

## CALENDAR



## Closer encounters with 'E.T.'

People who have experienced otherworldly phenomena find fact in Steven Spielberg's fantasy: This movie is one more step in the plan to prepare Earth for delegations from outer space.

By MICHAEL LONDON

**N**ear the end of the movie "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" is a scene in a school playground that neatly captures director Steven Spielberg's mixture of the mundane and the mysterious.

Ten-year-old Elliott is introducing his visitor from another planet to his schoolmates. "He's a man from outer space," he says. "We're taking him back to his spaceship."

The boys are dumbfounded. Asks one, "Why doesn't he just beam up?"

Elliott is peeved: "This is *reality*, Greg."

For eight people who attended a recent screening of "E.T.," the movie is reality of a special kind. All are veterans of what they call "the UFO experience." To them, Spielberg's fantasy is fact.

Frank Reed, 39, his wife, Phyllis, and their three sons claim to have sighted six extraterrestrial craft hovering over the Harbor Freeway. The Rev. Harrison E. Bailey, 55, says that alien beings made repeated visits to his Pasadena apartment two years ago. Anita Furdek, 36, a psychic, says she observed the creatures in Bailey's

apartment and helped root them out.

Two participants requested anonymity—a photo-research technician, 40, who says his family was visited by aliens at a desert campsite outside San Diego, and a computer programmer, 29, who says extraterrestrials examined her aboard a spaceship in a field behind her Panorama City apartment.

"This is a true movie, not a romance," said the photo-research technician. "It's part of a conditioning process to prepare us

for the arrival of alien beings."

"The movie is a vehicle," said Furdek, who's employed as a marketing research analyst at Mission Insurance Co. "A lot of it is hokey, but it also invites the audience to be less afraid of the so-called paranormal. And what better place to start than with the children."

"If you listen very carefully to the statements made in this film, little seeds of information are being planted in peoples' minds," said Reed, a prosperous manufac-

turer's representative.

"We're going to be part of a whole system of beings one day," he continued. "They're going to arrive over the course of time until we feel more comfortable with them. And the human race has to prepare for it or the effects will be devastating."

According to these fervent "witnesses," the lovable space creature in "E.T." bears only vague resemblance to real-life visitors—he's more of a gussied-up alien-gone-Hollywood. The aliens in their reports range from blobs of floating ectoplasm to emotionless dwarfs radiating a blinding white light.

But the witnesses are quick to add that physical authenticity isn't the point of "E.T." What's at stake in this gentle film fable, they say, is an urgent lesson for earthlings: The extraterrestrials are coming.

They see "E.T." as part of a much broader effort—involving Spielberg, the government, perhaps even extraterrestrials themselves—to acquaint people with

Please Turn to Page 26

**FAMILY  
BUSINESS  
FINAL EPISODE**

The fall of Louis Peraino in Hollywood: Where did all the money go? The \$20-million question. At least. Please see Page 3.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH FILM 'E.T.'

Continued from First Page

the likelihood (some say certainty) of alien visitation and to avert global panic when such a visit occurs.

The eight witnesses all say that their experiences have prepared them to accept the reality of extraterrestrials. Now it's time to start on the rest of mankind—and that's where Steven Spielberg comes in.

□

Initially, each participant was reluctant to be interviewed for fear of being lumped with the charlatans and professional crackpots who frequent the UFO field. But they eventually agreed to attend a screening of "E.T." at the Cinerama Dome in Hollywood and then meet as a group to discuss the film. (Follow-up phone conversations were also held.)

They come across in person as earnest, thoughtful and articulate—down to earth, so to speak. "These are all rational witnesses," said Ann Druffel, of the Center for UFO studies, a researcher and author on UFO phenomena who helped select the screening group from her file of "verified" cases. "They're the best of the lot. Many people are so damaged by the experience that they just can't cope."

Professor Alvin H. Lawson, head of the UFO Report Center of Orange County and himself an experienced investigator, cautioned that there is still no hard evidence of alien visitation. "I don't believe these experiences are physically real," he said. "But psychologically, they are very real."

The psychological reality comes across vividly in conversation with the witnesses. They recount their experiences with a quiet intensity and richness of detail that would give pause to any skeptic. (For details on the individual encounters, see adjoining article.)

There was a similar intensity in their reactions to "E.T." Several acknowledged powerful responses.

Bailey, pastor of a local Baptist church, was moved by the film's theological overtones. "I don't want to get into a religious discussion," he said, "but at one point E.T. tells the boy, 'I'll be with you.' That's just what Christ said to the disciples when he sent them out into the world."

