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Comments

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Popular Culture Association in the South

The UFO Contact Movement from the 1950s to the Present

In recent years, claims of UFO abduction and/or contact have become an increasing fixture in the mass media. So-called “reality” television shows, such as NBC’s *Unsolved Mysteries*, and syndicated newsmagazines such as *Hard Copy*, and *A Current Affair*, regularly feature UFO accounts. The syndicated *Sightings*, and Fox’s *Encounters* are entirely devoted to UFOs and other paranormal phenomena while a popular new adventure series, *The X-Files*, utilizes current UFO beliefs in its storylines. Abductees, people who claim to have been kidnapped by alien beings, have appeared on talk shows such as *Oprah Winfrey*, *Montel Williams*, *Maury Povich*, *Phil Donahue*, *Sally Jesse Raphael*, *Jenny Jones*, and even *Larry King Live*. In fact, October, 1994 will see the debut of Larry King’s two hour special on UFO abductions and government cover-ups, *UFO Coverup: Live From Area 51*. In 1993, a movie about the supposed UFO abduction of Arizona logger Travis Walton, *Fire in the Sky*, became a modest hit.

The attention given to claims of UFO contact will only increase with the publication of *Abduction* by John E. Mack. A Harvard educated psychiatrist and author of the Pulitzer Prize winning study of Lawrence of Arabia, *A Prince of Our Disorder*, Mack has become convinced of the reality of UFO abductions. In 1993, he founded the Program for Extraordinary Experience Research (PEER), as a project of the Center for Psychology and Social Change, affiliated with Harvard Medical School (Cutting, 25).

Researchers of popular culture should be especially interested in the UFO contact movement because of its close ties to the science fiction genre. Science fiction gave the public the idea of extra-terrestrial

David Hartwell examined current UFO-based cults, such as the Aetherius Society, reaching the conclusion that such groups are “turning SF images into reality with a vengeance” (Hartwell, 88).

Since the beginning of the UFO movement in the late 1940s, beliefs about what the aliens are like and the purpose of their visits to Earth have changed numerous times. The first claims of extended contact with alien beings in the early 1950s were entirely different in form and content from the current, frightening UFO abduction tales. This article will trace the UFO movement from its origin in 1947 to the present, explaining how its prevailing paradigms have changed.

Kenneth Arnold and the Flying Saucers

Kenneth Arnold, an experienced civilian pilot and fire equipment salesman based out of Boise, Idaho, spent the morning of June 24, 1947 installing fire-control equipment at Central Air Service in Chehalis, Washington. Several employees informed him that a C-46 Marine transport plane had crashed somewhere in the Cascade Mountains. After installing the equipment, Arnold hopped in his plane, en route to another appointment in Yakima. Intrigued by a \$5000 reward offered for the plane’s discovery, he took a slight detour over Mount Rainier and made a brief search for wreckage.

While making a 180 degree turn high over the town of Mineral, Washington, a “tremendously bright flash” illuminated the surface of his plane. Startled, Arnold searched the skies for the source of the flash but could see only a single DC-4 far to his left and rear. The light flashed again, and this time he was able to determine the direction from which it came. Approximately one hundred miles away from him and coming at a bearing that would pass them directly in front of his plane were nine peculiar crafts. At first Arnold thought that he was observing a formation of jets, until the craft drew closer and he could see they had wings but no tails. One of the objects was almost crescent-shaped, with a small dome midway between the wing tips. The others were flat “like a pie pan,” with a reflective surface. Their manner of flight was equally strange, “like speed boats on rough water” (Arnold & Palmer, 10-11).

The craft seemed to be coming from nearby Mount Baker area and stayed close to the mountain-tops, weaving around the higher peaks. Arnold managed to clock their speed at roughly 1,600 miles per hour; nearly three times faster than conventional aircraft in the 1940s.

When he landed at the Pendleton, Oregon airport, Arnold described the object for a corps of eager reporters. Most famous was the term he used to describe the objects’ flight-”they flew like a saucer would if you

skipped it across the water.” The press latched on to Arnold’s description and created the phrase “flying saucer” to describe mysterious aerial objects. In recent decades, “U.F.O.,” or unidentified flying object has become the preferred term.

