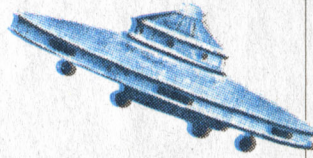


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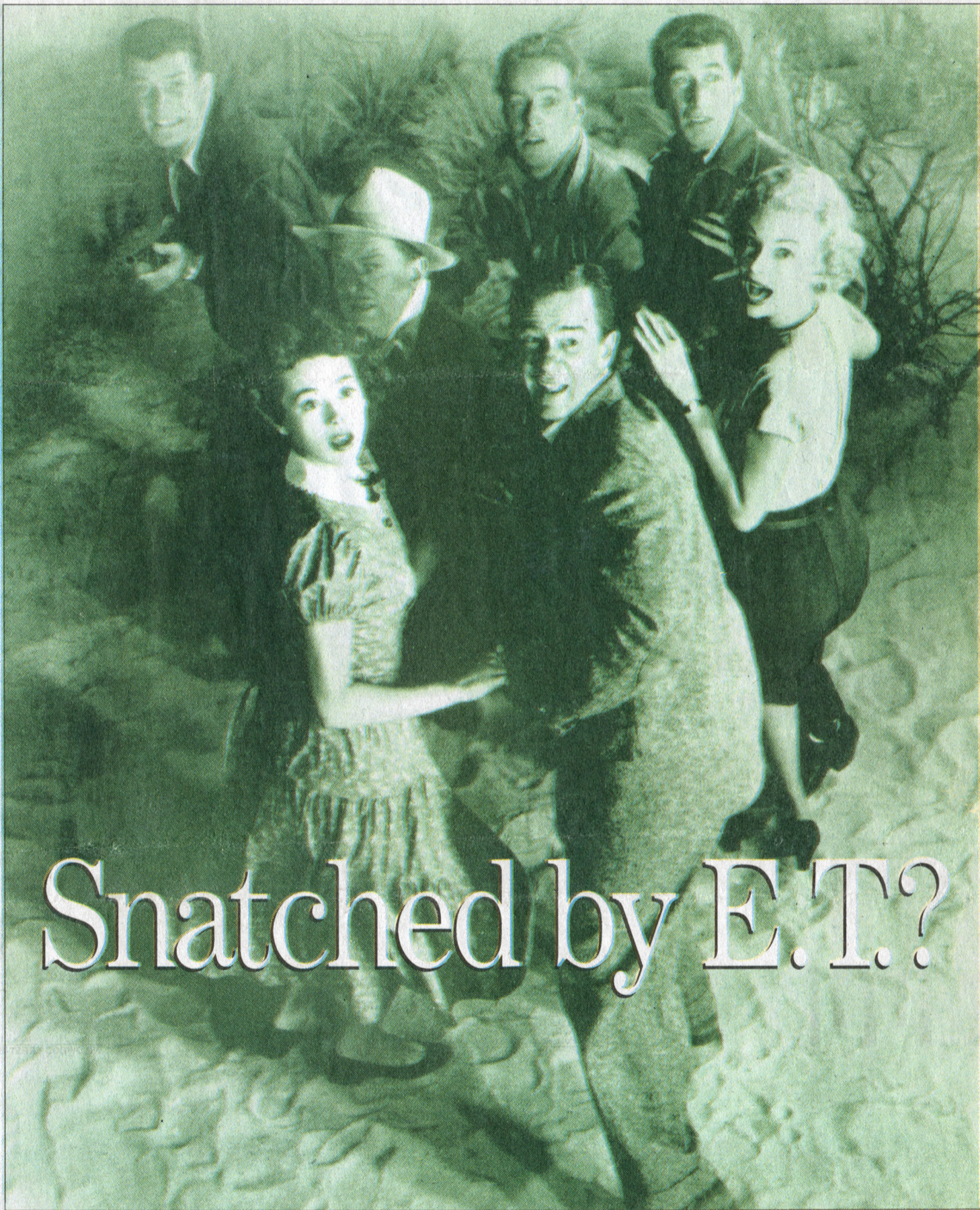
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Sunday, June 12, 1994

Section M *

At a New York ceremony, the FiFi's are awarded. M3.

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Snatched by E.T.?

Hollywood films, such as "It Came From Outer Space," have often depicted groups of people seeing aliens in broad daylight. Present-day abduction stories often describe nighttime visits that target a solitary, sleeping person.

It doesn't matter if you don't believe.

Those who do would just shake their heads at your skepticism.

They'd laugh if you said that you thought that proof of space aliens is limited to fuzzy sightings of shadowy UFOs.

They'd chuckle because true believers have gone so far beyond that. These days abduction is the number-one topic of discussion among those attuned to the cosmos.

Yes, abductions. You know, the taking of Earthlings onto spaceships. Space people doing odd experiments on humans, even melding human genes with extra-terrestrial DNA.

Weird stuff, no question about it. Real or not, America seems to love the mystery.

Alleged alien abduction recently has been

all over the media, in books, on television, as fiction and even as could-be fact.

Much attention is being given to a new book written by Harvard University psychiatrist John E. Mack. Titled *Abduction*, the book recounts first-person tales of space-alien abductions that Mack has certified as real.

