

UFO books peer into surreal tales

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For years, reports of people being abducted by UFOs were dismissed, even by most UFO investigation groups, as being not even worth considering.

But now, Whitley Strickler's "Communion," Budd Hopkins' "Intruders" and Gary Kinder's "Light Years" have brought public attention back in a big way to the phenomenon of unidentified flying objects. The authors have been making the rounds of radio shows, and despite the stringency of their stories, UFO abduction are getting more attention than at any time since the mid-1960s, when several "contactees" were national celebrities and most were later revealed as hoaxes.

AWOL abductees

The most puzzling and chilling aspect of Hopkins' investigations is the extent of "missing time," the victims rarely have conscious recall of their experience with UFOs. Their deeply buried trauma probably only comes out through hypnosis, and none want the kind of publicity abduction received in the 1960s.

"Missing Time" is the title of Rogister's first book about UFO abductees, and while his findings seem surreal, it is also one of the most down-to-earth and thorough books to be found in the mountain of UFO literature.

I first discovered this Everest of areas last summer, after drinking a few beers with someone I had known for years, but never suspected of being so deeply immersed in the world of ufology. Like a video game-master game, I found myself in a baffling maze of feasible phenomena, ancient mysteries of the conscious and the hidden edge of the human psyche.

Trent University has a bibliography of UFO literature that runs more than 200 pages with thousands of listings. You've seen "E.T.," "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and the Miller-Lite commercial with Earth being invaded by a race of Boney Dinosaurids. But the books, like, is where the going gets really weird.

Chance meeting

A nationally known artist who works in the Whitney and Guggenheim museums, Hopkins became drawn into the UFO phenomenon through a chance conversation with an abductee. The owner of a liquor store across the street from his New York studio.

For the past 12 years, Hopkins has interviewed 125 UFO abductees, accumulating a massive pile of evidence, and many strange stories that began to fall into a frightening pattern. While former San Antonio Strickler, who received a \$1 million advance for "Communion," theorizes that the aliens represent the way to a higher plane of human evolution, Hopkins is much more skeptical.

The abduction pattern, made famous by the Betty and Barney Hill case in 1961, generally begins with the sighting of a glowing saucer in a remote rural area. The victims are then somehow paralyzed, their thoughts controlled by the aliens, who communicate with telepathy. The humans are taken aboard the UFO ship to an operating room, where probes are implanted in their heads and a physical examination is made. The women are often examined by a needlelike device stuck through their naval. Afterwards, all memory of the event is wiped out.

Tagging humans

Hopkins has found that many members of the same family are often involved in a long-term genetic experiment with humans. Sperm samples are taken from males and ova from women. Women abductees report mysterious pregnancies that simply disappear. Some female abductees have revealed being presented by the aliens with mysterious children. Some men have reported forced sexual relations with alien women.



A Swiss Air Force jet fighter flew into this scene near Schwarduel, April 14, 1976. Photo from Gary Kinder's 'Light Years.'

In the past, those kinds of claims have been ignored by even the most zealous ufologists. But Hopkins has subjected many abductees to professional psychological testing, and soon have shown any sort of known mental disorder. However, the abductees do reveal the effects of a devastating trauma, which they can't talk about because of the social stigmatization that comes with publicly acknowledging a UFO experience.

Clash of the authors

Strickler used Hopkins as a consultant, but the two have reportedly had a falling-out over the last book of "Communion," which goes into Murray's philosophy about the source of the 200-foot-tall characters with large eyes. Strickler thinks they may want to form a "tribe" with humans, a major jump in our evolution. Strickler, though, is a successful writer who has demonstrated his ability to do massive research on a subject and then turn out best sellers like "Warfare" and "Wolves." He also has a long association with the Gurdjieff Foundation, based on the teachings of a Russian occult teacher who believed in a parallel, spiritual universe.

Hopkins, on the other hand, approaches the subject from a firmly skeptical point of view. He thinks any utopian messages from the aliens promoting peace on earth are probably just camouflage, a lot of "noise." Instead, he's disturbed by the abductees, whose lives seem filled with fear because of their UFO experiences. While some of his interviewees have revealed fantastic messages from the aliens, most of the people he has dealt with are afraid of their captors. As one woman's chilling recollection put it: "I felt like a guinea pig."

Needing help

Hopkins became drawn into his investigation because he said, "These people are suffering and they need help." In "Intruders," Hopkins details the tragic case of a woman he calls Kathie Davis, who lives with her family in a suburb of Indianapolis. She, her mother and some of her friends have had abduction experiences. Physical evidence includes a mysterious hole in a nearby woods that remained visible for more than two years and unexplained, and identical scars on the knees of Kathie and her mother.

