

REVIEWS

Abduction

John Mack, M.D., Charles Scribner's Sons 1994
[\$22.00, 432 pgs, hardback]

Abduction is only unique in that the author who wrote it has such heavyweight credentials people have to sit up and take notice. John Mack is not just any old PhD. He's both a professor of psychiatry at Harvard and a Pulitzer prize winning author. But does Mack bring anything substantially new to the area of UFOs and alien abductions, or is he another victim of the newsroom strategy: "I don't care how crazy it sounds... just give me a PhD who says it's true and we'll print it!"

Mack's interest in UFO abductions was triggered when a Harvard colleague asked him if he'd like to meet Bud Hopkins, an UFO investigator who had authored abduction books. After his chat with Hopkins, Mack felt something compelling and launched into the subject. Mack reviewed the literature, talked with other serious UFO/ET investigators such as David Jacobs of Temple University, embarked upon some hypnotherapeutic intervention with those claiming ET abduction, developed a psychological differential which reflected there was no psychopathology associated with his abduction cases, wrote *Abduction* describing his clinical experience, and then went on the talk-show circuit to discuss his conclusions and pitch his book and ideas.

Mack began to look pretty haggard on T.V. as he consistently defended his psychiatric observations (his authority does not extend into the overall question of whether or not UFOs have a physical validity, even though some alleged evidence, e.g. ET implants, is discussed in the book). He had to contend with professional askance, deal with the unneeded association of fringe UFO groups who bragged of having a Harvard PhD in their corner, and had to stomach debating militant sceptics (the same kind of know-it-all who used to boast that man would never fly). All this might have taken its toll because after his foray into this field he has pretty much instantaneously disappeared. But maybe not for long because a professional friend of his says Mack thrives on high-risk, bold ideas/actions. Mack could be loaded down with the increase in UFO abduction cases brought about by his exposure, or he could be busy administrating to his Programme for Extraordinary Experience Research (PEER), a project promoting understanding in the abduction area [P.O. Box 382427, Cambridge MA 02238].

Mack's intellect and systematic writing style is very apparent in *Abduction*. In two short but effective chapters Mack runs the reader through the history of UFOs and ET abduction, to include some mythological folklore.

Given that whole books have been written on some of the issues and cases he discusses he does well to succinctly target the needed basic points. Then 13 chapters deal with case histories, which include: patient introduction, problem presentation, the evaluation, the therapeutic indications/ strategies, dealing with trauma and/or transformation, and the follow-up support. He also discusses the unique doctor-patient relationship in abduction cases. From reading of other therapists who deal with abduction cases, I saw nothing uniquely illuminating in terms of how Mack therapeutically assesses and integrates the experience. Mack probably does a service by placing the hypnosis sessions in a narrative format rather than an actual Q & A interview transcript format. The reading is made faster and descriptively more eventful, but one at the same time the reader might be deprived of some subtle technical information where one can better critique the session. In a final chapter Mack freely speculates on Alien Intervention and Human Evolution (biological, technological, religious, spiritual, philosophical, political, economic and ecological implications).

Though this book probably will become a well referenced addition to UFO/Abduction literature, it is too soon to determine if this book will have the same socio-scientific impact that say Moody's books have had for Near-Death Experiences, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' books have done for Death and Dying, or Gabbard, et al, books have done for the Out of the Body Experience; that is to take the subject from quiet corridors to mainstream discussion, leading to better understanding of the subject.

We have a sad situation here though, really. Others have covered this subject just as capably as has Mack, but because of his notable academic accomplishments, his entry into the field draws special attention. As a positive though this attention might provide the needed impetus to have the question changed from, "Do you believe in UFOs/Abductions" to What causes... what is the process behind UFOs/Abductions?"

Philip Paul

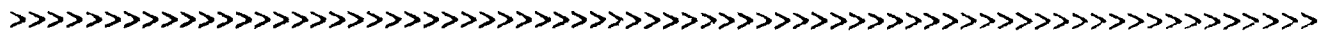
The Afterlife

Jenny Randles & Peter Hough, Berkley, 1994

Jenny Randles has authored or co-authored a number of books on the paranormal with varying degrees of quality. Though the bookcover boasts *Afterlife* as a comprehensive and thought-provoking study of our time, this is promotional tripe (why do authors allow editors to embarrass them so?)

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The Psi Researcher

The Psi Researcher is a quarterly magazine which aims to provide an accessible forum for the dissemination of research and debate in this interdisciplinary area.

It publishes articles on any aspect of psychical research and related areas, including extra-sensory perception (telepathy, clairvoyance and precognition), psychokinesis (including poltergeist phenomena and healing), apparitional phenomena (such as ghosts), anomalous altered states (such as out-of-body and near-death experiences), mediumship and divinatory practices. Featured articles cover theoretical and empirical work and topical concerns.

The editor particularly welcomes review articles, experimental research and field investigations in the areas traditionally encompassed by psychical research, parapsychology and anomalous psychology, pertinent aspects of consciousness studies and psychophysics. Accounts of apparently psychic experiences and other anomalous experiences are welcome for the experiences section.

All views expressed are those of the authors alone.

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