

ABDUCTION WATCH 21

Doing it for money

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

This will be the last 'Abduction Watch' for now. There will, intermittently (what's new, I hear you cry!) be a different, longer publication, less a newsletter than a report on work in progress, in the hope of receiving more of the tremendous feedback a number of *AW* readers have always provided. More of that in a moment, and at the end. You'll see.

However, as I wrote to UFOIN luminary Robert Moore recently, in a grumpy and dismissive response to a suggestion for an 'abduction conference' from somebody who would benefit from the holding of such an event that I might speak

"With regard to the possibility of an 'abduction conference', my current view is that the least said publicly about abductions, the less 'abductees' there are likely to be. The endless recycling of dubious and unargued abduction accounts, in the UK by Jenny Randles in particular, only feeds the myth. It is time we stopped publicising and started understanding, and that is best done quietly and privately, minimising the likelihood of producing yet more frightened and confused people whose accounts can then be reproduced in yet more books."

I have become very worried by the effect of publicising extreme abduction material, and I know I have certainly been doing just that. All the issues of *AW* are out there on the Net, and it is clear that people read them. The problem is, that in highlighting what I see as the bad, hurtful, exploitative, dishonest and so on aspects of abduction, some perverse psychology of extreme belief then has no problem in making me into an agent of disinformation, thus confirming the validity of the very views that I seek to criticise and undermine. Simply, I'm bad, therefore what I criticise is good. It is, probably, an insoluble problem, best ameliorated by not dealing with the issue in such a public and confrontational way. While it's great to have an appreciative audience, which much of what I've written does, that audience isn't growing. Out there in the world of abduction belief, at best I have no effect at all. Probably, my overall achievement is markedly negative.

I'm not alone in having this effect, I'm not alone in ending up encouraging people to believe in the reality of alien abduction. Others, who might seem to have quite worthy intentions, do just the same, and more so where their words are reaching a far wider audience. Hence this issue's subtitle of 'Doing It For Money'.

What I'm going to work on - actually, what I've been working on for some months now - is a project which I think of as being called 'Be Afraid', which could be a title for a book if a book grows out of it.

The idea isn't original - Hilary Evans did much ground-breaking work in his classic books 'Visions-Apparitions-Alien Visitors' and 'Gods-Spirits-Cosmic Guardians (Thorsons, 1984 and 1987). I set

out some of the thinking behind my approach to the material in my article 'sacred Sites' in the latest issue of Gloria Dixon's excellent magazine 'Strange Daze, which I hope you all read. If you haven't come across it, it's available from Gloria Dixon, Strange Daze, Unit 2A, East Cheap, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 5UA. In the UK a 4-issue sub is only £8.00, foreign subs only £13.00. I'll take the liberty of quoting a little from that article . . .

If we're going to look for a word to describe these experiences, then 'spiritual' seems like the most appropriate. These rich, personal, non-physical encounters seem to define what 'spiritual' experience is all about: something that communicates not with the body or the physical senses, but in a different way, and with a different effect. No doubt Hopkins and Jacobs, obsessed with their tales of real and utter nastiness, would object to my describing abduction as 'spiritual'. As would most mainstream religions. But human beings want spiritual experiences, they seek them out, anticipate them, and they repeatedly report that they have had them.

Because we want spiritual experiences, and want others to share the beliefs we construct around them, we create places where we may more easily have those experiences, if we wish, or where we may take others to persuade them of the strength of our own spirituality, and hope they are led to share our beliefs. We build churches, temples, mosques, and fill them with beautiful objects, and architecture, and light, and scents. We often build those places on what we describe as sacred sites. And what is a sacred site? Why, it's a place known and chosen because, previously, internal, personal spiritual experiences were reported as taking place there. And it's not only structures with roofs and windows, either. It's hard to imagine that stone circles were built to specific solar or lunar orientations to demonstrate the achievements of observational science. It seems much more likely that if a crowd of people were gathered together in the dark in anticipation of the Sun rising over, say a particular stone, or within an arch or trilith, the moment of sunrise as and where predicted would be intensely spiritual. This is what many, even most, of us want, and we give power not only to those who appear to provide it to us, but to those who explain it to us, too.