The Arnold sighting was not the first of a strange flying object in the Americas. As far back as 1492 Christopher Columbus logged his sighting of a strange light “like a bad waxen candle that rose up into the sky and went out” near the Bahamas (Hervey, 33). Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century there were isolated reports of strange flying objects.

In the 1800s the U.S. experienced its first major UFO wave. Although it was still several years before the first documented flights of airplanes and dirigibles, witnesses from northern California to Canada reported flying cigar-shaped objects. During one especially impressive sighting in November of 1896, a strange light, behind which some witnesses claimed to see a dark body structure, passed over Sacramento, California. The light was later seen about twenty miles west in Folsom and the San Francisco area (Story, 8-9). Although a few people claimed the “airships” were craft from another planet, the predominant theory in the 19th century was that they were the creation of a “secret inventor.” In most of the cases in which witness claimed to have seen a landed airship, they reported that the occupants were human in appearance.

As technology changed, so did the popular explanations for the mysterious crafts’ origins. During World War II, numerous Allied pilots reported strange objects tailing their planes, leading to fears that UFOs might be the secret weapons of an enemy power. However, after Arnold’s sighting of craft with capabilities far beyond that of conventional aircraft, researchers began to consider the possibility that UFOs were of extraterrestrial origin. His experience almost single-handedly brought UFOs into the space age.

George Adamski and the Contactees

When the popular impression of UFOs changed from German or Japanese secret weapons to vehicles from another planet, the public’s fears changed as well; some feared that UFOs would stage an invasion of Earth. Such fears resembled back to Orson Well’s infamous 1938 broadcast of H.G. Wells’ *War of the Worlds*, which caused a panic when thousands of listeners became convinced that the show was chronicling real events. In the 1950s, UFO invasion films such as *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*, and *Invasion of the Saucer Men* were quite popular. In

UFO invasion films, aliens alternately wanted to enslave us, eat us, or kidnap our women. *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, in which earthlings shoot a peaceful alien, remains a notable exception to the early saucer paranoia.

Surprisingly, given the pop culture response to UFO reports, the first person to claim extended interaction with aliens said that they were friendly, helpful, even noble beings. In 1952 George Adamski collaborated with author Desmond Leslie on *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, which told his “true” story of a series of philosophical contacts with men from Venus, Mars, and Jupiter. Adamski was the first of what would later be many “contactees”; a label given to people who claimed friendly, extended encounters with alien beings.

A Polish immigrant born in 1891, Adamski joined the U.S. Calvary in 1913, serving until an honorable discharge in 1916. From 1916 to 1926, he worked as a painter and maintenance worker in Yellowstone National Park. Fancying himself a sort of wise man or teacher, Adamski started teaching the philosophy of a mysterious group of cosmic wise men called “The Royal Order of Tibet” in 1926. By 1940 he had settled in Valley Center, near Mount Palomar, and worked as a cook in the small cafe owned by one of his students, Alice K. Wells. Mount Palomar was home to, at that time, the world’s largest telescope. An avid astronomy buff, Adamski spent hours looking through his own small telescope in a personal observatory he constructed (Curran, 43-44).

During a spectacular meteor shower in October of 1946, Adamski had his first sighting of a “space ship”—an object “similar in shape to a gigantic dirigible” (Leslie & Adamski, 172). Adamski reported many more sightings, but his most spectacular occurred on a Friday evening in August of 1946, when he and a group of friends watched 184 saucers, broken into squadrons of 52, parade through the sky. After his initial sightings, Adamski made frequent trips to the deserts near his home, in hopes that the space ships might choose to land in less populated areas. In August of 1952, a Mrs. A.C. Bailey from Winslow, Arizona contacted him, indicating her interest in joining his desert forays.

On November 20, 1952, Adamski, his secretary, Lucy McGinnis, Alice Wells, the Baileys, and a Prescott, Arizona couple, Mr. and Mrs. George Williamson, made a day trip into the barren areas near Desert Center in California. The group spent the day exploring until about noon when they sat down to eat some lunch. At that time a plane passed low over their heads, drawing their attention to a “gigantic cigar-shaped silvery ship, without wings or appendages of any kind” that was hovering nearby.

