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TCC PHOTO BY BEN BARNHART

The Cosmic Connection

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Alien visitors from Outer Space have been visiting earth for decades, at least.

Thousands of unsuspecting humans have been kidnapped at various intervals during their lives by these creatures, who whisk them away and perform experiments upon them, and then return them with no conscious memory of the strange experience.

This may sound like science fiction, but to Budd Hopkins it is fact. After more than a decade of intensive research, this Wellfleet summer resident—who is also a distinguished modern artist—has become convinced that UFOs have been an active presence on this planet for some time, and the only reason the general public hasn't accepted it yet is that it is too mind-boggling.

Okay, you say. The guy is a nut. He's gone 'round the bend. But you see, that's his point. No sooner is the subject raised than it's dismissed out of hand. What if he's right?

Through both his art and his fascination with UFOs, one thing is clear: Budd Hopkins loves a good mystery.

The beginning of the UFO mystery for him came on a summer afternoon in 1964 when he saw an inexplicable ellipse in the clouds while driving from Truro to Provincetown. That experience, and reading John Fuller's book, *The Interrupted Journey*—the story of a couple who claimed to have been abducted by a UFO—led to an exhaustive investigation of other cases which resulted in Mr Hopkins' 1981 book, *Missing Time—A Documented Study of UFO Abductions*.

He says that some people have accused those who believe in UFOs of being members of a "cult," which, he adds, couldn't be further from the truth.

"A cult is a situation of all beliefs and no miracles, and we've got just the opposite—we've got all miracles and no beliefs. We don't know what the hell it means.

"I live every day of my life as if none of this is true," he says. "I've gotten very involved with people to whom this has happened and tried to help them. That's been my focus, and that's taken me away from worrying about who it is up there that's doing this, and why, and all those questions, which we really don't have answers to."

Missing Time, he admits, is a distinctly non-scientific study which repeatedly reveals its author's enthusiasm about his subject matter. There is no denying that these strange tales are hard to explain.

Since the book was published, Budd Hopkins has been in touch with many more "abductees," and for the past year has been working on a new book which he hopes to have published in the spring. That will coincide with the publication of a first-hand account of a UFO encounter by novelist Whitley Strieber entitled *Communion*—a serious account which the publisher, Morrow, has paid a high price for and will promote heavily. When the two books come out, Mr Hopkins says, "The subject is going to be hot again, which is terrific."

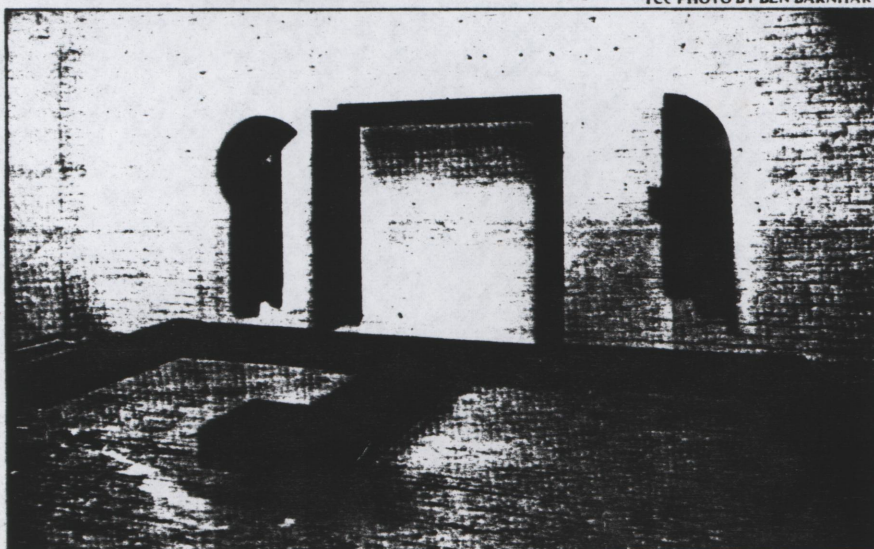
Budd Hopkins was born 55 years ago in Wheeling, West Virginia.

He decided to become an artist while enrolled at Oberlin College, after hearing a talk by Robert Motherwell. After moving to New York, he spent time in the company of artists such as Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline, and his work evolved from loosely abstract and chaotic paintings and collages in the '50s to geometric sculptures, paintings and constructions during the '70s and '80s.

