



ARTICLE

UFO abductees claim that large-eyed, gray-skinned, four-foot-tall aliens are confiscating their eggs and sperm to create a bizarre race of hybrids

SECRET SHARERS

BY PAMELA WEINTRAUB

Browsing through B. Dalton's in Syracuse, New York, Bruce was alarmed by an eerie display of books. Emblazoned on the covers, staring out at him in multiples from the showcase grid, was a haunting face: grayish skin, pointed chin, receding lips, and massive, dewdrop eyes. The color of molten basalt, the eyes held him mesmerized until he broke their discomfiting gaze. He grabbed the book—Whitley Strieber's best seller *Communion*, about the author's encounters with alienlike "visitors"—off the shelf. "I just looked at it," Bruce says, "then I turned to the manager and said, 'The eyes are wrong.'"

Instantly embarrassed, Bruce left without purchasing the book. *How do I know if the eyes are right or wrong?* he chastised himself. *I didn't draw the picture.*

But a nagging sensation—one so horrific he'd pushed it from his mind for years—told him he might have drawn a picture like the one on the cover of *Communion* himself. As he left the bookstore that day, and for a long time afterward, Bruce says, "memories flooded in like water rushing through a hole in a dike."

Early one evening during the summer of 1978, it seems, Bruce had been driving home from a relative's house with his wife, Marion, and adopted son, Steven. Scanning the sky, he noticed what seemed like a low-flying plane headed in for a landing. "There was this loud whooshing sound," Bruce recalls. "I thought it was a plane in trouble, trying to land and buzzing me to clear the road. So I sped up, trying to pull away."

But though Bruce remembers pushing the accelerator down full force, the car didn't move at all. In fact, he says, the rubber on the tires began to burn, and the whole vehicle started to overheat. "I figured," Bruce recalls, "that the best thing to do was to shut the car down."

A second later, Marion looked out the window and let out a bloodcurdling scream. Bruce locked the doors, rolled up the windows, and threw a blanket over Steven, instructing him not to move. Then, looking behind him, he saw some figures approaching. "What registers in my mind," he says, "are two very formal military figures. Their uniforms were homogeneous—beige from the neck up and

PAINTING BY GREG HILDEBRANDT

black from the neck down."

By this time, Bruce recalls, Marion's behavior had become bizarre. "She's under the impression that the door is unlocked instead of locked. So she keeps trying to lock it, but she's doing just the opposite. And she believes the window is down instead of up. So she's rolling it down, *thinking* that she's rolling it up. There's this struggle between us to keep the door locked. She's getting very mean, almost like a cornered dog. And then she lets out another scream. I spin around, and oh, my God, I'm staring into these humongous eyes. I'm transfixed. All of a sudden I hear a door slam behind me, and Marion is gone. She's just walking along with this guy, sort of on a stroll toward, well, for lack of a better word, a ship."

According to Bruce, he leaped out the door to try to get Marion back when three more figures surrounded him. "My sense of self-preservation," Bruce says, "was suddenly very strong. I was curious, but I didn't want to risk going on that ship, so I did something I'm not proud of. I tried to see if I could send Steven, who would tell me what he saw. Should he not return, then I would have evidence I could take to the authorities. So I pulled the seat forward and leaned in to get Steven, and that's when I was jabbed. Right in the rear. I felt like I'd been poked with a hatpin."

From that point on, Bruce says, everything was cloudy. He was, he's sure, dragged down the road a bit. But the next thing he knew, he was back in his car with Marion and Steven, driving home. The family returned two hours later than expected. As far as the "experience" was concerned, nothing was said.

Bruce's chilling story (and the accompanying block of missing time for which he could not account) makes him one of the growing number of people who claim to be UFO abductees. The abductees say, among other things, that large-eyed, gray-skinned, four-foot-tall aliens are swooping down from the skies to take them away. These ghoulish visitors put their victims in a trance and literally float them out of car or bedroom windows onto spherical ships. The medical examinations that reportedly occur aboard alien vehicles are painful and extreme: Biopsies (later appearing on the skin as long, straight cuts or simply as scoops) are performed on arms and legs. Transponder implants that enable aliens to track their subjects like caribou are inserted in the eyes, nose, ears, and even the brain. And most disturbing of all, painful surgical procedures remove human eggs and sperm. The result, many abductees contend, is a race of human-alien hybrids gestated in artificial wombs, raised in alien nurseries, and sent, ultimately, into the unknown reaches of space. The hybrids' suspected purpose: to provide a genetic shot in the arm and new evolutionary vigor for the ailing alien race.

Hearing such stories, one has the natural instinct to give the so-called abductee

a wayward glance and run. But these days that's hard to do. Hundreds of people worldwide, in countries from Canada to Brazil, now claim the abduction experience. What's more, the strange details they conjure up—from the appearance of the visitors to the surgical procedures they perform to the symbols on the alien ship—are often uncannily similar. And the half dozen respected psychiatrists and psychologists who have studied this odd group find no evidence of psychopathology. The abductees have suffered a severe, unspeakable trauma, yes. Most are overly cautious, many neurotic. But according to a spate of standard personality and intelligence tests, the question of whether the abductees are *crazy* can be unequivocally answered with a no.

Explanations put forth by experts in a variety of fields are numerous: repressed rape or child abuse, ancient racial memories stored in the genes, mass hysteria, culturally induced dreams, transcendental

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right-brain states, and more. Some have said that the abductees form the core of a powerful new religion, one sure to supplant Christianity and subvert the progress of science. Others, including more than a few of the abductees, insist the reports are literal and the experiences real.

Whatever the ultimate explanation, those tormented by abduction imagery might find their way to Wellfleet, Massachusetts, a quaint Cape Cod town best known for fishing boats, art galleries, and vacationing shrinks. (New York City's entire population of psychiatrists, it seems, summers there.) Wellfleet's lesser-known treasure—a state secret, if you will—is acclaimed artist Budd Hopkins, whose imposing, altarlike sculptures add a sacred touch to New York City's Guggenheim and Whitney museums and some of the best art galleries in New York City and Provincetown, Massachusetts. Hopkins has to date worked intensively with upwards of 160 abductees. He has grappled with their plights, published their experiences, and given—well, if not validity—at least a smattering of compassion to their outrageous claims.

When in Wellfleet (his other home is in

Manhattan), Hopkins lives at the end of a twisty macadam road on a verdant cul-de-sac. While other houses on the road are simple wooden structures that fade into the landscape, Hopkins's stark concrete home, all angles and slopes, glistens like a sculpture in the sun. He opens his door, and a furious crescendo of Gustav Mahler pulses out in waves. Hopkins's paintings—giant orbs that hint at transcendence, the cosmos, God—dominate his living room. His windows, a collection of different-size rectangles, capture the view of a sweeping wooded valley out back. The artist stands in contrast to all this drama: Hazel-eyed and angel-faced, he exudes an earthy warmth and sensitivity. To the abductees he is a mentor, a father confessor, a *friend*.

That's a relief to Bruce. Sitting at Hopkins's kitchen table, his face tired, glasses tinted, beard manicured, the thirty-two-year-old upstate New York graduate student sips his coffee nervously, waiting for Hopkins's interview and subsequent hypnosis session to begin. "I'm not sure what really happened," Bruce says haltingly, obviously at the end of his rope. "I just feel so embarrassed and at odds. I could be having actual memories, psychological side effects, or dreams. I want to understand."

Hopkins himself believes the understanding Bruce seeks can be gleaned, at least in part, by way of a swampy outback—the fettered, complex terrain of the UFO. The dawn of modern UFO history is generally considered to be June 24, 1947, when Boise, Idaho, businessman Kenneth Arnold was flying his private plane near Mount Rainier, Washington. Arnold reported nine bright objects that moved "like skipping saucers over water" at more than 1,200 miles an hour. Thanks to Arnold's description, the term *flying saucer* entered the English language, and for months after his sighting, saucer reports rolled in.