Omni, the respectable national science magazine, is running a six-part series about an alleged government cover-up of UFO visits since the 1940s.

The Weekly News, a not-so-respectable supermarket tabloid, recently ran a front-page headline declaring: "12 U.S. Senators Are Space Aliens!"

Alleged abductees have appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and have even hit prime time, as subjects of reports on big-time news shows such as *48 Hours* with Dan Rather and *Dateline NBC*.

What is going on?

Well, that depends on whom you ask.

True believers say that the abductions are real, not some bad dream or mental illness. Scientists in the believers' camp say that through hypnosis and regression therapy, they've been able to uncover exactly what the space aliens are up to.

Some skeptics, on the other hand, say the reports of alien abductions could be the side-effect of a strange physical occurrence loosely similar to sleepwalking. And doubts have been growing about all kinds of memories unearthed during hypnosis, from child abuse to past lives.

Only one thing seems for sure. Neither side has come up with one solid piece of indisputable evidence to prove its argument.

It usually happens at night. "Almost always the event is accompanied
See **ALIENS** on M4

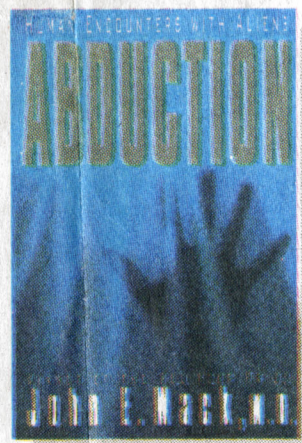


Credibility varies greatly about reports of visitors from other planets.



From the book "The Intruders"

People who say aliens abducted them are not alone. A Harvard psychiatrist's book backs their belief. By Tanya Barrientos.



From the jacket of "Abduction"



Abductions by aliens: Is this for real?

ALIENS from M1

by a light source, an unnatural light source that is not headlights or street lights," said Wendy, a Philadelphia area woman who asked that her last name not be used.

"This light source enables them to travel. It's an energy field of some sort."

Wendy, 30, an articulate woman with a job and a family and strong religious values, is convinced space aliens have been abducting her for years. And, she said, they've recently begun abducting her two children.

She's come to David Jacobs, a Temple University history professor, who also is a noted national expert in UFO research, seeking some answers. Jacobs wrote a book about alien abductions in 1992, titled *Secret Life: First-hand Accounts of UFO Abductions*.

For 18 months, Wendy has allowed him to hypnotize her and delve into her subconscious to help her re-create the strange experiences.

"One or two beings will come in with the light and take myself and my kids," she said in a recent interview at Jacobs' home office.

"Normally they just look at me. They have an ability with their eyes and their minds to give almost like a sedative effect, to knock you out and make you go without feelings of your own," Wendy said. "You become robotic. With that mind control, that's part of what facilitates their ability to make you forget"

Wendy stopped herself, and then added: "I can't blame people for not being able to digest it, for not believing. I just ask that people don't make fun of me because I do believe it."

It took her a while, she said, to accept it herself.

For as long as she can remember, Wendy said she's seen "odd" things, balls of light following her and unexplained shadows in her house.

"But they would be far enough apart that I'd just say, 'What in the world?' and then go about my day."

But that all changed 18 months ago. That was when her 7-year-old son, afraid to sleep in his own room because of strange happenings, woke her up in terror while sleeping in Wendy's bedroom.

"He said he'd seen two alien beings in my bedroom," Wendy said. "... He consciously remembered seeing these things, wide awake."

Wendy said neither she nor her husband had an interest in such things as UFOs or space aliens. They asked the boy to draw a picture of what he saw.

"He sat down and drew big heads with big black eyes," Wendy said. "He knew nothing about aliens and we hadn't shown him any movies with them so there was no way my son could have picked this up somewhere."

Through hypnosis, Wendy said she has concluded that she, her son and her daughter have been, and continue to be, abducted.

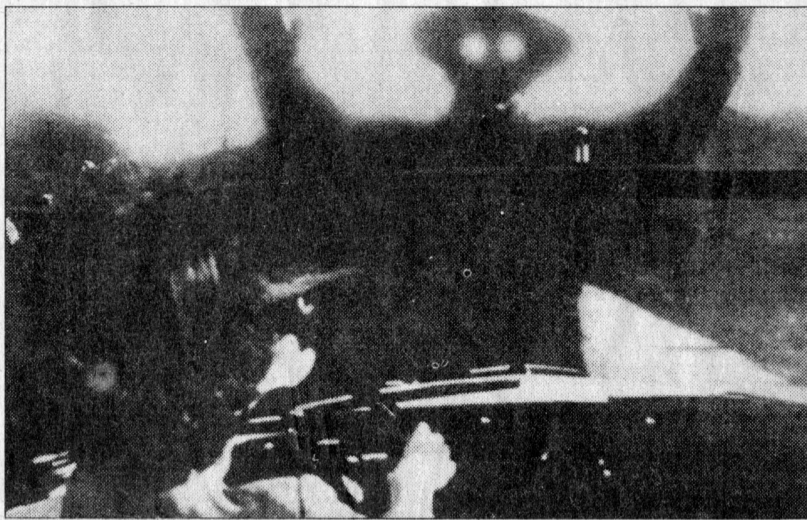
Wendy's account of what allegedly occurs inside the spaceship is similar to all of the published narratives in the books written by Jacobs and Mack. Both authors use controversial hypnosis therapy, which skeptics claim is riddled with subtle suggestive questions.

