

# psychology today

March/April 1994, VOLUME 27, No. 2



## LOVE

### FEATURES

#### Are We Any Closer Yet?

▶ **Soul Mates** 26

With all of their inherent difficulties, relationships of all kinds deepen our lives and help fulfill the needs of the soul. They may also help us to discover who we are in ways otherwise unavailable to us. **By Thomas Moore**

▶ **Love: The Immutable Longing for Contact** 32

As the child is connected to the parent, connection with another person is the only security we have in life. In that sense, we never grow up. Welcome to attachment theory, which tries to explain what goes wrong with couples—and what to do about it. **By Susan Johnson, Ed.D., with Hara Estroff Marano**

▶ **What Makes Marriage Work?** 38

Why have marriages become so fragile? New breakthrough research tells us that you can get mad as hell at each other or avoid conflict altogether. But positivity must outweigh negativity by five to one. **By John M. Gottman, Ph.D.**

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She's edited *Cosmopolitan*, one of the world's most successful magazines, for almost 29 years, and credits her longevity and success to remembering that uncensored practical advice is the most useful service that an editor can provide.

**The Harvard Professor and the UFOs** 46

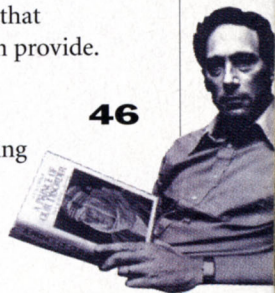
One of the best and the brightest, Dr. John Mack, a Pulitzer Prize-winning psychiatrist, has made himself into a high priest of what is politely called "the abduction phenomenon." He insists that it's a form of cosmic correction for our Earth-polluting ways. **By Jill Neimark**

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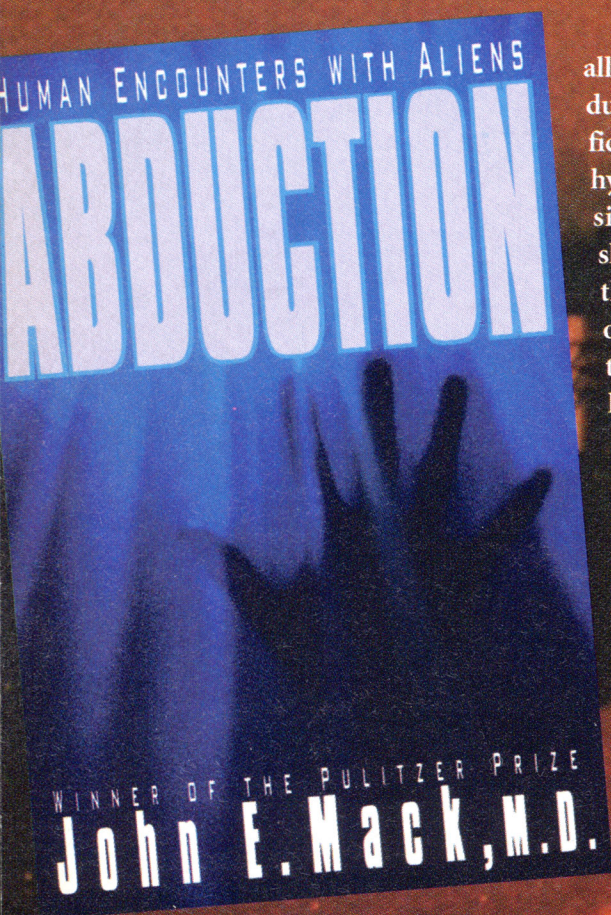
Are behavioral differences between the sexes learned? Or are they stamped into our brains before birth, as one expert insists? In the wacky world of gender differences, why ask why? **By Susan Baxter**

**Remissions** 54

Can a crisis of the flesh—say, the diagnosis of a disease such as cancer—summon barely suspected healing powers into existence? His own experience led writer **Marc Barasch** to explore how, and how often, remissions may be the result of spontaneous healing.



Cover photo: James McLoughlin.  
Hair and Make-up: David Maderich for Perrella Management.



*They flock to him* from all around the country, these abductees, then lie down on his office couch and are coaxed into a hypnotic trance. Under hypnosis, sometimes weeping and shouting with agony and terror, they recover buried memories of alien encounters. Many of them come to believe that they have been kidnapped by extraterrestrials regularly since they were children, that they are guinea pigs in an intergalactic hybrid-breeding program, and that, in a close encounter of a truly original kind, they have had sperm and egg samples taken, alien fetuses implanted and removed, and probes inserted in their vaginas, anuses, and up their noses.

And here's the clincher: Most of them recall that after suffering the indignities of lab animals in outer space, they are given a picture show that aliens project onto the walls of their spacecraft—or directly into their brains—images and movies of ecological disaster that terrify and ultimately transform them into spiritual seekers hoping to save the polluted Earth.

“Some other intelligence is reaching out to us. It's the most exciting work I've ever done,” claims Mack. A few minutes later he admits, “I'm shocked in a way to hear myself saying such things. But I've been as careful as possible to exhaust conventional explanations. None of them begin to explain this phenomenon.”

