

This issue of *AW* is a special, looking at claims of small objects being implanted into the bodies of people alleged to have been abducted by aliens. Like No.6, when *AW* dealt with hypnotic regression, other magazines are welcome to use the whole of this issue as an article, and I will be happy to supply it on disk - name your format - to any respectable editor who wants to publish it, or to anyone who wants to put it out on the Net. We might as well reach as wide an audience as possible when people are being led to believe that they are being controlled and spied on by aliens, and when the evidence presented for that assertion is at best idiotic, at worst psychologically harmful. I am at a loss to comprehend the motivation of those who want us to believe that we are no more than slaves to aliens, and this issue is a challenge to them, their evidence, and maybe their motives and integrity, too. Let's see.

The technical and scientific input in this issue has come primarily from members of ASKE, the Association for Skeptical Enquiry, so far as I know the only effective, national sceptical organisation in the UK. Membership of ASKE costs only £15 a year, including the substantial journal the *Skeptical Intelligencer*. Details can be obtained from The Secretary, ASKE, 15, Ramsden Wood Road, Todmorden, Lancs, OL14 7UD, or at <http://linus.mcc.ac.uk/~moleary/ASKE/>.

## ***Abduction Watch 15*** November 1998

### **ALIEN IMPLANTS - A CHIROPODIST SPEAKS**

In *AW14*, I wrote briefly about the article reporting an analysis of 'alien implants', written by Dr Roger K Leir - a close associate of 'Alien Hunter' Derrel Sims - and published in both the June 1998 *MUFON UFO Journal*, and the UK *UFO Magazine* for November/December 1998. Appearing in such high profile locations, with no critical context whatever, it will have convinced some readers that the implants are real, whereas the truth is that it is strongly persuasive that the scraps of unidentified material found are just that, and no more. Happily, the short piece in *AW14* produced two more professional, scientific views of what Leir had to say, which I'm happy to present here.

The 'implant' myth is the last refuge of the abductionists. Everything else but blind belief has collapsed, and even Whitley Streiber has, in *Confirmation*, admitted that his own much-publicised 'implant' was nothing unusual, let alone alien. You hear little of implants, now, from Hopkins, Mack or Jacobs, but they are firmly out there in popular belief. And where myth is, so too is Derrel Sims and his team. Oddly enough, implants are one of the few consistently unambiguous elements of the *X-Files*: it may not be quite clear who placed them there, but their reality is unarguable. And they are undoubtedly one of the nastiest of the ways of persuading abduction believers that they are enslaved, and controlled, unable to control their fate, and in need of the help of Sims, or somebody like him.

As I explained previously, you'll benefit from reading the whole report, which I can't publish but I understand is out there on the Net. However, the comments I've been given make the situation pretty clear. What it is absolutely vital to remember is that Leir's article is allegedly based on reports of analyses conducted by Los Alamos National Labs and New Mexico Tech, yet we hardly get to see a word of what they have to say. What we do get is a confused apologia from a chiropodist. Which may be what we deserve. To quote *Skeptical Inquirer*, Sep/Oct 1998, "Many of the removals have been performed by "California surgeon" Roger Leir. Actually Dr Leir is not a physician, but a podiatrist (licensed to do minor surgery on feet). He was accompanied by an unidentified general surgeon (who did not want to be associated with UFO abduction claims). The latter performed all of the above-the-ankle surgeries". Leir explains that

"The first surgeries consisted of two candidates, one male and one female. They were both subjects of the alien abduction phenomenon . . . (with objects in their bodies that appeared on X-ray examination. these first surgeries resulted in the extraction of three objects, two from the toe of the female patient and one from the hand of the male.)"

I'll start by reprinting the comments of Trevor Jordan, a retired GP, and a member of ASKE who previously looked critically at Sims' claims of alien fluorescence

"Re the encapsulation of the foreign matter in a 'dark gray shiny membrane' consisting of 'a protein coagulum, haemosiderin granules and keratin'. All of these are, as the paper admits, naturally occurring: the haemosiderin suggests a ferrous object which has, in effect, rusted. All this, I suspect, is no more than the tissue which develops around any retained foreign matter in the body, and I can't see how the author substantiates his claim that this combination of elements has never been seen before. The lack of any

'fresh or resolved' inflammatory or rejection process in the surrounding tissue suggests that the foreign body had been there for some time: once it is encapsulated, the inflammation has done its job, the encapsulation membrane isolating the foreign matter from the rest of the body.

