imperfect, but often the variations were almost *too* disparate. At the time this was considered a small anomaly in the paradigm of UFO sighting reports.

The Scientific Community

The scientific community was a more difficult area to attend to. We did not realize at the time that the politics of science was so powerful and so all-encompassing, that few scientists would be able to break away from the political constraints of their professions. Ridicule reinforced this encasement and the two worked together to prevent the scientific community from engaging productively with the UFO evidence. The scientific community's inability to recognize the UFO phenomenon's importance is without doubt the most significant scientific scandal in history, and the UFO research community's inability to make meaningful inroads into the scientific establishment has constituted its greatest failure to date. This is all the more ironic because important discoveries in astronomy in the past fifty years have lent credence to the idea that life other than ours could exist in space. With scientists on the verge of discovering new planets, and even microbial life, they are still careful to distance themselves from the UFO phenomenon and the ridicule attendant upon it. Hynek's statement, "Science is not always what scientists do" certainly hits the mark. To be a UFO researcher is to gain a healthy disrespect for the courage and vision of the scientific community.

The scientific community's refusal to cooperate in UFO research put the burden of verifying the phenomenon upon dedicated and intrepid lay individuals. During the early 1970s I was a dedicated field investigator, although perhaps not so intrepid, going to people's homes and interviewing them about their sightings. I, along with most of my fellow investigators, was concerned with the problem of whether the objects were conventional, anomalous, artificially constructed, and/or intelligently controlled. Verifying the phenomenon was of primary importance before researchers could generalize about its intent. We collected sighting reports, compared them with others, and tried to analyze what they meant. When conventional explanations failed to account for the phenomenon, the extraterrestrial hypothesis became dominant. In a sense there was little choice--either the objects were conventional, in whatever sense one wanted to apply to that word, or they were unconventional and anomalous. But an anomalous manmade unconventional object was a contradiction in terms. If the objects were judged to be unconventional, anomalous, artificially constructed, and under intelligent control, they were not from earth. The "ultraterrestrial" theories so popular in the 1970s were either variations on the extraterrestrial hypothesis, or so speculative that they seemed divorced from the evidence. These ideas some popularity



for a while, but the extraterrestrial hypothesis seemed more “grounded” until evidence suggested otherwise.

Studying the UFO phenomenon directly proved difficult. It was not courteous. It would not wait until it could be scientifically analyzed. Still, the reports themselves could be analyzed and generalizations drawn from them. We amassed hundreds of thousands of reports from around the world. We learned a tremendous amount about sightings. In fact, we eventually learned practically everything we could--given the limited information that comes from sighting reports. We studied UFO effects on the environment, the witnesses, the times of day or night of the sightings, the number of witnesses, the proximity of the witnesses to the objects, how long the objects were in view, their movements, their colors, their proximity to the ground, how they appeared and disappeared, radar traces, photographs, movies, tapes, occupants, and so on.

The Anthropomorphization of UFOs

But all this information did not come easily. We often found ourselves playing a cat-and-mouse game with the UFOs. When you wanted them to appear they did not, and when you least expected it, they appeared. Their actions seemed purposeful and puzzling. For me, and for other investigators, the UFOs' actions subtly imbued the objects with a life and personality of their own. This was in part because the contactee controversy and the ridicule that the subject had endured prevented conservative and intellectually cautious researchers from fully engaging with the idea that the objects were probably piloted or controlled by aliens from another planet--although everyone fully understood that this might very well be the case. But, the question of the objects' origin was still problematic, and because it was difficult to discuss UFOs without attributing intentionality to them, researchers began to imbue the objects themselves with intelligence and purpose, thereby politically sidestepping the issue of who was inside. Thus, researchers talked of UFOs “doing” things, “behaving” strangely, and “not acting” the way they were supposed to.

