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APRIL 1994

THE UFO CONSPIRACY

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**AN
ABDUCTEE
SPEAKS**

**INSIDE THE
MILITARY/UFO
UNDERGROUND:
BREAKING
THE SILENCE
BARRIER**

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The Great High-Rise

Abduction

spin you put on it, it's definitely the case of the century

It was cold and clear, about 3:00 a.m., when the car stalled near the South Street seaport in Manhattan. Glimpsing up, the passengers—a major political figure, who will remain unnamed, and two government agents—spied a glowing oval object hovering over a building a couple of blocks away. As lights on the heavenly vision changed from red-orange to a bright bluish-white, a woman in a nightgown floated out of a twelfth-story window and hovered midair. The awe-struck witnesses watched as the woman, surrounded by several small creatures, ascended effortlessly into the bottom of the craft. The object zipped over the Brooklyn Bridge and finally plunged into the East River. **Or so the story goes.**

ARTICLE BY PATRICK HUYGHE • PAINTING BY MASAHIKO FUJII

"It's an extraordinary case," says Budd Hopkins, a world-class modern artist who has recently become known for his books, *Missing Time* and *Intruders*, detailing his 18 years of investigation into claims that thousands of people have been abducted by UFOs. A trip to Hopkins' studio on Manhattan's West Side reveals the profound influence these so-called abductions have had on his art. Scattered around the room are colorful, profile-shaped paintings he calls "guardians" that evoke nothing if not the aliens in question. Indeed, as Hopkins describes his work, his dark, thick eyebrows dance with enthusiasm; these days, it is the bizarre tales of UFOs and the nasty creatures who inhabit them, plucking innocents from their homes in the middle of the night, that consume most of his time.

If Hopkins seems excited, he explains, it's because he has found a case that might convince the army of skeptics who have hounded him for years. Unlike the thousands of other abduction cases on record, he explains, this is the first time independent witnesses have come forward claiming to have seen the event take place. Even more significant, one of these witnesses is said, in the vernacular, to be a Very Important Person. "The implication," Hopkins speculates, "is that this was deliberate, a demonstration of alien power and intent."

Hopkins has never had trouble drawing dramatic conclusions about UFO abductions, a phenomenon that emerged, it should be noted, without him. The first bizarre story came to public attention in 1966 and involved the now-notorious New England couple, Betty and Barney Hill. Under hypnosis, the Hills recalled being snatched from their car and examined by small creatures aboard a flying saucer. But it would take another decade, a few more headline-grabbing abduction tales, and, finally, the television broadcast of the Hills' own story before tales of alien encounters became embedded in the popular consciousness at large.

The stage was now set for Hopkins to emerge as the leading authority on abductions. It happened in 1981 with the publication of his book, *Missing Time*, in which he suggested that the abduction experience was much more widespread than anyone had imagined. For Hopkins, the plight of the abductee became a personal crusade, and before long, he would be lecturing on the subject across the country, appearing

on one talk show after another, and finally writing *Intruders*, a 1987 best seller that was turned into a television miniseries in 1992. Clearly, no one has done more than Hopkins to bring this strange phenomenon to public awareness. Even more to the point, no one has had greater success in getting scientists and mental-health professionals to take a serious look at abductions.

So it's no surprise that when Hopkins began touting his latest case as the strongest evidence yet for UFOs, their alien occupants, and their systematic abduction of human beings, people listened. But as the pieces of the puzzle were revealed, critics began charging that rather than prove his point, Hopkins had fallen victim to the elaborate fantasy of a bored housewife or a complex hoax. Indeed, said his detractors, so outrageous was the tale and so fragile the evidence for it, it had backfired, destroying his credibility and bringing down his body of work like a house of cards.

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The story certainly is a humdinger, with more twists and turns than California's Highway 1 and more mystery characters than a Le Carre spy thriller. "It's a crazy, endless saga," says Hopkins, including such elements as secret agents, attempted murder, and two high-level political figures, Mikhail Gorbachev one of them.

