

ENCOUNTER!

*If any solid conclusion has been drawn about the predominant nature of UFO-alien encounters on this planet, it's that a large number of people believe they have experienced a form of kidnapping by creatures which, by now, all of us must recognize—the white or grey, dark-eyed, nearly insect-like being, usually short and thin, which adorned Whitley Strieber's seminal first-person account, *Communion*, and which over and over again ends up in the rough sketches by other abductees. The weird, impassive face is now embedded in the collective mind.*

The stories of these encounters are almost boringly monotonous, the phases interminably predictable. Because of certain recurring details—men and women report the taking of sperm and ova by the creatures and talk of holding small, strange, pale-complected babies—researchers have tentatively decided that whoever it is perpetrating these acts of abduction, they are carrying out a program of genetic/reproductive experimentation on the human populace.

The medical and psychiatric communities have thus far failed to incorporate these stories into their clinical paradigms. "It's overwhelming, frightening, incredible—all those words and more," ventures one researcher. But for the most part, words fail us.





PHOTO BY GEORGE KRUSE

IT LOOKS LIKE THIS—Widely recognized for his pioneering work in the field of abduction research, Budd Hopkins uses slides and witness reports to illustrate some of the detailed encounters which feature alien abduction, genetic experimentation and sometimes ‘presentations’ of what appear to be hybrid infants.

Psychotherapists Take Note of Abductions

Studying ‘Anomalous Experiences’

By Vicki Cooper

How do you name the unknowable?

In the current lexicon, the most readily-acknowledged type of alien encounter is usually saddled with a descriptive label carrying particularly negative and sensational overtones: abduction. Other terms have been tried. “People use the term ‘anomalous experience,’ ” observes Harvard-educated psychiatrist John Mack, M.D., “but it’s awkward, because it’s kind of fancy, and [abduction] is not the only kind of anomalous experience. So it’s not a satisfactory term, either. We don’t have a good term.”

Dr. Mack is one of a growing number of psychotherapeutic professionals who have begun to look seriously at reports of alien abduction and to work closely with that



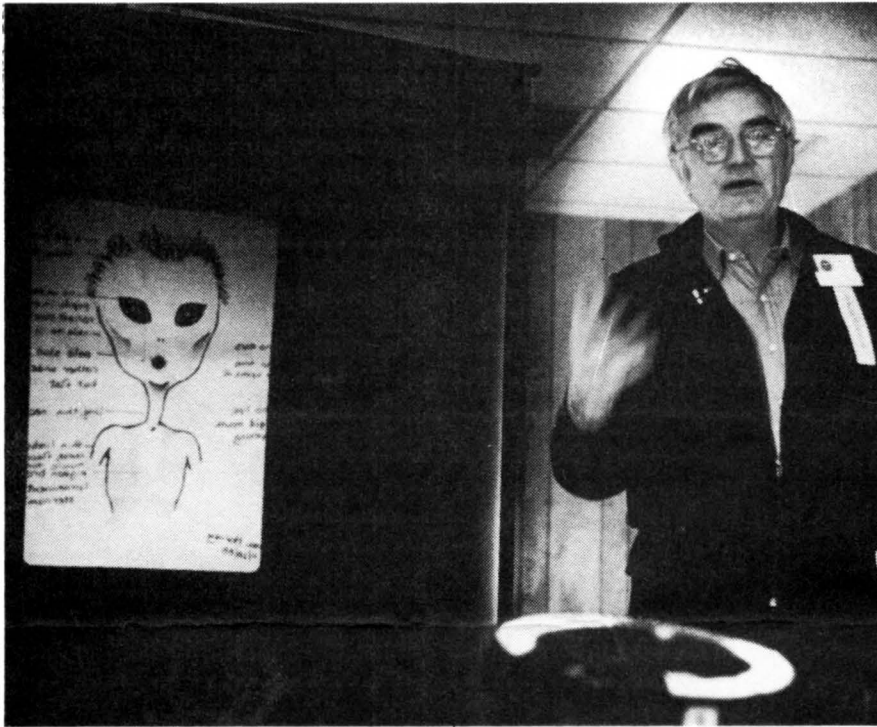
John Mack, M.D.

singularly neglected population of troubled individuals known as abductees.

As a trend, serious professional interest in the sensitive abduction scenario hardly begins to match the growing need for interdisciplinary study and therapeutic management of abduction experiences, which, *en masse*, slowly are revealing to the larger population what appears as a disturbing, worldwide syndrome. The lack of appropriate terminology to use with reference to putative alien abductions signifies just how unprecedented the data are by normal therapeutic standards.