Attempts at Prediction

While many researchers ascribed intentionality to the hardware, others looked at the objects almost like a natural phenomenon. They developed the idea that UFO activities could be charted like seven-year locusts or eleven-year sun-spot cycles. Studying the supposed periodicity of UFO waves became a primary focus by those who sought to predict their next appearance. Aimé Michel found (erroneously) that they appeared on a global grid pattern. David Saunders, after resigning from the Condon Committee, tried to find global appearance patterns through statistical and temporal analyses of where they had been seen before. The ability to predict when they would appear suggested that they might eventually be studied directly without the complications of the reports. As a result, individual researchers had maps in their rooms with push-pins marking the locations of sightings and UFO organizations published charts and analyses of sighting report locations--all in vain attempts to find patterns and predictability in UFO sighting waves.



The ultimate failure to predict waves or appearances of any type, suggested that the UFOs exhibited intelligent and non-predictable behavior. They appeared when they wanted to without regard to pattern. Furthermore, their activities seemed to indicate that they were as fascinated by us as we were by them. They did not seem to be hostile, but neither were they friendly. Whatever the case, the UFOs remained steadfastly shy and they appeared to keep a healthy distance from us.

Occupant and Witness Behavior

By the early 1970s, researchers were looking for clues to their behavior in the growing number of "occupant" sightings. Occupants presented an embarrassing dilemma to investigators. They directly suggested the extraterrestrial hypothesis and they also seemed extremely close to the spurious contactee claims. Caution was indicated. Even using the word "alien" seemed extreme and researchers substituted the more neutral "occupant" or "humanoid."

The occupants acted strangely, mirroring the bizarre behavior of the objects and the witnesses. Occupants would sometimes paralyze and inspect terrified and paralyzed witnesses. They would move away quickly from prying eyes. The occupants seemed to make no attempt at communication. They were not interested in formal contact. They were not friendly or hostile. Their behavior seemed to be bizarre, ungraspable, absurd.

The objects themselves acted in similarly bizarre ways. They "chased" cars. They "materialized" and then "dematerialized." They landed and, upon being seen by a witness, took off, for no apparent reason. If occupants were near the objects they appeared to be able to get inside the UFOs almost instantly. Furthermore, they did not land on the White House lawn and say take me to your leader. They did not make a sudden public appearance. Their activities did not conform to models of how aliens should act.

Witness behavior was also bizarre at times. People suddenly went to sleep upon seeing a UFO. Some witnesses made the seemingly logical, but strangely illogical, claim that they "stopped their car to get a better look" at a UFO. Others talked about a strange psychic connections that they felt with UFOs. They reported being "mesmerized" by UFOs. UFO researchers had no idea what all this meant.

For debunkers, the UFO phenomenon's quixotic behavior was proof that they did not exist. For UFO proponents, their supposedly alien behavior became evidence of their existence. It was assumed that their thought processes were so different that we humans would not be able to understand them. In an article I wrote for an Italian UFO journal in 1978, I asked the same questions that Aimé Michel and other researchers had asked in one form or another: "If we are dealing with an extraterrestrial phenomenon of an advanced technological nature, has our intellectual achievement evolved enough to comprehend the phenomenon in its technological and cultural aspects? Or, is the phenomenon so advanced, so far beyond the state of the art of all our intellectual disciplines, that it will not be understood until we have progressed through many stages of scientific and cultural advancement?" I felt at this time that we might never be able to fathom alien intelligence and perhaps even their intentions.



The growing number of really strange UFO reports contributed to my thought about the subject. The 1970 Dr. "X" case in France with his strange rash over his navel, and his "levitation" episode was incomprehensible. Bizarre alien encounter cases took place like the Imjarvi, Finland, case in which an alien suddenly appeared in front of two paralyzed skiers standing in the snow. The alien showed the two astonished men a box with a light on it and then disappeared in a few seconds. Afterwards, the two men were sick and their urine was black. This case lacked logic. Although more accessible, the 1961 Barney and Betty Hill case puzzled researchers with its hints at alien examination and interest in reproduction. And there was also the embarrassing Antonio Villas Boas abduction event with its sexual contact between a human and female occupant. Most UFO researchers simply ignored this case.