The cigar-shaped ship sped away after a brief period of time. After about five minutes, a smaller saucer-shaped craft appeared and settled into a cove about a half a mile from Adamski's location, who had distanced himself from the rest of the group in hopes of getting closer to the craft. As he busied himself taking pictures, Adamski suddenly noticed a man standing at the entrance of a ravine about a quarter of a mile away. Upon approach, he realized that the being was "from another world" (Leslie & Adamski, 194).

The space person was about five feet six inches tall and weighed about 135 pounds. His skin appeared suntanned. His face, framed by shoulder-length, brown hair, was rounded with an extremely high forehead and large grayish-green eyes that were slightly slanted at the outside. The only clothing he wore was a one piece, chocolate-brown, jump-suit type garment. Adamski's description of the "alien" became the model for contactees for the years to follow. Nearly every contactee described their space friends the same way- all details from the jumpsuit to the shoulder-length hair remained the same in most cases.

The being could not speak English so he and Adamski communicated through hand signals and telepathy. In summary, the alien indicated that he was part of a friendly procession from Venus who had come to Earth out of concern for our recent nuclear testing. Earth, he warned, was in danger of destroying itself and surrounding planets. Soon the being indicated that he had to leave, and he returned to his craft which sped away. At that point Adamski took plaster casts of the being's footprints and received affidavits from the others present, who swore to have seen the being and his craft from afar.

Flying Saucers Have Landed, made Adamski a celebrity. He followed its success with *Inside the Space Ships*, which chronicled even more spectacular adventures with the spacemen. In his second book, Adamski gives the being he met in 1952 the name "Orthon" and meets a Martian named "Firkon" and a Saturnian named "Ramu." As did Orthon, Ramu and Firkon resembled earthlings in every way. The beings spoke near-perfect English by this point and told Adamski that they now lived on Earth, passing as humans. They managed to hold down jobs by visiting their home planets only during work holidays.

Perhaps the most spectacular adventure Adamski recounts in *Inside the Space Ships* is his saucer ride to a giant mother ship hovering above the Earth, where he met two gorgeous space women, "Kalna" and "Ilmuth", and a thousand-year-old Venusian wise man who told him that man could take his rightful place in the cosmos if he could only learn to love his brother (Adamski, 63).

All of the “space brothers” that Adamski met espoused a similar philosophy as the Master’s. In many places, his books take on a near-religious tone, using extensive Christian symbolism. Among other things, the space brothers told him that Jesus was an alien “incarnated” on Earth to help humans learn to be peaceful and loving and the Biblical fallen angels are actually the universe’s criminals and “trouble makers” which the aliens had banished to Earth (Adamski, 134-135).

Adamski’s curious mixture of the sacred and the space age continued in his final book, *Flying Saucers Farewell*. One lengthy chapter, entitled “The Bible and the UFO” provides lengthy interpretations of Biblical passages in an attempt to prove that references to “fiery chariots” actually refer to alien spacecraft. He concludes with a philosophical anecdote about the role of Satan on Earth.

There have been dozens of contactees since Adamski. For example, Howard Menger, a New Jersey sign painter, claimed to have talked to the crews of flying saucers that “landed many times” near his home in Highbridge. The cover of 1959s *From Outer Space to You* depicts a gorgeous space woman that Menger met as a boy of ten:

She seemed to radiate and glow as she sat on the rock, and I wondered if it were due to the unusual quality of the material she wore, which had a shimmering, shiny texture not unlike but far surpassing the sheen of nylon. The clothing had no buttons, fasteners or seams I could discern. She wore no makeup, which would have been unnecessary to the fragile transparency of her Camellia-like skin with pinkish undertones (Menger, 26).

Other notable contactees include Gabriel Green, who ran for president in 1960 on the advice of his “space brothers”; George Van Tassel, who organized several large UFO conferences in the Arizona desert after his experience; and Dr. Frank Stranges, who claimed to have attended a meeting with a Venusian named Val Thor in the Pentagon. The glory days for contactees, however, ended in the late 1960s. By that time man had reached the moon and knew much more about the surrounding universe. Claims of beautiful cities on Mars and Venus seemed naive in retrospect. Adamski’s claim that he had seen the Earth as a ball of white light while in orbit on the Venusian mothership was but one notable casualty of the space program.

