

The alien in your brain

By JULIE COULSON

Then silence. The light has gone. His watch has stopped, but the car starts first time.

Shaken, he continues his journey praying the light will not return and pursue him. He arrives home safely and glances at the clock. He is three hours late.

The young man reports the incident to the police. He is contacted by a UFO investigator who persuades him that hypnosis is the key that will unlock his memory.

He is regressed back to that night and begins to reveal the true horror of those missing three

hours. He was captive in an alien spaceship, strapped, like a sacrificial lamb, to a table, surgical instruments probing.

He describes the shiny silver module in great detail and recalls the pale, humanoid figures with spindly limbs and black bulbous eyes who told him they were going to experiment on him and that he would not remember his ordeal.

A scene from a cult 1950s sci-fi B-movie? A real life alien abduction? Or a tale conjured up from the young man's own uncharted psyche — with a little help from an unscrupulous UFO investigator?

Books chronicling alleged UFO abductions are instant best sellers in the United States. But American psychologists have warned that UFO investigators who promote stories of people claiming to have been kidnapped by aliens may be causing serious psychological damage.

Because hypnosis can transform a dream, an hallucination or a fantasy into a seemingly real event, the UFO investigators may be doing psychological harm to their subjects, abnormal psychology expert Robert Baker told a recent gathering of scientists, magicians and writers.

A hypnotist, using the power of suggestion, can even create "memories" of an event that never occurred.

The pattern of abduction is the same seen by psychologists in the days when people claimed to have been abducted by fairies and leprechauns, Mr Baker said.

"Despite claims to the contrary, all abductee claimants are victims of their own hallucinations and delusions, or fantasies lifted from their own subconscious, or else they are victims of other misguided individuals.

"These people are literally talked into believing they have been abducted... a form of psychological rape worse than any claimed alien abduction."

Now British UFO researcher John Spencer has joined the chorus of disapproval. In his new book, *Perspectives* (Macdonald £12.95), Mr Spencer, a researcher for MUFON, the largest UFO network in the world, exposes the "highly questionable ethics" of investigators who plainly "lead" their witnesses.

Mr Spencer also poses some intriguing questions about the "classic" abduction scenario.

- If aliens are intent on people not knowing about their experiments, why do they dangle enough clues to make exposure almost inevitable through hypnosis?
- If US investigators are correct in that the 'aliens' purpose is genetic engineering with human subjects, why don't they just raid the laboratories of hospitals or research institutes in one night and collect all the information they need without difficulty?
- Why are virtually all aliens suspiciously humanoid in appearance?
- Why, over the years, have aliens become suspiciously more "alien" in the same manner that Hollywood box offices require that a sequel betters the original?

He demonstrates the failure of regressive hypnosis to come to any indisputable conclusions. He strives to expose the extra-terrestrial theory for the "wish-fulfillment fantasy" that it is, and prove how American ufology has built up a stereotypical abduction phenomenon into a modern myth which continues to mirror popular science fiction.

exciting as the ET theory. Are they manifestation of a culture with which we share the earth and yet do not understand, for instance?

John Spencer offers alternatives, new perspectives. But no answers. He would be a very remarkable — and wealthy — man if he could.

He says, "If UFOs are extra-terrestrial then that will be possibly the most important and significant event ever to have occurred to Mankind, affecting his society, his religion, his concepts of race.

"We have no right to suggest this as a certainty until we have evidence of equal intensity. And we do not yet have that degree of evidence."

and the elimination of opponents. "UFO investigators do not seek political power," Mr Spencer concedes.

"But then the true power of the 20th century is probably the power of the media and there is little question that some UFO investigators seek that."

Mr Spencer does not believe in regression hypnosis, but does uphold the importance of the witness leading the investigation. And while he challenges the ET hypothesis, he does not refute the existence of unexplained paranormal activity.

He feels there are other ways of looking at UFO encounters and that these alternative perspectives are as credible and

Some UFO investigators, says Mr Spencer, are to the 20th century what witch finders were to the 17th century. Witch finders would determine that a person was possessed by the devil by finding the "mark of the devil" — a scar on the witch's body. A good witch finder could always tell the difference between a natural scar and the devil's mark.

Some current US UFO research suggests scars on abductees' bodies are evidence of surgical examination by aliens. A UFO investigator can always tell between forgotten childhood injuries and alien incisions.

Despite their stated aim, part of the reason for witch hunts was the acquisition of political power

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