

Professor's close encounters alienate colleagues

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN NEW YORK

THEY came from outer space: grey aliens with large eyes and voracious libidos who abduct humans to other planets and have sex with them.

This is the stuff of America's whackier talk-show fringe, but it is also the substance of an academic book by a renowned Harvard psychiatry professor and Pulitzer Prize-winning author whose work has presented the univer-

sity with one of the more bizarre problems in its 359-year history.

Harvard must now decide whether Dr John Mack, the author of *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens*, is a crank with a taste for publicity or a genuinely inquisitive academic who has boldly gone where no scholar has gone before. A committee at Harvard Medical School will soon present the university dean with a report strongly criticising Dr Mack for violating accepted standards of scholarship, *The*

New York Times reported yesterday. But the case of Dr Mack's lecherous aliens has divided America's academic community and many say that his work, while highly unusual, involves sincere scientific inquiry in an important and neglected field.

Abduction details 13 case histories in which humans claim to have been kidnapped and seduced by space creatures. Take, for example, the experience of Ed, a middle-aged technician, who told Dr Mack of an ex-

tremely close encounter with a female being having "long, silvery hair with large black eyes without pupils or irises". The female alien seduced Ed in order to "create special babies", Dr Mack relates.

Fearing that Harvard's reputation is being compromised, the disciplinary committee is reported to have concluded that Dr Mack's scholarship is faulty, while forcefully asserting his right to explore any subject under the sun, or beyond it.