The Search for the Cover-up

Another strain of UFO research existed parallel to the sighting report analyses. Almost from the beginning of UFO research investigators have been involved with the idea that the government has greater knowledge about the UFO phenomenon than it is admitting. Many researchers became heavily invested in government cover-up theories and devoted tremendous amounts of time and energy into exposing the conspiracy. There is no doubt that the government covered up, but just what was hidden is still a matter of debate. Did it conceal its incompetence and lack of action, or did it cover-up critically important information about the objects? If it was the latter, we have yet to discover the origins of the cover-up, the staffing of the cover-up, paperwork leading to and extending the cover-up, funding for the cover-up, past and current directors of the cover-up, rationale for the cover-up (always extremely vague and changing), and the bureaucracy that would necessarily have to be in place for the cover-up. James McDonald's question of 1967, is it a "cover-up or foul-up?" still holds true. When I published *The UFO Controversy in America* in 1975, after examining this question I, like McDonald, became convinced that the government was more inept than "ept."

Although many researchers took the government conspiracy as a matter of faith, they found it difficult to present complete, irrefutable, evidence of its existence. Yet they are propelled by a certain academic logic. If the government has *not* covered up, than we are dealing with an astonishing lack of interest in the most important scientific phenomenon, and potential threat to the national security, that the world has ever known. This is a situation of major consequence and discovering it constitutes a major contribution knowledge. On the other hand, because of the nature and importance of the phenomenon, the silence that the government had displayed towards UFOs since 1969 when Project Blue Book closed, *should* be indicative of a cover-up. In this way it would suggest that the government is aware of the problem and, presumably, is doing something about it. Knowledge of a government cover-up, therefore, should be comforting to us.

Cover-up theories imbue the government with an all-encompassing power that gives comfort to those who would like the phenomenon to be controlled in some way. Without cover-up, the phenomenon is on the loose, free from restraint, and free to do what it wants. Thus, the popular cultural fantasy that the government has signed a "contract" with the aliens puts limits on them, suggests weaknesses that they might have, and points to the government's efficiency in handling the situation.



And there is evidence that the government *has* covered up. It was secretive about its Project Blue Book, Sign, and Grudge. It covered up its Project Mogul balloon project. It covered up the 1953 Robertson Panel. And when information about the Robertson panel was released in 1958, the Air Force covered up its CIA connections. It has released heavily censored documents. It has investigated more individual UFO events than had been previously thought. This was important to learn because it pointed to the idea that the government could be hiding even more important facts and programs.

In spite of the difficulties with pinning down a government cover-up, the investigation of government involvement with UFOs performed an important function in UFO research. It gave us the opportunity to see how the government has confronted an anomalous phenomenon that has stubbornly resisted its scrutiny. It allowed us insight into what I feel is the most important scandal in the history of science. Still, after decades of careful scrutinizing, the government conspiracy to cover-up the secret of the saucers has yet to be found.

The Roswell crash, of course, is an integral part of this scenario. It remains stubbornly impervious to attempts to find the critical evidence that is needed: the object itself. Indeed, although tantalizing evidence about the crash have surfaced, most of what we know centers on the year 1947. What has happened to the debris after it was taken away from the crash site, which scientists have been studying the debris, what conclusions have been drawn from the studies, what on-going studies of the debris have developed, what government programs have been put into place as a result of irrefutable knowledge of alien visitation, how much money has been appropriated for its study, the location of the Roswell debris over the decades, and a myriad of other important questions still have no answers after over fifteen years of research.

Building a New Professionalism

In spite of the important, but peripheral, issue of government conspiracy, most theories about the purpose and motivations of the UFOs and their occupants were based on their appearance and disappearance--the outside shells of the objects. This proved to be a mistake. Whereas it became impossible to discuss the phenomenon without talking about "UFOs," by the beginning of the 1980s, this began to change. Researchers began to adopt a new attitude when they realized that they were not going to receive the scientific legitimacy and help they had hoped for. While the scientific community's support remained desirable, researchers were, by necessity, forced to build their own scientific community. MUFON became more professional, the Fund for UFO Research began to finance worthwhile projects, the Center for UFO Studies published important monographs and under the editorship of Michael Swords (and now Stuart Appelle) made the *Journal of UFO Studies* the world's only refereed journal devoted to UFOs. Quantitative techniques involving statistical analyses and computer databases were developed to analyze sighting reports. More standardized investigative techniques were developed. The general thrust was still in the service of verification and prediction, but on a more sophisticated level.