This alien invasion—subtle, shattering, mysterious—is really

One of the best and the brightest, a Pulitzer Prize-winning psychiatrist, has made himself into a high priest of what is politely called the “abduction phenomenon.” He insists it's a form of cosmic correction of our Earth-polluting ways. By Jill Neimark

*In a tiny, utilitarian office at Cambridge Hospital—a nondescript cubicle on the third floor, overlooking a parking lot—Harvard psychiatrist John Mack is seeking God. And the way this 64-year-old Pulitzer Prize winner is going about it is truly unprecedented: He has become a kind of paterfamilias and healer to a whole underground of Americans who claim they have been abducted by aliens in UFOs.*



## The Harvard Professor

a form of cosmic correction by beings more advanced than we, believes Mack, whose about-to-be published book, *Abduction* (Scribners), details the kidnappings of 13 individuals by aliens and fits them into a new cosmology. It's a view of the universe that's both high-tech and ancient, one that assumes intelligence can take many forms and melds Eastern spirituality and Western science. Above all, it's a cosmology eerily well adapted to our country's obsession with abuse, confession, and transcendence.

Mack has long been one of the brightest minds at Harvard, a man

whose prize-winning *A Prince of Our Disorder* (1977)—a psychological study of T. E. Lawrence—was hailed as one of the most remarkable biographies of its time. Mack was one of the men who forged Harvard's Cambridge Hospital Department of Psychiatry into a premier teaching hospital, a place

where psychiatrists and residents now vie for positions, and for four years he was its head. He's been a member of the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, certified as a child psychoanalyst, and chairman of the Executive Committee for all five hospital-based departments

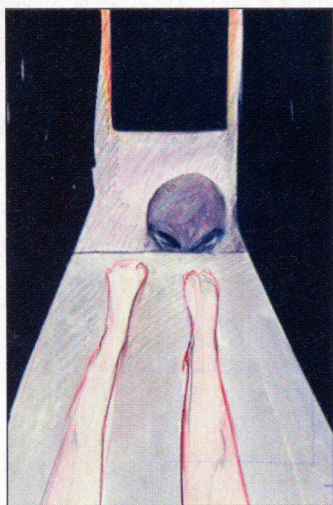


# UFOs

the

of psychiatry that make up the huge Department of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

He's also a high-profile idealist who has been at the forefront of efforts by his peers for global peace and conservation. He is founding director of the Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age and a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. He is an outspoken advocate of corporate and industrial policies that sustain the environment. The list of accomplishments doesn't stop there; Mack has published over 150 articles and books on subjects



**Abductee art: Visions of aliens sometimes look a lot like E.T.**

witch-hunts of another age.

John Mack's UFO work rests in great part on the validity of hypnosis as a tool to recover memory. The cultural uproar over

he was under crushing pressure to finish his book, for which Scribners had reportedly paid him a handsome \$200,000. But it was easy to detect another reason: fear of a hatchet job in the press. Mack himself has confessed, "The experience of taking on a subject which has been fare for the tabloids and the seamier side of the mass media has been a story in itself."

The first time I spoke with Karen on the phone, I heard the clacking of computer keys: she was taking down every word I said. She asked more preliminary "who are you and what do you want" questions than I'd encountered in a decade of reporting. She called

## “The abduction phenomenon gets at the core of who we are. It’s traumatic, but it expands us into a different universe.”

ranging from nightmares to teenagers who kill their mothers to Russian children's feelings about nuclear weapons. And so his excursion into the realm of ETs has elicited an outcry of contempt, sorrow, bewilderment, anxiety, confusion, interest, and even admiration from his colleagues.

Is Mack legitimizing ufology, a pursuit that has until now found its warmest reception on the pages of supermarket tabloids? Or has he, as one longtime colleague laments, ruined his career?

More than the legitimacy of UFOs is at stake. The fact is that Mack—at least to those who view him from the outside—is actually in the white hot center of a controversy that has been raging around the country. It's a battle about the essential nature of the human mind, really; a war over the nature of memory, and access routes to it, particularly hypnosis. Can hypnosis recover repressed memories of sexual abuse, satanic ritual abuse, past life abuse, and abuse at the hands of aliens? In a tabloid culture, recovered memories have led to accusations and court cases so damaging and sordid they've been compared to the