The central character in the case is Linda. She does not want her last name revealed. She lives in Lower Manhattan, and on the very hot spring day I went to meet her, I came to appreciate why the aliens had decided to grab her through the window. It certainly beats penetrating a locked gate and the scrutiny of a guard, then taking an elevator up 12 stories and winding your way through a corridor to her place. When I knocked on the door, I was greeted by an attractive, fortyish woman with brown, almond-shaped eyes and long, flowing brown hair. We sat down on her couch, and as her air conditioner blasted arctic air and she smoked a dozen cigarettes, I was treat-

ed to one mind-boggling tale.

It started early in 1988. Linda had just bought Kitty Kelly's biography of Frank Sinatra and another book, which she took to be a mystery. The other book was *Intruders* by Budd Hopkins. By the end of the first chapter, she was stumped: Aliens had left mysterious implants in people's brains and noses, and that last little bit bothered her. Thirteen years before, she had found a lump on the side of her nose and had gone to a specialist who said it was built-up cartilage left over from a surgical scar. But she had never had any such surgery, even as a child, she said. Linda then took my finger and put it on her nose: Yes, I could feel a very slight bump on her upper right nostril. But there had to be more than this, I thought. There was.

A year later, Linda finally contacted Hopkins, who decided to explore Linda's past with his favorite tool—hypnosis. "It felt kind of strange," Linda says. "I'm just a wife and mother. I'm just Linda. UFOs? Naw."

Hopkins says he learned otherwise. He regressed Linda to age 8, enabling her to recall an episode in which she thought she glimpsed the cartoon character Casper, of *Casper the Friendly Ghost* fame. But under hypnosis, her memory of Casper turned out to be a large, top-shaped object that she'd seen flying above the apartment building across the street from her childhood

home in Manhattan. Hopkins came to suspect that she had been abducted by aliens and by June of 1989 had invited her to join his support group for abductees.

"I remember sitting there bug-eyed listening to these people," says Linda. "I felt strange the first time, but after that I felt better."

Finally, on November 30, 1989, a very agitated Linda called Hopkins to report she had been abducted again. She had gone to bed quite late, at about ten minutes before 3:00 a.m., because she'd been up doing the laundry. Towels and blue jeans for four take eons to dry in her small dryer, she explained. Her husband, who normally worked nights, was on jury duty that week and so was home and asleep in the bedroom. She showered, got into bed, and lying on her back, clasped her hands and began reciting "Our Father" to herself, a habit she carried over into adulthood from her Roman Catholic upbringing. Then she felt a presence in the room.

"I was awake but had my eyes closed," she recalls. "I was afraid. I knew it wasn't my husband; he was snoring away. Then I lay there wondering, *Did I lock the door? Is it one of the kids?*" She called out the names of her two boys and finally reached out for her husband. "Wake up," she said, "there's somebody in the room."

He didn't answer, and she began to feel a numbness crawl up from her toes. After months in the support group exploring her past abductions, she recognized what that meant. *It's now or never*, she thought and opened her eyes. At the foot of the bed, says Linda, stood a small creature with a large head and huge black eyes. "I screamed and yelled," she says, "and then threw my pillow. The creature fell back." After that, she has only fragments of conscious memory—a white fabric going over her eyes; little alien hands pounding up and down her back; suddenly falling back into bed.

It was a quarter to 5:00 in the morning when Linda jumped out of bed, ran into the kids' room, and discovered, she says, that "they weren't breathing." Hysterical, she retrieved a small mirror from the bathroom and placed it under their noses. Suddenly, a mist formed on the mirror, she says, and she heard her husband snoring in the other room. They were all alive. Linda, in shock, sat on the floor in the hallway between the two bedrooms until dawn. Later she called Hopkins.

Under hypnosis, Linda revealed that there had actually been five creatures in the apartment. They had led her from the bedroom through the living room and out a closed window, she declared, where, floating in midair, she saw a bright bluish-white light. She was afraid of falling and embarrassed, thinking her nightgown had gone over her head. She moved up into the craft and then found herself sitting on a table. The creatures around her, she says, were scraping her arms—"like taking skin samples," she speculates, and pounding with an instrument up and down her spine—all typical abduction fare, to say the least.

