

John E. Mack (1929-2004): In Memoriam

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The death of Harvard psychiatrist, psychoanalyst psychobiographer, researcher, and social activist John E. Mack came on September 28, 2004. Mack was crossing a darkened section of a street when he was hit by a car driven by an individual who had consumed slightly over the legal alcohol limit for driving. The psychiatrist died shortly afterward without regaining consciousness. At the time he was attending a London conference on T.E. Lawrence, the subject of his most celebrated book. In a lengthy career, he won both academic and public acclaim for his Pulitzer Prize-winning psychobiography, *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (1976), as well as many other accomplishments. Mack was also the recipient of intense academic criticism in the 1990s for his work on alien abductions. The failure of efforts to discredit his subject of research and his methods which would have endangered his position at Harvard, helped reaffirm academic freedom.

John Mack was born in New York City on October 4, 1929. His mother died nine months later and his father married a widow with a young daughter, thus "Johnny" grew up as the second of two children and the only son. His parents, descended from 19th century German Jewish immigrants to America, were academics with doctoral degrees. Both children were educated at the experimental Lincoln School of Teachers College of Columbia University in Morningside Heights where they lived. In 1951, he graduated as a Phi Beta Kappa from Oberlin College in Ohio with a degree in history before taking his medical degree *cum laude* from Harvard Medical School in 1955. His residency was in adult and child psychiatry at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center from 1956-59, after which he served two years as a United States Air Force psychiatrist in Japan with the rank of captain. He returned in 1961-1963 to the Children's Unit at Massachusetts Mental Health Center as a fellow in Child Psychiatry.

In 1967, John Mack graduated from the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute and

two years later he was certified as a child analyst. In the late sixties he started working at Cambridge Hospital culminating in the establishment of its Psychiatry Department in 1973. He was a deeply caring, committed psychotherapist who was much quicker to listen carefully to his patients rather than quickly medicate them. The young doctor, who was a most determined, enthusiastic, and able administrator, would later be quite proud of his accomplishments in building up the department and Cambridge Hospital, especially its psychiatric residency program. Though he did not show it to the outside world, at the time he was quite anxious about overcoming the obstacles to making great improvements to a city hospital which had grave doubts about psychiatry. In 1973, he had become a professor of psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School. While doing important administrative work and seeing patients, he was also an extremely disciplined researcher on the Lawrence book which took 12 years to write. In 1989, Mack founded and directed the Center for Psychology and Social Change—formerly the Center for Psychological Studies in the Nuclear Age. In 2004, it was rededicated as the John E. Mack Institute. From 1991-92, he was president of the International Society for Political Psychology.

Professor Mack had over 180 publications on a wide range of subjects such as his 1964 article on nightmares, the 2004 chapter, "Looking Beyond Terrorism," in *The Psychology of Terrorism*, and "Approaching Extraordinary Experiences in the Mental Health Field," in *The Psychospiritual Clinician's Handbook* (2005). His books, counting co-authored and edited ones, include *Nightmares and Human Conflict* (1970, 1974, 1989), *Borderline States in Psychiatry* (1975), *Vivienne: The Life and Suicide of an Adolescent Girl* (1981), *The Development and Sustaining of Self-Esteem in Childhood* (1983), *The Alchemy of Survival: One Woman's Journey* (1988), *Human Feelings: Explorations in Affect Development and Meaning* (1992), *Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens* (1994), and *Passport to the Cosmos* (1999). He was one of many authors of *The Psychiatrist as Psychohistorian: Report of the Task Force on Psychohistory of the American Psychiatric Association* (1976) that was somewhat restrictive of the role of psychiatrists in psychohistory who worked with live subjects. He also won numerous awards in-

cluding being named Freud Lecturer at Yale in 1978. As a colleague and friend of Erik Erikson and Robert Lifton, he attended the Wellfleet psychohistory annual meetings in October which played an important role in the early development of psychohistory and which continue to this day.

In 1959, John married Sally Stahl, a social worker and psychotherapist. They went camping on their honeymoon and had three sons. Mack was an avid baseball fan who enjoyed tennis, a game of basketball when his sons were younger, photography, and reading. He always loved history and travel. He was an upbeat individual who was excellent at getting the assistance of others, yet someone who had an unusual awareness of and ability to "look down into the abyss." At most times he could be totally aware of his surroundings, and at other moments totally cut off from them as he concentrated on the task at hand.