The Search for Intentionality

Still, much of this impetus was based on the behavior of the objects, not on the intentions of the aliens. This is a critical difference. A difference that led us astray for many years. The problem was that even with databases and quantification, there was a paucity of evidence with which to mount serious theories about the most critically important aspect of the phenomenon: its intentions. In fact, the lack of evidence became an indication of intent in itself. Some researchers theorized that the lack of hard evidence of its existence was evidence of the UFOs' intention to reveal themselves slowly so as not to shock the culture. Although this theory was suggestive, it was, like all theories of the period, evidence-free.

By 1980 we had come to an impasse in our knowledge of UFOs. It occurred to me that we were dealing with the only phenomenon in human history that actively dictated the terms upon which it could be studied and we might never be able to even learn about the UFO "mystery" other than describing its outward manifestations. I was wrong. The abduction phenomenon has emerged as the great opening to the intent and motivations of the aliens that UFO sightings could not provide.

PART TWO: THE PRESENT--ANALYSIS AND DEBATE OVER INTENTION

The Importance of Abductions

The abduction phenomenon has changed everything. I must admit that when the abduction phenomenon first came to the attention of UFO researchers, I had no idea of its importance and I gave it scant attention. I thought that the Hill and Andreasson cases might be psychological and the Pascagoula and Travis Walton cases were hoaxes. When I first met Budd Hopkins in 1982, who had published the breakthrough book *Missing Time* the year before, I had not bothered to read it. It was well-known that people were imperfect recording agents and with the added hurdle of hypnosis as an aid to recall, the idea that abduction claims could yield reliable information seemed to me to be a long-shot. Some researchers in the 1960s and 1970s had tried hypnosis with abduction claimants, but with only limited results. Abduction information could not be verified, and much of the information seemed too fantastic and "iffy" to be taken seriously.

Once again, I was wrong. Although Hopkins was not yet doing hypnosis of abductees himself, leaving it to Dr. Aphrodite Clamar, his excellent research and analysis eventually inspired me to a course of action I never dreamed possible: becoming an abduction hypnotist. From 1986 to the present I have looked at the UFO phenomenon in a very different way than I did for the first twenty years of my involvement with it. With that decision I forever changed the way I look at the UFO phenomenon. Abductions have provided what was impossible to obtain with sighting reports: evidence of alien motivation, intent, and purpose. The abduction phenomenon has allowed us to enter inside the objects rather than simply observe the outside shells of the objects. It has also allowed us to enter into the minds of the aliens.



The abduction phenomenon basically ended the controversy about whether UFOs "exist" or not. (Indeed, most researchers no longer argue over whether they are extraterrestrial or not.) Sightings of the objects now seem somewhat less relevant than before. The weight of the evidence has finally overcome researchers qualms about the existence of the occupants who are now "aliens" who come from elsewhere.

The Debate Shifts

The abduction phenomenon has shifted the UFO debate. The new argument is not about whether the phenomenon is "real," but, as Budd Hopkins framed it, "What they are doing to us." Are they friendly and benign, or unfriendly and malignant? Are they here for our good or for their good? Will the world stay the same or will it be irretrievably changed by them? Is this the end of the human race, or the beginning of a joint partnership with another species? These debates represent an evolutionary advance in our thinking. They have centered the argument squarely on the most important aspect of the UFO phenomenon--the minds of the aliens, not the aliens' hardware. This debate has taken place in the past, but now the abduction phenomenon provides something we had not had before: evidence.