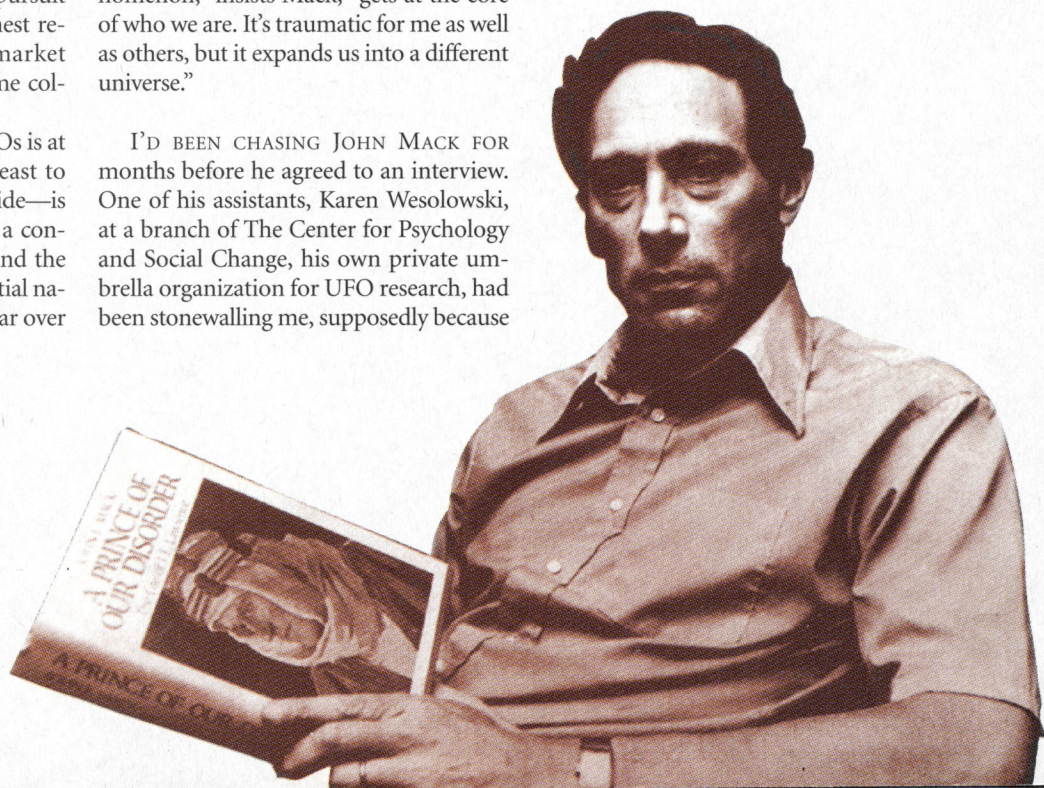
this modus operandi may not resolve itself for years to come.

Strangely enough, he shrugs off the controversy. "I have such long relationships here at Harvard, they just tolerate me. Of course, I don't know what they say behind my back. But the abduction phenomenon," insists Mack, "gets at the core of who we are. It's traumatic for me as well as others, but it expands us into a different universe."

I'D BEEN CHASING JOHN MACK FOR months before he agreed to an interview. One of his assistants, Karen Wesolowski, at a branch of The Center for Psychology and Social Change, his own private umbrella organization for UFO research, had been stonewalling me, supposedly because

*Psychology Today* and asked to see samples of my work. She instructed me not to speak to Dr. Mack's department head, Malka Notman, M.D., until he had had a meeting with her first. She told me that in part she and Dr. Mack were simply pro-

*(continued on page 74)*



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## UFOs

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tecting the abductees. Karen likened individuals who did not believe these victims' stories to people who tell holocaust survivors that Nazi atrocities never happened.

When I finally faced Mack *à deux*, I found a tall, lanky man with eyes like cobalt glass. He was wearing a slightly wrinkled button-down shirt of the same startling blue, khaki pants, and loafers. He had a boyish, baffled sincerity about him, an almost bedazzled helplessness that would both endear him to me and irritate me throughout the interview.

It was lunchtime and we shared Mack's typical fare: peanut butter from a gallon-size plastic container stored in his secretary's adjacent office, bagels, and Mars bars. As we ate, he told me how he'd arrived at his fixation on UFOs as agents of cosmic correction of our Earth-destroying ways. Although the press, when credulous, recounts his story as if he simply woke up one day and was confronted with irrefutable evidence that aliens are kidnapping and experimenting on humans, the truth is far more complex and intriguing.

First, Mack has never been your garden-variety shrink. He openly admits that he has always felt a bit like Georg Simmel's "The Stranger," the marginal man who participates in the culture but is not part of it. He was raised in a rationalist, German-Jewish, New York household, where his father read him the Bible not because he believed in God but because the stories were fascinating.

From Oberlin he went to Harvard Medical School and set out to become a psychoanalyst. He continued his internship and residency training at Harvard institutions, and was accepted at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, then at the pinnacle of its reputation, where he underwent both personal and a training psychoanalysis. He went on to specialize in child psychoanalysis. He also trained at the Harvard-affiliated Massachusetts Mental Health Center when it was leading psychiatry to alternatives to institutionalization for the mentally ill, and was chief resident there. Mack was on a brilliant trajectory in Harvard's prestigious embrace.

Coming to Cambridge Hospital was his first major departure from the beaten track: At the time "it was a derelict community hospital. It was not the place to fast-track." He was its head of psychiatry

until 1977 and was instrumental in crafting a community mental health program that today is the centerpiece of a citywide network of clinics and hospitals.