The presence of 'nerve proprioceptors . . . which are never found . . . in the deep tissues next to the bone'. My understanding was that nerve proprioceptors (if such they were) are virtually universally present in all tissues . . .

The 'solar elastosis' (again, if it is that) is evidence of UV exposure but it is usually patchy and no significance attaches to the lesion found having been circumscribed: this is normal. It certainly does not indicate localised or circumscribed exposure to UV, otherwise we would say the same of, say, malignant melanomata which are also more common after excessive UV exposure, yet they are also discrete lesions. Nor does it necessarily indicate excessive general exposure - ordinary exposure to sunlight is enough to account for it; though it is more 'common' after excessive exposure, it isn't necessarily solely due to that factor.

In short, a poor piece of scientific writing which is unconvincing in its claims that these lesions were anything other than those which might be as well explained (we would say, better or more probably explained) as natural phenomena . . ."

The next selection of comments comes from another ASKE member, Barry Jones. He is the Managing Director of a scientific instruments company.

#### **A Response to "Alien Implants" by Dr. Roger K. Leir - MUFON UFO Journal, June 1998.**

When I was asked to comment on this article I started off intending to read through the paper and respond to each claim in turn, but I quickly discovered that this would result in my virtually retyping the entire paper. Almost every sentence contains some element of nonsense, and the result would have been very boring.

On the surface, the whole tone of the article is one of wondrous, uncritical amazement, but between the lines you begin to realise that this is partly just a front designed, no doubt, to promote the interests of Leir and others in the Aliens Business. The article is full of hyperbole and wild and fanciful descriptions, with supposition and wishful thinking substituted for careful, thorough, scientific analysis. The entire report is a tenuous, over-hyped and fanciful interpretation of very feeble data. Reams of "facts" are presented so as to appear "astounding", whereas in fact they are totally mundane with no credible explanation given to support the hype. Or maybe explanations were given by the labs involved, but we don't see them reported because they don't suit the author's purpose. For example, although the name of the Los Alamos National Laboratories is introduced, we don't get to see any direct quotes from their report.

To give a flavour of flavour of the original article to those who haven't yet seen it, I have included many quotes in the following commentary which I hope the reader will find illuminating, and perhaps even amusing.

#### **Introduction**

The article deals with the supposedly-scientific examination of supposed "alien implants" surgically removed from subjects, including a number of supposed "alien abductees". These "implants" were examined by the New Mexico Tech (a "world class laboratory") and by the Los Alamos Laboratories, though the extent to which these organisations were wholehearted supporters of the project is to my mind questionable, as we shall see later. The article discusses the results of the investigation in four broad categories: collection of the samples, appearance, physical state, and metallurgical analysis, and these are the categories I will also comment on.

#### **Collection of the samples**

The first point to make here is that there is mention of seven other such surgeries having been performed to date - where are the results of these other procedures?

The first two subjects were "both subjects of the alien abduction phenomenon"- a bold assertion. Both had objects in their bodies that showed up on x-ray, two in the toe of one subject, one in the hand of the other. Note that these are extremities where one would be most likely to pick up a splinter or other foreign body. Also they seem to me to be locations where the danger of damage or detection would be relatively high.

Surely an advanced civilization who can abduct human beings silently in the night through solid walls could find a better place in the body to hide their devices?

The patients reportedly showed a "violent reaction" to having the objects touched, and they reported pain one week before the surgery and a "feeling of freedom" afterwards. This I can sympathise with - I get exactly the same feelings when I have a splinter in my finger.

A lack of inflammatory response in the tissue around the objects is apparently the subject of "numerous professional debates" - could we please be introduced to just one of these debates? Leir demands that critics show where similar findings are found in the literature, but the answer is probably quite simple - no-one else finds this particularly remarkable, and you don't report non-events. Another example of this "never-before-seen" hysteria appears in the analysis of two small balls removed from one subject, which materials analysis apparently showed to contain "a multitude of combined elements never before seen attached to a skin pedicule". Rather than "never before seen", what he really should say is "never before reported", which is not really remarkable - no serious scientist is likely to make a big deal out of such a minor fact as the elemental composition of a piece of biological tissue, even if an elemental analysis were ever done. Does Leir have a list of elements which are normally found in these circumstances? I doubt it.

