

Are extraterrestrial visitors finally

By Dennis Stacy

San Antonio-born novelist Whitley Strieber is clearly a haunted man. What remains even less clear after a reading of *Transformation, the Breakthrough* is exactly who or what is doing the haunting.

In last year's surprise smash seller, *Communion*, Strieber — who now makes his home in the literary hub of New York — revealed his abduction and rough handling at the hands of the "visitors," alleged intelligent, non-human beings who may or may not be behind the flying saucer phenomenon and a host of other bizarre, but seemingly related experiences.

Communion struck a public chord that caught UFO skeptics and book critics by surprise. In the midst of a media blitz that saw Strieber make some 225 appearances before microphones and cameras, the book soared to number one status on the N.Y. Times hardback bestseller list. The paperback did likewise, assuring a pre-primed audience for the cinematic version of *Communion* presently in the works.

Now comes *Transformation*, which has the cash-register ring of a continuing series of sequels written all over it. (The issue of what Strieber believes really happened to him is no more resolved here than it was at the end of *Communion*.)

The visitors could be the product of evolution elsewhere in the Universe, that is, physical beings whose intelligence and science is greatly in advance of our own, or they could represent "something to do with the mind that we (don't) yet understand."



Whitley Strieber says he was abducted by "visitors."

Post photo by Sandra Shriver

Even granting that these experiences took place as claimed (and hundreds, if not thousands, of people have reported similar occurrences), one is still left wondering what Strieber means about his own involvement.

On one hand he argues for the physical reality of the phenomenon by citing stories in the UFO literature of crashed saucers and government-retrieved bodies; on the

other he argues that the visitors are the same ethereal entities as the angels, fairies and perhaps even goblins of yore that have both plagued and inspired mankind since time immemorial.

At one point they are pictured as eternal and indifferent, at another as at the crossroads of an imminent intervention in human affairs.

Even this dual nature of the phenomenon would be allowable, if

paradoxical, if only Strieber himself were able to maintain some sense of proportion about events, however weird and personally perplexing they might be.

But this, despite offhanded castigations of critics and conventional science, he does not seem able to do. The visitor experience, whatever it might or might not prove to be, so preoccupies his thinking that literally every anomalous dream,

'The visitors are sweeping up from where we buried them under layers of denial and false assurance to deliver what is truly a message from the beyond; there is something more to us in our universe and it is rich with the potential of the unknown.'

WHITLEY STRIEBER

From 'Transformation, the Breakthrough'

vision and sensation of a lifetime is eventually encompassed under its leaky umbrella.

Confusion may be the only possible reaction to such startling events. But even so, it should not be allowed to reach out and color everything it touches, as it does in *Transformation*, hauling in visions of golden cities, dreams, out-of-body experiences, childhood fears and every unexplained light in the