Quite atypical is what allegedly happened 15 months later. In February 1991, Hopkins received a typewritten letter from two people claiming to be police officers. Late in 1989, the letter said, the two had witnessed a "little girl or woman wearing a full white nightgown" floating out of a twelfth-floor apartment window, escorted by three "ugly but small humanlike creatures" into a very large hovering oval that eventually turned reddish orange. The object, the letter added, flew over their heads,

over the Brooklyn Bridge, and plunged into the East River. They wondered if the woman was alive, though they wished to remain anonymous to protect their careers. They signed the letter with first names only—Richard and Dan.

Hopkins was astonished. "I realized immediately that the woman they had seen was none other than Linda," he said. "The account seemed to corroborate the time, date, and details of her abduction. Here, finally, were independent, seemingly reputable witnesses to an abduction."

When Hopkins first called Linda to tell her, she replied, "That can't be possible." Then she wondered if she and Budd were the victims of a cruel joke. But all suspicions vanished one evening a few weeks later, she says, when Richard and Dan showed up at her door.

"Police," they announced. Linda looked through the peephole and saw two men in plain clothes flashing a gold badge. "So I let them in," said Linda, "and they looked at me kind of funny. When they introduced themselves as Dan and Richard, my stomach dropped to the floor." Both were tall, well-built, attractive men in their forties, she says. Dan sat on the couch, put his head in his hand, and said, "My God, it's really her." Richard had tears in his eyes and hugged her, expressing relief that she was alive.

"Budd had warned me not to discuss the incident with anyone," Linda says now, "so all I could do was tell them to talk to Budd."

In the year that followed, Linda claims, she had numerous encounters with the mystery duo—at bus stops, outside her dentist's office, even at church. Hopkins himself never had the pleasure of meeting the pair, though, he says, he did eventually receive three more letters from Dan and four letters and an audiocassette from Richard. In one letter, says Hopkins, Dan explained his need to remain anonymous: He and Richard were not New York City cops, he said, nor on that fateful November night had they been alone. They were, in fact, government security agents and had been escorting an important political figure, who they would not name, to a downtown heliport; suddenly their car's engine died and the headlights went out. They had seen Linda's abduction unfold after they pushed the car to safety under the elevated FDR Drive.

Dan and Richard just couldn't stay away. One morning, after Linda had walked her youngest son to the school bus at 7:15, she claims she was approached by Richard, who asked her to take a ride in his car. She refused, but Richard's grip firmed on her shoul-

der. "You can go quietly or you can go kicking and screaming," Linda claims Richard told her. As he dragged her to the open rear door of his black Mercedes, he tickled her, Linda states. "That's how he got me in the car."

"They drove me around for about three hours," says Linda, "asking me all sorts of questions." Did she work for the government? Was she herself an alien? They even demanded she prove herself human by taking off her shoes. Aliens, they would claim in a letter to Hopkins, lacked toes. She called Hopkins as soon as they dropped her off at home.

"Hopkins told me to call the police," Linda now explains, "but I refused. Who would have believed me?" The notion of surveillance by Richard and Dan eventually spooked her so much that she quit her secretarial job and simply stayed home. To ease Linda's isolation, Hopkins found a benefactor who paid for Linda's limited use of a bodyguard so she could go out.

Unfortunately, the bodyguard was not around for what Linda says was her second major encounter with Richard and Dan. On October 15, 1991, Linda reports, Dan accosted her on the street and pulled her into a red Jaguar. As they drove along, he sometimes put his hand on her knee—"to distract me,"

Linda suggests, "from following the route to a three-story beach house which I assume was on Long Island." Inside, Dan started a pot of coffee and gave Linda a present: a nightgown, she says, "the kind a woman might wear if she didn't have any children, especially sons." Dan asked her to put it on so he could photograph her in it as she appeared mid-abduction, floating over New York. She refused but finally agreed to put it on over her clothes. As Dan's behavior became increasingly strange, she decided to flee, running out the door and onto the beach.

"Dan caught me and picked me up, shaking me like a toy," she says. There was mud on my face, so he dunked me in the water once, twice, three times. I don't think he was trying to drown me, but he kept me under too long." This behavior, which critics of this strange tale have termed "attempted murder," finally ceased. Instead, Dan pulled off Linda's wet jeans and, she says, pulled her down on his lap in the water, rocking her like a baby. Shortly after, Linda reports, "Richard showed up, apologized for Dan, and drove me home."

Linda went straight to Hopkins. "She left sand all over my house," Hopkins says. "A few weeks later, I received a

half dozen photographs of Linda, in the nightgown, running along the beach."