Most abduction accounts spring from no more than fragments. At their most genuine they are grounded in attempts to resolve the puzzlement and confusion arising from the fragmentary recollection of an unexpected or anomalous event or events which couldn't be readily identified . . .

There have probably always been such fragmentary experiences; brief, odd perceptions which make no sense, and can both facilitate a perception of spiritual experience, and demand an explanation. There have long been sites deemed to be sacred, where the facilitation of the experience is carefully designed and arranged, and where the non-human forces or intelligences behind the experience are often said to visit or dwell. Our relationship with those forces and intelligences underpins more societies in this world than it does not, and where it is forbidden or repressed it simply becomes stronger and more important to that society, often leading to dramatic social and political change . . .

The world of alien abduction is, unfortunately, a world of stinking ignorance, as authors and 'investigators' seek out, attract, and mislead individuals who have been through a common, time-honoured and, potentially, deeply enriching experience, and twist it into one of depravity, pain, and fear of the future. They present random histories which only underline

their lack of knowledge, and resort to claims of the physical reality of encounter and abduction experiences because they fail to recognise the nature and importance of human spirituality, or of how they are abusing it.

It seems that, in the past, spiritual experience has generally been positive and life-enhancing. Difficult, certainly, and often demanding on resources of faith and self-control. But the pattern has been, broadly, that spiritual experience has led to spiritual living, to hope for the future in this life and beyond, and to displaying care and concern for others. It appears that positive spiritual experience is a component - whatever its true source and nature - of how both individuals and societies grow and develop. Persuading those individuals to believe that their own perception of spiritual experience proves that they were chosen before birth to be used for hybrid interbreeding with cruel and uncaring alien beings who will return repeatedly to hurt and exploit not only that individual but her (it's so often her) children and grandchildren too is not truthful, it is not right, and its effect can be the same as the effect of deliberate abuse. Our real sacred sites are the human beings in whom these complex, unfathomable experiences are perceived. Let's stop desecrating them with the dark, harsh, and unjustifiable fantasy of abduction.

So, the groundwork here is acknowledging and collating the reports of the **experience**, the **sensation** even, of contact with non-human intelligences. I want to explore the nature and consistency of those reports, probably accepting that most of those making the reports are without guile or deceit in making them. Generally, they are at least mystified by the experience and seek an explanation for it. Many will not doubt that the experience was objectively real. As I have suggested many times before, this is the context in which reports of alien abduction should be considered - a common human experience whose temporal beginning we will probably never identify, which takes on the characteristics and influences of its social, religious and scientific context. Not that this will just focus on abduction material: that's just one aspect of several thousand years of remarkably similar experiences.

The next step - and again, I'm already collecting this material, too, and often getting quite unnerved by it - is to look at the way in which the belief in these experiences is, and has been, manipulated by groups, individuals, churches, cults, murderers, satanists and the rest, to achieve personal power over others, financial gain, and all the other nasty little personal advantages that people seek when they use the fear of an mysterious threat or promise to exploit and damage others. Here, too, there is a wealth of historical material to record and investigate, but the abduction field undoubtedly offers rich pickings for the sheer, sick exploitation of hurt and helpless individuals. As I've suggested, much of the groundwork in collating records of experiences has already been done by some excellent writers and thinkers, though there's more to add. I think that investigating the way in which that material is used to facilitate the psychological, and sometimes even physical, abuse of others is probably an area that has been little explored. As I now have Internet access (but no, I've resisted e-mail thus far, life not being long enough for both proper research and trivial debate) I can look carefully at extreme religious and political material in a way that isn't otherwise possible.

Where I will continue to focus on abduction material is in endeavouring - and this is unpleasant and difficult ground - to explore the apparent links and parallels between the developing content of abduction accounts and accounts, real and fictional, of the disempowerment and sexual abuse

of adults and children. And, too, to consider possible associations with extreme right-wing beliefs and attitudes. Some reports of scientific research are beginning to emerge in these areas, and I will make a point of reporting on these. Similarly, I will include reports of 'magickal' experience, and of exorcism and related processes: any claim of a relationship with the non-human, especially where that includes an assertion of special powers, or a superior understanding of the intentions of the 'others' should be included. It isn't much of a pleasure doing it, but it seems like a responsible and worthwhile task to take on, and into which to sink some serious time and energy.

COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

At the heart of the public perception of alien abduction is, of course, the way in which abduction material is presented to the public. The primary material - then regurgitated repeatedly by others - is in the hands of a surprisingly small number of individuals. Jenny Randles is much the most important and influential person in ufology in the UK, and one of the most influential in the world, so it is important to consider carefully what she says, and the effect that her views have. In what I think is (this week, anyway) her most recent book, 'The Complete Book of Aliens and Abductions', in a chapter titled 'An Alien World', Jenny gives figures for abductions in different countries. I do think that if Jenny is going to tell her readers that 192 Brazilians have been abducted by aliens, it's reasonable to expect her to argue every single one of those cases on its merits. The same goes for the 43 abductions in Australia, the 87 (87?) in the UK, the 1,272 in the USA and so on. Why? Because the proposition that human beings are abducted by aliens is so extraordinary, so counter to the whole of our current scientific understanding, and so utterly devoid of any physical or third-party evidence (note, particularly, how Budd Hopkins failed with the arguments in 'Witnessed', and resorted to his theory of 'selective invisibility') that any rational person has a right to expect a high level of proof, of thoroughness, of argument. It is simple enough to understand why Jenny doesn't even attempt to **prove** that 192 human beings have been abducted in Brazil. Firstly, she can't, because abduction is never investigated from a 'prove it' standpoint: the figure will be a simple numerical total of reports of varying, but usually poor quality and provenance. And secondly, if she wants to sell books about abduction, which she clearly does, she has to give a strong overall impression that abduction really occurs. An unsupported, unqualified statement that 192 Brazilians have been abducted by aliens serves that purpose, and that of her publishers, perfectly. But I don't believe that 192 Brazilians have been abducted by aliens, and I'm confident that Jenny can't prove that her statement to this effect is true.

I'd like Jenny to say clearly why she allows these assertions to be published. A much-vaunted contribution to a 'sceptical' book, or the odd, often quoted, sceptical passage or comment in an otherwise belief-oriented book of her own looks, to me, more like a moral fig-leaf than a genuine attempt to establish the truth. Occasional high-profile fence-sitting really doesn't answer the question of whether Jenny believes, (1) that a single human being has ever been genuinely, physically, objectively abducted by aliens from earth into spaceships from other planets, and (2) whether, as her book 'Star Children' suggests, she believes that she is in some way, physiologically, genetically or otherwise, other than, or more than, human. Open, direct, 'yes' or 'no' answers to these questions would be very helpful in determining how best to respond to much of her writing.

I suspect that the limp, greenish Sunday 'newspaper' (it had no recent news) 'Planet on Sunday' has only lasted a few weeks: I certainly haven't seen it in Leeds in the last month. While it was being published, Nick Redfern was writing a regular column, and in one of these he dealt with animal mutilations, suggesting that "all the evidence" suggested that the mutilations were caused by aliens. If I was being charitable, I could say that Nick was looking at the wrong evidence, but I just don't think he's that dim. There is, of course, no **proof** that any animal has ever been abducted or mutilated by an alien being, and in my view there is no substantive evidence either. No photo, no radar, no dependable, fully conscious, conscious-recall witness of standing that I am aware of, no professional medical report arguing persuasively and with reasoning, from facts established through professional observation that such an abduction took place.

And there is, of course, abundant medical, Police and scientific evidence that what are said to be mutilations are the result of natural causes, often assisted before or after death by predator activity. It is hard to imagine that Redfern, who has shown himself fully capable of accurate documentary research, was not aware of this material. If he was aware of it, then his statement in the 'Planet on Sunday' was misleading: there is plenty of competent evidence arguing that mutilations are not caused by aliens at all. I don't know why Redfern chose to suggest this, but whatever his reasons I am left doubting both the reliability of all his other statements, and the actual scope and competence of his research.