Hopkins interviewed several witnesses, and builds a convincing case that something physical and real happened to the Davis family. But Hopkins refuses to conclude about what the aliens are or what exactly they are up to.

Gary Kinder's "Light Years" is the author's convoluted story of a one-armed, unemployed Swiss cranker named Edward "Bibby" Meier, whose hundreds of color photos of UFOs have been a sensation in



First in a series of photos taken March 3, 1975 of a beehive and accompanying remote controlled craft.

Europe. The photos are remarkably clear, but Meier's stories are remarkably strange. He claims the aliens, which hail from the constellation Pegasus, have taken him to other planets and back in time to meet Jesus Christ.

Who's in charge?

So, just what the heck is going on? Franks, no one really knows, but there is no shortage of theories. All I have to offer are the titles of some of the books I've uncovered since stumbling onto this mysterious last summer.

John Puler's "The Interrupted Journey" (1986) is the full story of the Betty and Barney Hill case. Coral and Jim Lawrence of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization kept the abductee's stories alive with "Flying Saucer Occurrences" (1967) and "Abducted" (1971). In 1976, prominent ufologist Raymond Fowler published "The Astronaut Affair" about a fundamentalist Christian woman's experiences. Others are "The Walton Experience" (1978) and Ann Drexler's and D. Scott Rogo's "The Tijuanga Canyon Contacts" (1985).

Although abduction stories overlap in many ways, no two ever seem exactly alike. While some physical traces have been left, the experiences also seem to be firmly connected to the human abduc-

tion. Carl Jung spent 13 years studying UFOs, and his 1964 essay, "Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Sky," probably comes the closest to getting a handle on what is happening.

June, however, felt UFOs were so significant that "I feel myself compelled to sound a note of warning," and to help "prepare those few who will bear me for coming events which are in accord with the end of an era." Because UFOs have shown up on radar, Jung notes "that either occultic projections throw back a radar echo, or else the appearance of real objects affects an opportunity for mythological projections." He felt the UFOs may be preparing mankind for the same kinds of changes that occurred in the civilization of ancient Egypt.

Government position

Officially, the U.S. government has dismissed all UFOs as illusions since closing Project Bluebook in 1969. But some ufologists think the government is still checking out UFOs under the code name Project Aquarius. Anyone who's pursued Marilyn Ferguson's "The Aquarian Conspiracy" is aware of the many New Age changes transforming our society.

The most thorough historical account of the many esoteric and governmental makings of UFOs are detailed in David Jacobs' "The UFO Controversy in America." His doctoral thesis at Indiana University, and still the most respected book about UFOs, scientists have their say in "UFOs: A Scientific Debate" edited by Carl Sagan and Thornton Page. Sagan notes that without physical evidence, it's impossible to prove UFOs have extraterrestrial origins.

Actually, the idea that earth is being visited by "ETs" no longer holds much sway in UFO circles. Among the multitude of theories are that the beings come from another dimension, or that they are the modern equivalent of angels, demons and spirits.

Cherists of God?

There's a whole subgenre about UFOs, the Devil and God, notably Maria Jasneps' "The UFOs and the Bible" and James Dunbar's "The Spectacles of Esoterica." In "UFOs: What on Earth is Happening?" North-south Christian John Weldon and Zola Levitt argue that the aliens are devils preparing for Armageddon.

For me, the most astounding theories are put forth by John Keel's classic "Wig Wags" (1981). Keel thinks the beings may be the spirits the ancients call "demons," intelligent forms of energy that enter his from the air, fire, earth and water. Keel thinks the elements have been fouling mankind for centuries, a cosmic conspiracy that made us believe, first, in angels and phantom armies, later in mystical inventions, ghost airplanes, and ghost rocks, and finally, "ET."

Factors you venture into: the realm of ufology, a few tantalizing tidbits: L. The aliens don't really seem to know too much about humans. Most of their promises of miracle cures or the end of the world turn out to be completely bogus. Many contacted have wound up scorned, their lives ruined. Leon Ferguson's "When Prophecy Falls" is an excellent case history of the demise of a UFO-appointed prophet.

Altered states

1. Sightings generally occur in 11-year cycles, with the most reported Wednesdays-Saturdays, particularly on the 24th days of April, June, September and November. In the U.S., most sightings are in a line from Texas to Michigan.

2. Airships have been appearing for centuries, and always seem just two steps ahead of man's technology. The modern era of airship sightings began in 1897 with reports of cigar-shaped, propeller-driven airships all over the country.

3. The phenomenon may require animal or human blood in order to materialize, which may help explain the thousands of cattle mutilations that still occur. Sten, black, unmarked helicopters have often been seen in conjunction with UFOs and cattle mutilations.

4. Aerial images often block memories of UFO abductions. Lately, Strickler reports that he has been seeing giant eagles flying over San Antonio and New York.