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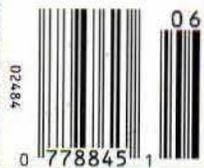
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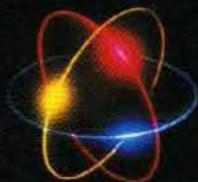
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UFO UPDATE:

Can UFO researchers prove that aliens are tagging and tracking humans with tiny devices implanted in the body or brain?

BY PAUL MCCARTHY

One of the most insidious forms of alien technology ever reported by UFO buffs is the implant—a BB-like object said to be inserted in the brains or bodies of UFO abductees. According to some UFO advocates, E.T.'s use these tiny devices to tag and track human abductees just as earthbound wildlife specialists tag and track animals.

But how can anyone know whether a reputed implant is real or not? How, some UFO investigators have begun to wonder, can they authenticate an implant should a sample emerge?

One person addressing this issue is David Pritchard, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. According to Pritchard, no matter how strange the structure or material of an alleged implant, if it is not some "out of this world" material like "heavy metals or quark matter" it won't be possible to convince a lot of people.

But, Pritchard adds, there are other ways to skin the cat. For example, researchers could peg an insert as such if it worked like a flashlight but was a hundred times brighter than any flashlight on Earth. If the implant sent complex but unrecognizable signals, he says, "that would be pretty con-

vincing as well." Finally, Pritchard believes, evidence would mount if investigators found the exact same type of implant in numerous people making abduction claims.

Yet another means of studying the so-called alien implant is a high-tech imaging technique called magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI. The technique was tapped by reputed abductee Whitley Strieber, who says he remembers the insertion of needles in his head. His MRI brain scans, he adds, now show strange white spots. "Are the unknown objects in my brain an outcome of such intrusions?" Strieber asked in his recent book, *Transformation*. Pritchard says the dots prove nothing; they

could be air bubbles. But a statistical argument could be made he adds, if researchers can show that professed UFO abductees have significantly more dots than a random control group.

Longtime UFO skeptic Phil Klass, who doesn't believe that aliens have ever come to Earth, takes a different tack. First, he says, he would want to know "where the implant came from," and would feel more confident if it had been removed by a surgeon. Then, if it were something "that could not form naturally in the body," he would want to know if it could be made with terrestrial technology. If the answer to that is no, says Klass, "I think you have your proof."

Even more skeptical is Robert Sheaffer, author of *The UFO Verdict*, who says the whole question of UFO abductions is dubious and that the idea of alien implants is "certainly rubbish." According to Sheaffer, the UFO is a slippery phenomenon that always manages to fade away before the evidence becomes too convincing, and alien implants are an example of this. "Some people might be saying they were kidnapped by aliens for the money," says Sheaffer. "Others might be doing it

because they really believe that they were abducted. But there is not a shred of evidence to substantiate this claim. Alien implants are just too good to be true."

According to UFO abduction expert Budd Hopkins, author of *Missing Time* and *Intruders*, a number of radiologists are privately doing MRI scans on people who claim they have been abducted by aliens—and that the aliens have inserted devices in their bodies or brains. But a neurosurgeon advised him that if, as claimed, implants exist somewhere above the upper nasal passages, then they are near the optic nerve. In that case, he says, "it would be very risky for a surgeon to try to get one out." What does Hopkins say about the prospect of actually validating these weird alien implants? "It'd have devastating societal impact," he says. "I am not looking forward to something like this."

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