Nevertheless, a few contactee groups have survived. In March of 1954, George King, a thirty-five year old Londoner with an interest in the occult, was washing dishes in his apartment, when a loud voice declared him to be “the Voice of Interplanetary Parliament” (King, 10). Shortly after the prophetic announcement, King began channeling

“Cosmic Masters”, including Mars Sector 6, Jupiter 92, and Jesus Christ (Clark, 15). Formed in 1955, King’s *The Aetherius Society* still enjoys moderate success, with active branches in Hollywood, Detroit, Toronto, London, Auckland and Sydney (Aetherius Society, 1).

The Unarius Society, founded by Ruth and Ernest Norman in the late sixties, has also survived. Unarians believe that Ruth, is the “present incarnation of a supreme spiritual being who visited earth many times before” who goes by the name of “Uriel” (Curran, 28). Among the people Ruth/Uriel claims to have been in a past life are—Confucius, Socrates, Henry VIII, Benjamin Franklin, Mary of Bethany, King Arthur, and Peter the Great. One of the Unarius Society’s many publications, *The Restoration: Accomplishments Past and Present of Prince Uriel*, includes photographs of Ruth dressed as these various historical figures (Norman 1982, throughout). Members undergo past-life regression sessions with Ruth/Uriel to find out about their past lives on other planets. Particularly, members hope to learn about misdeeds they may have performed in “the former lifetimes you have lived on this or some other world”, for such misdeeds are believed to cause problems in their present incarnation (Unarius, 1).

Kidnapped!

During the late 1960s, UFO occupant reports experienced drastic changes. People started to come forward with stories of alien contact that differed greatly from the happy, spiritual encounters of the contactees. While contactees espoused willing contact with human-like “space brothers”, this new breed claimed to have been kidnapped by inhuman alien creatures. A new name appeared in UFO circles; the abductee.

In a prototypical UFO abduction account, the victim, or victims, sees a strange object far away in the sky. The object comes closer and closer. Suddenly the person blacks out and has no recall of the following events. The next thing that person remembers is looking at a clock and realizing that a couple of hours have passed that cannot be accounted for. Troubled by this memory gap or “missing time” as it is called in UFO circles, the victim may undergo hypnosis or other therapies to attempt to remember this period of time. While under hypnosis the victim recalls that strange, alien, beings took him or her aboard their ship, submitting him or her to an exhaustive and often painful physical examination. The victim is then released with little or no memory of the event. Most UFO abduction researchers believe that the “aliens” somehow erase the victims’ memory of the abduction.

Betty and Barney Hill

The fantastic story of Betty Hill, New Hampshire social worker and her husband Barney, a postal officer, set the prototype for abduction accounts. In September of 1961, the Hills were returning home from a vacation in Canada. At some point during their drive, Betty noticed a “white star” in the sky which seemed to be following their car. After a long “chase”, during which they became extremely frightened, the couple stopped their car near North Woodstock. Barney got out and watched through binoculars as the object tilted downward and started descending. He was able to see a row of lighted windows behind which stood several figures wearing shiny black uniforms and black caps. Fearing the creatures were going to “trap” him, Barney panicked and jumped back into his car.

Suddenly, the Hills found themselves at a point further down the road. When they arrived at home, they realized their journey “had taken a couple of hours longer than it should” (Randles, 18). Betty began to have nightmares about strange faces and medical examinations, which became so upsetting that the couple sought help from Dr. Benjamin Simon, a Boston psychiatrist, who chose to utilize hypnosis as a means of relieving the couple’s anxieties. Since the Hills were a mixed-racial couple in the turbulent sixties, Simon felt that their stresses might stem from the societal pressures on such a relationship. Much to his surprise, under hypnosis Barney and Betty told him a bizarre story of being taken aboard a landed flying saucer by strange men.

Under hypnosis the couple said the object had landed, disgorging several creatures who escorted the Hills into the craft. Barney described the strange men for Dr. Simon:

[They] had rather odd-shaped heads, with a large cranium, diminishing in size as it got towards the chin. And the eyes continued around to the sides of the head, so it appeared that they could see several degrees beyond the lateral extent of our vision...The texture of the skin...was grayish, almost metallic looking...I didn’t notice any hair...[and] there just seemed to be two slits that represented nostrils (Fuller, 260).

