



ANTIMATTER

UFO UPDATE:

A Harvard psychiatrist says alien encounters, while traumatic, may be our gateway to God

For the past three decades, students of UFO abduction have hailed from outside the scientific community. Their ranks include an historian, a social worker, and an artist. Despite the diversity of their backgrounds, these researchers have all agreed on one thing: The aliens, they say, are evil, inflicting on their human victims only misery and pain.

But now, Dr. John E. Mack, professor of psychiatry at Cambridge Hospital, an affiliate of the Harvard Medical School, and a Pulitzer Prize winner, has broken the mold. The first world-class scientist to jump on the abduction bandwagon, Mack agrees that alien abductions do, indeed, take place. But unlike other researchers, he says the abduction experience can be spiritually uplifting, a key to inner growth.

To back up his theories, Mack has recently published *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens* (Scribner's), the chronicle of eight male and five female abductees whose stories have been elicited through hypnosis. The tales they tell, says Mack, who has worked with 80 abductees in all, "reveal many examples of great personal growth, a reexperiencing of past lives, and a deepening concern for the fate of the earth."

Joe Noonan, for instance, is a 34-year-old psychotherapist who runs a professional development and training business. As quoted in Mack's book, Noonan says his alien abductors are "midwives" who help him stay connected to his divinity. "Unconditional acceptance and understanding are always an integral part of my E.T. experiences," Noonan explains.

Eva, a mother of two, says that for her, abduction has been "a process of awakening." The aliens "need us for their own reasons," she says, but they are also "helping us to evolve as a race."



But if aliens connect us with the cosmic realm, why do they cause so much pain? "It's possible," says Mack, "that the alien presence, however traumatic, may be part of a larger process bringing us back to our common source."

But most of Mack's fellow investigators put little stock in his ideas. "I haven't seen the positive spiritual components that John Mack reports," says David Jacobs, an historian at Temple University and author of the book *Secret Life*, a step-by-step examination of the abduction process. "Most abductees don't like this phenomenon, feel that it's a detriment to their lives, wish that it had never happened to begin with, and hope that it never happens again."

Many abductees also vehemently disagree with Mack's findings. According to Wendy, a food manufacturer who says she has been repeatedly abducted, "I've been forsaken by God, not enlightened by him. Why isn't he answering my prayers and stopping this?" Adds Sheila, a 32-year-old mother of three, "Saying I benefited spiritually from being abducted by aliens is like saying an Auschwitz survivor benefited spiritually from being treated like a laboratory animal."

And how do Mack's colleagues in psychiatry feel about his abduction research? John O'Brien, CEO of the Cambridge Hospital, has only praise. "John," he says, "is a nationally recognized clinician and researcher, and we encourage him to pursue his interests, whatever they are." As for the American Psychiatric Association, it does not endorse Mack's work. But Dr. Michael S. Aronoff, spokesperson for the New York county district branch says, "the Association generally views any responsible scientific research into human behavior as useful for the progress of information."—ANITA BASKIN