Eventually things calmed down, and the next true UFO wave didn't crash on American shores until 1952. On July 19 of that year, at nine P.M., pilots coming into Washington National Airport reported unusual objects and lights cavorting over the White House lawn. The next week, at about the same time, the objects appeared again. This time, though, they were briefly contacted by Air Force planes and even showed up on radar. The 1952 sightings prompted a massive UFOmania, and before long, Pentagon phone lines were tied up with hundreds of people asking for information about the UFOs.

Then, in 1964, an extraordinary sighting outside of Socorro, New Mexico, convinced at least one scientist that the most outlandish explanation for the reports—the extraterrestrial one—might be right. Physicist J. Allen Hynek, director of the astronomy department at Northwestern University, had been reviewing some data for the Air Force's official investigation, Project Blue Book, when he was asked to check out the Socorro report himself.

As the late Hynek explained it, patrol-

HIDDEN MEMORIES: ARE YOU AN ABDUCTEE?

Have you ever experienced an abduction by the occupants of a UFO? Bizarre as this question sounds, some researchers think the phenomenon, be it physical or metaphysical, is widespread. They hypothesize that because of amnesia often associated with the experience, many thousands of people may have had such encounters with little or no conscious recall. To help a team of psychologists and UFOlogists test their theory that large numbers of people have submerged what they call the "abduction experience," please fill out the following questionnaire. The questionnaire analysts will use the data to see what percentage of *Omni's* 5 million readers were potentially abducted. They will also try to glean new details about the experience itself. Some questions require a simple yes or no answer; others are multiple choice, and still others ask for elaboration. To provide the researchers with the full facts, please write out all your answers on a separate sheet of paper. Be sure to indicate the number of the question you are answering. Fill out the personal data section on the questionnaire itself. Send your questionnaire to UFO, *Omni*, 1965 Broadway, New York, NY 10023-5965.

1. Have you ever had a sighting of what you believed to be an unidentified flying object? _____. If so, please describe the event.
2. If you answered question 1 with a yes, you reported the sighting to
 - A) the Air Force or any other military agency
 - B) any local police agency
 - C) the news media
 - D) any civilian UFO organization
 - E) none of the above
3. If you answered question 1 with a yes, does your recollection of the sighting seem to have odd gaps in it, as if your memories of the experience do not form a coherent whole? _____. If so, explain.
4. Have you had any periods of lost or missing time that strike you as unusual? _____. If so, describe the circumstances.
5. Do you have any strong but seemingly unexplained fears of particular places—a stretch of highway, a room, a field, or whatever? _____. If so, describe the location and the nature of your fear.
6. Have you ever experienced an odd displacement in which you found yourself inexplicably in a location different from where you remember being only seconds before? _____. Please describe the incident.

7. As a child, did you ever see strange figures, such as the bogeyman in your bedroom, in a situation that seemed too real to have been a dream? _____. If yes, please describe the figure or figures, and add a sketch if possible.
8. Did you ever receive an unexplained wound that was painless, relatively bloodless, and left a scar? _____. If your answer is yes, is the scar located on your chest, on your back, or elsewhere? Please describe the scar and its location.
10. Have you ever experienced recurring dreams that you feel are connected somehow with the subject of UFOs and/or their occupants? _____. If so, describe the dream or dreams.
11. Have you been told that you were frequently lost as a child under circumstances you do not now remember? _____. If so, elaborate.
12. Do you have any intense phobias or fears that seem completely without cause but have had a crippling effect on your life? _____. Describe both the fears and their effects.
13. Do you remember certain "meaningless" words that seem to have a special, as yet unrecalled, meaning to you? _____. Is the word *trondant* one of these? _____. If you are a woman, have you ever had any oddly disturbing, realistic dreams about pregnancy, infants, or a missing or deformed baby? _____. Please describe the dreams in detail.
15. If you are a man, has any female relative or friend ever described such dreams to you? _____. Have you ever had such dreams yourself? _____. Please explain.
16. Have you ever suffered from an extremely unusual and as yet unexplained medical problem? _____. If so, what were the symptoms?
17. Have you or your spouse ever experienced a mysteriously terminated pregnancy? _____. If so, please explain.
18. Were you ever a sleepwalker? _____. If so, did you ever find yourself outside the house, suddenly awake? _____. Please give details.
19. Have you ever heard voices speaking to you "in your head," issuing orders or warnings? _____. If so, please explain, giving the nature of the communication and your reaction to it.
20. Have you ever clearly heard your name being called "in your head," without literally audible sound? _____. Please describe the circumstances.
21. Has any member of your immediate family told you that he or she recalls the kinds of experiences or images described in the questions above?

22. Which answer best describes your gut feelings about UFOs?
 - A) Many UFOs are physically real objects, maybe extraterrestrial in origin.
 - B) UFOs are probably only misidentified real objects, such as planes and stars, but I accept the possibility that some of them might be extraterrestrial.
 - C) UFOs are always either hoaxes, misidentified objects, or the inventions of overheated imaginations.
23. Which answer best describes your feelings about UFO abduction reports?
 - A) At least some of the abduction accounts I've heard about seem genuine, and I accept the idea that such things can and do happen.
 - B) These stories sound just too implausible to accept as true, but I cannot absolutely rule out the possibility that I'm wrong.
 - C) I cannot accept these accounts as anything other than hoaxes or the products of some mental aberration.
24. Have you
 - A) as a person interested in the subject read more than three books or articles about UFOs in the last year?
 - B) as a casually curious person, read a book or two and perhaps a few articles on UFOs over the past few years?
 - C) as someone who regards the subject as spurious, tried to avoid reading anything about it at all?
 - D) if none of these categories describe you, please explain.
25. Which answer best describes your reaction to this questionnaire?
 - A) intellectual rejection
 - B) uneasiness
 - C) intellectual curiosity
 - D) amusement
 - E) indifference

PERSONAL DATA

Male Female
 Age _____
 Residence:
 City Suburban Rural

If you would like to be contacted by UFO investigator Budd Hopkins or one of his colleagues, fill in your name and address in the space below. All names and addresses will be kept strictly confidential. Since the investigators will use this questionnaire primarily for research purposes, please understand that many respondents will not receive a personal response.

man Lonnie Zamora had been chasing a speeder out of town in broad daylight when he supposedly saw something descending over the plains. He went through the sagebrush and finally glimpsed what looked like an upside-down car and some creatures. When he went back to investigate, Zamora found some charred grease-wood bushes and, more importantly, four pod marks indicating, he believed, the spot where the thing had landed and scooped up some dirt. Hynek himself tried to char the bushes with matches and create pod-like impressions with a shovel but to no avail. He also interviewed Zamora's old schoolteacher, the railroad baggage man, and other townsfolk. "They all gave Zamora a clean bill of health," Hynek reported. "He was a very solid cop."

By the mid-Sixties UFO proponents pointed to distant disc sightings, radar corroboration, and physical evidence that had purportedly been found. The Air Force, in its own series of investigations, declared there was nothing much to this evidence. Virtually all UFOs, government investigators said, could be explained away as weather balloons, cloud formations, atmospheric phenomena, meteors, planes, and the like.

The dispute would be settled, of course, if UFOlogists could come up with some aliens. But much to their chagrin, the E.T.'s appeared, full-blown, in the stories of a group of charlatans known as the contactees. In the standard contactee story, the Earthling was sitting in his yard when gorgeous, Nordic-looking aliens swooped down from the sky. These benevolent E.T.'s eagerly told the contactee about the secrets of propulsion and the mysteries of their home planet—invariably an Eden with no taxes, no divorce, and no war. One contactee said he went to the moon and dined with the lunar king. Another said he went to Jupiter and brought back a native dog that, oddly enough, looked like a Saint Bernard. Whatever the specifics, the contactee was always given a mission: to try to stop atomic testing, end all wars, and promote peace on Earth. Such a mandate, of course, meant forming organizations, writing books, hitting the lecture circuit, and producing record albums of music from Pluto—all for a hefty profit. Hundreds of deluded people ended up converting to UFO religions and cults, but as the tall tales and questionable activities of the contactees continued, the field of UFOlogy itself fell into disrepute.