Mack was quite impressed by Erikson's idea of pseudo-speciation and interested in how individuals identified their own hurts with those of their nation or ethnic group. He became quite concerned about the dangers of the nuclear arms race. When the United States continued nuclear testing after the Soviets abandoned it in 1986 following the tragedy at Chernobyl, at his suggestion the entire Mack family went to the Nuclear Test Site in Mercury, Nevada, to protest the U.S. action and were arrested together with other demonstrators in an act of civil disobedience.

Professor Mack was an inquisitive, intense, and restless man. The range of his interests was enormous as reflected in his publications on subjects such as academic activism, addiction, adolescent suicide, aggression in international relations, alcoholism, alien abduction, borderline states, ecological crisis, the development of self-esteem, fire starters, nationalism, nuclearism, the relationship of psychoanalysis to biography, and spiritualism. He was heavily involved in Russian/American exchange at the Esalen Institute and influenced by the Czech psychoanalyst Stanislaw Grof. Robert Jay Lifton, who worked closely with Mack in the anti-nuclear movement, remembers him as "a restless, highly creative man who was many-sided," and also "as sensitive to other's needs as anyone I've known." He was intensely curious and saw himself, much like Lawrence of Arabia, as holding to

his beliefs and persevering in the face of intense criticism.

Sally Mack reports that John was always aware that there was so much we don't know about the human mind and was far more open to new and challenging ideas than most professionals. Mack first became interested in the accounts of alien abductions when he spoke to someone he respected who reported there were people who believed they had been abducted by aliens. At first he thought that the person who claimed this must be crazy. But after he talked with several people who described having such experiences, he came home and declared they were certainly not "crazy" or mentally ill—thus he initially had the same reaction he would soon experience from colleagues in academia. He changed his opinion upon meeting numerous other people who believed they were abducted when they reported identical unique details, such as the temperature and smell of the room or the nature of eye contact from the aliens. Mack began an in-depth study of the phenomenon, using hypnosis normally in the presence of another researcher, though not necessarily a fully-qualified one.

Mack eventually became intrigued by reports of surviving spouses who claimed to have had contact with their dead mates. It became his conviction that with few exceptions his research subjects believed in the reality of their accounts of alien encounters. He did not think they were either hallucinating or mentally disturbed.

One wonders if this openness to possibilities dismissed out-of-hand by most academics could have some bearing on an unconscious desire to connect with his birth mother who died when he was nine months old and of whom he was forbade to mention by the mother who raised him. His son Danny reports that this became a conscious desire he was able to achieve "via the work he did with Stan Grof."

Whatever John Mack's conscious or unconscious motivation was or was not, in 1992, he co-chaired the Abduction Study Conference held at MIT, which drew public attention to his current field of inquiry. He related this research to healing the mind body split. A close relative reports that it is hard to know exactly what he believed about

alien encounters: "In quieter moments, he did not necessarily believe there were actual alien encounters because he was open to other possible explanations for their experiences involving as yet unknown dimensions of our existence and of communication among beings." At times he became quite insistent on presenting his findings and challenging the unwillingness amidst the intense criticism, ridicule of his work, and distorted public accounts.

According to his sister, her brother was so interested in doing his research that he neglected to take the time to set up the rigid scientific safeguards that would have protected him from some of the criticism that became quite intense after he began to publish on abductions and aliens. At the time, there was considerable suspicion of hypnosis because of the false memories controversy. In 1994, in response to calls for Mack's removal from Harvard Medical School, its dean set up a committee of peers to investigate his clinical work. Fortunately, Mack was able to use private funds to pay the considerable costs of his legal defense. He also received support from defenders of academic freedom, such as Harvard Professor Alan Dershowitz, who questioned the investigation of a tenured professor. After fourteen months, the committee "reaffirmed Dr. Mack's academic freedom to study what he wishes and to state his opinions without impediment," and concluded with: "Dr. Mack remains a member in good standing of the Harvard Faculty of Medicine."

John Mack died on the same date his father had been killed in 1973 in an auto accident while driving. He was cremated on October 13th in London. He is survived by his sons Daniel of Boulder; Kenneth of Almaty, Kazakhstan; David (Tony) of Cambridge; Sally Stahl Mack of Cambridge, (they were divorced in 1995 after 36 years of marriage while remaining friends); his sister Mary Lee Ingbar of Cambridge; and two grandchildren.

Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, is the author of over 165 publications. He wishes to thank individuals too numerous to list for assistance in researching this obituary. □

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Bulletin Board

The next **Psychohistory Forum Work-In-Progress Saturday Seminar** will be on **September 17, 2005** when **Donald Carveth** (York-Canada), **Paul Elovitz** (Ramapo), and **Ken Fuchsman** (University Connecticut) will present "**Watergate and the 1970s as the Age of Permissiveness-Narcissism.**" Subsequent 2005/2006 presentations will include **Thomas Ferraro**, **Christine Silverstein**, and Paul Elovitz on the psychology of sports and **David Lotto** on vengeance. We are also planning a session on suicide and on suicidal terrorism. **CONFERENCES:** The National and International Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP) is having its annual conference on **October 15, 2005** in New York City with the central theme being love and loss. "Psychoanalysis and the Stories of Our Lives: Memory, Narration, Discovery" is the theme of the International Federation for Psychoanalytic Education (IFPE) at its meeting on **October 21-23, 2005** in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "Psychoanalysis and Community" is the focus of the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society (APCS) at its meeting on **November 4-6, 2005** at Rutgers University in New Brunswick. At the International Society for Political Psychology (ISPP) meetings in Toronto on July 2-6, 2005, **David Beisel**, Donald Carveth, **Anna Geifman**, Paul Elovitz, and **Jacques Szaluta** were among the presenters. (Next year's ISPP will be in Barcelona on July 12-16, 2006.) Among the Forum members presenting at the June 8-10, 2005 International Psychohistorical Association (IPA) meetings at Fordham Law School were **Herbert Barry III**, David Beisel, **Dan Dervin**, Paul Elovitz, **John Hartman**, **Richard Morrock**, **Denis O'Keefe**, **Lynn Somerstein**, and **Charles Strozier**. (Next year's IPA will meet on June 7-9 in New York City). **AWARDS:** Congratulations to **David S. Barry** of Bradenton Florida on the award of his doctoral degree in psychology from Argus University and marriage. He has been nominated and received a **Psychohistory Forum Young Scholar Award**. (Some members may remember David attending several of our meetings in the 1990s.) **NOTES ON MEMBERS:** Congratulations to **Suzanne Adrion** on being appointed to a full-time, tenure-track position at Monroe Commu-

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**Did 1940 Vichy Shape 1958 Paris?
A Symposium (15 authors)**

De Gaulle as Pétain

**Rudolph Binion
Brandeis University**

The Third French Republic came to an inglorious end between Bordeaux on June 16 and Vichy on July 10, 1940. That June 16 in Bordeaux, makeshift capital of France at the height of the German invasion, Premier Paul Reynaud made way for a successor, Marshal Philippe Pétain, to request armistice terms. Then on that July 10 as much of the French parliament as could meet in Vichy voted Pétain's government full powers to draft a new, authoritarian constitution for popular approval and to rule by fiat meanwhile. Eighteen years later, between May 28 and June 1-3, 1958, the Fourth French Republic came to an equally inglorious end. In Paris on that May 28
(continued on page 56)

**Thomas A. Kohut: Historian
With a Psychoanalytic World View**

**Paul Elovitz
Ramapo College and the Psychohistory Forum
Geoffrey Cocks
Albion College**

Thomas August Kohut, PhD, was born on March 11, 1950 in Chicago where he grew up as an only child. As a youngster he attended the innovative Lab School of the University of Chicago. He later took his bachelors degree from Oberlin College in 1972 and his masters and doctoral degrees from the University of Minnesota in 1975 and 1983. He practiced psychotherapy and psychoanalysis in Cincinnati from 1981-84, and in 1984 graduated from the Cincinnati Psychoanalytic Institute where he became
(Continued on page 49)

**Filial Loyalty and Rebellion in
Watergate: Woodward, Felt and
Nixon**

**Kenneth Fuchsman
University of Connecticut**

Bob Woodward was 26-years-old, a Navy Lieutenant, bored, and uncertain of his future when in 1969, in the basement of the Nixon White House, he met W. Mark Felt, a senior FBI official. Out of this chance encounter and subsequent developments, a hidden psychological drama developed that resulted in Nixon's resignation and forever marked the lives of these three men. It involved issues of worthy and unworthy father figures, generational loyalties, and ego ideals.