Lack of categories

Individually and collectively, ab-



OFFSPRING—Here Hopkins shows an abductee's sketch. A sequence often reported, particularly by females, involves being handed and asked to hold and show affection to strange, frail looking infants. Often the adult abductees are told the infants are theirs.

ductees themselves defy categorizing, says Dr. Mack. A year and a half ago, when he was first exposed to the subject through researcher Budd Hopkins, he "was impressed with the internal consistency of the stories that the people told; the fact that

diagnosed these individuals. Indeed, a "diagnosis" appeared to be well out of the range of possible psychiatric conclusions. When he presented his findings to some of his colleagues on the Harvard faculty, the doctors present were given the

'The child is telling about the little man who stuck a needle in her belly button, and then she hikes up her blouse, and there's a puncture mark and a red spot . . .'

people who were not connected with each other had independently reported experiences which were very detailed. I couldn't think of any psychiatric explanation for it, unless you take one case where somebody may have a delusion of a complex nature." As a rule, however, testing has shown that most of the people reporting alien abduction are not deluded. Except for the stories they reveal, largely under hypnosis, abductees exhibit normal behaviors and perceptions.

As he spent time interviewing and regressing people reporting the abduction experience, Dr. Mack soon discovered what he'd suspected: other psychiatrists had probably mis-

opportunity to interview two abductees. Mack's fellow psychiatrists were perplexed: "They didn't know what to make of it; the tendency at first is to try and fit it into some familiar category."

One all-too-familiar syndrome which doctors may be quick to link with the phenomenon, and which has been found to have some incidence in relation to it, is child abuse. But the links appear to be largely coincidental. According to Hopkins, a memory of child abuse can be a screen for the frequently dehumanizing, traumatizing effects of treatment by so-called aliens on their hapless human subjects (a psychological defense also confirmed in the work

of psychiatrist Rima Laibow).

Children and abduction

Children's direct reports of abduction are now coming under increasing scrutiny. Working through his Intruders Foundation, a non-profit organization set up to assist abductees, Hopkins has provided interested therapists, as well as family members of possible child abductees, with a discovery tool he calls an Image Recognition Kit. Familiar images and personalities are shown to kids. Included among the images is the typical "grey alien." Children are asked to tell the interviewer about the image.

"We're getting extremely detailed descriptions of abductions from kids six years and under. There are very often 'signs' that go with it," Hopkins notes, and gives an example: "The child is telling about the little man who stuck a needle in her belly button, and then she hikes up her blouse, and there's a puncture mark and a red spot . . . the children's memories do not seem adequately blocked, and therefore they're coming up with much more detailed memories. Hypnosis is not an issue here."

In much the same manner as adult abductees, children Hopkins has worked with report having had needles or probes placed into their bodies. In one case, Hopkins says, a little girl was also asked to hold an odd-looking infant. "Now, this child is six years old," Hopkins says. "She described the baby as very tiny, very light. I asked her if the baby squirmed around, like a regular baby, and she said no, it didn't move."

The pattern of events with children has taken on a new twist. According to Hopkins, "A number of children are being asked to 'play' with an odd-looking group of children in the UFOs. The [human] children feel they are supposed to be instructing them in games and things." Are these hybrid children being prepared for something? Hopkins says, "The simple deduction is, if normal human children are being asked, as it were, to instruct hybrid children—whatever these are—in simple techniques of play and so on, a basic assumption would be that hybrid children would be living in this environment.

That's speculation, but the reason you'd ask children how to go down slides and swings, etc. is because you intend to go down slides and swings . . ."

'Signal and noise'

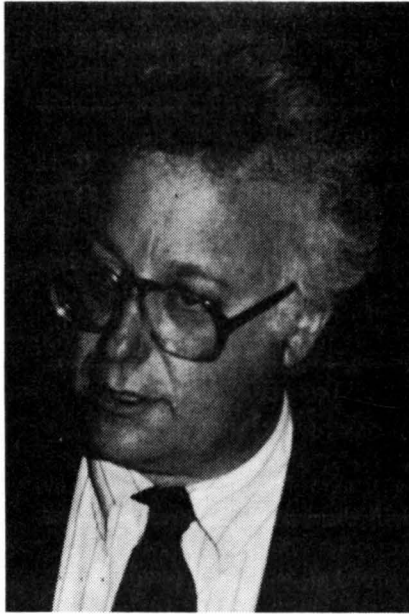
These chilling developments aside, to those researchers closest to abductees, a definite pattern of genetic experimentation appears to be at least one central underlying motive behind alien abductions. But the "why" of such an experiment is still an open question. Dr. David Jacobs has written a book, to be published next winter by Simon & Schuster. In *Secret Life: The Structure and Meaning of UFO Abductions*, Jacobs hopes to help separate the "signal from the noise" in the enormous amounts of information which have so far been gathered.