That November, the saga became stranger still. While lunching with Linda, a relative who was also a doctor insisted she go to the hospital to x-ray the lump in her nose. The x-ray Linda now presents shows a profile of her head; clearly visible is a quarter-inch-long cylinder apparently embedded in her nose.

"It was weird," says Hopkins' friend Paul Cooper, professor of neurosurgery at New York University, who has examined the x-ray. "I've never seen anything like it." But even Cooper admits the x-ray could have been faked by taping a little something to the outside of Linda's nose.

Moreover, as usually happens in UFO stories, this tantalizing bit of evidence vanished as quickly as it had appeared. Soon after getting the x-ray, Linda told Hopkins she'd awakened with a bloody nose. Under hypnosis, Hopkins says, Linda revealed that the aliens had again whisked her away. Later, with Cooper's help, Hopkins had further x-rays taken, but the implant was nowhere to be seen.

Meanwhile, another alleged witness to Linda's spectacular abduction came forward. That same month,

Hopkins received a large manila envelope from a woman living in upstate New York. On the outside, in large letters, appeared the words, *Confidential, Re: Brooklyn Bridge*.

On the evening of November 29, 1989, the woman—Hopkins calls her “Janet Kimble”—had been in Brooklyn at a retirement party for her boss. When she headed home via the Brooklyn Bridge around 3:00 a.m., she told Hopkins, her car came to a dead stop in the middle of the bridge and her headlights blinked out. The same thing, she states, happened to the cars coming up behind her. Suddenly, she saw what she thought was “a building on fire” about a quarter of a mile away. The light was so bright that she had to shield her eyes, she said. Then she realized what she was seeing: Four “balls” had floated out of an apartment window and, midair, unrolled into three “rickets-stricken” children and a fourth, taller, “normal girl-child” wearing a white gown. “While I watched,” she wrote, “I could hear the screams of the people parked in their cars behind me.” The “children” were then whisked up into the object, whereupon it flew over the Brooklyn Bridge and disappeared when her view was obscured by a walkway.

Hopkins says he telephoned “Janet Kimble” immediately and later had lunch with her. The tale told by this “widow of about sixty who once worked as a telephone operator” corroborates stories told by Richard and Linda, he says, ruling out the possibility of a hoax.

In fact, if Hopkins is to be believed, another witness to the Linda abduction was actually the first. That person, he states, is a UFO abductee as well, a woman in her early thirties who claims to have been abducted from her Manhattan bedroom in the middle of the night. She consciously remembers being outside at some point, moving along the streets involuntarily, and seeing 15 to 20 other women all moving zombie-like toward a UFO on the banks of the East River.

When Hopkins tells me this, I can't help but guffaw. He finds my reaction perfectly understandable. “What can I say?” he says. For Hopkins, who is in the midst of investigating another mass abduction in New York City involving a hundred humans, this woman's story is only “a little more bizarre than most.”

In any event, says Hopkins, this woman at one point looks down the East Riv-

er and sees two other UFOs in the sky, one a bright orange object at the southern end of Manhattan, ostensibly the one that abducted Linda.

The two cases, if believed and taken in concert, shed an ominous light on the humorous name that some critics have bestowed on the Linda case: “Manhattan Transfer.” Were the aliens out that night abducting Manhattanites like Linda in droves?

By December of 1991, the end of Linda's saga was nowhere in sight. She was now struggling with an obviously disturbed and persistent human named Dan, who, according to Richard, had been admitted to a “rest home.” At Christmas, she received a card and note from Dan. It was a love letter actually. He told her he planned to leave the “rest home” soon and asked her to pack her toothbrush—he was coming for her. He wanted to learn her alien ways and her special language. “You'll make a beautiful bride,” he teased. Linda, however, was not amused.

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Dan apparently tried to get Linda in February of 1992, but she was rescued from this dragon by Richard, whom Linda now regards as a knight in shining armor. Linda says that Richard, upon returning from a “mission” abroad, had gone to visit Dan at the rest home, found him missing, and had come looking for him in New York. When he learned that Dan had prepared a passport for Linda and booked two tickets to England, he immediately sought out Linda and managed to spirit her away just in time.