In the aftermath of this hysteria there emerged one contact story different from the rest: the saga of Betty and Barney Hill. Barney was a black post-office worker and an official in the New Hampshire NAACP. Betty was a white social worker. Coming back from a vacation in Canada, they reportedly saw what would be called a typical UFO. Then Barney inexplicably turned left onto a side road. That was all the Hills remembered until two hours later, when they found themselves 35 miles farther

down the road, without any idea how they had gotten there.

They began to have bad dreams and finally went to see psychiatrist Benjamin Simon, who used hypnotic regression to bring them back to the incident. Under hypnosis the Hills said that extraterrestrials had impelled them to leave the car and walk to the craft, where they were separated and given examinations. Betty said they stuck a needle in her navel and then took skin and nail samples. Barney claimed they took a sample of his sperm.

Like most other skeptics of the day, Budd Hopkins, a young artist splitting his time between Cape Cod and New York City, didn't think much of this story. But one day in 1964, while driving to an afternoon party in Provincetown, he saw an elliptical, pewter-colored object hovering over the dunes. After three minutes, it seemed to Hopkins, the object simply zoomed off, disappearing in the clouds.

At the party Hopkins discussed his ex-

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perience, only to find that other guests had had similar sightings as well. That summer Hopkins bought a couple of UFO books. And every now and then he brought the subject up at a party.

But his interest in UFOs didn't intensify until 1975, when George O'Barski, owner of the liquor store across from Hopkins's Manhattan town house, had a sighting of his own. "I walked in to get a bottle of Soave for dinner," Hopkins recalls, "and I found George pacing back and forth behind the counter, obviously disturbed. 'A man can be driving home, minding his own business,' O'Barski fumed, 'and something can come down out of the sky and scare him half to death.'"

The story he then told Hopkins was incredible, to say the least. O'Barski lived in North Bergen, New Jersey, and, as was his habit, he'd been driving his car through North Hudson Park on the way to an all-night diner in Fort Lee after work. As he passed through the park, O'Barski said, he saw a roundish, 30-foot-long ship circumscribed by windows. Then he watched in disbelief as a narrow panel opened to release a ladder. Down the ladder climbed

some ten humanlike figures, each three and a half to four feet tall and wearing a one-piece, light-colored garment. The figures carried spoonlike instruments and containers, O'Barski claimed, and proceeded to collect samples of the earth. Inside of four minutes the strange individuals and their craft were gone.

Hopkins investigated the story, found five corroborating witnesses (not to the occupants, just to the apparent craft), and published his findings in *The Village Voice*. The *Voice* story was reprinted in *Cosmopolitan*, and Hopkins's avocation—as a UFOlogist—was off to a start.

Even back then Hopkins was aware of the issue of missing time. O'Barski, who claimed his sighting lasted four minutes, had returned home a couple of hours after he would have on any normal night. But it wasn't until 1976 that Hopkins considered a preposterous notion: What if UFO witnesses were losing track of hours, even days, because aliens were abducting them, then forcing them to forget?

That idea walked into Hopkins's life in the form of Steve Kilburn (not his real name), a tennis instructor he'd met through one of the investigators helping with the O'Barski case. One day, after an informal UFO gathering that Kilburn happened to attend, he approached Hopkins nervously. "There's probably nothing to it," he confided, perhaps because Hopkins seemed more accessible than others at the meeting, "but something may have happened to me when I was in college. I can't remember anything specific, but something has always bothered me about a certain stretch of road I used to pass through whenever I left my girlfriend's house in Maryland." Kilburn recalled no strange lights in the sky, and he only suspected a gap of missing time. Nonetheless, he told Hopkins, "I'd like to try hypnosis just to see if there's anything at all to my feeling."

Encouraged by the O'Barski episode, Hopkins agreed to help. He recruited New York psychologist Aphrodite Clamar, referred to him by psychiatrist Robert J. Lifton, Hopkins's friend and an expert in the psychology of survivors. Known for her deft use of hypnotism in psychotherapy, Clamar is as down-to-earth as her name is exotic (her family is Greek). Combining a strong skepticism of UFOs with the unique ability to suspend judgment, no matter how extraordinary a client's claim, Clamar put Kilburn into a deep trance. To abate his fear, she provided him with a protective image: "a warm, solid house to stay in, safe from everything threatening, but from which you will be able to watch any events that might unfold outside."

From the depths of hypnosis Kilburn explained that while driving home on the night in question, he'd grown increasingly drowsy, until he felt his car turn violently, "like a huge magnet just sucked it over to the right." Looking up into the sky, he noticed two strange lights. To ease his fear he pulled the car over and stepped out.

Walking down the road a bit, he said, he met with four or five tiny individuals, including one who seemed to be the boss. Their faces were dull, chalky white, "like putty," he told Clamar; and their walnut-shaped eyes, devoid of pupils, were huge and liquid black. One was bending down, digging in the earth.

Kilburn also recalled a clamp, "almost like an arm," affixed to his right shoulder. At this point, he told Clamar, he was totally paralyzed, and the creatures used the instrument to turn him around. The next thing Kilburn knew, he was walking up a ramp. Sitting on a table in a curved, misty-white room, beneath an elaborate diagnostic instrument hanging from the ceiling, he felt the excruciating pain of a needle running along his spine. He was examined over the length of his body: hips, stomach, arms, legs, and thighs. "I feel like a frog," he told Clamar at one point in the session. "A metal thing comes up around both my legs. It's very skinny. Moves my legs apart a little bit . . . moves my right leg all the way up. The doctor now touches my skin under that leg. . . . It feels kinda rough." Something else, something "dirty," might have happened, Kilburn told Hopkins after the session, but he couldn't recall what.

Kilburn's story shook Hopkins to his roots. "It was nothing I wanted to accept," Hopkins says. "Yet it seemed totally real." What's more, it seemed to fly in the face of the traditional abduction scenario estab-

lished by Betty and Barney Hill. Instead of remembering portions of the UFO experience consciously, as the Hills had, Kilburn had totally suppressed his experience. "This opened up the possibility that the experience, whatever it was, had been suppressed in others," Hopkins explains, "and that abduction was widespread."

Radio and television appearances garnered as a result of Hopkins's work soon flushed still more people out of the woodwork, and as time went on, other patterns emerged. Perhaps the most chilling common denominator, Hopkins learned, was that many people claimed to have had the so-called abduction experience at least twice, and of those, almost all had mysterious scars.

Take Virginia Horton, a corporate lawyer who said she'd disappeared near her grandfather's farm in southern Manitoba at the age of six. She'd reappeared an hour later with a large, straight cut on the back of her calf. A decade later, in 1957, she had a similar experience in Frankfurt, Germany. Later, under hypnosis, she told Clamar and Hopkins about her abduction by aliens who took a "teeny piece" of her leg back to their world.

By 1981 Hopkins and Clamar had worked with 11 abductees. As a professional psychologist, Clamar didn't particularly believe that bona fide aliens were coming to Earth. She was impressed, however, by her clients' "frightening experi-

ences, which both mystified and disturbed them. I did not find any drug users among the subjects, nor any alcoholism, nor any strange habits or exotic perversions," she says. "Most were satisfied with their choice of careers and relatively successful. In a sense," she adds, "they were run-of-the-mill people. I could find no common thread that tied them together—other than their UFO experiences—and no common pathology, indeed, no discernible pathology at all."