His biography of T. E. Lawrence was another departure: though psychobiography is an honored tradition among analysts, Lawrence was an unusual choice. Mack was fascinated by this man who himself was a stranger, a troubled hero caught in the fate of a culture not his own.

Later he began to work on issues of nuclear disarmament, global peace, and conservation. He has traveled the world attending conferences on ecology and the Earth, mingling with everyone from scientists to philosophers, philanthropists, and economists.

He also began to explore alternative approaches to consciousness. In the 1970s, Mack was taken with Werner Erhard's *est* and assorted mind-altering techniques. The final break with tradition came when Mack met Stanislav Grof, a Russian who had developed "holotropic breathwork," a technique of rapid breathing that allegedly accesses nonordinary states of consciousness. The first time he tried it, Mack not only "reexperienced" his mother's death when he was eight months old, he also felt "my father's grief at the time. There was a businessman in the room who was screaming his head off because he was reliving the time when his mother tried to choke him as an infant. I got more out of one session than I had in all my years of analysis." Later in the session, "I became a Russian father in the 16th century, a man whose four-year-old son was decapitated by Mongol hordes."

### MACK IN TIME

Mack begs the question of past lives here. He says that at the time he was in Russia as part of an exchange project, sponsored by Esalen, to talk about the impact of the nuclear arms race on children. His consciousness, he told me, "traveled in time to identify this Russian man. After that experience I felt great empathy for the Russians I was working with."

He took a three-year training program in Grof's breathing technique, which concluded in 1988. A year later, a psychologist who also practiced the technique urged him to meet Budd Hopkins, a New York artist who had published a best-selling book, *Intruders*, about UFO abductees.

Mack claims that "nothing in my 40 years as a psychiatrist prepared me for  
(continued on page 76)

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## UFOs

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what he had to say. I was impressed with his sincerity, depth of knowledge, and deep concern for the abductees. But what affected me even more was the internal consistency of the highly detailed accounts [of abduction] by different individuals who would have had no way to communicate with one another."

He cites the specific, consistent information abductees give about the inside of spaceships, procedures, medical instruments, and more, as absolute evidence of the veracity of their reports. He notes the interesting but inconclusive physical "evidence" of abduction—strange "scoop" marks, nodules, and cuts (in one case, on a quadriplegic man who would have been unable to self-inflict them); and the fairly common experience of waking upside down in the bed or sometimes outside the house, with clothes removed or lost.

Today he calls himself a "co-investigator and co-creator" in the abduction phenomenon. Mack has scaled down his private psychiatric practice and his teaching to focus on exploring this field. He has now hypnotized and "regressed" nearly 80 abductees and, in his home, where he encourages them to talk about their experience, holds monthly support group meetings. Mack's abductees undergo a remarkably uniform transformative shift in consciousness and become committed to preserving the Earth; they report dreams of floods and other destruction that will otherwise occur. "I have no way to explain this except as some sort of robust emergence of an intelligence reaching out to us in some way. The hybrid[-breeding] program may have something to do with the state of the Earth at this time."

Mack's history, he admits, has prepared him for exactly this work. One almost wonders if he could have ever resisted it, for it so perfectly occupies his clinical, mystical mind. Abductions allow him to be far more than a psychiatrist. He is now an explorer of consciousness, at play in the fields of the universe itself, a participant in an ecological and global transformation that he sees as part of a cosmic plan.

But what's really going on? I decided to retrace Mack's steps.

Take a visit with me to the New York City home of Budd Hopkins, the man John Mack dedicates his book to, the one who "led the way." Hopkins is an abstract

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expressionist who has brushed elbows with many of the great painters of our day, and has the look of a slightly disheveled but friendly Phil Donahue. He's an ingenuous guy, happily showing off his studio and his upstairs home, where original art by Degas, Franz Kline, and Frank Stella grace the walls. Hopkins' time these days is spent conducting free hypnotic regressions and support groups for abductees, traveling constantly to lecture on the subject, and preparing a third book for publication.

Hopkins sat with me in his studio, which was filled with a series of brightly painted, wooden wall hangings he calls "the guardians," and rattled on enthusiastically about UFOs. He brought out a notebook of pictures of people with indeterminate "marks" from space-alien probings, which seemed unremarkable to me, garden-variety abrasions and minor bruises. He then showed me drawings, made by victims, of what they had seen on the inner walls of spaceships. He requested that I not describe them in print; yet they are generic and primitive enough to also seem unremarkable.

#### LAVENDER UNDERWEAR

It was when he began to talk about other "proofs" that he began to lose me—and I wondered how he had been able to retain Mack's interest. For example, the problem with clothes. Hopkins mentioned one abductee who woke up wearing lavender underwear, and she *owns* no lavender underwear because she hates the color. Others wake up with pajama bottoms several sizes too small—clearly not their own; or with bottoms and tops reversed.