Linda's last contact with the aliens occurred a few months afterward. On Memorial Day 1992, she, her husband, two sons, and one of their guests all awakened at about 4:30 in the morning with nosebleeds. Hopkins says he has subsequently confirmed, through hypnosis, that the incident was UFO related. “I really don't try to convince anybody,” says Linda, having come to the end of her story. “I don't expect anyone to believe this because, to tell you the truth, if the shoe were on the other

foot, I wouldn't believe it either. But it happened. It happened.”

If it really did, I thought, the independent witnesses would confirm it. The prize witness obviously was the VIP, and the word in the UFO community is that Hopkins thinks it was Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, secretary-general of the United Nations from 1982 to 1991. “I will not deny or confirm that,” says Hopkins. “I won't say who he is, but I can say this: All the letters from Richard and Dan refer to the fact that there was a third man in the car. And he's written one letter to me, which was signed, *The Third Man*. I can't make the things he said public, though clearly he's letting me know between the lines who he is.”

Actually, rumor has it that this third party may be central to the Linda case. According to anonymous sources close to Hopkins, Richard, Dan, and their passenger were *all* abducted on that fateful day of November 30, 1989, right along with Linda. Their delayed recall of this event supposedly would explain why it took 15 months for them to write to Hopkins, why they were so interested in Linda, and why they are so reluctant to come forward now.

But all that is *certain* about Pérez de Cuéllar is that he was in New York City on the days in question. Did he really witness the Linda abduction?

Joe Sills, spokesman for the secretary-general at the United Nations, was nice enough to check with the security people but came up empty handed. “No one that I spoke to,” he says, “was aware of him ever being in that part of town at that hour of the morning. It's just not in the kind of schedule that he kept.” What's more, he added, Pérez de Cuéllar could not have been heading for the heliport since he always went to the airport via limousine. U.N. spokesperson Juan Carlos Brandt checked with Pérez de Cuéllar directly. “He says he never witnessed any incident,” says Brandt.

And adding insult to injury, Hopkins can't even prove that the two government security agents, Richard and Dan, are real. He has never met or spoken to them, and all efforts to identify them have proven fruitless. In March of 1991, for instance, Linda looked through six hours of clips of news programs showing security agents at events in New York City. The clips belong to one of Hopkins' contacts in government law enforcement. Near the end of the six hours, while watching a network broad-

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identified as 'Dan.' Despite the fact that the images were taken from a distance, involved crowds and the bustling chaos that accompanies visiting dignitaries, she apparently had no trouble making her identification. Those who have viewed the tapes have seen a man who appears to be taking part in official business, and who is in no way out of place or unusual.

In the months that followed, Hopkins and Linda made the rounds with their pictures of "Dan" in hand. They went to United Nations security and the State Department, Secret Service, and Russian delegation offices in New York. At times, Hopkins and Linda would use a cover story so as not to arouse suspicion: "Sometimes we said we were husband and wife and that this was a friend we had met a couple of years ago in Cape Cod and he had said to look him up here when we came to New York," Hopkins explains. But the ploy didn't work. "I've been all over with these pictures," says Hopkins, "and nobody recognizes him."

Then there is the woman on the bridge, "Janet Kimble." She is a real person but apparently, after being ridiculed by her own family, wants no part of Hopkins' story. When Hopkins tried to arrange an interview for me, she told

him, "I can't help you anymore with this." The final independent witness is the woman up the East River who claims to have participated in the mass abduction of women that very night. But she's another abductee and not truly impartial in the matter.

With no independent witnesses willing to come forward, the case, not surprisingly, has come under intense criticism. Curiously, two of those most critical of the case initially became involved at Linda's request.

By early 1992, Linda was feeling so helpless at the hands of her human kidnapers that she decided to seek additional expert help. At the suggestion of New York journalist and UFO researcher Antonio Huneus, she contacted Richard Butler, a former law-enforcement and security specialist for the Air Force and a fellow abductee, whom Linda had met at Hopkins' support group. Butler met with Linda on February 1, 1992, and brought with him Joe Stefula, a former special agent for the U.S. Army's Criminal Investigations Command and current head of security for a drug company in New Jersey. During the meeting, Linda asked for safety tips on how to protect herself from the dangerous duo, and Butler and Stefula, in order to give useful advice, asked

Linda a few questions of their own.