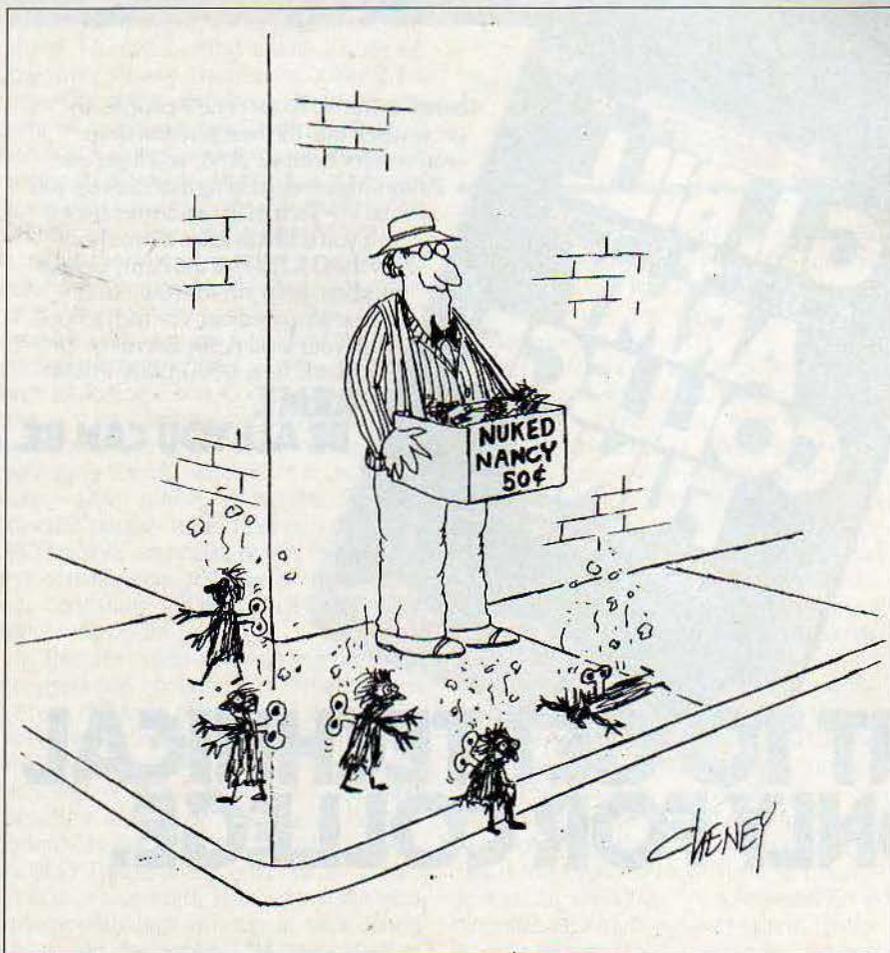
Clamar didn't know what to make of the group; nor did she want to impose an interpretation on the incredible reports. But, she suggested to Hopkins, it would be advisable to subject some abductees to an independent battery of psychological tests. "Here was a group of people who had consistently bad press, who were described as crazy, paranoid, and marginal," Clamar says. "Yet the people I hypnotized did not appear to fit these stereotypes. This, however, was only my impression, not a fact that I could support with hard data. I wanted a way to quantify the abduction experience and its effect."

So Clamar and Hopkins went ahead and recruited New York psychologist Elizabeth Slater, who tested nine group members for, among other things, creative potential. She was not told that they were in any way involved with UFOs. Slater administered a Rorschach test, in which subjects are asked to interpret inkblots; the Bender Gestalt test, in which they reproduce geometric figures; the Wechsler adult intelligence test; the thematic apperception test, in which testees described a series of pictures; and the Minnesota multiphasic personality inventory, which profiles individuals and evaluates their tendency to lie.

After completing her study Slater reported that except for one person—a schizophrenic—the group showed no particular psychopathology. "These people didn't seem alike in any way except for their tendency to be overly sensitive, guarded, and vigilant," she says. "They were careful but not paranoid, and they shared a greater than average intelligence and a richness of inner life."

"When I found out these people claimed to be abductees," Slater adds, "I was flabbergasted. I tend to be a skeptical person, but I find their stories hard to dismiss. I worked on an inpatient unit for two years, and I'd never heard such stories. People reported the CIA was bugging their phones, they heard the voice of the Devil, or they had a desire to kill themselves or their spouses. But alien abduction is something that I had just never heard. I won't say I believe these people were abducted, but I do believe they aren't crazy. I have no explanation for this group. Psychologists, moreover, can't demonstrate facts. They can only try to understand what people experience and perceive."

To get to the bottom of the claims, Hopkins and Clamar also sent ten abductees to Donald Klein, director of research at the



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New York State Psychiatric Institute. Klein had offered to do psychohistories—psychological profiles taking the subjects' entire lives into account—to see whether he could find anything to account for their stories and claims. Working with staff psychiatrist Abigail Feuer, Klein found that all ten abductees, including author Whitley Strieber, were sane. The researchers found a high degree of anxiety in all the subjects, to be sure. One of the ten had somewhat of an alcohol problem. But nobody emerged as a sexually abused child or the victim of an alcoholic parent. No patterns, no trauma, no insanity, and no psychological explanation emerged. In other words, the institute team found nothing that in any way would suggest a cause.

While psychologists claimed merely that the abductees were sane, Hopkins decided to take a stand. Perhaps we were witnessing a long-term study of humans by an alien race, he suggested, who "could be fitting our children with monitoring devices and extracting them decades later." The purpose he did not know.

These ideas were put forth in *Missing Time*, Hopkins's first book on the abductees. The book, which sold 55,000 copies, generated a response. Hopkins soon received letters from more than 400 self-pro-

claimed abductees. Writing back to many of them, he knew that the second phase of his research could begin.

Now, instead of working with a mere dozen witnesses, Hopkins interviewed scores of them. The large work load meant he could no longer rely on psychologists like Clamar to volunteer their time, and after studying with experts, he began hypnotizing people himself.

His first subject, a woman he calls Kathie Davis, would ultimately become the center of *Intruders*, his latest book. Davis had written to Hopkins, telling him about a gap of missing time experienced by her sister and sending him 15 photos of so-called UFO landing traces—circular areas of dead grass—that had appeared on her lawn. Because Davis's letter sounded urgent and because she seemed to be hinting at a submerged abduction experience of her own, Hopkins called her on the phone. After several conversations she agreed to come to New York for interviews and a series of hypnosis sessions.

An unemployed mother of two children, aged three and four, Davis had put literally all her resources into the trip. The journey from her home to New York took 17 hours by bus. But when she arrived Clamar had only two available sessions open for the duration of the week.

"I called around, trying to get other psychologists to do the hypnosis," Hopkins says. "But I kept getting estimates of two