His primary fascination in recent years has been with akars, temples and guardians, whose presence throughout human history, he says, transcends whatever culture or religion they represent. "The basic point of it is, through all of history, artists have made temples for whatever purposes," he says. "They have taken a space and magically charged it, so that the area that has been marked out has, through the artist's effort, been charged, and feels different than the space outside. Temples have been common to all of history."

This connection is outlined in a booklet, "Sacred Spaces," which Mr Hopkins published in 1983 with funding from the New York State Council on the Arts. It places his work next to photographs of the Parthenon, Stonehenge, and various Egyptian, Aztec and Iranian ruins. Nearby his creations and these ancient temples are "guardians," which he has fashioned as colorful abstract figures with curved tops which recall warriors' helmets.

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"Black Temple With Guardians" (1984)

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(CONT'D.)

"There's always that kind of figure that guards the temple area," he explains. Then there are "altars" where ceremonies are conducted, which "Sacred Spaces" describes as "the most charged point within the temple."

Without explanation, the art of Budd Hopkins seems mysterious, but he wants it to fuel the observer's curiosity in the same way that ancient ruins do. "I want it to look like it had a function of some sort," he says.

"I always had the idea that from earliest cave times, there were two reasons for making art—one was to make the magic thing, the charged thing, the temple. You had the sense of the hierarchal weighted center. The other was to make decorative images.

"I want these," he says, pointing to one of his recently created "altars," "to have that dense, hierarchal sense."

Other than the fact the subject matter seems like something straight out of *Chariots Of The Gods*, there is no conscious connection between Mr Hopkins' artistic efforts and his research on UFOs. He will not argue that there may be an unconscious relationship between the two, although his interest in these images preceded his UFO work.

Rather than explain what the presence of UFOs on earth might mean, Mr Hopkins says that the goal of his research, ultimately, is to get more qualified people—psychologists and scientists—involved in a serious study of the phenomena. In addition to corroboration of sightings and examination of physical evidence, his method of research deals with individuals who have seen a UFO or some strange occurrence and then have "blanked out," finding themselves in a later time and, sometimes, a different place with no memory of the events in-between (hence the phrase, "missing time"). Under hypnosis (which was performed initially by psychologist Dr. Aphrodite Clamar, but which Mr Hopkins now performs himself), these people relate details of much more specific experiences—abductions at the hands of ghostly, unemotional creatures with large eyes and humanesque forms who move them to a pristine vehicle and perform various clinical procedures, from tissue-sampling to nerve stimulation. "Eighty per cent of every case, you've heard before," he says.

Are these all the same creatures from the same place? Are they related to humans in any way? Why have they abducted so many humans over the years?

"I have absolutely no answer to any of these big

questions," Mr Hopkins says. "The only end you can pick it up by with any assurance is the human end. We do know about humans to a certain extent. The other end we don't know about.

"One point I'm making, and other people have made, is that one of two things at this point has to be true—either this stuff is more or less going on the way it's being remembered by so many people, or there is some new totally unknown psychological phenomenon which is so powerful and amazing that it should be fascinating by itself. Either way, there's no way you can lose. I don't care which hypothesis you accept. All I ask is that someone understand that there is a very strange, very hard-edged phenomenon that's out there that deserves attention."

There is no question, however, that Mr Hopkins sees it as highly unlikely that what he is researching is merely a psychological condition. "It's like the Holocaust," he says. "There are some subjects where the level of evidence required is extraordinary. How much evidence does it take to persuade you that something is true? It should get somebody's attention, but the mind puts it in some realm. Those books...the Von Daniken thing—about how the Egyptians were incompetent to build the pyramids, so aliens had to help—are based on denigrating man, as far as I'm concerned. Those books far outsell anything on UFOs, because in the public mind, somehow, there is a romance in the idea that in 2000 B.C. spaceships were flying around helping the Aztecs, or whatever. People accept that because it's romantic. But the idea that something might be going on now is still upsetting enough, despite the evidence, that it gets shut away."

As to whether these outer space visitors are benevolent or evil, superior or inferior, or from one end of the universe or the other, Mr Hopkins says, "I have no way of knowing. I have no theories about it. I try to avoid it—it doesn't help me." But through his encounters with people who, under hypnosis, seem to remember being in the presence of alien beings, he has drawn something of a personality profile of these shadowy visitors.

"One thing I've learned is that the minds of whatever one wants to call them out there—their minds seem much more uniform, one to another, than ours. Something comes through that they are rather baffled by the ragged craziness and diversity of the human mind and emotions, which they don't seem to understand."

HAMILTON KAHN