

nine's psychological characteristics were consistent with those she'd expect to find in people who had been subjected to a traumatic event, such as a kidnapping or abduction.

Horton, now a 42-year-old corporate lawyer, believes she's telling the truth but fears she'd lose her job were her identity known, says UFO investigator Hopkins. Under hypnosis, her story came out, a story typical of abductee reports. According to Hopkins, a W. Va.-born New York painter and writer who has been involved in UFO investigations for a decade, when Horton was about 7 she was playing on a hillside on her grandparents' Midwestern farm. The next thing she knew she was standing near a chicken coop or barn, with no knowledge of how she got there — what Hopkins calls "the standard kind of gap in recollection."

"She felt something on her leg," Hopkins relates, "and reached up underneath her blue jeans and when she took her hand out it had blood on it. She had a very deep cut, totally painless (but) there was no tear in her pants." Hopkins says he's seen 25 cases in the last decade with injuries in the same general area but without tears.

Years later, in the late 1960s, when Horton was 16 she was again abducted, an event her mother remembers as well. While the family was vacationing in Europe, they picnicked near a woods. With her brother, Horton wandered into the woods. The next thing she remembers she was emerging from the woods having had a conversation with a gray-furred deer — what Hopkins calls a "covering image" to protect her from the memory of seeing an alien.

Her mother, Hopkins says, remembers telling Horton she had little drops of blood on her blouse, "but she had no idea how she got it." Hopkins believes they came from "a needle which was put up her (Horton's) nostrils, implying an implant."

Johns Hopkins University astronomer Dr. Richard Henry, who with nine other scientists sits on the national board of the Fund for UFO Research, admits he's "sort of impressed" by the research project. But, he points out that "whether you should be impressed, whether experts should be impressed is another matter."

The 45-year-old scientist spends the bulk of his time working on Hopkins' new ultraviolet telescope, which will be launched aboard the space shuttle Columbia next March. But, occasionally, he's asked to review research proposals for the UFO fund, which is currently the only organization that systematically supports research into UFO phenomena. "No one is an expert, but we're as close to experts as we have," he notes.

Does Henry believe aliens could be visiting Earth? Or, are we just a living mote in an otherwise lifeless universe? "We know the universe is 15 billion years old. Our own technological society is only 100 years old — incredibly, incredibly young. There are 100 billion stars in our galaxy (yet) we imagine we are the only technological society in the universe... We don't know... (but) if they are out there, they are far ahead of us... If phenomenon is real, it doesn't surprise me at all."

Hopkins says the pattern remembered by abductees while under hypnosis is remarkably similar: "Whether in cars, walking or in bedrooms, they feel paralyzed, extraordinarily terrified. They see figures but never feel they are deliberately menacing... They are taken into ship (which has) either landed or is hovering. Then, there's a blank period and the next thing they remember they are on a table in a circular bright room, very calm, almost anesthetized. Then there's a blank period. They are stripped — but with no sexual implication. Often they don't remember how they are returned, how they got out of the ship. There are some periods of unconsciousness."

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The aliens they see are also similar: usually 4½ to 5½ feet tall with over-large heads, quite slender, with whitish-gray skin like "a dead marshmallow or mushroom" and long thin arms. Their eyes or coverings over their eyes are extremely black, their mouths a slit that doesn't move. Two tiny openings make up a nose and they've no ears.

Hopkins, who has personally interviewed 95 "probable abductees" and has been in contact with another 200 "highly likely ones" through telephone calls and letters, says he has to assume the phenomenon is "extremely widespread." It also tends to run in families. He's also traced abductions across three generations in two families — fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, all picked up at different times. "It seems they (aliens) are doing genetic sampling, taking sperm samples from men and ova from women. Children are first picked up when they are between 5 and 8 years old and are often picked up again in adolescence and in young adulthood."

One Wisconsin woman who read his book wrote him her story. She had taken her two sons and neighbor boy for a ride to see a bear who had been raiding garbage cans. It was a long drive, and she had promised to be back by 9:30 that night, so her husband could use the family auto.

They saw the bear and started out on their long drive home. As they drove through the woods, suddenly a bright light shown down from above the car. Her foot was on the brake, but the car wasn't slowing or stopping. The next thing she knew, they were three miles further down the road. When she got home, her husband was angry that she was so late. She didn't believe it when he told her it was 11 p.m. and he had to turn on the television to prove he hadn't set the clocks forward. She had lost 90 minutes on that stretch of road.

Later, she went back to the scene with her husband. As they approached that stretch of road she panicked. She believes she and one boy were taken aboard a ship while the other two boys were kept in suspended animation.

Perhaps the most famous abductee case (recounted in "The Interrupted Journey" by John Fuller and made into a TV movie) is that of Barney and Betty Hill. Under hypnosis, the New Hampshire couple claimed that on Sept. 19, 1961, as they were returning home from Montreal, they were abducted by six humanoids and taken aboard a spacecraft for two hours. The aliens stuck a six-inch needle through Betty's navel for what she was told was a pregnancy test.

Another case, widely reported at the time, occurred in Brazil in the fall of 1957. Antonio Villas Boas, 23, was out plowing his father's field at night to avoid the heat. Hopkins says that Boas, who is now a lawyer, stands by the story that he was abducted, stripped and forced to have sexual relations with an alien "woman" aboard a spacecraft while his brother looked on.

The after-effects for abductees aren't pleasant. According to Fund for UFO Research board member and professor of sociology at Eastern Michigan University Dr. Ronald Westrum, those kidnapped are left with unexplained fear, anxiety and phobias. They suffer nightmares, flashbacks and quasi-memories. In severe cases, personalities unravel, careers suffer and marriages break up. "Many of these cases display the symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome so common with Vietnam veterans," he says.

Westrum believes the reports should be taken seriously, "since at least some of them might actually provide some evidence of extraterrestrial (or some other kind of non-human) intelligence or of some heretofore unrealized factor of the human psyche."

If the stories are true, if hundreds and perhaps thousands of people have been kidnapped and examined by aliens aboard their ships, why haven't the aliens said, "Take me to your leader?" Why hasn't a government on this planet been contacted?

"We may be to them the way ants are to us — the zoo hypothesis, except we're the zoo," says Dr. Bruce Maccabee, a Washington, D.C.-based physicist with the U.S. Navy who is also the chairman of the Fund for UFO Research.

"On the other hand, I don't think we could guarantee the government hasn't been contacted. There are lots of weird stories — some of them coming from inside sources — that some government agents have had conversations with aliens (but there is) no way of proving that," Maccabee says.

"Does the government know?" Hopkins astronomer Henry asks rhetorically. "You have to ask, is it possible for the U.S. government to keep a secret of that nature for so long?"

Hopkins has "no doubt" of a U.S. government cover-up, and says that although the Air Force's investigation of UFO reports, "Project Blue Book," ended in 1969, under the Freedom of Information Act he's seen several hundred pages from military and defense agencies regarding sightings. But, he adds, aliens may not have contacted the government directly.

Still, he's convinced that for every one abductee that has come forward, there are 100 still secret. "They are not seeking publicity. They've been through the bloody mill... It's a most painful thing to deal with."