Dr. Jacobs feels that abduction research has some distance to traverse before even addressing the meaning behind abductions. "What we need to do first is describe the present," he says. "Once we all agree on the present picture, on what they're doing, then we can move to other things." In his view, the highly routinized, practically monotonous abduction sequence is the product of one type of creature, the standard grey. At least, "I tend to think that 95 percent [of the abductions] are," he says, "and the rest are confabulation."

To further complicate the database, the captors appear to be applying certain forms of "mental procedures" upon their captives. Abductees are given things to hold, to look at; certain images are systematically placed in their minds. The reason behind this? Jacobs describes one woman he regressed who was asked to concentrate on a piece of paper. "I just happen to hit on the right question to ask her," Dr. Jacobs comments. "I said, 'while he's asking you to do that, what is he doing? She said, 'he's staring into my eyes.'"

Transformation?

Jacobs and others have heard this over and over again; a type of emotional examination is the tentative explanation for this particular alien behavior. Like Hopkins, Jacobs



DR. DAVID JACOBS—Temple University professor and author of the upcoming book, *Secret Life: The Structure and Meaning of UFO Abductions*.

tends to view these examinations and their subsequent effects on people as a cold, intrusive process; that abductees are nothing else if not victims. "I think there's more to it than that," Dr. Mack comments.

"Without going all the way over into a kind of contactee, quasi-romantic view, the fact is that some of the abductees experience very powerful personal transformational growth outcomes from the experience; they become very 'Earth conscious.'" He emphatically does not believe that the alleged aliens are willfully cruel. "A number of people I work with feel that the discomfort of the basic experience is somehow necessary to the larger purpose. And they accept that, even though they don't like it."

In fact, a very divergent school of thought has developed from this attitude. According to Steven M. Greer, M.D., director of the Center for the Study of Extraterrestrial Intelligence in North Carolina, it's entirely possible that "negatively perceived actions are derived from genuinely good motives." (Dr. Greer has compiled a list of possible non-hostile motivations of what he believes is an extraterrestrial intelligence (ETI). Among them: "protective surveillance," and "emergency intervention and 'rescue' [in the event of a man-made or natural cataclysm.]") In his recent paper on

"The Case for Non-Hostility," Dr. Greer writes, "The point here is that there are actually a number of explanations for even the most disturbing reports of ETI actions which involve non-hostile intentions. It is entirely possible—if not probable—that ETI actions which many humans view as hostile are actually neutral or benevolent . . ." Replies Hopkins, "Well, I haven't seen it. And you get into a big problem with this, because there is lot of deception with [abduction experiences]," adding that, "even the Nazis had a kind of theology behind their ideas of racial purity . . . The point is, without seeing this as a deliberately malevolent thing, what I do see is something that is—in the short term, in the immediate present—enormously harmful."

In Dr. Mack's view, the entire phenomenon poses some fascinating research questions, not the least of which is the one which might pierce the hidden motives behind the aliens' entire "cosmic enterprise." He asks rhetorically, "Why when you think you have a 'smoking gun,' you don't have it? Why is it so covert? Are they trying to deceive us to take over, as some believe? Or is it that our reaction would be so negative if they went public, so traumatically rejecting, that it's not wise?"

"It's like the old joke Allen Hynek told about the southern colonel who said of the UFOs, 'Why don't we shoot one down and see if it's friendly?'—which reflects the government's attitude. If that is the government attitude, I surely wouldn't make it obvious that I was present; never mind that I have technology that can escape their guns and radar. I simply wouldn't feel it was useful to encounter that degree of hysteria and rage."

Meanwhile, most abductees go through a kind of hysteria and rage of their own. With two new cases a day coming to him, Hopkins for one is confronted with the raw impact of alien abduction. "It is a central and international issue concerning the mental health of vast numbers of people whose emotional stability has been threatened by very terrible experiences. As far as I'm concerned, it is the central issue of the UFO phenomenon . . . At least with the Vietnam vet, he knows the war is over. What do you tell these people?"