New Insights

The abduction phenomenon research has also clarified many puzzling facets of the sighting phenomenon. We now know that car stoppings, inspections of people, bizarre alien behavior, lack of communication, and pulling-off-to-the-side-of-the-road-to-get-a-better-look, are all typical of abduction activity. The mysterious Dr. X case was, in all likelihood, one of many abductions that he has experienced throughout the course of his life. All the features of this case that so puzzled researchers can easily fit into the fragmented memories and physical sequelae of a typical abduction scenario. The Imjarvi case, and others like it, almost certainly had much more to it and what we do know is most likely unreliable memory fragments. UFOs do not chase cars--people forget that the car stopped, and they were abducted. Occupants do not inspect paralyzed witnesses standing in the woods--abductees confuse bits and pieces of their examination on board a UFO with first seeing the object and the aliens. Aliens do not instantly enter an object--abductees forget the hour or so between first seeing the aliens and last seeing them. They commonly collapse the two separate memory fragments of seeing aliens coming out of and going into a UFO, and fashion these snippets of memory into a smooth scenario of aliens instantly entering an object. People do not go to sleep when they see a UFO--they are abducted and when they come out of their abduction mental alteration, they "remember waking up." Major discrepancies in the details of UFO sightings by multiple witnesses may have another origin than just faulty memory.

We now know that the location of sightings is probably the least important UFO statistic. It makes very little difference for this phenomenon, as long as abductions can take place in relative privacy. Before the insights provided by the abduction phenomenon, we thought that when a person had more than one UFO sighting, his credibility and the sightings were suspect. A UFO sighting was, in Hynek's words, "a rare bird." Now we know this is not true; abductees frequently have multiple sightings and many, if not most, of them mask abductions. It is no longer as fruitful to ask the question: what did the witness see? The more important question is: Why did the witness see it?



Understanding Alien Thought

The abduction phenomenon has ended the speculation about whether we will be able to understand alien life and thought processes. I think that the answer now is clear. We cannot understand the technology that we see in this phenomenon, but we can understand the more important aspects of the phenomenon--the motivations, purposes, and goals of the intelligence behind the it. The evidence does not support the idea that alien intelligence is so cognitively and culturally different that it is beyond our abilities to comprehend.

A little more than a decade ago if I had been asked how I could use the word "baby" in the same sentence with "UFO," I would have been dumbfounded about how to do it. When Budd Hopkins first uncovered the reproduction link between humans and aliens, it came as a complete shock. In the beginning, we suspected that if this were an extraterrestrial phenomenon we would expect to see very advanced technology. Without it they would not be able to get here from "there." But what we did not expect was that the aliens would have an extremely advanced knowledge of human physiology. Once we began to understand the implications of their physiological designs, the full range of the alien motivations began to come into relief.

The Problem of Hypnosis

The problem of hypnosis still remains. Hypnosis has been roundly criticized by everyone, expert and nonexpert, often correctly and more often, incorrectly. Every UFO researcher who uses hypnosis is vulnerable to criticism--it is, to a certain extent, the nature of the beast. Hypnosis is easy. Anybody can hypnotize anybody else as long as that person wants to be hypnotized. Anybody can, like the field investigators of old, be a "mind investigator." Used properly hypnosis can be a powerful means of gaining insight into the UFO and abduction phenomenon. The problems arise when the hypnotist does not know how to ask the right questions, in the right way, at the right time, and when the answer is given, separate valid information from invalid.

UFO researchers using hypnosis have been easy prey for debunkers who automatically assume that they "lead" subjects, persuade hapless victims that they have been kidnapped by aliens from another planet, and inject "memories" into their subjects' minds. To make matters worse, we are put in the unusual position of defending the technique without fully understanding why memories are hidden away, how they are recalled, and how hypnosis facilitates the recall (it is, of course, important to realize that abduction memories are recalled all the time without the aid of hypnosis). Because we use hypnosis, we can expect a torrent of criticism to continue into the foreseeable future.

In spite of its problems, hypnosis has been the instrument that has put us in a position to answer the major questions about the UFO phenomenon and therefore to solve the mystery once and for all. Used correctly, it has been a powerful and effective, if flawed, tool to gain insight and information about this phenomenon.



On balance over the last fifty years we have a lot to be proud of. We have withstood intensive ridicule and scorn for decades and emerged, not quite victorious, but still struggling for the truth. We have cracked open the UFO phenomenon and advanced well beyond sighting analysis.