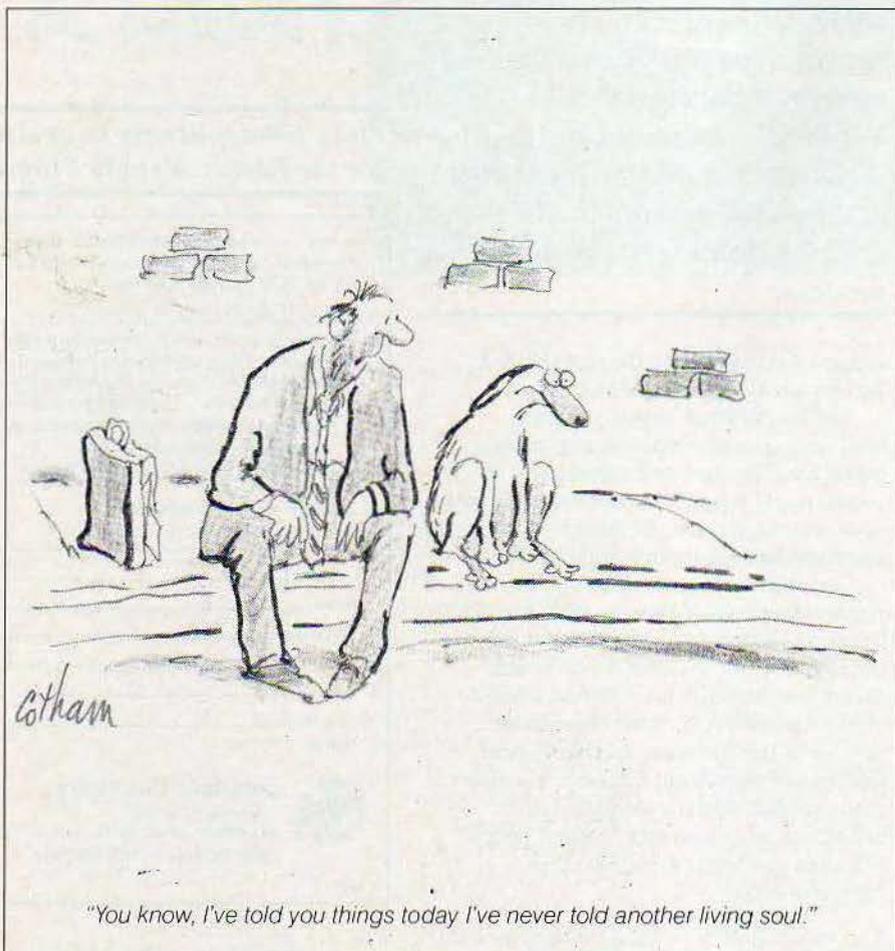
hundred dollars an hour. So I finally said, 'Kathie, this is really terrible. Let me do the hypnosis myself.'"

Hopkins knew the process. He'd already learned self-hypnosis from accomplished New York psychiatrist Robert Naimon. He'd sat through hundreds of hours of observation with three psychiatrists, two psychologists, and a police hypnotist. And noted psychiatrist Donald Klein had observed Hopkins's technique and given him pointers. "Listening to the abductees' stories, I'd matched them tear for tear," Hopkins says. "They would be crying, and I would be crying. I didn't want Aphrodite to see my tears, but it was awful. And as a mere observer, I felt so *hélpless*. It was like seeing somebody in terrible pain on the other side of a glass wall. As the hypnotist, I could calm these people down; I could ease their passage through the experience. I could *help*."

Those skills, Hopkins feels, were particularly useful with Davis, whose story was one of the most wrenching he had ever heard. According to Davis, she'd been abducted by small, gray visitors repeatedly since childhood. In late adolescence she'd been examined and impregnated by aliens, only to have her fetus—a human-alien hybrid—taken away. And, she eventually told Hopkins, she'd seen the girl child years later, during an abduction: "I was in this place, and it was all white. It was like I was getting ready to go back where I came from . . . like they were essentially finished with me except for one thing. And there was a whole bunch of these little guys in the big room . . . little gray guys, and there were several of them around me. One of them, I seem to remember . . . it's almost as if he had his arm around my waist . . . very comforting. I was standing up. And they were all around me, and one of them touched my shoulder. Everyone seemed very pleased with me, and . . . I didn't know why. And then . . . a little girl came into the room . . . escorted by two more of them. And she stood in the front doorway . . . she looked to be about four . . . she didn't look like them, but she didn't look like us, either. She looked like an elf or an . . . angel. She had really big blue eyes and a little teeny-weeny nose, just so perfect. And her mouth was just so perfect and tiny, and she was pale, except her lips were pink and her eyes were blue. And her hair was white and wispy and thin. Her head was a little larger than normal, 'specially in the forehead . . . but she was just a doll. And they brought her to me. And they stood there and looked at me. And I looked at her, and I wanted to hold her. And I started crying. . . . I'm pretty sure somebody told me I should be proud."

Davis had wanted to take the child with her, she said, but one of the figures, a man she'd seen many times before, ostensibly the girl's father, said the child would not be able to live. "You wouldn't be able to feed her," he said. "She has to stay with us."

Kathie Davis, moreover, was just the tip of the iceberg. According to Hopkins, he



"You know, I've told you things today I've never told another living soul."

has collected similar details about the production of these hybrids from dozens of abductees. Since the details have never been printed in *Missing Time*, *Intruders*, or any other book or magazine, Hopkins says, they couldn't have been copied from one person to the next. Instead, their redundancy and strangeness add an eerie credence to the abductees' claims.

Most of the stories, for instance, include the removal of eggs or sperm, apparently in preparation for the hybrid's conception. Lying down on the couch in Hopkins's darkened Wellfleet studio, responding to questions under hypnosis, Bruce echoed other abductees when he recalled one such procedure in great detail:

Bruce: There's a finger. It looks rubbery, like it's made of latex. But it's hard when it touches me. It's hard like a piece of plastic. All I know is, the more I think of it, the bigger this stupid thing gets, and the more I hate it.

Hopkins: Let's move on. What's happening elsewhere on your body?

Bruce: They put some kind of device on me that causes an erection. They're trying to collect semen.

Hopkins: Then what happens?

Bruce: I'm embarrassed.

Hopkins: Of course, but it happened a long time ago. Let's look at it objectively. What is this device?

Bruce: I have nothing to compare it to, except it seems like something you might use to milk a cow.

Hopkins: Is it just on the penis, or is it on the testicles, too?

Bruce: No, it's just on the penis. I'm not sure how far up it fits. They were saying something about not fitting far enough or something like that. They were embarrassing me.

Hopkins: Are you aware of having an orgasm?

Bruce: No, it's fast. They just do it real fast. They collect what they want.

Hopkins: Is there a sensation connected with it, either pleasurable or painful?

Bruce: Well, some of the pleasure that comes from that kind of thing, but not much really.

Hopkins: Was there an orgasm or not?

Bruce: Not what I'd call an orgasm. Curiosity is the only thing they'll allow me.

Hopkins: They allow you curiosity?

Bruce: Nothing more.

"Others may doubt my experience," Bruce said after his stint in Wellfleet, "but I no longer do. These creatures are as concerned about us as Jacques Cousteau is over a new species of fish. They're doing methodical research into our functioning and placing us in the proper context in the universe at large."

Other abductees recalled special incubation rooms, weird incubation vessels (Hopkins will not describe them for publication), and bizarre, high-tech nurseries in which the tiny babies were raised. "People consistently described the unusual way the hybrid babies were dressed. Still other ab-



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ductees, both men and women, claimed they were taken for the distinct purpose of touching these baby hybrids. One woman, Hopkins says, was even presented with a baby she simply didn't like. "Well, here are some others," the aliens allegedly told her. "Touch any one you like."

Perhaps the most bizarre type of report was that of the dummy birth. According to reports, aliens sometimes tell a nonpregnant female abductee that she's about to have a baby *now*. The woman lies in a birth position, and the alien doctors pull a hybrid baby out from between her legs. As far as Hopkins is concerned, the goal is to simulate the bonding process, providing the baby with human touch.

Hopkins likes to tell one story about a Southern gentleman who recently came to his door. "He looked very nervous, and I asked him if he'd come about my book. 'No,' he said. He'd seen part of a film about Barney and Betty Hill, and spurred by that, he'd taken his story to the Center for UFO Studies. They referred him to me."

The man's abduction experience, Hopkins says, went back to the age of five. "You won't believe it," he told the artist, "but when I was five years old they cut my leg, and I even have a scar." He recalled other abductions, during which sperm samples were taken, and then he got to the point: "Budd," he said, "I was recently taken again. I went into the ship, and there was this female who held out a pan that had this little tiny baby, halfway between us and them. It had a very big head and a little tiny neck that didn't seem big enough to support the head. They wanted me to pick that thing up and believe it was mine. But the skin was so thin, I felt as if my fingers would puncture it. I wanted nothing to do with it. I felt really upset, and they felt upset, too."