Several months later, after Hopkins made the case public at the 1992 Mutual UFO Network annual meeting in Albuquerque, Stefula, Butler, and a friend of theirs, parapsychologist George Hansen, decided the case needed a thorough investigation and began poking around Linda's neighborhood. They spoke to the security guard and supervisor at Linda's building, went to the offices of the *New York Post* nearby, and simply interviewed residents to see if they remembered anything amiss. No one did.

Afterward, Hansen, already the author of a number of stinging critiques of both psi research and its critics, wrote a lengthy skeptical report. The central issue, say the skeptics, is the lack of large numbers of witnesses to this spectacular event. After all, New York never sleeps; there are people out and about even in the middle of the night. Why did none of the truck drivers at the loading dock of the *New York Post* just a short distance from Linda's apartment see this blindingly bright object? Why haven't all those other people whose cars were supposedly stalled on the Brooklyn Bridge come forward?

To such questions, Hopkins has a two-fold reply: "The unwillingness of people to report such fantastic experiences is

Abduction

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not new. People do not like to be ridiculed," he says. Then there's the invisibility issue, "which just seems to be part of the phenomenon. Many people who you think should have seen these things just don't," Hopkins explains.

But Hopkins can't explain everything. For instance, how could "Janet Kimble" know that the words *Brooklyn Bridge* written on the outside of her envelope would attract Hopkins' attention unless she knew or was related to one of the people in the Hopkins support group, all of whom had heard about the case? The answer, replies Hopkins, is ridiculously simple: "She saw the abduction from the Brooklyn Bridge and thought that the others who had been stalled on the bridge that night might have contacted me about it."

But Butler says the likelier explanation is that Linda fabricated the whole story after reading *Nighteyes*, a science-fiction novel by Garfield Reeves-Stevens published in April of 1989, just months before her alleged abduction. The novel charts the abductions of an FBI team staking out a beach house in California while a mother and daughter undergo a series of abductions in and around New York City. It concludes with an apocalyptic finale. Butler claims that Linda was very intrigued when the book was brought up at the Hopkins support-group meetings. "I guarantee you that's where she got the basis for her story," he says.

Butler admits the book's storyline is different from Linda's but says there are too many parallels to be coincidence. Both Linda and the novel's Sarah were abducted into a UFO hovering over a high-rise apartment building in New York City. Linda was kidnapped and thrown into a car by Richard and Dan; one of the novel's central characters, Wendy, was kidnapped and thrown into a van by two mystery men. Dan is supposed to be a security and intelligence agent, while one of the book's central characters is an FBI agent. Both Dan and an agent in the novel were hospitalized for emotional trauma. Both Linda and the novel's Wendy were taken to a "safe house" on the beach. The list of such parallels goes on and on.

"But similarity does not prove relationship," replies Hopkins. Without an important political figure witnessing the abduction—the very essence of the

Linda case, he notes—the comparison with the book is meaningless.

Hopkins is not alone. Walt Andrus, international director of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), is "absolutely convinced the case is authentic." And David Jacobs, a history professor at Temple University and another researcher on the abduction scene, says the critics debunking the case have twisted the facts. "Over the past several years, I have been a confidant of Hopkins' and, at times, of Linda's. I can tell you that when Hopkins' report comes out, the inaccuracy of the critics will be apparent and the case will stand or fall on its own merits."

For Hansen, of course, those merits are slim. And, he says, the hoaxing he believes occurred is the least of it. "For me," he says, "the worst infraction is the reaction of the leadership of UFOlogy. I think this has given us great insight into the mentality—and the gullibility—of Budd Hopkins, Walt Andrus, and David Jacobs, the people who really con-

against the government. She was not, she said: "I'm a Bush Republican."

When I called the Secret Service about their investigation, I was referred to Special Agent James Kaiser, media representative in the New York field office. After reviewing the file on the case, titled "Special Agent Alleged Misconduct, February 10, 1993," Kaiser told me that Linda "was, in fact, interviewed at our office, and it was determined that her allegations regarding U.S. Secret Service agents having any contact with her whatsoever prior to that day were unfounded and baseless. It never happened. She may have been mistaking us for some other agency or organization. Case closed."