Some subjects apparently displayed "solar elastosis", meaning that the skin had been exposed to severe ultraviolet radiation, which Leir found "rather shocking". Shocking? Really? In New Mexico, especially in the summer? New Mexico may be short of a few things, but ultraviolet radiation is certainly not one of them. Leir was also very surprised that the lesions were well demarcated, which he took to "prove" that the applied radiation had not exceeded the boundaries of the lesion itself. This is total rubbish; solar-induced skin lesions are in fact often well demarcated, as I myself know - I've got one, the result of being follicly challenged combined with too much ultraviolet radiation (some of it indeed acquired in New Mexico, but not from aliens!).

An item removed in a previous surgery was apparently examined by an "eminent scientist", Dr David Pritchard, at "a well-known University in the eastern United States". Why the reluctance to name the University? The object in that case was found to be "made of earthly material", surely a good indication that other such objects are likely to be of similar origin, but this possibility is given little consideration.

### **Appearance**

Electron microscopy photos were taken of some of the surgically-excised objects. These show the objects to be rather rough and irregular, with pitted, knobby, flaky surfaces. They certainly do not display the smooth, undamaged appearance one would expect from an advanced, high-tech device. Nevertheless, the appearance of the objects is claimed to show "distinct and interesting features" - a barb, a rounded end, and some indentations. In fact it's so irregular you could imagine you could see the face on Mars if you looked hard enough (watch out for a forthcoming Leir article!). One object was in two pieces, with a horizontal T-shaped part having an indentation so that the vertical part fitted into it "in a most precise manner". Maybe my imagination is a bit lacking but the fit didn't look that precise to me. Anyway, perhaps it was originally in one piece and broke off, so it would look like it fitted together, or is that too simple an answer?

All the bar-shaped objects were covered with a "dark gray shiny membrane" which resisted cutting by a scalpel. This was not what they expected - so what did they expect? They were "shocked" by not being able to cut through "an ordinary piece of biological tissue"- but hold on - why did they assume it was biological tissue? And shock has no place in a real scientific investigation - you just find what you find and then try to explain it.

Later we are told that the membrane was a "complex cladding" of eleven different elements, but we are not told what was so complex about it, or why we should be amazed at a material that contains eleven elements. We are surrounded by natural and artificial materials that will commonly contain at least 6 or 7 elements, and countless materials will contain 11 or more. Big deal. Later in the report, we are finally told that this membrane ("which could not be opened with a surgical blade") was shown to be a protein coagulum, haemosiderin granules, and keratin, all of which are natural substances found in the body. If the identity of this material was known all along, what was the point of all the mystery and build-up about a "complex cladding" and "strange, gray membrane" which "could not be opened"? Just hype, yet again.

It is claimed that six of the specimens fluoresced under ultraviolet radiation, which shows that they were not looking at metal, as metal does not fluoresce. However, there could be many kinds of biological matter

in which UV fluorescence would be perfectly natural, including the kind of fungal growths that are the most likely cause of the claimed fluorescence on the skin of so-called abductees.

At one point Leir makes some vague comparison of one of the objects to an antique crystal radio set and then leaps seamlessly into pure science fantasy, with confused rambling about "structures" performing "numerous complex functions" using "technology such as the superatom and neutrinos". Let's hold on a moment here - "technology" can perhaps be defined as the application of science to practical devices, but what practical application has Leir ever heard of for superatoms and neutrinos? Apparently this is what one of their "consulting engineers" has "theorized", but any theory needs to be based on some factual evidence and there is none of that here - this is complete pseudo-scientific hogwash. No evidence was shown for any kind of circuitry or other internal structure in any of the samples. Mostly they're just pieces of iron with a protein-based coating - hardly miraculous or mysterious.

### **Metallurgical analysis**

The elemental analysis seems to be seized on as evidence of rigorous scientific investigation, but on even rudimentary scrutiny it turns out to be as vacuous as the rest of the report. Long lists are given of the elements found at various points on the samples, but without any indication of relative amounts or any attempt to comment on the significance (or otherwise) of the presence of these mundane elements. This is nothing less than a blatant attempt to blind the reader with pseudo-science. Also, the different compositions found at different places are hardly indicative of a precision-made item - more likely a piece of some irregular, natural material which these samples almost certainly are.

In a highly confusing paragraph, Leir says one lab told him that the samples were most likely from meteorites (I'd love to see the original quote from the lab report on this), although the nickel/iron ratio was apparently wrong for meteorite material, so, in another leap into the far side, they surmised that perhaps the samples were from just part of a meteorite! Why on earth would anyone in his right mind make such a baseless assumption? Leir, predictably, was "astounded at this revelation" and evidently didn't stop to think that these tiny samples (1-2mm diameter and less than 10mm long) were obviously a fragment of something, and fragments of anything are very likely to show statistically-varying compositions. In short, the samples are so small and irregular that their elemental composition is pretty much totally meaningless as an indicator of their origin.