Some of the details might have been picked up from Hopkins's books. But, Hopkins says, "the man went into incredible detail about the presentation of the baby, dredging up technical descriptions I'd heard from dozens of other witnesses but had deliberately withheld. I asked him to draw a picture of the abductors; then I showed him one drawn for me by another abductee. Big as he was, he broke down like a baby and cried."

The specifics of the abduction experience have recently been culled not just by Hopkins but by Temple University professor of American history David Jacobs as well. Like Hopkins, Jacobs spends much of his spare time hypnotizing abductees. Standing in the kitchen of his Victorian home in Philadelphia's elegant Chestnut Hill, Jacobs drinks some coffee from a cup with the label HALDOL, a powerful antipsychotic drug. The moniker, he says, is significant—he should be examining the abductees' *psyches*, he often hears people say, not charting the abduction experience as if it were real.

Jacobs, obviously, does not agree. Paddling up two flights of stairs, he reaches the top floor, which houses his library of UFO

books, his tape recorder with special microphone, and his pretty, flowered couch. "This is where I do my regressions," he says, and takes his customary seat.

A short, pudgy man with stubby fingers, prematurely gray hair, and electric-blue eyes, Jacobs explains that he's been involved with UFO research most of his adult life. "Initially," he explains, "my goal was to synthesize knowledge so we could make sense of the UFO phenomenon. But I was never really able to make any serious headway as far as understanding the purpose of it all."

Indeed, throughout his years of studying UFO reports, Jacobs could never truly comprehend the phenomenon or understand why people were seeing things in the sky. "Why didn't they land on the White House lawn? Why didn't they say, 'Take me to your leader'? Why didn't they crash? Why had we never recovered the pieces? I was never able to answer any questions that started with the word *why*."

● I've explained myself two hundred twenty-five times in public, and I've had the experience of being laughed at in front of eight million viewers on the Phil Donahue show. ●

Then, in 1981, he met Budd Hopkins and became familiar with his work. Though skeptical, Jacobs reasoned that if Hopkins were on to something, the true business of the historian—the task of synthesis—could begin. "If Hopkins was right," he explains, "then he would have found the intellectual breakthrough we had been waiting for, and his work would launch us into a new era in the study of UFOs."

Jacobs launched his own investigation of the abductees a couple of years ago, when a Philadelphia native contacted Hopkins about an experience. Unable to work extensively with the woman, Hopkins referred her to Jacobs. "I studied hypnosis," Jacobs explains, "until I felt I was proficient enough to do it myself."

Hopkins's referral, moreover, was just a start. Thanks to newspaper articles and radio shows, other local abductees found Jacobs, and his research took off. In the past two years Jacobs has worked intensively with 13 abductees. Functioning much like a psychotherapist, he tries to see each individual as often as once a week.

"Budd works on the macro level. He's interviewed dozens and dozens of peo-

ple," Jacobs explains. "I work more constantly with each individual, getting them to go over their stories again and again."

As a result, Jacobs has come up with what he says is a chronology of the abduction phenomenon "as it exists second by second. What happens when they know something is wrong in their bedroom? What's the first thing they see as they're led down the hallway? How do they get their clothes off? How do they get on the table? What do they see on the ceiling? What happens during the examination? What happens to them point by point, up until the time they return?"

Jacobs says his multiple hypnotic sessions have yielded "just tons of information." And in an upcoming book he plans to take readers through the abduction experience, step-by-step, room by room. "I don't want to go into too much detail right now," he says, "but once the abductee is in the ship, the first part of the experience usually involves an examination, egg harvesting, and sperm sampling. Next come baby presentations and machine examinations. Finally, the experience can involve media presentations of idyllic places where, supposedly, the hybrid babies go."

Needless to say, Jacobs, Hopkins, and the abductees have stirred more than a little debate. Nowhere was the fire hotter than at American University in Washington, DC, where the world's most committed UFOlogists gathered this past summer to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Kenneth Arnold's sighting of a UFO. It was at the end of a long, sweltering day when the panel on abduction convened.

Sitting in front of the crowded lecture hall were some of America's most celebrated abductees: Whitley Strieber, author of *Communion*; Kathie Davis, the subject of *Intruders*; and Charles Hickson, whose gripping tale of abduction had been publicized a decade before. David Jacobs, moderator of the event, threw out the first question: "What was it like," he asked, "to talk about this experience in public?"

Strieber took the mike. "I perhaps have made the most public statement about this so far," he said, his voice welling with emotion. "This has been the most difficult thing I've ever done in my life by an enormous degree. I have explained myself two hundred twenty-five times in public since January and had the experience of being laughed at in front of an audience of seven hundred people and eight million viewers on the Phil Donahue show. I have cried all the way to the bank because it's no secret that I made a million dollars from *Communion*. However, up until now it's been a secret that I found out I deserved every penny." Then, glaring into the audience, he announced, "There's a gentleman here tonight who has seen fit to call me a liar in public on a number of occasions: Mr. Philip Klass, right here, in case anybody doesn't recognize him." At that point the room shook with hisses and boos. When the audience simmered down, Strieber quoted from a

polygraph test administered to him by the BBC: "Do you intend to answer the questions truthfully? Reply, 'Yes.' Have you invented the visitors for commercial gain? 'No.'" Then Strieber perched forward: "While in the presence of those visitors, have you actually felt them touch you? 'Yes.'" And then, actually yelling: "'Is *Communion* an honest account of your experience? 'Yes!' 'Have you ever taken any kind of hallucinogenic drug?' 'No!' 'Are the visitors physically real?' 'Yes! Yes! Yes! I think they may be!'"

"I would like," Strieber said amid a round of applause, "to give this copy of this test to Mr. Klass."

Klass took the report, and when the meeting ended, just before midnight, he met Strieber in the hall. "Whitley, as far as I know," he said, "I have never called you a liar." Strieber then mentioned a TV show that had appeared not long before in New York. Klass told Strieber that the statement may have emerged as the result of unfortunate editing on the part of the show's production staff. "But," he said, "if you send me an audiotape, I will issue a public apology at once."

Klass never received a tape or transcript, and the incident faded. But the bitterness directed at Klass by many UFO researchers has remained. The reason is clear: Klass is a tireless opponent of the so-called abduction phenomenon as an explanation for UFOs. His contention? Hopkins is "the Typhoid Mary of UFOs," he says, and he is creating an "alien epidemic" on his own.

Referring to the work of University of Pennsylvania psychiatrist Martin T. Orne, one of the world's leading experts on hypnosis, Klass explains that the technique can be used to implant *pseudomemories* that, even when subjected to the scrutiny of a polygraph, appear real. "Let's say," Klass explains, "that I want you to recall what happened last night after six. You know you had dinner, watched some TV, read, and went to bed. Now I put you in a trance and I ask, 'Did you hear a loud noise?' Because we have this peculiar master-slave relationship, you will respond to my leading question with a yes, even if you heard no noise at all. When I ask you how you responded to the noise, you will say, 'I went to the window and looked out.' If I tell you to remember everything we discussed under hypnosis, even in the un hypnotized state, you will now accept this memory as real. And if the next time I hypnotize you I ask you what you saw, you are likely to describe that as well."

Beyond this, Klass adds, Hopkins violates many of Orne's clinical rules: Hypnotists must not have any preconceived ideas about the subject under discussion; they must have no contact with the subject prior to the session; and they must videotape the proceedings so that not only oral communication but also facial expressions can be reviewed. "Hopkins violates so many of these principles," Klass says, "that

I would give more credence to a gypsy tea leaf reader than I would to his hypnosis."

Hopkins counters, however, that today Klass's hypnosis argument is all but moot. "We have had sixteen cases where the entire abduction story surfaced without hypnosis," he says. "And in twenty-three instances, people who thought they were abductees underwent hypnosis only to find mundane explanations emerge."

