

# 'Abduction': Close encounters of spiritual kind

REVIEW/by Steve Dykes

*"Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens" by John E. Mack, M.D. (Charles Scribner's Sons)*

Catherine, a young music student in Boston, felt something strange had happened to her late one night in February 1991. After getting off work about midnight, she found herself driving north instead of going home to Somerville. When she did return home, she couldn't account for 45 minutes.

Turning on the TV the next day, she heard newsmen commenting on a UFO seen over Boston the previous night. One policeman and his wife reported that the object stopped and shone a light down on them. One channel charted the object's

northeast path from southern Massachusetts. Catherine hadn't seen the UFO but realized that she had been driving in the same direction. She wanted to know why she couldn't remember what had happened to her during that 45 minutes.

In "Abduction," an extraordinarily rich and strange, mind-expanding book, Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard psychiatrist John E. Mack explores 13 cases of alien abductions. He says what happened to



JOHN E. MACK

Catherine and nearly 100 other people is an authentic mystery.

He finds the UFO/alien intrusion to be a real phenomenon, whatever its ultimate source. Abduction by alien beings, whether the reported entities are alien astronauts, intruders from another dimension of reality or earth spirits — as the Tibetans believe — is both intensely traumatic for the random victims and psychologically and spiritually transformative. It is a worldwide occurrence that forces us, "if we permit ourselves to take it seriously, to re-examine our perception of human identity — to look at who we are from a cosmic perspective."

Dr. Mack is getting criti-

cized for "Abduction," catching hell from every conceivable direction. But he implies in the book he'll remain stoic; he has faith in the work he's done and the conclusions he's reached.

The book is disturbing at first and threatening to our consensus reality and need for control. And Mack has everything going for him: obviously more hip than his impoverished critics, and credentialed to the gills. The debunkers can't hide the fact that "Abduction" is not only the book of the season, but also a transcendent, landmark work that is finally less about alien phenomena than about realms of spiritual emergence, where our true freedom lies as human beings. □