Picture this: We've got aliens who are smart enough to travel light-years across the universe, whisk us up into spaceships that move at unthinkable speeds, communicate telepathically and transform our consciousness, and yet they're so disorganized that when they're ready to drop us down again they dress us in the wrong clothes. (Mack himself has made equally amazing statements; he told me, "They can't do anything they want. Apparently they can take you through a window or a door but not walls of a certain thickness. But I'm not one to talk about that kind of technical stuff.")

Hopkins' reliability began to crumble like old cake when he told me about the case of the decade, if not the century, which is the subject of his next book. A woman, Linda N., was abducted from her high rise in November of 1989 in lower

Manhattan; Hopkins claims the abduction was witnessed by a woman driving over the Brooklyn Bridge a quarter of a mile away, and by two security officers driving former U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar (who refuses to admit this; nor are there records of his car stalling that night, as Hopkins claims).

Hopkins told me about this case at length. However, he managed to leave out a remarkable series of details, all of which are revealed in a 25-page study of the "incident" published by three independent UFO researchers, including a former spe-

cial agent for the U.S. Army and a former security police specialist for the U.S. Air Force. According to the information they gathered from papers Hopkins wrote and talks with him personally, Linda said that the two security officers who supposedly witnessed her abduction later kidnapped her, asked her to remove her shoes to find out if she was an alien (they claimed aliens lack toes); and that one of the officers drove her to a beach house, asked her to put on a nightgown, and requested she have sex with him. She says he also tried to drown her and that at one point he wrote

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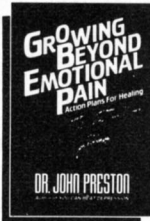
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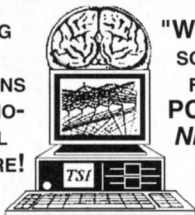
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her saying he was in a mental hospital. Yet Linda never made an official complaint or contacted the police. The investigators note that these bizarre details of Linda's story—none of which Hopkins told me—turn out to be uncannily similar to a science fiction novel, *Nighteyes*, published a few months before Linda claimed to be abducted.

If Mack accepts Hopkins wholeheartedly as the pioneer in whose path he has followed, what are we to conclude? This question haunted me simply because the distinction between Mack and Hopkins is enormous. Hopkins is an artist, but Mack is a high priest at a most sanctified temple of science: Harvard Medical School. He also happens to be a man with a halo of perfection about him, an honorable man given to just causes, a man with a reputation for kindness. Mack more than anybody needs to be rigorous in his research. Otherwise he may become a kind of Pied Piper, seducing and perhaps terrifying us with visions of a world that may not exist. Can Mack corroborate his own findings?

I asked him about the physical evidence: "Why aren't the ETs showing up on the White House lawn?"

His answer sounded like better sleight of hand than Freud himself, who invented the term "resistance" to fend off naysayers. "Is it real? Did it happen? That looks like an irreducible question. But the answer is, in what reality? Ours, or another reality? My hunch is that this is some new kind of entity that exists in a marginal place between the physical and the nonphysical. I would almost say this phenomenon, by its very nature, is trying to get us off the pure reliance on physical artifacts."

I asked him how he responds to the criticism that he is "leading" his clients to the stories he wants to hear—a criticism not leveled solely at Mack but at many of those who rely on hypnosis to provide proof of any sort. Mack admits that not every UFO researcher gets the same powerful information he does about ecology and Earth changes. In fact, the field is rent by disagreement and argument about the meaning of UFOs. Early researchers, who were interested in the flying saucers, have trouble believing there are creatures inside who are performing experiments on us. Many of those who do believe feel, like Hopkins, that "the aliens' agenda is not focused on us particularly, we're incidental." And other researchers find the aliens are more body snatchers than angelic guides to a purer Earth.

Nonetheless, Mack insists, "I do not

lead people. We look together at a shared mystery, but they are not alone in the strange, reality-shattering matter here." When I asked him what percentage of abductees come up with a new "Earth consciousness," he said percentages were not valid. "If I said half did, the other half may still come up with it. We just may not have gotten that far with them yet."

I asked about his contention that these people lack pathology. He has given only four of nearly 80 clients any kind of psychological testing. No independent clinician has verified his statements of his patients' mental health.

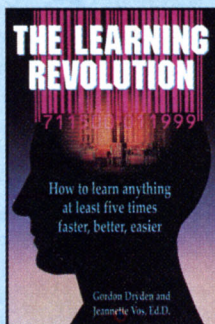
However, in a recent study of 49 people reporting encounters with UFOs, four Canadian psychologists found them free of psychopathology. What did set them apart from others, the researchers, led by Nicholas P. Spanos, Ph.D., state in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, was "a belief in UFOs and in the existence of alien life forms." Most of their experiences took place at night, and the team attributes them to temporary sleep paralysis, a condition associated with vivid hallucinations. Under these conditions, believers tend to confuse "internally produced images and sensations" with external reality.

