

Harvard doctor probes claims of abduction by aliens

By JACK MEYERS

If you think you were abducted by extraterrestrials, maybe you should talk to Harvard Medical School psychiatrist John E. Mack. But not because you're crazy.

Mack has interviewed and administered psychological

tests to a few dozen people who have reported being abducted by non-human beings.

"Many of them are quite normal," aside from claiming to have been kidnapped, examined, and in some cases "probed," said Mack. And none of them, he said, would be con-

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sidered insane, delusional, or possessed by some form of mass hysteria.

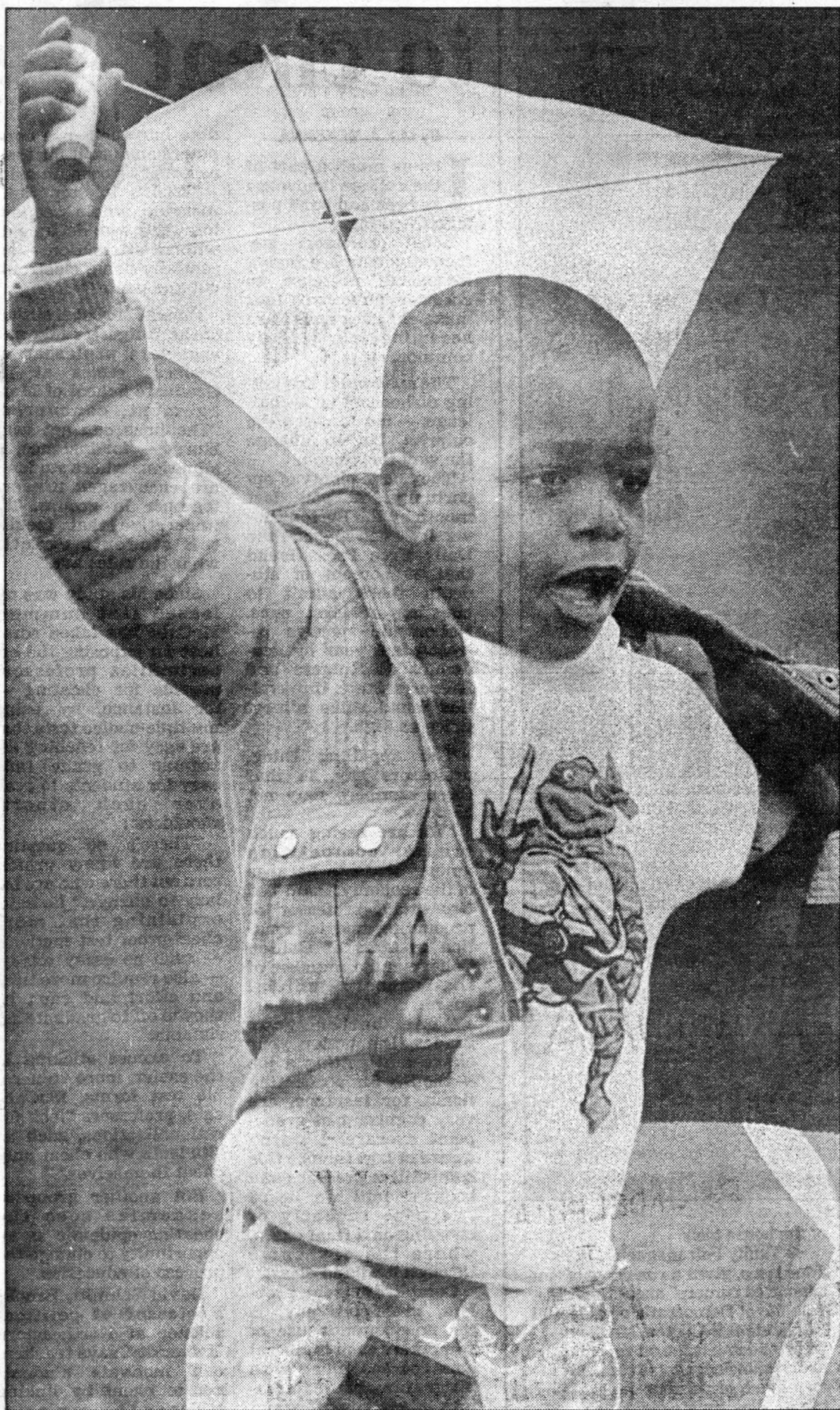
Neither would Mack. Aside from being a professor at Har-

vard Medical School, he is a highly regarded writer, having won the Pulitzer Prize in Biography in 1977 for his book "A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence," about Lawrence of Arabia.

But his recent research into what he calls "the abduction

phenomenon" has again brought him a measure of public attention. In fact, he is the basis for the fictional psychiatrist in the television show "Intruders," which airs tonight, about aliens' contact with hu-

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Staff photo by Michael Fein

FLYIN' LOW: Jarrod Jones, 5, of Boston gets his kite airborne yesterday.

Thousands go fly their kites

Several thousand people turned out yesterday for the 23rd annual Kite Festival at the William Devine golf course in Franklin Park.

Young and old alike joined in the kite flying and kite-making workshops.

Picnickers filled the grounds at the traditional event.

Entertainment ranged from musical performances to acrobatics and magic shows.

Ethnic delicacies as well as traditional foods were served up during the day. □

Designers hope new fed court will be Hub jewel

By SHELLEY MURPHY

Designers of a new federal courthouse on Boston's waterfront hope their visionary plans will summon the public to appear without an indictment or jury duty notice.