By rights the society should absolutely reject any such wild and absurd claims of being abducted by denizens of another world, but in fact, the abduction phenomenon is more accepted in the society than we have a right to expect. The media has been ranged from viciously debunking to quite supportive, but in a sense, *any* support is more than we could have hoped for. UFO proponents have been on hundreds of television and radio shows in the past few years and many of these shows have given us a fair hearing. Of course, the subject is still steeped in ridicule, especially in the academic world, but we have to be pleased with the substantial inroads we have made.

We have made these inroads without the aid of the general academic community or the government. Bit by bit we have been adding to our knowledge of this phenomenon. One can argue that the tremendous growth of our knowledge in the past twenty years has been our most remarkable achievement. This is good because it shows the continuous increase and development of our evidence. For the first time, we have depth. We have burrowed so deeply into the phenomenon that we are now a state of information overload. We are having trouble keeping up with the meaning of it all. The secrets of and the secrecy behind the UFO and abduction phenomenon are crumbling. **We are on the verge of solving the UFO mystery once and for all.**

What has been emerging has, to say the least, been thought-provoking. The UFO phenomenon is not like what we thought it might be. We are seeing an alien agenda that is using humans for selfish purposes. I suffer from an odd dualism: I have been somewhat elated at the breakthroughs that have been accomplished, but I have been quite distressed over what has been found. The future, I think, is going to be very different for UFO research. We must renew our efforts to meet the challenges that this phenomenon presents to us.

THE FUTURE: THE TASKS BEFORE US

Although we have accomplished a great deal, there is still much that needs to be done. It is distressing to me that we do not have as many younger scholars as I would like interested in this phenomenon. The academic community is still resolutely hostile to the legitimacy of the subject and if a student accepts its legitimacy, it is at the peril of his or her career. Thus, we must concentrate on tenured members of the academic community if we wish to have them contribute. It is important that we work for privacy safeguards so that younger scholars can research the phenomenon free from academic ridicule and scorn. Without new research and new ideas, we cannot hope to move forward in our knowledge.

The Threat of the New Age

We must work to divorce the phenomenon from New Age entanglements--including past lives, spirit guides, Pleiadians, guardian angels, Zeta Reticulans, and the whole gamut of fringe material that



overjoys our enemies and dismays our supporters. The Heaven's Gate suicide cult demonstrates the extremes to which people can go with New Age beliefs coupled with ignorance of the UFO phenomenon. There is nothing wrong with finding spirituality, guidance, and comfort in the New Age movement. But the UFO phenomenon has nothing to do with the New Age. Thousands of inveterate and dedicated investigators from MUFON, APRO, NICAP, CSI and scores of other organizations who spent years of time tracking down UFO sightings were not chasing past lives or spiritual enlightenment. They searched for solid evidence of the phenomenon's existence and composition. They set up strict criteria for the evaluation of sightings and witnesses that still remain the backbone of UFO research. We must not give that up. We must maintain the scientific spirit of these pioneer researchers. If not, we are in danger of being subsumed by mushy-headed, nonscientific research that will endanger us all. Exchanging rigorous and systematic investigation for New Age beliefs means that we surrender to occult, mystical, and religious interpretations of this phenomenon that are antithetical to all that we have learned in the past. Once again, Hynek's talk in 1970 is appropriate: all speculations must be backed up with valid evidence.

If an abductee wants to insert memories and experiences into a New Age structure, that is fine. After all, it is his or her life, not the researcher's. It is up to the hypnotist to help the abductee cope with this phenomenon in the healthiest way possible for that individual. However, in my opinion it is not fine or even professional for the hypnotist to have a New Age structure as the dominant force in his or her research agenda.

Standardization of Methodology and Protocol

We must have a standardization of methodology and protocol to improve the quality of hypnosis around the country and the world. As long as researchers use hypnosis or variants of it in any way they see fit, we are going to have a chaotic situation. There are right ways and wrong ways to do abduction research. That is an absolute fact. We must sort out the most effective ways to protect and help the abductee and also gain knowledge about the phenomenon. A standardized methodology and protocol is essential for this development. The first step in this quest was the code of ethics developed by David Gotlib, Stuart Appelle, and Mark Rodeghier. We must build on this.