Once aboard the craft, the beings subjected the couple to a series of strange examinations. Barney was placed on a table that was too short for his body and prodded with several different objects. The creatures pulled out his false teeth. They seemed unable to fathom why Betty’s teeth could not also be removed. Betty, whose account of the examination was much more detailed than Barney’s, said that the beings poked

her with several different strange instruments, pulled hair from her head, and took skin scrapings and nail clippings. During her examination Betty conversed with an alien who appeared to be the leader. When she asked the leader where he was from, he produced “a star map” which she later reproduced while under hypnosis.

Dr. Simon remained skeptical as to the reality of the Hill’s story. He believed that the abduction was a shared delusion based on Betty’s nightmare that manifested under hypnosis. Simon noted inconsistencies in the couple’s stories (for example, Betty noted that the creatures spoke English, but Barney said they did not have mouths) which are characteristic of dreams (Klass, 12). Despite his reservations Dr. Simon collaborated with the Hill’s and journalist John Fuller on a book about their experiences, *The Interrupted Journey: Two Lost Hours Aboard a Flying Saucer*. The book was a best-seller. The Hills were suddenly celebrities, their story known the world over.

Perhaps the single most important feature of the Hill case was their initial amnesia about their experience. Neither Betty and Barney remembered the abduction until **after** they underwent hypnotic regression, though they did have strange nightmares. Abduction researchers alternately argue that UFO-related memory loss occurs as a result of the alien’s intervention, i.e. the aliens make the victim forget, and that the memory loss occurs as a reaction to extreme trauma. Regardless, the phenomenon of amnesia following a UFO experience or “missing time” became the central feature of most, but not all, abduction accounts.

What Do They Look Like?

From the late 1970s through the early 1980s, UFO contact cases once again went through pronounced changes. First of all, the UFO community came to a much-needed, albeit forced, “consensus” as to what the aliens looked like.

One of the strongest arguments against the reality of UFOs is the lack of consensus amongst reports— especially those involving reported sightings of alien beings. To be sure, most contactees reported visitations with tall, blond, aryan, humanoid beings, but most UFOlogists did not take the pseudo-religious contactee reports seriously. Other sightings of reported alien beings exhibited a startling, even embarrassing, diversity.

On November 16, 1963, four witnesses in Sandling Park in Kent in England, saw an oval-shaped object land near some trees after which a “human-sized black figure, headless, with webbed feet and wings like

a bat" shuffled toward them (Hough, 112). In September of 1973, a family in Sydney, North Carolina reported a being with glowing red eyes, pointed ears, long hair, a hooked nose and grey skin. A month later, on October 16, a copper-colored UFO swooped down over Watauga, Tennessee and a tall creature with claw-like hands and wide blinking eyes attempted to grab several children. That same day witnesses reported that a UFO landed on a highway in Mississippi. Occupants of one car reported a humanoid with a wide mouth, webbing between its legs and flipper feet. The next day near Chatham, Virginia, two boys were chased by a three to four-foot-tall eye-less "white thing" that ran sideways. In November 1973, Florence Dow of New Hampshire encountered a creature wearing a "black coat and wide-brim hat pulled down over a face that looked as if it had been covered with masking tape" (Randle, 140).

The above examples should serve to illustrate the diversity in reports of the appearance of aliens; but they are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Witnesses have reported giants and dwarves, hairy creatures and bald creatures, creatures with three legs and creatures with none. In other words, reports of UFO occupants used to differ as widely as the human imagination, which served to damage their credibility.

Curiously, American UFO researchers have reacted much differently to the total lack of consistency in UFO reports than those in other countries. Many UFO researchers in France and England have entirely rejected the notion that UFOs are simply visitors from another planet. Rather, they relate UFO stories to the fairy encounters of old, noting regional differences in their form and content; and suggest that such encounters are very personal and related to the needs of the witness. Most American UFO researchers, however, are unwilling to entertain such a hypothesis, preferring the more exciting theory that UFOs are objectively real visitors from the stars. It should be of no surprise, then, that Americans have attempted to force homogeneity into reports of UFO occupants.