In summarising these "scientific" findings, Leir says the labs made "two major statements" - first that one sample contained 11 different elements, and secondly that another sample had an iron core and iron and phosphorus in its "cladding". These statements were hyped like evidence of the Second Coming, but no attempt was made to try to explain the supposed significance of these extremely mundane findings - presumably because there is none.

The metallurgical analysis showed that part of one object contained a carbon core that was soft and "magnetoconductive". Here they seem to have invented a new scientific term - what exactly does "magnetoconductive" mean, and how was this tested? Magnetism would certainly pass through it if it was soft carbon, and it would be electrically conductive, so what's the surprise, and why do we need a new word, except as yet another attempt at scaremongering? The other part of the same object, we are told, had an "iron core" that was "harder than the finest carbide steel", and that it was magnetic. Please make your mind up, Dr. Leir - was it iron (in which case it certainly wasn't harder than carbon steel) or wasn't it? And if it was iron, it's no great revelation that it was magnetic.

After the tests, Leir says he "immediately" contacted NIDS for clarification. They took several weeks to respond, which is perhaps indicative of the lack of seriousness which they attached to Leir and his antics. Leir devotes a few paragraphs to complaining of "the politics of scientific testing", but my overwhelming sense when reading his criticisms was of responsible scientists and laboratories, having been somehow drawn into this business, trying desperately to distance themselves from a crackpot subject and its promoters.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion of Dr Leir and his colleagues was that these objects obviously have a purpose, but it was not clear to me how this inference could be drawn. An electrical engineer working with them apparently has a theory about these objects might work, but we are not treated to any details about this theory, presumably in case we injure ourselves laughing. We will have to wait for his forthcoming book to find out. Suggestions put forward by Leir himself include a tracking device or transponder, a behaviour-controlling

device, or "more plausibly"(!) a device for monitoring pollution levels or genetic changes in the body. Of course - that must be it!

In all seriousness, there is only one way in which these questions will be satisfactorily answered, and that is for Leir and his supporters to turn over one of their objects for independent, peer-reviewed analysis, under sceptical scrutiny, and for the analysts to make their report publicly known in full. If he needs any help in facilitating this we can certainly help, but I doubt very much that he will take up our offer.

**Barry Jones for ASKE**

**11 November 1998**

Thirdly, picking up the point made by Trevor Jordan about histopathological analysis, ASKE member Jamie Revell obtained the views of a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists, and clarified this with his own professional opinion

### **ALIEN IMPLANT - HISTOPATHOLOGICAL COMMENTARY**

In Roger Leir's article in the MUFON journal, he refers to a number of supposedly unusual features of the histopathology associated with alleged alien implants. I have consulted with a professional histopathologist regarding the features Leir regards as unusual. The following summarises his response:

1) The foreign bodies were not associated with any inflammatory reaction (in one part of the paper, Leir refers to a 'mild infiltrate' of inflammatory cells in one instance). This is not at all unusual.

2) In two of the cases, well circumscribed lesions of solar elastosis were observed. While it is unusual for such lesions to be defined in this manner, it is not unknown for this to occur. Likewise, while the parts of the body on which the lesions were observed were unusual, they are not unknown.

3) It was further implied that solar elastosis normally only occurs in individuals with excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation. Again, this is unusual but not unheard of; such lesions can occur spontaneously in the absence of excessive radiation. Furthermore, lesions indistinguishable from solar elastosis may be caused by any form of radiation (such as that used in radiotherapy) and not just ultraviolet.

4) The objects were surrounded by a membrane said to consist of protein coagulum, keratin (the protein which forms hair, nails and the surface of the skin) and haemosiderin. The doctor quoted in AW#14 suggested that the haemosiderin might be due to a rusting iron object in the body; while this is possible, haemosiderin is also a normal finding in any healed wound whether or not the object causing it was made of iron. This is because haemosiderin is a normal breakdown product of haemoglobin. Protein coagulum and haemosiderin are normal findings around foreign matter in the body. Keratin is somewhat unusual, but the pathologist I consulted was able to think of two possible explanations without any great difficulty:

a) The whitish objects could be calcified sebaceous cysts; these can become very hard, are visible in X-rays and would be surrounded by keratin.

b) Keratin from the surface of the skin could have pushed into the subcutaneous tissue by the foreign body at the time of the injury, and remained surrounding it afterwards.