#### MEMORY IN THE MUSCULATURE

Mack insists that his patients are able to provide detailed accounts of abduction because of his use of Grof breathwork. "I tell the person about the breath, that it gives them power and connects them to the life-giving forces of the cosmos." He believes that traumatic experiences are held in the body's tissues and that, using the Grof method, pressure in the "blocked area of the musculature will bring the stored emotions forth and discharge the tensions that have been out of reach until this time, stuck in the body. As strong emotions are coming to the surface, I can feel, for example in the client's neck or back, in a place where he feels the alien instrumentation once occurred, a powerful tightness or spasm in the muscle."

The most unwieldy question is that of hypnosis. All roads to UFOs always seem to lead back to hypnosis. It is when patients are under hypnosis that Mack witnesses extremes of emotion. Patients thrash, cry, shout. Stories pour out of them. The drama is so great it's hard not to be convinced.

Mack, who "taught myself to do hypnosis in this work," here stands on shaky  
(continued on page 81)



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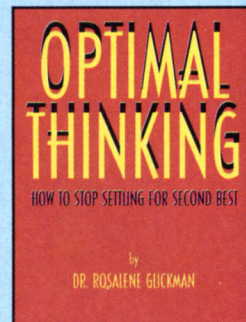
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(continued from page 79)

ground. Though scores of therapists around the country are happily in his camp—fully believing in repressed memories, and regressing patients who then come up with never-before-remembered stories ranging from ritual torturing of babies to copulation with aliens—a furious backlash has begun. Many professionals are concerned that such work is a misuse of the power of the therapist. They are also alarmed that innocent individuals are being accused of unthinkable crimes, by patients who themselves have been utterly terrified by hypnotic “memories” they believe are real. Mack’s use of hypnosis enrages some psychologists, because it opens a very dark Pandora’s box.

Perhaps the most outspoken is Berkeley social psychologist Richard Ofshe, who shared a Pulitzer Prize in 1979 for his work in exposing the Synanon cult in California. Ofshe, with his olive-dark eyes and majestic white beard, looks a bit like a feudal king you wouldn’t want to mess with. He’s become a crusader against what he calls extreme forms of influence—from coerced police confessions to therapist-induced false memories retrieved in trance. He sees a direct and dangerous bridge between them, and doesn’t exempt John Mack for a minute.

“If there’s a certain brilliance in backing the trendiest wrong horses available, then John Mack has it,” he comments. “He has made a stellar, absolutely impressive, world-class series of mistakes. First he was in bed with Sigmund Freud, and we are already beginning to see the obituary of Freud. Then he was in bed with Werner Erhard, another big-time loser. Now he’s in bed with E.T.’s evil brother.”

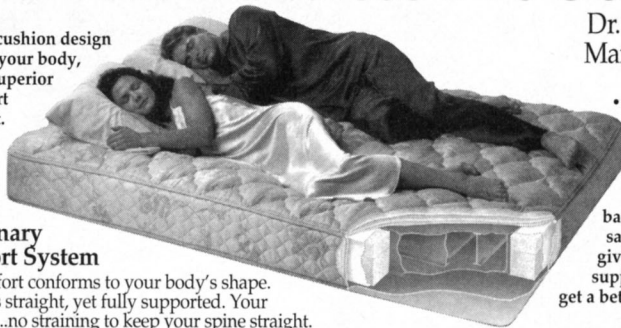
Ofshe points out that nobody has proved the concept of “robust” repression of memory, which is far different from traumatic amnesia (forgetting a single, horrendous event) or normal memory’s denial and whitewashing. Robust repression requires that one repeatedly forget a recurring event—whether it’s that your father kept raping you or aliens abducted you from the time you were three. “That’s like forgetting you went to high school.”

“John Mack’s use of hypnosis runs counter to all we know about it,” agrees Fred Frankel, M.D., psychiatrist-in-chief at Boston’s Beth Israel Hospital, a professor at Harvard Medical School, and editor of the *International Journal of Clinical and* (continued on page 84)

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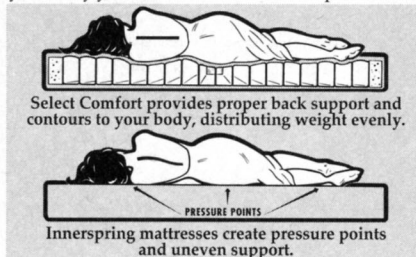
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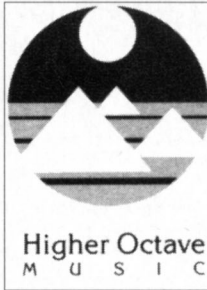
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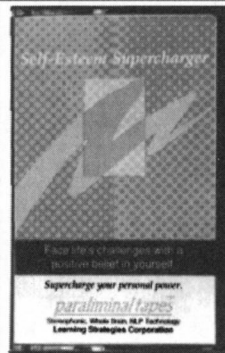
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## UFOs

(continued from page 81)

*Experimental Hypnosis.* Frankel tells a story that seems to put Mack in questionable light: a woman was referred to Frankel for disturbing dreams. "I explained to her that hypnosis does not necessarily provide accurate recall. I told her that in hypnosis fantasy and suggestion play a major role. Her response to hypnotic induction was minimal." Not much happened.