For his book, Mack interviewed and performed psychiatric evaluations on more than 100 alleged abductees. He has printed 13 of his patients' abduction accounts in the book.

Mack contends that the sincerity of the men and women, the sheer honesty he felt in their narratives, and an apparent lack of psychiatric instability, convinced him that they were telling the truth.

"I originally thought it [alien abduction] was not possible in the reality in which I was raised," said Mack, in a recent telephone interview. "I didn't write anything about it for the first two years that I studied it."

Mack's academic credentials — as professor at the Harvard Medical



© Universal Pictures

Hollywood's handling: An alien-possessed human stops a car in the Arizona desert in 1953's *"It Came From Outer Space."*

School's Cambridge Hospital and the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of a biography of T.E. Lawrence (better known as Lawrence of Arabia) — have given the abduction theory some respect.

The New York Times printed a serious review of *Abduction*, and Mack has been on a national public relations tour defending its authenticity.

"I think it [the abduction theory] is coming out of the marginalized status into the forefront," Mack said of the recent attention being paid to abduction stories. "The denial is beginning to break down. ... I think it's becoming increasingly legitimized."

For believers, similarities in the oral accounts are proof that it is really happening. For skeptics, the accounts are proof that people have either been influenced by group-think, or that the mind reacts in similar ways to a little-known sleep disorder.

Wendy said that once aboard the spaceship, abductees (and it is rare that she is on the spaceship alone) are disrobed and placed on examination tables, much like those in doctors' offices.

"They have a standard physical, a head-to-toe check, kind of like to make sure there have been no changes in the specimen," said Wendy. "They check the nose, eyes, throat, mouth, they run their hands down your legs and back."

In books about abductions, victims report that the aliens often take sperm from men and implant alien embryos into women.

Wendy said it's happened to her. She said she's felt pregnant after some abductions.

"Once I missed my period for three months and I called the doctor," she said. "I made an appointment with the doctor, and the day before they [the aliens] came and it was done."

It refers to a procedure that Wendy said the aliens do to extract fetuses and "put them in these columns with water. Well, I say water, but I don't know what it is."

Wendy said sometimes abductees are led into the incubation room and made to look at the fetuses.

Other times, Wendy and other alleged abductees have reported that the aliens take them into a room somewhat like a nursery.

"It's a room with children ... some look very alienlike, but they have some human qualities," Wendy said. "You can tell there has been a genetic splicing."

Abduction believers claim that aliens are using human genes to create a hybrid race.

Wendy said that when she is returned to her house neither she nor her children remember much about the abductions.

But, she said, she has found what she considers solid evidence that they've really happened.

"Many times I've come back and my underwear is on inside-out and backwards, or I'll have no underv-

wear at all," Wendy said. "Once I woke up with a sock on my hand instead of my foot. Sometimes my kids and I have woken up and everyone is in a different bed."

She said other pieces of proof include bruises that appear overnight, and sometimes scars she believes have been left by the aliens' medical instruments.

Whatever is going on, some researchers say, the people who think they are being abducted may be experiencing *something*. The question is whether it's earthly or otherworldly.

"I've met a lot of abductees and I think very few are hoaxing," said Charles Emmons, a sociology professor at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pa.

"They are really serious about what's happening to them. ... They have almost like post-traumatic stress syndrome."

The most current scientific explanation of alleged abduction reports is something called sleep paralysis.

David Hufford, professor of medical humanities and behavioral science at Penn State University College of Medicine, has been researching sleep paralysis for 20 years.

Sleep paralysis, Hufford said, is a strange physical state somewhere between sleep and wakefulness.

Normally, he said, the body's central nervous system goes limp during dream sleep. That paralysis keeps people from physically acting out their dreams.

During sleep paralysis, the body is limp, even though the person is conscious and no longer asleep.

"They are aware of their environment. ... No matter what the person's cultural background, with no regard of what they believe in, the majority are convinced that at the time there is a threatening presence in the room with them," Hufford said.

That's why, he said, people who report alien abductions claim they are not dreaming. Because, Hufford said, they are fully conscious while still suffering from an abnormal condition that sometimes leads to hallucinations.

"People report that the presence sometimes looks humanoid," said Hufford. "The little grays [the alleged aliens] sound a lot like gnomes or elves that people historically reported."

Hufford said victims of sleep paralysis from all over the world report similar occurrences, which include strange visitors and even the feeling of being prodded by the beings.

"The similarities are just too great for a coincidence," he said.

But true believers such as John Mack say that abductions have occurred when people are not asleep and therefore sleep paralysis cannot be a viable explanation.

"Debunkers will invent the most outlandish of explanations," Mack said.

Outlandish explanations? Well, when it comes to space aliens, apparently there are plenty to choose from.