Beyond this lies Peter Hough, and his tragically misleading book 'Visitation - The Certainty of Alien Activity' (London House, 1999). This is one that is definitely going to carry over into my current research. Somehow, assisted by regressionist Moyshe Kalman (now, it seems, Dr Kalman - which university did that come from, I wonder?) he suspends disbelief in the use of non-medical, non-psychiatric hypnotic regression, a researcher who once adopted a fact-based, rational approach to his investigations sets himself up as having a superior knowledge and understanding of alien intentions. He unblinkingly tells us in his conclusion, that, clearly being party to the aliens' innermost secrets

"They control our evolution, our religious and cultural beliefs, our environment, and our intellectual and personal freedom. The 'aliens' can come and go with impunity. We are powerless to do anything about it. They can take people at will, and enter our dreams as easily as they invade our air space. They can mock us and hurt us, but they are not really cruel - just indifferent. Our destiny is in their hands."

And then, there's Malcolm Robinson, who is also coming with me to 'Be Afraid', and the study of apparently sensible people who decide that they have the right - the duty, even - to involve themselves in persuading others that unpleasant and oppressive - albeit quite impossible - events have befallen them. As UK ufology disassembles itself into more piles of non-achieving detritus than ever, MR comes up with the wizard idea of a BUFORA debate on the use of hypnosis. He asks me to speak at this event, and to recommend some hypnotherapists. Not doctors, psychiatrists or psychologists, but hypnotherapists. I responded

"Thank you for your invitation to take part in BUFORA's 'For and Against' hypnosis debate and "education day".

There are two reasons why I am declining your invitation. Firstly, I have no medical or psychiatric skill or qualification which gives me any authority to speak publicly on the subject. When I write about it I am careful only to rely on the opinions of properly qualified practitioners, or on court decisions where 'experts' have been properly heard and examined. If you wish to conduct a debate then it should actually involve those who have the authority to speak from their own knowledge and experience: I have contacted a clinical psychologist at the University of Sheffield who is accepted by the High Court as an expert witness on hypnosis, and has addressed the issue of regression hypnosis and the recall of extraordinary events before, but unfortunately his commitments won't permit him to take part.

Secondly, I don't consider that there is a reasonable basis for a debate. There is no "for" argument that will be supported by any person with the appropriate qualifications and experience, and the last thing that convinced and potential abductees need to hear is a bunch of amateur hypnotherapists with meaningless qualifications and association memberships talking about regression hypnosis as if it can be relied upon to unlock otherwise unremembered, deeply traumatic experiences. Even less do they need to hear from abduction believers who want to find victims to bolster their delusions of self-importance and their crackpot beliefs.

I notice that you say that you have changed your view of the use and value of regression hypnosis, yet you are publicly supporting and, it seems, seeking to publicise the ludicrous 'MILAB' material. As this is substantially based on recall under hypnosis, including the absurd King/Lamont 'Salisbury Plain' case, I do wonder about the true extent of your conversion.

I hope the 'education day' does not proceed: on its past record it seems unlikely that BUFORA could organise an event dealing with such a sensitive issue either competently or responsibly. If it does proceed, I suggest that you have careful regard to the law on public demonstrations of hypnosis."

BUFORA, of course, brought Derrel Sims and his UV light to the disabled lady at the Sheffield Conference. A hypnosis debate should be right up their street. They didn't have a clue about Sims and what he might do. Who knows what harm they could leave behind them if they really worked at it?

CONCLUSION

So, what of this 'replacement publication', and what about your outstanding subscriptions, too? Well, what I intend to publish is a twice-yearly progress report on the research that I'm doing, including some - hopefully unfamiliar - source material, drawing some tentative conclusions, asking questions to which I hope that some of you out there can help provide answers, and looking for new directions to take. This will be at least the length of two issues of *AW*, and probably longer: you can reckon on 6 - 10,000 words, on disk or paper as desired, a couple of times a year. Of course, if you'd like a cheque refunding the balance of your subscription, please let me know. In the meantime, *Abduction Watch* shuffles off, its editor having learned much which will, I hope, prove to be of use in the future. Thanks.

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