The case is also closed as far as Hansen, Stefula, and Butler are concerned. They truly believe that Linda is involved in a hoax. "I think she started out with a small lie," speculates Hansen, "a tall tale that grew in the three years that followed. She's been a typist and temporary secretary, so she has had access to a lot of different typewriters undoubtedly. It would not surprise me if there were someone else hoaxing Hopkins as well."

Hopkins flatly rejects the hoax scenario. "An efficient hoax has a minimum of moving parts," he says. "You don't want to go into too many details. This has more moving parts that one could possibly imagine."

As for Linda, when asked if she had made up this whole scenario, she replied simply, "No. How could this be a hoax? There are too many people involved. In fact," she added, "I take the suggestion as a compliment. They must think I'm pretty intelligent to pull off such a thing."

Some details of the case frankly do make me suspicious. For one, the drawings of the abduction that Hopkins received from Richard and the woman on the bridge not only look like they might have been prepared by the same person, despite the stylistic and perspective differences, which Hopkins has duly noted, but more importantly, both were done in crayons and used the same colors.

What's more, to actually meet Linda and hear her talk is to be transported to a world where reality is inverted, where all we have ever known is flipped on its head. Strain your ears, and you can almost hear the chords from *Twilight Zone* kick in as the underlying chaos of the universe takes control. Fact is, outrageous as I find Linda's story, Linda herself seems sin-

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control much of what people actually read about UFOs."

Hansen is particularly upset that, given charges of kidnapping and attempted murder, the leadership did not go to the police. "I recognize there is government cover-up on UFOs," he says, "but covering up a so-called attempted murder and kidnapping, as these guys apparently say they've done—that's quite something else."

Hoping to right the wrong, Hansen has, in fact, sent a letter to the inspector-general's office, Department of the Treasury, requesting that Linda's claims of kidnapping and attempted murder by federal agents be investigated. In February of 1992, the Secret Service contacted Linda and she and Hopkins went down to their World Trade Center offices to speak to Special Agent Peggy Fleming and her supervisor. Hopkins and Linda told Fleming the story and explained that they didn't know who Hansen was or why he was involved. Linda also objected to what she perceived as Hansen's insinuation that she was

cere. Her emotions—fright, anxiety, and anger—appear genuine.

I'm not alone in these impressions. John Mack, a professor of psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School, whom Hopkins confided in as the story unfolded and who now knows Linda well, insists that "there is nothing unauthentic or devious" about her.

Gibbs Williams, a New York psychoanalytic psychotherapist with a quarter century of experience, has tested Linda and also dismisses any notion that Linda might be hoaxing the whole affair. "You would have to have the kind of conspiratorial mentality of Richard Nixon and be able to think sixty-two moves ahead," Williams says. "Quite frankly, Linda doesn't appear to have that kind of mind; she does not have that kind of abstracting capacity." He notes further that her emotive capacity—her anger, crying, and tendency to get carried away—is not consistent with the psychopathic cool mentality of the hoaxer and liar. "My conclusion," he says, "is that from her perspective, she is telling her truth."

Perhaps Jerome Clark, vice president of the Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) and editor of the *International UFO Reporter*, sums up the controversy best: "This is an absolutely extraordinary claim, and the evidence that you need to marshal to support such a claim simply is not there."

Hopkins promises it will be when his book appears. Until then, Linda stands alone, ambivalent about her fame. On the one hand, she seems to revel in the notoriety. She attends national UFO meetings obviously dressed to impress. "To tell you the truth, it wouldn't be that bad if I didn't have a family," she admits to me.

Yet she also feels victimized. "There are a lot of Italian Americans and Chinese in my neighborhood, and many of them even laugh at joggers," she says. "Imagine if anyone in the area heard that I was abducted by aliens."

"Worst of all," she continues, "those critics took away the safety of my family by taking my real name and publishing it. We are sitting ducks for any crackpot in the UFO community. They know where I live. They know what I look like." She has already taken her name off her intercom system, and she fully expects to move when Hopkins' book on the case comes out. "I don't know what's worse," she says finally, "what Richard and Dan did, what these three stooges from New Jersey did, or what the aliens did." Or what Hopkins has done, I might add. After all, he promised so much and has delivered so little.

Poor Linda. ☐