But Klass has other complaints as well. For instance, he says, the similarities Hopkins finds from one case to the next have been exaggerated. Drawing from Hopkins's books, he contends that different abductees portray the hybrid babies in different ways. "Kathie says the baby looked like an old man. Pam said it looked like a little newborn lamb, with white skin so thin it was see-through. And Susan described the skin as grayish, with the head going down to a point. It seems to me," Klass says, "that similarity is in the eye of the beholder. I'd like to say I'm similar to Robert Redford;

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world has ever known. ●

and to an alien, I probably would be. But I doubt a Hollywood producer would see it that way."

Finally, Klass says, the prototypical alien is just what you might expect. "Would you expect these creatures to be eight feet tall with long, flowing hair or short and bald-headed?" he asks. "I'd expect them to be short and bald-headed. That's the traditional science-fiction image. I would be more impressed if everyone described eight-foot-tall giants with four hands."

There are other critics as well. UCLA psychopharmacologist Ronald Siegel, an international authority on altered states of consciousness, says abduction accounts can be explained by hallucinations related to stress, darkness, and isolation. "Such situations can create images that are strikingly vivid and cause those who see them to respond to them as if they were real." The abduction reports are alike, Siegel adds, because they arise from "a common subjective state of consciousness in which archetypal images emerge."

Alvin Lawson, an English professor and UFOlogist at California State University at Long Beach, believes that UFO witnesses

weave their abduction stories from haunting but submerged memories of birth. As far as Lawson is concerned, "Hopkins's abductees recalled not alien abductions but fetuses, medical examinations, forceps, and piercing delivery-room light."

And according to psychiatrist Harvey Ruben, public affairs chairman of the American Psychiatric Association, one possible explanation for the abduction phenomenon may be a "psychological epidemic" infecting those who are most suggestible. Says Ruben, "Psychological epidemics do occur. One example was brought to light in a study of Arab schoolchildren on the West Bank of Israel. The children smelled fumes from a sewer, and one by one they all became sick, even though there was no reason for this reaction. People can be very suggestible," Ruben says, "yet show no evidence of psychopathology at all."

The abduction phenomenon, Ruben adds, may be somewhat akin to a form of psychological epidemic known as mass hysteria, where large numbers of people, spurred by movies or books, misinterpret what's going on. "A film such as *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* might provoke this reaction," he says. "And once people believe a traumatic event has occurred, they might develop the same posttraumatic stress disorder seen in rape victims and Vietnam vets."

But perhaps the strongest criticism comes from the domain of UFOlogy itself. After speaking to colleagues and sitting through the abduction panel in Washington, DC, Jenny Randles, a British UFOlogist, felt "American naïveté" was extreme.

Randles's opinion is not uninformed. She has conducted a study of abductees on her own. Working in Britain she interviewed 28 abductees. Comparing her cases to those studied in America, she found that cultural differences were widespread. "In virtually all the American cases," she says, "the entities resemble the one on the cover of Whitley Strieber's book—small creatures with large heads and eyes. It astounds no one that we have recently begun to get similar reports in Britain as well. But most often, our aliens are more humanlike and six or seven feet tall. Of the twenty-eight cases, we have found only one scar, and it was fairly suspect; it might have even been a birthmark. And only ten of our subjects reported medical exams. Not one recalled a gynecological exam or a sperm or ovum sampling."

Hopkins says those in Randles's study may merely be "claimants," not true abductees. But Randles insists that her study is bolstered by the finding that one report tends to influence the next. "We have found that if a story appears in a newspaper about one abduction case, a subsequent witness, under hypnosis, will produce details that are very much the same."

As for the abduction reports in America, Randles says, "It's just a fascinating sociological phenomenon. In their zeal, it's

possible that the researchers are manipulating people into accepting their version of the phenomenon. There's no doubt that there is an abduction phenomenon, and there's also no doubt that so far no standard explanation seems to fit. But that's a long way from concluding that the phenomenon is extraterrestrial in origin."

Instead, Randles sees the abduction phenomenon as a vast cult movement that will expand drastically. "I don't know how it can grow any more than it has," she says, "but it will. The UFO researchers who take an interest in abduction may be seen, essentially, as gurus. For them, abduction is just what they have been seeking for the past thirty years. It is the last step, the dramatic new evidence proving UFOs are real. But vulnerable people will seize upon anything they say. Just after the panel discussion yesterday, I spoke to four people who had become convinced they were abductees." And, Randles adds, "there's a similarity between what's happening now and what happened in the Fifties. Sure, the UFO movement has been updated in thirty years, and the reports have been updated as well. But if you talk to some of these abductees, you'll hear them presenting a contactee-style message to the world."

Take Kathleen, a filmmaker whose work has met with significant critical success. Kathleen's strange story starts in Turkey, where she was making a documentary about the Orient Express. Kathleen shot the

scenery leaning over the side of the train. When the person helping her to steady herself went back into the train, Kathleen did, too. But then she experienced a period of missing time, and the next thing she knew, she found herself flying through the air and crashing into the rocks. The second person in history ever to survive such a fall, Kathleen's traumatic experience propelled her to seek out past-life regression therapy. Working with her therapist, she says, she discovered she had been a nineteenth-century Austrian woman who had met her death falling from a train. The therapy sparked what Kathleen calls a "spiritual search." She began channeling and eventually came into contact with a spirit guide named Layftet-tzun, or, as Kathleen calls him, L.T.

Hopkins, who has worked extensively with Kathleen in both New York and Wellfleet, says the channeling part of Kathleen's story is merely invented, a mask for the horrors she experienced during the abduction itself. "The abduction experiences Kathleen reports are pretty standard, just what we get," Hopkins says. "But she's imposing on that experience a heavy desire to turn this into something very nice. She's developed a theology in which the gray-skinned figures are helpers, but the true spirits—with whom she channels—are wonderful and understanding. I'm afraid that's just a wish-fulfilling fantasy."

University of Wyoming psychologist Leo

Sprinkle, who has been studying abduction and contactee claims since the Sixties, says Kathleen's *entire* story may be real. "I've heard many types of aliens described—some people claim there may be as many as forty. Some are tall and beautiful; some are small and gray," Sprinkle says. "There are many groups, and each has a different job."

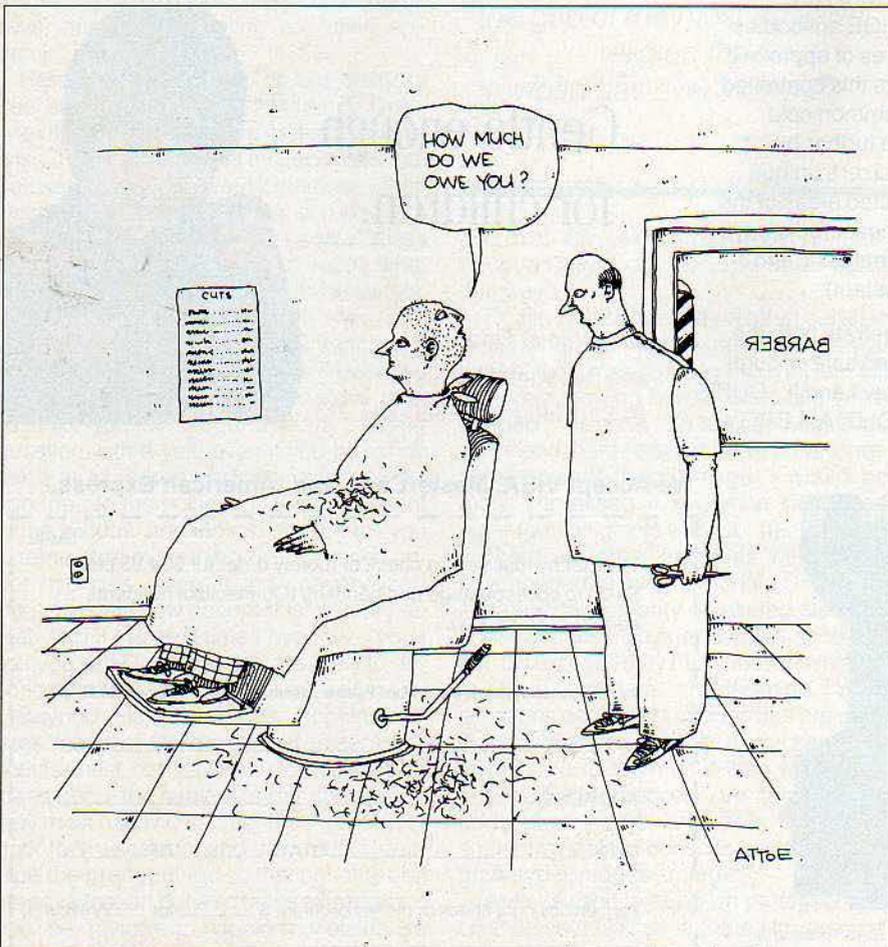
Now, Sprinkle is no skeptic. A pioneer of the New Age and an avid proponent of channeling, he believes we can talk to otherworldly spirits and that the space brothers are here. He accepts the abductees, the contactees, and the channelers as equally real.