But the woman then found her way to Mack, and "he got a major response." She recalled abduction experiences in great detail. Mack describes her reaction in his book: "Her fear seemed to reach a crescendo as her body writhed in awful contortions. 'They take control and you don't have the energy to fight....'"

Mack called Frankel and they talked for two hours about their different results. This past September, they presented the case at a Grand Rounds, a standard teaching event for residents and other doctors, whose comments are always openly invited. The subject was a fairly big draw as these things go. Seventy people came. "It was done in a cooperative spirit" says Frankel. A third doctor presided and monitored the discussion of explanations for why hypnosis could yield two such opposite responses.

"But [Mack] incorporated none of what was said there into his book," reports Frankel. "In fact, Mack has devoted an entire chapter to this woman's case and entitled it, 'Personally, I Don't Believe in UFOs.'" The woman claims that Frankel himself said this, which he indignantly denies. "Look, I don't know enough to ever make that statement. I have enough problems with *this planet!*"

Although Mack acknowledges Frankel's denial in the book, he makes his bias stunningly clear by using the disputed statement as the chapter title. Frankel's main point is that Mack continually claims to be neutral but is in fact totally supportive of abductees and thus must be skewing his results. For instance, Frankel observes, before beginning hypnosis, Mack often gives people a pilot interview during which he indicates that he believes in abduction. If Mack has so clearly cast his lot, that is a stance far removed from balanced scientific research. The issue is not whether Mack is right or wrong, but that he has abdicated scientific objectivity; his methods pre-

(continued on page 90)

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## UFOs

(continued from page 84)

clude us from ever getting an answer.

Hypnosis expert Michael Yapko—whose textbook, *Trancework* (Brunner Mazel), is the leading book in the field—has equally strong words of caution. Yapko recently surveyed nearly 900 psychotherapists and found that "they are grossly misinformed about the nature of hypnosis." The great strength of hypnosis, says Yapko, is that under trance "you can accept and respond to a suggested reality. Therapists like Mack may be oblivious to the fact that they're creating the experiences they then have to treat. These phenomena are not arising independent of his influence."

Even therapists who are intrigued by and half-convinced of the reality of UFOs concede this fact. "Expectations of the observer have a tremendous amount to do with what's produced," explains Jim Gordon, a clinical professor of psychiatry at Georgetown Medical School who published an article on UFOs in *The Atlantic*. "Patients in Jungian analysis have Jungian dreams, and in Freudian analysis they have Freudian dreams. That's why therapists with different approaches to UFOs produce different reactions in their patients."

Mack responds to all these protests with the helpless shrug of a man who is simply convinced of what he is seeing. "I know this sounds like hedging, but we don't know in what reality this occurs. False and true memory don't apply. This is powerfully real, but in what reality?" I asked him where he felt he belonged in the raging controversy over memory and abuse. Does he think memories of satanic abuse might be happening in an alternate reality? He postulated that indeed they might: "Perhaps those memories are experientially true but they didn't factually happen in this reality." What does this mean? In the fourth dimension—or perhaps the sixth dimension?

Mack is the most frustrating type of true believer: congenial, intelligent, and absolutely impenetrable. "People say you must be influencing them, there must be childhood trauma, memory is not reliable. I could say all those things but it's not like that. It's authentic."

But what does he mean by authentic? I interviewed one of Mack's prime abductees, Peter Faust, a Boston acupuncturist and spiritual healer, a man Mack says the aliens simply won't let rest. Faust is as

handsome as a soap-opera star, with dark hair and dimples. He and his wife were in the Caribbean when he had a strange dream, in which he remembers saying, "You little f\*\*\*ers get out of here!" The next morning he had some odd bites behind his ears. It was years and several dreams later that he "realized" what might have happened to him and went to Mack for hypnotic regression.

Peter told me with absolute sincerity how he recalled under trance that during his abductions, sperm had been suctioned from him with a funnel device and that he was being bred with a particular alien female. I turned to his wife at that point and asked her how she felt about it.

"Well," she admitted, "it's hard. Sometimes I wonder if I should pack up and leave. It's like the affair that never ends. And I can't do anything about it."

I turned to Peter. His eyes were burning with a believer's intensity. "They're coming in our lifetime, I guarantee it."

### WAITING FOR A VERDICT

The jury on UFOs may forever remain out—floating somewhere in the cosmos among spaceships and alien breeders. Yet perhaps the most interesting aspect of John Mack and his work is not whether it is valid, but the intense furor surrounding it. Carl Sagan, the foremost astronomer of our time, wrote an impassioned cover story for *Parade* magazine about our national obsession with aliens. (Mack wrote him a nine-page letter in rebuttal, but it went unpublished.) Sagan contends that there is no hard evidence of ETs on this planet, and that so-called abductions are most likely hallucinations. Nonetheless "we have before us a matter of supreme importance—touching on our limitations...the fashioning of our beliefs and perhaps even the origins of our religions."