"When I saw the ship at the beginning of the film, I felt a sudden rush of emotion," said the computer programmer with obvious joy at the memory. "I thought, 'Wow, there it is again.' When the aliens appeared, the same thing happened. That surprised me. I hadn't expected those feelings."

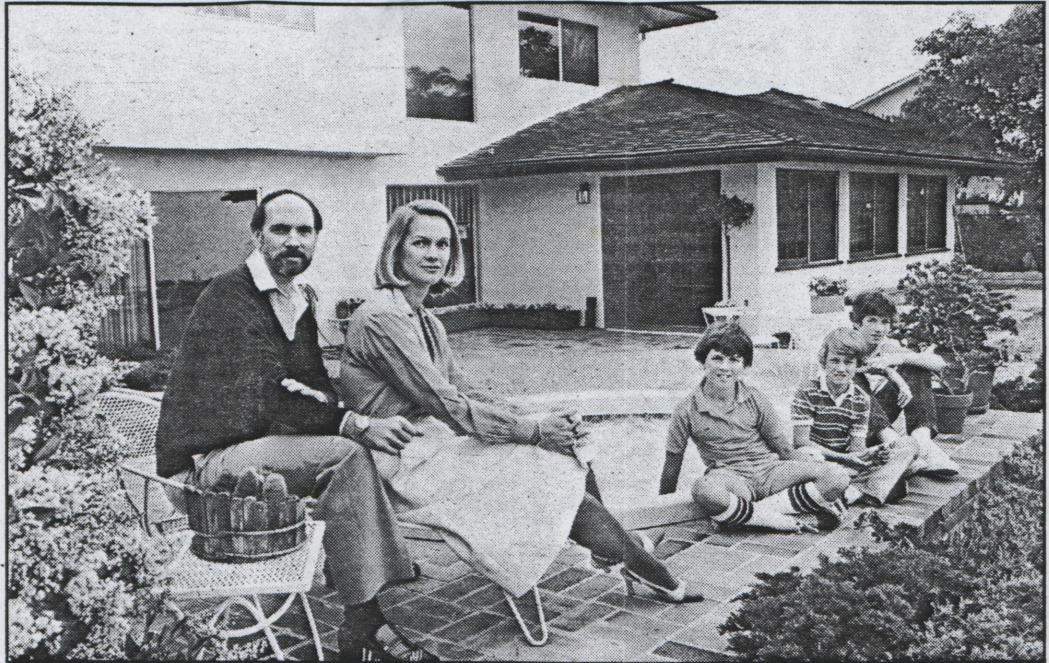
But it was the subject matter, not the content, that provoked her response. In fact, she said, the physical features of E.T. and its spacecraft were closer to Walt Disney than her real-life encounter.

"Every once in a while E.T. would put on a little show of powers," she said, "but for the most part, he acted like a big pet from outer space."

"I can see all kinds of E.T. dolls, toys and T-shirts," added Bailey. "It's very clever commercially."

That line of criticism found its most extreme advocate in researcher Ann Druffel. "It was charming," she said, "but it wasn't about UFOs."

Druffel's remark drew strong protests from several of the witnesses who insist-



LARRY DAVIS / Los Angeles Times

ed that the heart of "E.T." has everything to do with UFOs.

"The spiritual essence of the film is right on," said the photoresearch technician, who was 13 when his reported encounter occurred. "From a child's point of view, that's exactly how it happens."

The other participants agreed that the film was primarily aimed at children—but that's all part of the plan, they said.

"As far as I'm concerned, this film is for my children and my children's children," said Reed. "They're the ones who are going to have to deal with extraterrestrial visitation on a much greater scale."

"Everything's being done through the children," added his wife Phyllis. "If E.T. would have approached the mother first, there would have been no movie."

The Reed sons were entertained but,

for the most part, nonplussed. They found the movie a little shallow after their own real-life experience. Frank Jr., 14, mentioned the scene in which E.T. uses his glowing index finger to magically heal a cut on Elliott's outstretched finger. "It reminded me of the Creation," he said. "It looked just like the painting we saw in Rome last Christmas."

Frank Jr. may not have been bowled over, but the witnesses believe that "E.T." will provide a valuable lesson for other children—and adults—whose previous experience is limited to science-fiction movies depicting extraterrestrials as savage monsters bent on enslaving the earth.