We need a certification agency and evaluative system to monitor hypnotists and oversee the activities of those who seek to understand this phenomenon. Without this, shameful and unprofessional circumstances can occur. For example, a thirty-eight-year-old woman contacted her local UFO group to explore her abduction experiences. The Midwest UFO group she contacted used a *nineteen year old* undergraduate to conduct its abduction hypnosis, with its attendant reproductive and sexual content. When the abductee underwent hypnosis with the young man, she was too embarrassed to discuss anything in detail and vowed never to go back.

New Perspectives, New Questions

As we launch ourselves into the next phase of UFO research, it seems important to me to have a different perspective on what needs to be done. We must ask some hard questions of ourselves. For example, will the investigation of more sighting reports add significantly to our knowledge of the



phenomenon? Will another one-hundred sighting reports change what we already know? The answer is "perhaps," but only so much can be learned from sighting reports and the history of UFO research demonstrates that we might have probably reached the point of diminishing returns.

Another hard question to ask is: Is it worth the time and expense to continue to search for the government cover-up? Are we now any closer to discovering the cover-up than we were twenty years ago? I am not sure of the answer, but I think that it is legitimate to pose the question. If there is no government cover-up then we have hurt ourselves immeasurably. We have asked the public and the scientific community to believe something that is not true and it therefore makes the entire UFO and abduction phenomenon vulnerable to attack because conspiracy proponents require the public to believe two inherently unbelievable propositions: UFOs exist as anomalous objects, and the government has covered up knowledge of them. If the enemies of UFO research can put doubt in the public mind about the government conspiracy, then it will be easier for the public to believe that UFOs do not exist because the two have been linked together when they should not be. If there is no government cover-up, it is time to cut our losses and fight other battles.

If there has been a massive cover-up, we must take stock of what it means and, if we cannot force its revelation, we must go on with the business of solving the UFO mystery the way we have done for fifty years--without government help or validation. Fifty years of searching for government cover-ups has, sadly, netted us little information about the UFO phenomenon itself, although it has given us more sighting reports and quite a lot of knowledge about the inner workings of the government. In the end, we must get on with our research lives, regardless of what the government knows or does not know.

We have other hard questions. If a UFO crashed at Roswell, then we must address the questions of why we have not been able to trace its consequences through the last half-century. An event of such magnitude--it would be the most astounding and important event in human history--would most likely have left a number of trails in different arenas--political, scientific, military, and so on. That we have not been able to detect positively any of those trails is sobering. Perhaps the evidence is hidden in researchers' files. If so, they should come forward with that evidence and begin to illustrate the historical record of the Roswell debris for the past fifty years. Without that chain of evidence, convincing the public that a UFO crashed at Roswell is going to be virtually impossible.

A New Stage of Research

I think that we are now in a very different stage of research and discovery. In the past we talked about the "UFO phenomenon." Then, we talked about the "abduction phenomenon." In fact, these two phenomena are only parts of the whole. What we are dealing with, ultimately, is the **alien phenomenon**. The evidence is now quite strong that we have been invaded by aliens and abductees are subject to their abilities. They have not made formal contact because they did not want to. They have remained secret because they want to. They have been engaging in a systematic physical exploitation of humans because of a specific agenda that advances their designs. Humans do not figure into the equation as partners. This is an alien-centered phenomenon, not a UFO or abduction phenomenon. All of this requires new



thought, new insight, and new approaches to study. I think this reorientation is now underway, but it will take time.

Reaching out to the Academic Community

We must have greater outreach to the academic community. Scientists are only part of the academic community. We need people who can think critically and logically from all the academic disciplines as well as those who are not a part of academics. The scientific community is only one aspect of the vast array of academics who can learn about this phenomenon and contribute. The old idea of trying to interest astronomers and physicists makes little sense anymore. There is no one single branch of academics that is more likely to study the alien phenomenon, but the psychological community probably comes more in contact with abductees than anyone else and it is fertile ground to gain researchers. Ideally, professionals in the medical and biological sciences, especially biologists, neurologists, gynecologists, and physiologists, need to be consulted. A good place to start is with the MUFON consultants. I think it is time that we begin to use the talent that we already have access to.