5) Proprioceptor nerve endings were found in the deep tissues near the lesions, 'next to the bone'. There is more than one kind of proprioceptive nerve ending, so my colleague found this insufficient information to render an opinion. He speculated that this was most likely to refer to Pacinian corpuscles, a highly distinctive type of nerve ending, which would be unlikely to be confused with any other. He was unable to recall any information on the distribution of Pacinian corpuscles in the body.

Therefore, I conducted my own research of relevant textbooks. A Text/Atlas of Histology by Leeson, Leeson and Paparo (WB Saunders, 1988, p671) says concerning Pacinian corpuscles: "These are distributed widely in subcutaneous tissue, particularly of the palms, soles, digits and in the nipples, periosteum, mesentery, cornea, pancreas and loose connective tissues." You may be interested to know that the 'periosteum' is the layer of tissue which immediately surrounds bones.

There are, however, two other kinds of proprioceptor. The first are Neurotendinous Endings of Golgi, which are found in tendons, and which are of similar appearance to Corpuscles of Ruffini, a type of

mechanoreceptive nerve ending found in many connective tissues, but most commonly in the dermis and in joint capsules. Depending on what exactly Leir means by 'close to the bone', either of these do not seem particularly out of place.

Secondly, proprioceptive Neuromuscular Spindles are found in muscles, usually close to tendons. Neuromuscular spindles by definition include muscular fibres, so that it would be meaningless to say that they were found in tissue other than their normal location (so I think we can assume these last aren't what Leir was referring to.)

I also note that Leir omits to define 'proprioceptive' for the benefit of those less familiar with the relevant terminology. A proprioceptor is a sensory nerve ending which detects information about bodily posture, stretch of muscles, etc. It transmits information away from the nerve ending, making it difficult to see how the alleged implant could be using it to gather information.

My own relevant qualifications are:

Fellowship of the Institute of Biomedical Science, specialising in histopathological technique (not diagnosis)  
State registered Biomedical Scientist, specialising in histopathology (again, this is a technical, not a diagnostic qualification). The doctor I consulted is an MD, a practising consultant histopathologist at a district general hospital, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists.

**Jamie Revell, BSc, FIBMS**

Finally, let's look at Leir's conclusion

"It would seem that these are structured objects which serve a purpose. This purpose has not been determined yet. We hope that further study will provide answers regarding function . . . I feel it is safe to put forth theories, but these must be looked at scientifically and either proved or disproved. One such theory pertains to their ability to act as a tracking device or transponder. This would enable someone or something to find their subject anywhere on the globe. Another possibility is that they may act as behaviour controlling devices. We know that abductees seem to have compulsive behaviours. I believe a more plausible purpose might be a device for monitoring certain pollution levels or even genetic changes in the body. This may be similar to the way we monitor our astronauts in space. Only more time, effort and study will answer these questions."

I'd like to assist in providing that "effort and study". It has taken Sims and Leir more than two years to come up with these vague and, clearly, unconvincing assertions. ASKE has taken just a couple of months to produce a more comprehensive and meaningful analysis than that given by Leir, and I am happy to offer to arrange to have any of his 'implants' independently and comprehensively tested in this country, provided the results are published in full. Perhaps there are US readers who could make a similar offer. In the meantime, is there anyone out there who knows what 'Los Alamos National Labs and New Mexico Tech' **really** said about these objects, and what their view of alien abductions might be? There has to be a reason why Sims and Leir don't want us to know what was actually said. If, as has been suggested, the tests were funded by the Bigelow Foundation, they might be keen to avoid any comment that spoils the myth, and might inhibit further support. But so long as people believe in the reality of alien implants, then those people will also have their lives changed and blighted by that belief. Any effort to help those people must be more than worthwhile.

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Please excuse the dull typeface - I needed the extra space it allows! Anyway, this will probably be the last issue of *AW* before Christmas and the New Year. Between now and then I hope to find time to delve more into the 'Nazi UFO' business, and the ludicrous farrago that is (or more likely isn't) the Montauk Project. Many thanks to Peter Williams and David Sivier for their dauntingly erudite comments on both subjects, which just keep everything moving on. I hope you'll all have a fine holiday, and I'll look forward to hearing from you again in 1999! Thanks, **Kevin**