"E.T.'s" emotional key, they agreed, is the empathy created for the creature from outer space. "Usually we're all con-

cerned about what's going to happen when 'they' come," said Furdek. "But here I was thinking about the poor little alien trapped in the woods, and how he doesn't know where he is."

Much of the empathy for E.T. arose from the relentless manner in which the creature was hunted down by government scientists. "That's just how the government acts in an important case," said Bailey. "They bust right in with their keys jangling and their feet stomping. They assume that the aliens have come to take over the country."

UFO SIGHTERS RELATE THEIR EXPERIENCES

Frank Reed and his family had just delivered a relative to Los Angeles International Airport for a 10 p.m. flight to Cleveland on July 23, 1979. Reed set the cruise control on his new Oldsmobile and settled in for the drive back to his suburban Los Angeles home.

"Suddenly," he recalled, "I saw in front of me something I knew I'd never seen before."

Hanging about 10 degrees over the horizon near San Pedro were six oval disks of light in a V-formation, moving north toward their car. Reed pointed them out to his slumbering wife Phyllis. "So what?" she said and fell back to sleep.

Reed exited the freeway, pulled into a vacant lot and opened the car's sunroof. The disks of light drew closer until they were hovering almost directly overhead at about 2,000 feet. They were reddish orange and had a "sharply defined luminosity—like an incandescent lightbulb

without a shade," Reed said. "I know a lot about aircraft—and these were not aircraft."

By now, the entire family was transfixed—Reed with inexplicable euphoria, his wife with utter terror, their three young sons with glee. "They thought it was a light show," Reed said.

"Then I saw something new," he continued. "As soon as I did, the logic center of my brain told me I had to be imagining." But he wasn't alone in the sighting. In the back seat, Frank Jr. blurted out, "Look at that ray!"

They saw a narrow cone of light beaming out of the center disk and extending three-fourths of the way to the ground. Longitudinal waves of light were rotating slowly inside the cone in a fashion that defied ordinary physical laws, according to Reed. Minutes later, the disks broke formation and vanished into different corners of the night sky with astonishing speed.

□

Reed's experience was rather prosaic compared with those of the other witnesses.

The encounter of a photo-research technician who requested anonymity occurred on a 1954 summer night in Anza-

Borego Desert State Park outside San Diego, where he was camping with his family and a young friend. He noticed an unsettling calm as he went to bed. "The coyotes were howling as if their limbs were being torn off," he said.

Shortly thereafter, the then-13-year-old boy felt himself receiving telepathic messages. "I knew I wasn't talking to myself," he said. "Someone outside was communicating to me."

As the messages continued, he said he rose from his bed and signaled his location by waving a Coleman lantern in the air. Then he returned to the open-air campsite where he, his brother and his friend were sleeping on cots. (The parents were inside a nearby camper.)

Moments later, according to the photo researcher, a round disk of pure chrysaline light appeared in the sky, skipping over the mesa like a stone over water. A battleship-gray vehicle came to a hovering halt about 40 feet over the campsite.

"It was obviously an alien craft," he said. "There were all kinds of strange apparatus, including a rod sticking out in front. I could see the outlines of three figures looking down through some kind of porthole."

He said the boys heard a high-pitched

# CALENDAR



KEN HIVELEY / Los Angeles Times

The Rev. Harrison E. Bailey, right, relaxing in the Pasadena apartment where he says extraterrestrials repeatedly appeared. Above, a Polaroid picture that Bailey says he took of an alien visitor late at night.

Bailey said that his extraterrestrial visitors have repeatedly pestered him to inform the government that UFOs are real, that the occupants mean no harm, and that they wish to land on earth and communicate with man free of danger.

He said he has attempted to introduce resolutions to that effect into Illinois state and California state legislatures. "It's a losing battle," he said. "The government has a lot of information they aren't releasing."

Some members of the group cautioned that not all aliens are as lovable as "E.T.'s" hero. "We're supposed to identify with this creature as having human emotions, but that's not necessarily true," said the photo-researcher.

"My own experience is that yes, some entities are as sensitive as this one," said Furdek, who claims to have communicated with a variety of aliens in many separate incidents. "But I've also experienced the wrath of entities who are not as understandable within our intellectual and emotional structures. Just as people have different natures, entities from dif-

ferent planets have different natures."

The photo-researcher went even further: "I've been around all types of people all over the world, and I know human, cold indifference. But alien indifference is really *damn* cold."

