

# Matches made in heaven

## Harvard professor believes stories about humans mating with space aliens

Associated Press

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.

Harvard psychiatrist Dr. John Mack has never had sex with a space alien, nor does he care to. It could compromise his objectivity.

Mack, a Pulitzer Prize winner and Harvard faculty member, firmly believes those people who claim to have had extremely close encounters with beings from other worlds.

And in his new book, "Abduction," he relates his findings after spending four years studying 120 "experiencers" — people who say they had sexual or reproductive experiences with aliens who abducted them and took them aboard spaceships.

The 13 case studies in his book include Ed, who remembers an alien woman taking a sperm sample from him when he was in high school; Jerry, who says she gave birth to a human-alien hybrid; and Peter, who tells Mack he had an "alien wife" in a "parallel universe."

"There is a consistent reproductive theme," Mack said. "Now, do I mean by that literally there are millions of babies being made? I don't know. I can't claim that this is occurring literally in our physical dimension of reality."

What Mack does claim is that experiencers are not mentally ill and not working out the effects of rape, incest or other abuse. Their emotional and psychological state resembles trauma, he said, and trauma is the response to something outside his body, not inside the mind.

"They don't want to believe it any more than we do," he said. "They want me to find them crazy."

Descriptions of abductions are consistent from patient to patient, Mack said. So he believes the experiencers, even if he can't explain exactly what

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they experience.

As for having such a close encounter himself, he said: "I think my role is to be uncontaminated by the phenomenon. As soon as a psychiatrist reports they had an abduction, then they're immediately disqualified as an objective observer."

One of Mack's patients, a 37-year-old undercover debunker, told Time magazine that Mack gave her UFO literature to read before he hypnotized her.

"John made it obvious what he wanted to hear," the patient, Donna Bassett, said. "I provided the answers."

There was no answer at Mack's office this morning and he could not be located to respond to Bassett's allegations. He declined to comment to the magazine about her case.

As "Abduction" hits bookstores this week, Mack hits daytime television. His fellow academics have been less welcoming than talk show hosts.

"There's a split between how people regard him as someone with past accomplishments and skills and how they regard this project," said Dr. Malka Notman, chairwoman of Cambridge Hospital's psychiatry department and Mack's boss. "People are skeptical because it just seems quite remote and unsupported."

Mack is on the staff at Cambridge Hospital, a Harvard teaching hospital. He also leads the Program for Extraordinary Experience Research, which is overseen by the medical school-affiliated Center for Psychology and Social Research.

His accomplishments include founding the psychiatry department at Cambridge Hospital and

winning a 1977 Pulitzer for his psychoanalytic biography of T.E. Lawrence, or Lawrence of Arabia.

Since then, Mack has developed an interest in Eastern philosophy and religion, and believes it helped liberate his thinking.

"We don't have room in our culture for this. It's the elite people, my colleagues, who decide what we're supposed to believe," he said, "and to them this isn't supposed to be."

Even Mack's fellow researchers into the otherworldly think "Abduction" is a little, well, out there.

Dr. William McCall, a physician in Anaheim, Calif., said that for 10 years he used hypnosis to evaluate experiencers. His theory: They're actually remembering being born. People's memories of going aboard spacecraft match their hypnosis-evoked memories of passing through the birth canal, he said.

Budd Hopkins, a pioneer in UFO abduction research, said that while he agrees with Mack that these people had sexual encounters with aliens, he has reservations about Mack's counseling of people to see the experience as somehow enriching. Hopkins said it sees such experiences as neither good nor bad.

"I think John is putting a quasi-religious spin on the material that makes the book more vulnerable to criticism," said Hopkins, New York-based artist who has researched and written about experiencers for 19 years.

Mack said he believes that through hypnosis and therapy, experiencers can overcome their trauma. "The person moves beyond the victim to another level of awareness of themselves and who they are in the cosmos," he said.