Preliminary plans show a 10-story brick building with a glass facade facing Boston Harbor. The building's two wings facing the water embrace a one-acre park — sheltering visitors from the full force of the wind.

An outdoor cafe overlooks the water, facing Rows Wharf across the harbor. Perhaps an arcade and pushcart vendors will complete the tranquil scene.

This is Henry Cobb's vision for Boston.

"When you say 'courthouse' to most people, they think of something dreadful they don't want to be in," said Cobb, the architect hired by the General Services Administration to design the \$200,000 million courthouse on Fan Pier.

"We're trying to bring together the idea of what a new courthouse should be with what this new portion of the city should be," said Cobb, who also designed the John Hancock tower.

"This building is based on a very simple premise — that the building and site must be available to the public and made enjoyable to the public."

U.S. First Circuit Court of Appeals Chief Judge Stephen G. Breyer, one of two federal judges assigned by GSA to oversee the courthouse project, stressed that the design is not final and is being presented to the public for review.

"If you want real comment, you have to get it from the public before the project is frozen in stone," said Breyer, adding that the goal of the design is to create a place that belongs to the public and not to the judges or the government.

Cobb expects to present his final design to the GSA by mid-June. Construction is expected to begin in 1993 and be completed by 1997.

Boston Redevelopment Authority Acting Director Ted Chandler said the initial court-

house design is "very responsive to the historic development patterns of Boston," but needs more refinement to provide adequate public access.

Some South Boston residents have complained that the 600-foot long Northern Avenue wall of the proposed courthouse denies them access to the waterfront.

"We want to see more open space in the vicinity of the courthouse," said Chandler. "We want access to the park to be from an open-air harbor walk and not just from the arcade at Northern Avenue. We want active uses along Northern Avenue and not a blank facade."

But, Chandler quickly added, "I don't want to give the impression that the design is final or fatally flawed. It's all part of the public review process."

Gerry Vierbickas, president of the South Boston Residents Group, complained there's been little public input into the proposed courthouse, compared to the numerous public meetings over prior attempts to develop Fan Pier.

"My personal preference is not for a federal courthouse," said Vierbickas, predicting the area will be a "ghost town" after 5 p.m. when court recesses.

"What would prompt myself or any other member of the public to go over and use that area if they don't have business in the courthouse?" asked Vierbickas. "I've heard people say, 'Well, it will be nice for people charged with felonies, and for judges and lawyers, of course.'"

Vierbickas added, "I think one thing that might bring people down or make it a nicer area is if there's a lot of open space on the water side. It would be nice if there was another docking facility for harbor cruises or whale watching."

Cobb said he designed the building to make the inside, as well as the outside, inviting to the public.

Inside the courthouse, behind the great curved glass that faces the water, is an

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Doc probes alien-abduct claims

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Mack, who said he has never seen a UFO or an alien, imputes no outrageous or unverifiable claims about the reality of the abduction stories of the 50-plus people he has interviewed. Instead, Mack — neither a believer nor a skeptic — focuses on the reports as a phenomenon for which psychology, and Western science altogether, has no ex-

planation. "I treat it as a trauma of unknown origin," Mack said. For almost everyone he has interviewed, the abduction experience — the helplessness and sense of invasion of their bodies — was psychologically painful, so that many people apparently blocked the memories for years, he said. While the reactions to the abduction experience vary, the memories and feelings people have of the alleged incidents

have a remarkable degree of consistency, right down to detailed descriptions of the creatures and their behavior, he said. "We can't account for what they're reporting by conventional psychological diagnoses," said Mack. That does not mean he believes the extraterrestrials exist, describing his posture as one of "suspended judgment." However, he is quick to point out that he has no other explanation. □



JOHN E. MACK

College teachers face dilemma over cheating

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dents to find ethical dimensions in their assignments. Grossman argues that cheat-

ing — by crib sheet or pocket computer — gives professors an opportunity to shift focus as well. It's reminiscent, he said, of the debate several years ago over allowing grade-school students to use calculators in math class. At first, teachers said students would lose the ability to memorize; not long

afterward, they discovered that freedom from rote drills gave them extra time to teach. "My response to cheating is that we need change the way we teach and measure students," he said. "We need to be less concerned with how much students can memorize and more concerned with how stu-

dents apply the information that's available to them." Reaching beyond the problem finds favor with Jack Levin, a Northeastern professor of sociology who was 1992 Massachusetts Professor of the Year. "There is a fringe that will always cheat — but I think it's a real mistake to become preoccupied with cheating," he said. "It makes teachers cynical; they start to develop a very negative attitude toward all students. Ultimately it interferes with the learning process for all concerned." □

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Our Apologies...

We're sorry, but the following items advertised in our Sunday, May 17 circular will be unavailable at sale date:

- Page 2 - G.E. Microwave Oven (JE1235T) - Not Shipped By Vendor.
- Page 4 - Bali Accessories: Tabletop Set, Mug Tree, Butter Dish And Gravy Boat - Vendor Unable To Ship. No Substitutes.
- Page 7 - Sony Cassette Deck (TCWR670) - Manufacturer Unable To Ship.

Also On Page 7 - Kenwood Receiver (KRA5040) - Manufacturer Unable To Ship.

Except as noted, rainchecks will be issued and/or comparable substitute items will be offered at comparable savings.

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