In 1987, Walt Andrus, director of the Mutual UFO Network, the United States' largest UFO research organization, announced that, after studying thousands of UFO occupant encounters, he had come to the conclusion that a paltry four types of alien beings are visiting Earth- a small humanoid, "an experimental animal", a human-like entity, and the "robot" (Hough, 114). Andrus provided precise descriptions of each creature. Apparently he conveniently forgot about the

long-haired, hook-nosed creature of Sydney, North Carolina and Florence Dows' dapper, masking-tape covered rogue, among others. In fact, pronouncements such as these from major researchers in the UFO field have served to homogenize UFO reports. Those reports that match the preferred descriptions are heavily publicized, those that do not are considered hoaxes, or ignored altogether.

Most recently, American UFO researchers have focused on but one creature dubbed the "Grey". The Grey closely resembles the creatures encountered by Travis Walton- short in stature, with white or gray skin, a large head with huge cat-like eyes, a slit mouth and small nostrils, and thin, clawed limbs. It would be impossible to overestimate the prominence of the Grey stereotype in UFO circles. Its image is plastered across the cover of most every UFO magazine and book. It has appeared in movies such as *Close Encounters* and countless television UFO documentaries. In recent years the Grey has made an even stronger appearance in American popular culture. A 1991 episode of the Fox situation comedy *Married With Children* featured Grey-type creatures stealing Al Bundy's socks. A 1992 beer commercial featured the beings cavorting about a field drinking brews.

An Artist Enters the Fray

Although the descriptions of aliens in early abduction reports widely differed, most UFO researchers now believe the Grey is responsible for UFO abductions. The person most directly responsible for fostering this notion is a New York artist named Budd Hopkins.

Born in West Virginia in 1931, Hopkins graduated from Oberlin College in 1953 before moving to New York City. He is a nationally recognized painter and sculptor, whose works are displayed in the Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim, Carnegie-Mellon and many other prominent museums and art collections. But, despite his standing in the art community, whenever he is invited to appear on national talk shows, his beliefs about UFO abductions are the topic of conversation (Lindemann, 129).

Hopkin's interest in UFOs stems from one August day in 1964 when he and two friends he sighted a "darkish, elliptical object" in the sky off Cape Cod. The object was about two car-lengths long. Hopkins and his friends concluded that the object was a UFO since it remained stationary as the wind blew clouds past it. After his sighting, Hopkins began to read about UFOs with much interest. Over the next decade, he followed the case of Betty and Barney Hill and the few other abductees that had appeared. By the mid 1970s, he was actively involved in

investigating UFO cases which involved “missing time”. He often enlisted the help of mental health professionals to hypnotize witnesses, in hopes of aiding their recall. In 1981 Hopkins’ first book about his investigations into UFO abductions, *Missing Time: Documented Stories of People Kidnapped By UFOs And Then Returned With Their Memories Erased*, appeared. *Missing Time* became a best-seller, and forever changed the way in which the UFO community would view abductions.

The first revelation contained in *Missing Time* is that one need not remember having seen a UFO to be a possible abduction victim. All of the UFO abductions reported by the media up to this point conformed to a general pattern- a witness spots a UFO or occupants and then blacks out. Upon reawakening, that person immediately realizes that they have some “missing time” and seeks a UFO researcher or therapist to help them recall that “missing” period.

One of Hopkins’ first cases convinced him that a person could have been abducted without any knowledge of the event. In the late 1970s Hopkins learned of a young man named Steve Kilburn (pseudonym), who was deathly terrified about a certain stretch of road he used to pass through on the way to his girlfriend’s house in Maryland. Kilburn wanted to use hypnosis to find the reason behind his fear. He suspected he might have been abducted. At first, Hopkin’s was uneasy about working with Kilburn, admitting that his being fearful about a stretch of road was “an almost ridiculously flimsy pretext for entering into the costly and time-consuming process of hypnotic regression” (Hopkins 1981, 40). Nevertheless he enlisted the help of a Dr. Girard Franklin who hypnotized Kilburn in 1978. Sure enough, under hypnosis, Kilburn recounted a by-then typical tale; his car had been pulled off the road by some strange force, after which he witnessed several small beings who subjected him to a physical examination.