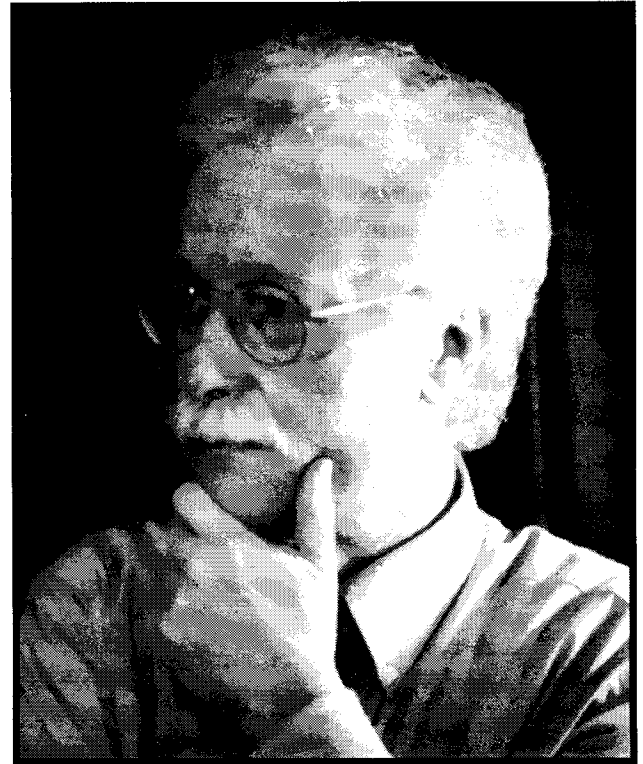
Finally, I believe that we are in a new stage of UFO research. When the UFO mystery is solved we must begin the task of confronting it honestly and intelligently with a maximum amount of valid information. Coping with the phenomenon is going to be extremely difficult, if possible at all. As Bette Davis said in *All About Eve*, "Fasten your seat belts. It's going to be a bumpy ride." We have a lot to do and as the 21st century approaches we must be ready with new ideas and new methodologies to meet the challenges that confront us. The truth is out there and we will attain it. Nobody said it was going to be easy, and the history of UFO research amply demonstrates this, but in the final analysis, we are right about the phenomenon and we have been right all along. We will prevail.



David M. Jacobs, Ph.D.

Dr. David M. Jacobs is Associate Professor of History at Temple University, specializing in twentieth century American history and culture. He has been a UFO researcher since the mid-1960s. In 1973, he completed his doctoral dissertation in field of intellectual history at the University of Wisconsin--Madison on the controversy over unidentified flying objects in America--only the second Ph.D. degree granted involving a UFO-related theme.

David has written and delivered many articles, papers, and addresses on the subject of UFOs and abductions. For the past nineteen years he has offered the only regularly scheduled university full-credit course on the UFO phenomenon. Since 1982 he has concentrated on UFO abductions conducting over 700 hypnotic regressions with over 100 abductees.



David and Irene attended MUFON's First Annual UFO Conference at Bradley University, Peoria, IL in 1970.

David is the author of *The UFO Controversy in America* (Indiana University Press, 1975). It is the only singly-authored non-debunking UFO book ever published by an academic press. His second book, *Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions* (1992), was the first book on UFOs published by Simon & Schuster. It is the most complete exposition of the structure and meaning of the abduction phenomenon yet published. Based on over 300 accounts of abduction events, Dr. Jacobs outlined a typical abduction experience on a minute-by-minute basis and its effects on the victims.

He and his colleagues Budd Hopkins and John S. Carpenter have given a series of workshops for mental health professionals in the methods of abduction hypnosis, research, and therapy. He has appeared on hundreds of radio and television shows in America and Europe discussing the UFO and abduction phenomenon. He and Hopkins devised the important 1991 Roper Poll.

In January, 1998, Simon & Schuster will publish Dave's next book, *The Threat: The Secret Alien Agenda*. The book will attempt to answer some of the most important questions about UFOs, abductions, and aliens. It also will try to clarify issues that have not been fully dealt with in the literature.

Dr. Jacobs lives with his wife, Irene, and their sons, Evan and Alexander, in Wyndmoor, PA. His mailing address is Department of History, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122.



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