Indifference also characterized the aliens that the computer programmer claims she met. "They weren't exactly joyful or outgoing," she said, "but at the same time I never felt frightened or threatened. I don't think they're ruled by emotions." Nonetheless, she said she agreed with the "consensus" that "E.T." sets a worthy example by casting an extraterrestrial in a friendly light.

None described the aliens that they have encountered as hostile. "That's the

Please Turn to Page 29



KEN HIVELEY / Los Angeles Times

UFO researcher Ann Druffel: "These are all rational witnesses."



JOSE GALVEZ / Los Angeles Times

Psychic Anita Furdek: "'E.T.' invites the audience to be less afraid."

whine and a panel in the belly of the ship slid open. A spectacularly bright spotlight flooded the campsite. It cast no shadows and was sharply defined at the edges. "I was immobilized," he recalled. "I felt like an amoeba under the lens of a microscope."

He isn't sure how long the light was on, nor what occurred during the interim. (Paralysis and time loss in the face of a bright light are common phenomena in UFO reports.) When the light finally retracted, he said, he found his brother and friend trying to burrow into the desert floor. "I pulled them out and told them they were meant to confront this. I don't know why I said that—maybe they were speaking through me." Moments later, the ship was gone in a burst of light.

□

An even closer encounter was reported by the Rev. Harrison E. Bailey, whose case has been the object of considerable scrutiny in UFO literature. Bailey said he first encountered extraterrestrials on a rural Illinois highway in 1951. Several subsequent encounters came to a climax on the night of Nov. 1, 1978, when Bailey said he was visited in his Pasadena apartment by two dark-gray entities with the ability to change shape at will.

In the ensuing weeks, the creatures reappeared regularly at night, according to Bailey. "For a while, I couldn't stay home," he said. "I was more afraid than if the Mafia had put out a contract on me. At least they'd wait until I was outside. These things were inside my home."

At the suggestion of researcher Ann Druffel, Bailey purchased a Polaroid camera. Over the next few nights, Bailey pulled the camera from underneath his bed and fired into the darkness. The result was a series of 11 photographs that he regards as proof of alien visitation. The pictures show glowing lights and eerie figures silhouetted against windows and doorways.

Bailey didn't stop there. Again with the help of Druffel, psychic Anita Furdek—who specializes in telepathic communication with extraterrestrials—was brought in to help dispel the creatures. She described the entities in Bailey's home as affable but extremely prankish: "They took on a bloblike form because they didn't want to frighten me," she said. "I'm glad they were fuzzy—their real forms would have been too terrifying."

A night-long battle ensued, according to Bailey and Furdek. The psychic was tossed around the room by the entities

"as if she were having an epileptic fit," according to Bailey. At 5 a.m., the creatures finally agreed to leave the pastor in peace.

"After that night, I decided to get out of the extraterrestrial field," says Furdek, a disarmingly down-to-earth woman. "There are plenty of psychics who'd enjoy this kind of work more than me."

□

The computer programmer who also requested anonymity had a more prototypical alien abduction experience. A soft-spoken, 29-year-old woman, her matter-of-fact narration seems strangely at odds with the bizarre details of her case—which she has kept a secret from even her family and closest friends.

On a summer night in 1975, she says she awoke to find three alien beings in the bedroom of her Panorama City apartment. "It was extremely real," she said, "and distinctly different from dreams. I remember being surprised because they didn't look like people, but I wasn't afraid."

The creatures were short and thin, with bulging eyes and egg-shaped heads. They had long, skinny arms ending in three-fingered hands. Their most unusual physical feature was a strong light

emanating from their bodies.

"I was very impressed when they started showing me their powers," she recalled. "The leader pointed his finger at things on my nightstand and they rose into the air."

She said the entities invited her through telepathic communication to visit their ship, which was parked in a field behind her apartment complex. She has only vague recollections of the craft; her strongest memory concerns a transparent examining table that was suspended in midair by a beam of light emanating from the floor. She said she lay down on the table and the aliens took imprints of her body on solid "sheets" that were inserted in a slot at the end of the table.

"I was fascinated by them, and totally enamored of what they could do," she said. But she decided to call it a night when the aliens asked her to leave with them and be trained to acquire their powers. "By that time, I just wanted to go home," she said. "I'm quite happy being an ordinary person on earth."

The aliens reluctantly let her go, she said. Back in her apartment, she woke up her roommate in time for both of them to observe a blinding flash as the ship took off from earth. □ —MICHAEL LONDON