After the Kilburn case, Hopkins embraced the notion that someone could have had an abduction experience without remembering any of it. Naturally this dramatically increased the number of people who could conceivably claim abductions. Any feeling of uneasiness about a place, or a piece of time that could not be accounted for was grounds for suspicion. It was from this new idea that *Missing Time* took its name. If you ever arrived home from a road trip inconceivably late, or blacked out for any reason, UFO abduction was a distinct possibility, according to Hopkins.

The second startling revelation in *Missing Time* appears in one of the last chapters, which recounts the encounters of a Virginia Horton. Horton, it seemed, claimed **two** abduction encounters, which indicated that, for some unknown reason, the aliens were following her life. The idea that someone might be abducted twice was an entirely new, and frightening idea that was just starting to be reported. Betty and Barney Hill, Travis Walton and most of the other early abductees, with the exception of Betty Andreasson, whose encounters more resembled those of the early contactees, each had but one abduction experience. The abductees appeared to be people who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time; aliens had picked them up, conducted some tests, and let them go. The Horton case, however, indicated that aliens might be choosing certain humans for abduction and then monitoring those humans over a period of time.

Horton's first strange memory was as a six-year-old on her grandparent's farm near Lake Superior in the summer of 1950. Horton had entered a barn to gather some eggs, when, all of the sudden, she found herself standing in the yard with a large cut on her leg. Her second experience occurred during a family picnic when she was sixteen. She remembers following a beautiful "almost...mystical" deer into the woods. The next thing she recalled was coming out of the woods with a horrible bloody nose. Based on Horton's memories she underwent hypnotic regression with Hopkins. Under hypnosis, Horton told of encountering grey-colored beings who examined her. Hopkins placed much importance on the second incident, with the mystical deer. He believed the deer was a ruse put on by the aliens to lure Virginia away from her family. Once Horton was in the woods, the aliens inserted a "probe" into her left nostril, which caused the bloody nose Horton had remembered.

In the conclusion to *Missing Time*, Hopkins laid the groundwork for his new theory about abductions. Based on his experiences with people like Virginia Horton, he concluded that the majority of abductees showed evidence of having been abducted several times, including when they were small children. Furthermore, several cases seemed to involve the insertion of some sort of probe into a nostril, which he believed to be an "implant" or tracking device. This led him to the conclusion that "extraterrestrials need something from humans- possibly a certain kind of genetic structure" (Hopkins 1981, 214).

Aliens Have My Baby

By the publication of Hopkin's second book, *Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods*, he had become convinced that abductions were part of an extraterrestrial breeding experiment in which women were impregnated by the aliens, only to have their fetuses later removed- in effect creating hybrid children. The central case in *Intruders* is that of Kathie Davis, who claims to have had upwards of a **dozen** abduction experiences from childhood through adulthood. Her recall was helped by hypnosis, which by this time, Hopkins was performing on his own.

During Davis' experiences, the aliens had focused on giving her gynecological examinations. In January of 1985, during a visit with Hopkins, Kathie disclosed that she believed the aliens had impregnated her and later removed the fetus. In a later encounter, which she had started to spontaneously remember, the beings had shown her the result of their experiment, a half-human, half-"Grey" daughter. She described the being as having big, blue eyes, pale skin, a tiny mouth and a head that was larger than normal (Hopkins 1987, 223).

For Hopkins the pieces finally fit together. With the publication of his two books he had changed the very nature of abduction reports from that of a single, random encounter, to a purposeful, lifelong, genetic manipulation on the part of an alien species in order to produce mutant offspring for some still-unknown purpose. He explained his new pattern for abductions in the conclusion of *Intruders*:

Again I want to describe the general pattern of these accounts: 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 (Hopkins 1987, 282).