But, in fact, once the waters get muddy, how can one say that a certain component of a witness's story is legitimate while another is not? Speaking to Kathleen certainly gives one the impression she has suffered at least as much as abductees with slightly different claims.

There are other problems, too. If the aliens are advanced enough to traverse interstellar space and reach planet Earth, why don't they employ technologies that resemble those used in fertility labs to store up human genetic material instead of abducting a person every time they want a single sperm or egg? For that matter, why don't they create a library of genes, building their progeny nucleic acid by nucleic acid, however they wish?

Finally, even those who believe the experience is real do not necessarily think that aliens from space are to blame. Strieber, now writing his second nonfiction book on abduction, says that he is "a thinking person who by no means buys the extraterrestrial explanation. However, I don't feel that a simple psychological explanation is in order, either. Something else is going on, something akin to the transcendental, visionary experience that has always been with humanity. I myself try to make use of this experience the same way that a shaman on the steppes of Central Asia two thousand years ago made use of his startling vision of the world of the dead—by telling my story and bringing my dreams back to society. Perhaps we had better try to stop laughing at this state and start trying to describe it, because an awful lot of people believe they are experiencing contact with higher beings and another world. If we don't stop imposing interpretations and narratives on the experience, we may find ourselves in the grip of the most powerful religion the world has ever known."

Many experts think Strieber has hit the nail on the head. Sociologist Marcello Truzzi of Eastern Michigan University says that we, as a society, have been so totally indoctrinated into the science of behaviorism we have forgotten our unconscious mental life. "When ideas like channeling, past lives, or abductions come along," he says, "some people grasp onto them, producing highly imaginative stuff. They seem unaware that this material, and the urge to express it, may be part of them. It's easy



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for them to say, 'Sure, it's Ramtha.' It's not so easy for them to see that there's simply more to them."

Dennis Stillings, a philosopher and Jungian scholar who heads the Archaeus Project in Minneapolis, essentially agrees. "We're seeing an eruption of the unexplored aspects of the mind," he says. "We are a pioneering nation, and the introvert in America has never had status. But now the pendulum is swinging the other way. We see the unconscious like we saw the wilderness. We exploit it for business, marshal it for an advantage. The American unconscious has only recently been blasted loose, and we don't have any notion of how real these images are. They resonate in all of us. We're not in a position to evaluate these images because we're not used to them. It's much easier to fall victim to them, to become their prey."

As far as Stillings is concerned, in fact, Americans have lost touch not only with their unconscious but with the basic primal experience—religion itself. "I personally find it interesting," Stillings says, "that the abduction phenomenon was ushered in with the strong rise in channeling and past-life regression. I see it as an attempt at re-creating a religion dressed out in high tech."

"The breakdown of organized religion," Stillings notes, "has been going on for four hundred years. This has increasingly forced man to have a personal confrontation with God, which results in strain. In our era some people compensate with channeling, in which they themselves become the gods. In the most extreme case, others—the abductees—have become the passive victims of omnipotent, omniscient forces whose godlike characteristics are drawn from science-fiction movies, fertility clinics, and other forms of high tech."

The abduction scenario is so religious, Stillings believes, that it borrows some of its most graphic images from religious motifs. The hybrids, he says, resemble the "wise babies," from Jesus to Buddha, who were born with extraordinary knowledge and superhuman skills. "The abductees," Stillings says, "even have what Hopkins calls wise-baby dreams." The strange scars and scoops, he notes, resemble the stigmata associated with religious devotees and saints. Mysterious pregnancies mimic the motif of the Virgin Birth. And the abductees have even adopted what Stillings calls the motif of three and four.

In this strange scenario, four people are expected, but only three show up. "We find this in the Bible," Stillings says, "we find it in Plato, and we find it in *Intruders*, when Kathie meets three strange young men, including a mysterious blond."

Where do these images come from? According to the late Carl Jung, they exist as literal structures in the brain. "Jung," Stillings explains, "believed that religion and the images it spawned were biological entities. Nonetheless, the religious instinct is vague. We give it form. If this stuff appeared as angels today, we would laugh

at it. But when it comes packaged in the form of E.T., we're more likely to believe."

No matter what the answer ultimately turns out to be, the bottom line, Aphrodite Clamar points out, is the obvious torment experienced by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of abductees. Few stories seem sadder than the one told by an attractive, successful New York businesswoman named Leigh. Today in love with a man she met at the UFO convention in Washington, Leigh lives in a graceful wood-frame house beside a gentle harbor filled with millionaires' yachts. Sitting in her living room early last summer, she recalled numerous partial memories—including periods of missing time and strange sightings of UFOs.

It was almost fall, though, before she had the chance to visit Wellfleet, where Hopkins hypnotized her so her story could emerge. Lying down in his cavelike den, she recalled what should have been a joyful encounter: the first time she made love. The night had been a blank for years.

"When I count to three, raise your eyes and look to the doorway," Hopkins said. "What do you see?"

"I see a little gray kind of person with lines all over his head," Leigh replied. "I keep asking Bill what's happening, but he isn't with me. Mentally, he's gone. . . . I feel like I'm being tugged out and jerked, but I can't move. There's some sort of liquid sensation. . . . There's a long arm under my side. . . . He takes a long tube and puts the tube inside my stomach at an angle, and there's a green liquid that goes down. . . . I feel like I have cramps. . . . He says it has to be done." Leigh woke up sobbing, and she cried on and off for days.

The leaves were turning brown in New York when Leigh, still upset by her experience in Wellfleet, finally had the chance to meet a roomful of other abductees. The scene was Budd Hopkins's town house in the Chelsea section of New York. Original paintings by Hopkins and a dozen great artists adorned the walls. Hopkins's wife, art critic April Kingsley, made pasta primavera. There were Italian hors d'oeuvres, Perrier, vodka, and wine. It seemed like any other New York party, with attractive, educated men and women discussing politics, films, and jobs.

After dinner, though, clustered around in a circle, those in the 25-member support group discussed the issue closest to their hearts: the fact that they were abductees. One young woman who came forward trembled as she described an immaculate conception and her daughter's subsequent birth. "I didn't know how it could have happened," she said, her lips quivering, her eyes filled with tears: "I was having panic attacks; I was close to suicide. I couldn't go to nursing school." Since working with Hopkins, however, she had recalled artificial insemination by aliens and several abduction experiences since the age of ten. "Now I know what's happened to me," she said proudly. "My life is back on track. I think I understand." ∞



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