

# More things in heaven and earth

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## ABDUCTION

Human Encounters with Aliens

JOHN MACK, M.D.

Charles Scribner's Sons. 432 pp. \$22.

BY BARRETT RICHARDSON •

**B**ELIEVERS IN Unidentified Flying Objects will find reinforcement in John E. Mack's fascinating new book, *Abduction*, which details the experiences of people who think that they have encountered beings transported from another world in such craft.

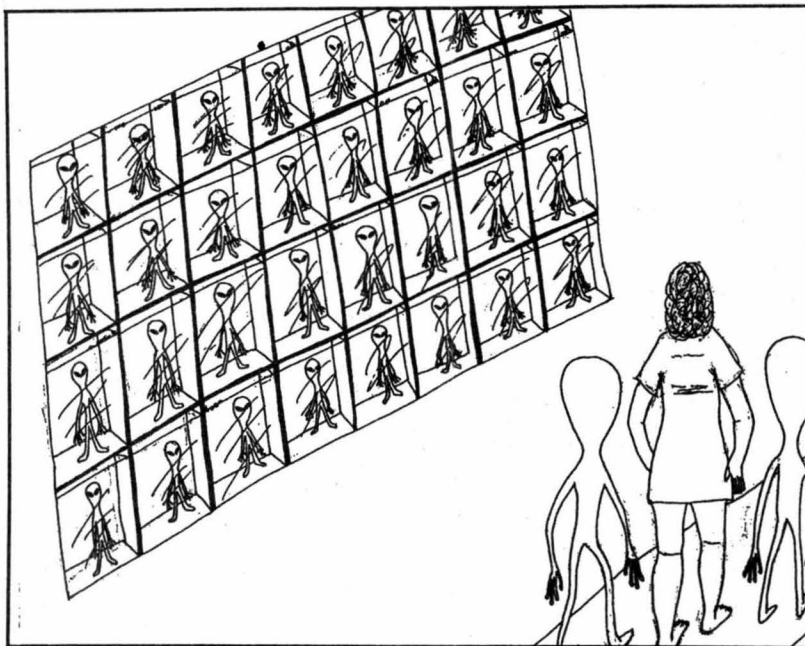
Even the skeptical may find Mack's interviews with alleged abductees convincing or at least intriguing, inasmuch as they crack the door on the sort of sensational material that has permeated supermarket tabloids for years.

Mack's chilling accounts seem credible because the author is a Pulitzer Prize-winning Harvard psychiatry professor and because the abductees are not certified loonies or spaced-out druggies but normal, intelligent people unlikely to fabricate experiences. The subjects, who are from distant parts of the country, had no previous contact with one another.

Mack consulted with more than 100 people who think that they have been abducted by extraterrestrials and presents detailed case histories of 13 in *Abduction*. He bases his conclusions on information obtained from them through hypnosis.

Their stories are essentially the same: The interviewees believe that they were abducted by creatures from another world (or dimension) and briefly detained while being examined in what appeared to be a spacecraft. After being wafted through walls in their homes and floated up on beams of light into the spacecraft, the abductees communicated with their "hosts" through mind-bending telepathy.

Described as frail in body and usually with large heads and penetrating, spellbinding eyes, the ex-



An "abductee" named Catherine depicts herself being led by aliens as they pass breeding tanks for human-alien embryos.

traterrestrials radiated power and control but seemed harmless. In fact, the abductees claim, they appeared to be on a sort of intergalactic mission to warn people on Earth of the impending destruction of the planet by nuclear holocaust, environmental degradation or other catastrophe brought about by man's selfishness and hatred.

Many of the abductees report that the aliens involuntarily extracted sperm and egg samples from them to create hybrid embryos that could be kept in holding incubators until needed to repopulate the Earth after its destruction. Abductees say tissue samples were taken from various parts of their bodies, including the brain, leaving them with quick-healing lesions for which there seemed no other explanation. Some also had the feeling that they were implanted with tracking devices that enable the aliens to conduct ongoing research.

In view of the radical nature of Mack's research and the scope of his conclusions, it is not surprising

that his work has been challenged by scientists, psychologists and ethicists. A woman who went "undercover" and posed as an abductee has also disputed his results. The "spy," Boston-based writer Donna Bassett, contends that Mack's investigative methods were flawed by his "pump-priming" interviewees with what he wanted to hear before he put them under hypnosis.

To such critics, Mack responds: "It may be argued that it is my own mind that has created this coherence, and that I have shaped and interpreted the data in line with a structure that I already have in mind. In response to this criticism, I can only state that the abduction phenomenon was, in the beginning, as unbelievable to me as it is to any skeptic. . . . I do not expect that the material presented in this book will have much impact on the minds of those who believe that the laws of physics as encompassed by the Newtonian/Einsteinian system are the full definition of reality."

As a lead-in to his research,

Mack notes many ancient accounts of encounters resembling those he documented. For example, the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel described a vision involving angels, wheels, light and clouds. The Romans, ancient Greeks and people of the Middle Ages also recorded unusual sky phenomena.

The abduction experience, like the near-death experience, has made a profound impression on those involved. For abductees, "the result . . . is the discovery of a new and altered sense of their place in the cosmic design, one that is more modest, respectful, and harmonious in relation to the earth and its living systems," Mack writes.

Mack contends that the U.S. government-funded SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence), which sends radio waves into the universe, is not likely to establish contact with creatures inhabiting a cosmos that does not embrace the space/time dimension currently comprehended, but rather a parallel universe that may be more spiritual than physical in its characteristics.

*Abduction* is a thought-provoking document. If true, its findings could drastically alter Western thought and have a more shattering effect on cosmology than the Copernican revolution. Mack makes a good case for the belief that "we participate in a universe or universes that are filled with intelligences from which we have cut ourselves off, having lost the senses by which we might know them."

*Abduction* brings to mind Hamlet, that great 17th century thinker, who said: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

More succinctly, it poses the troubling question: "What if?"

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