Kinder, Gentler Abductees

In his books, Hopkins has popularized the notion that the abducting aliens are, if not evil and selfish, at least indifferent to the trauma that they inflict on their victims. In the past he has expressed outrage at what he called "[the] physical rape of the abductees by a group of

aliens apparently interested...in replenishing their own failing genetic stock” (Conroy, 279). David M. Jacobs, a colleague of Hopkins and an Associate Professor of History at Temple University, equates UFO abductions with rape:

No matter how they handle the experience, all abductees have one thing in common: They are victims. Just as surely as women who are raped are victims of sexual abuse or soldiers can be victims of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, abductees are victims who require sensitivity and, if needed, help in understanding what has happened to them and the possible consequences that abductions have had for their lives (Jacobs 1992, 257).

A growing number of abductees report positive, almost spiritual encounters with the aliens. Although they were terrified at first, what was initially an “abduction” has turned into a positive relationship with the beings. These friendly abduction encounters harken back to the glory days of the contactees in the 1950s, when the likes of George Adamski reported spiritual contact with hip space brothers from Mars and Venus. As the ranks of these “new” abductees have grown, they have requested a new label—experiencers. A quote from a recent therapy manual for “experiencers” provides a succinct summary of their perspective:

For most of us, the ETs who have contacted us have become interesting acquaintances and, in some cases, friends. After getting over our initial fright and upset, we have come to share a deep respect for them and the messages they have traveled so far to deliver (Boylan & Boylan, 4).

Betty Andreasson is a prominent abductee who sees her abductors in a positive light. Andreasson’s experiences, outlined in three books *The Andreasson Affair*, *The Andreasson Affair Phase II*, and most recently *The Watchers*, all by Raymond E. Fowler, have involved bewildering, but overall beneficial encounters with Grey-like beings who claim to be Earth’s “Guardian Angels”. As noted by Andreasson:

[T]hey have always coexisted with Man and are genetically related. They have identified themselves as caretakers of the forms of life that have developed on earth. Over their existence, they have conducted a long term genetics program to prolong and improve life on this planet (Fowler, 349).

John Salter, Chair of American Indian Studies at the University of North Dakota, also claims positive experiences with Greys. On March 20, 1988 he and his son were abducted by several small grey humanoids, subjected to physical examinations and “implanted”. While

many abductees feel that “implants” are evil mind control devices used to monitor them, Salter claims that his implant has had beneficial side-effects such as improved skin tone, better eyesight, faster blood clotting after cuts and scratches, and faster hair growth. He further notes that the aliens have been “consistently gentle and considerate” (Salter, 27).

As an argument has arisen between those who feel that the Greys are good and those who believe that they are evil, abduction researchers and support groups have also chosen sides. Dr. Leo Sprinkle, a psychologist at the University of Wyoming, who hypnotically regressed his first abductee a year after Betty and Barney Hill’s 1967 encounter, is one of the few psychologists who has been involved with abductions from their beginning. Sprinkle believes that the aliens are kind and gentle “cosmic citizens” who are attempting to help the Earth with its various problems. Every year, he holds the Rocky Mountain UFO Conference at his university, providing a forum for discussions on the more positive aspects of UFO encounters.

Harvard psychiatrist John Mack also views abductions in a more positive light than Hopkins. While readily admitting that abductions are terrifying, Mack has also found that the experiences can have a positive impact on those involved. For example, one of his patients, Carlos, “is unusually aware of the relationship of his encounter experiences to the various dimensions of his personal transformation and spiritual growth” (Mack, 364).

Conclusion

UFO stories have evolved at an amazing rate in the last four decades. Kenneth Arnold’s simple sighting of nine strange craft, which many thought might be secret weapons from another country, evolved into sightings of strange creatures around the craft, serving to solidify the notion that they were from outer space. Mere sightings of alien beings evolved into the religious, “space brother” accounts of the 1950s contactees and from there to the frightening, seemingly random, encounters of Betty and Barney Hill and Travis Walton. The UFO community then decided that a small, gray, big-headed being, the Gray, was their alien of choice and determined that they were abducting earth people for their sperm and ova. In recent years a split has occurred among UFO researchers. Most believe that the Grays are evil manipulators, but a growing minority has become convinced that the abductors are serving some higher purpose.

Researchers who are interested in new religious movements should monitor UFO groups carefully over the next few years as the two

abduction camps fight for control of the overall movement. The UFO subculture provides a unique opportunity to watch a pop-culture inspired religious group in a state of rapid evolution and change.

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