So, when Mack says this phenomenon gets at the very core of "who we are" and "makes us question all realities," he is right. We will always wonder about our place in the universe, and the form that wonder takes will always reflect the age. Ours is an age of rockets and radio waves, an era mesmerized by the pleasures of purging and confession, caught by the belief in widespread abuse, and both troubled and inspired by questions of consciousness itself. If anyone is an emblem of our age, John Mack is. The real disappointment is that he brings us no closer to the truth—even though he could. ■

**MAD ABOUT MACK**

It is my personal fortune to know Dr. Mack [March/April]. If he is becoming a "high priest," it is reluctantly. As Dr. Mack accepts responsibility for his work, those of less fortitude are willing to give him the power, another of our Western traditions. Dr. Mack remains himself—humble, sincere, and kind; indeed, he is open to the possibilities of life, personally and professionally.

Dr. Mack does bring us closer to the truth by being open to understanding his own beliefs, and ours, about our Universe.

Perhaps UFO's will land on the White House lawn (or maybe they have already). Ms. Neimark will not see them. She is too busy denying their existence.

Barbara Roberts  
Phoenix, AZ

I strongly disagree with your article concerning John Mack. The article was debunked, took cheap shots, and with bias quoted many sources in an effort to attack Dr. Mack's credibility, yet never mentioning the multitude of psychologists, physicists, researchers, and

military officials who would confirm his findings. So much for objective reporting.

Mark Perk  
UFO Researcher

**YEARNING FOR YOUTH**

Regarding your interview with Helen Gurley Brown [March/April]: A more pernicious load of crap has never existed than between the

**On *Cosmopolitan*:  
"A more pernicious  
load of crap has  
never existed."**

covers of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Helen Gurley Brown is teaching a group of women between the ages of 18 and 34 to despise getting older as much as she does. This kind of old-fashioned attitude is totally counterproductive to everything

women want to improve about their long lives. One form of hell on earth is desperately clinging to youth.

Beverly Hamilton  
Forest Park, GA

**A FEMALE MOZART**

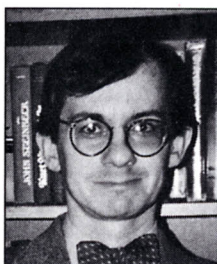
I just want to add my two-cents worth to Susan Baxter's wise and amusing article, "The Last Word on Gender Differences" [March/April]. I should state that as a journalist, I am one male who lives by his verbal skills and is lousy at math. In the spirit of Doreen Kimura's work, Camille Paglia has made a lot of hay by asking the rhetorical question: "Where is the female Mozart?"—or the female Shakespeare, Michaelangelo, and so on. Coming from Egypt the answer to me seems simple enough: They were busy doing housework, carrying too many pregnancies to term in those precontraception days, and dying young.

It is no coincidence that now that women have equal access to education (in spite of the teachers' biases) and have more time to pursue their interests—at least in the industrialized North—allegedly genet-

contributors

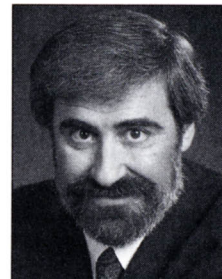
**Dan Hurley**

has written hundreds of articles on social, psychological, and medical issues for publications such as *American Health*, *Family Circle*, *McCall's*, *Woman's Day*, *The New York Times*, and *The Chicago Sun-Times*. He is currently a contributing editor of the *Medical Tribune* and lives with his wife in Upper Montclair, New Jersey.



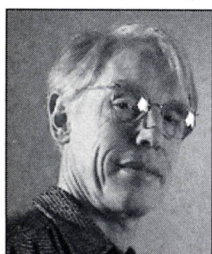
**David Schnarch, Ph.D.**

is Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Urology at Louisiana State University School of Medicine in New Orleans, where he also conducts a private practice. He is the author of an acclaimed tome for professionals, *Constructing the Sexual Crucible: An Integration of Sexual and Marital Therapy*, published by W. W. Norton (1991). His next book is aimed at the general public and will be released by Norton in the coming year. For information on Couple's Retreats he conducts, contact him at 101 W. Robert E. Lee Blvd., New Orleans, Louisiana 70124.



**Lindsey Clennell**

is an award-winning documentary filmmaker and a master teacher of yoga, who has been studying the discipline for 20 years with B.K.S. Iyengar of India. Clennell's films include *Pictures at an Exhibition* and *Box-On*. He has also created countless music videos featuring such talent as Mick Jagger, Elton John, and Pete Townshend. He is currently working on a television series on Hinduism.



**Peter Breggin, M.D.**

is director of the Center for the Study of Psychiatry in Maryland and coauthor of *Talking Back to Prozac* (St. Martin's Press, 1994), which he wrote with Ginger Ross Breggin. He has appeared throughout the popular press as a critic of the drug. His previous book, *Toxic Psychiatry*, also published by St. Martin's Press, was released in 1991.