

# Should Harvard Beam Him Up?



Suppose somebody writes a book called "Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens," consisting mainly of the case histories of 13 people who say they have been abducted by diminutive, large-eyed, gray-colored space creatures and forced to have sex with them. And the book becomes a national best seller and the author a star on the talk-show circuit.

Then suppose the author is a tenured professor at Harvard Medical School.

If you're Harvard, what do you do?

That's the conundrum that for the past year has bedeviled Daniel Tosteson, dean of the Harvard Medical School.

The best-seller by Professor John E. Mack, a 65-year-old psychiatrist at the Harvard Medical School's Cambridge Hospital, may be easy to dismiss as out

of touch with reality. But the question of the rights and responsibilities of a university to protect its reputation when that may conflict with academic freedom could hardly be presented more starkly.

Proceeding cautiously last year, Dean Tosteson appointed a committee of Dr. Mack's peers to evaluate his research methods. Now, after more than 30 closed-door hearings over the past 12 months, the committee is about to deliver a report said to be sharply critical of Dr. Mack.

After that, the matter will have to be resolved between Dean Tosteson, Dr. Mack's lawyer and perhaps some diminutive, large-eyed, gray beings who claim tenure.

WILLIAM H. HONAN