This story begins with the identity issues of the young Bob Woodward. Woodward's own father was a prominent attorney in Wheaton, Illinois who, Woodward says, "wanted me to go to law school and eventually join the firm" (*The Secret Man: The Story*
(continued on next page)

***The Sin Against the Blood,
Hitler, and the Holocaust***

**George Victor
Psychohistory Forum Research Associate**

Many studies of the origins of Adolf Hitler's decision to exterminate Jews cite internationally known books by the racists Arthur de Gobineau and Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and books by prominent German anti-Semites—notably Theodor Fritsch. However, they omit or barely mention the man who most influenced Hitler: Artur Dinter who, ironically, remains little-known in the United States.
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of *Watergate's Deep Throat* [NY: Simon & Schuster, 2005], p.24). In a 2003 interview, Woodward says: "my father to a certain extent was my model" (Academy of Achievement, "Bob Woodward: Journalist For Truth," p.8 [www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/woolint-1-9]). Family developments modified the extent to which Al Woodward was a model for Bob, the oldest of three children. When Bob was around 12 his mother had an affair and his parents divorced. His father won custody of the children while his mother remarried and moved to another town (Adrian Havill, *Deep Truth: The Lives of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein*, [NY: Birch Lane Press, 1993], p.7). Speaking about the dissolution of his parent's marriage, Woodward says: "Divorce is painful...it destroys the very notion of context, because the only context you know as a child is family" ("Journalist," p.7). Three years after the divorce, Al Woodward remarried. His new wife, Alice, had three children of her own and then together they had a daughter. According to biographer Adrian Havill, Bob Woodward "viewed his stepfamily with suspicion and jealousy" (Havill, *Deep Truth*, p.11). One Christmas,

Bob investigated and found his father had spent substantially more on gifts for his stepchildren than his offspring from his first marriage. "I confronted him," he told *Playboy* in 1989, "and showed him that the money he spent on them and on us was so dramatically out of balance...it was kind of sad, but the fact is that it's a very competitive world when two families are brought together this way" (Havill, *Deep Truth*, p.11). Despite the emotional wounds, Woodward endured and as a young man he felt some obligation to adhere to his father's expectations. In accordance with his father's wishes, while still in the Navy, Woodward applied to and was admitted into Harvard Law School for the fall 1970 term. Woodward was having second thoughts about this decision. "This was a time in my life," Woodward admits, "of considerable anxiety, even consternation, about my future" (Woodward, *Secret*, p.18).

Mark Felt came along at a crucial time in Woodward's life. Impressed with Felt's bearing and personality, Woodward turned to Felt for mentoring. Woodward writes in *The Secret Man: The Story of Watergate's Deep Throat*: "Mark Felt had

in some respects been an extra father" (Woodward, *Secret*, p.186). When Felt told the younger Woodward he should follow his own inclinations, this gave Bob the needed permission from a father figure to go against the hopes of his own father. For Bob Woodward, there was an inner conflict between filial piety and the separation-individuation process. By transferring, in part, his ego ideal and identification from his biological father to Mark Felt, both of whom were born in 1913, Woodward took the step towards individuation and chose journalism over law. When Bob told his father about his decision, the elder Woodward replied: "You're crazy." Bob says that this "was probably the severest thing he has ever said to me" ("Journalist," p.7). With the advice of Felt, Woodward had established independence from the expectations of his father. Interestingly enough, the same father-son drama over loyalty and independence that occurred between the senior and junior Woodward was to reoccur between Bob Woodward and Mark Felt, with significant and varying consequences for both of them.

W. Mark Felt was a loyal "company man." His ego ideal and father figure was personified by its authoritarian and perfectionist director, J. Edgar Hoover. Felt writes: "I had tremendous admiration for the man" (W. Mark Felt, *The FBI Pyramid: From the Inside* [NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1979], p.178). Hoover "was a sincere human being... with real greatness" (Felt, *FBI*, p.204).

Hoover had built the FBI into the agency that defended the country against "public enemies." These public foes of the FBI evolved from depression era professional criminals, to Nazis, Communists, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other assorted radicals. As the loyal and capable son, Felt had risen to be the third in command in the agency. W. Mark Felt adhered to Hoover's paternalistic ideology of the FBI as the defender of virtue against public enemies. After Hoover died on May 2, 1972 and the next in command retired, Felt believed his service to the "Bureau" and filial loyalty entitled him to succeed Hoover. The good son should inherit the father's company. "I allowed myself to think I had an excellent chance," Felt admits (Felt, *FBI*, p.178). However, President Nixon thwarted Felt's hopes by appointing a Nixon loyalist, L. Patrick Gray, rather than Felt, a Hoover loyalist, as Acting FBI Director.

Richard Nixon, who was also born in 1913, had loyalty and father issues of his own; he was raised by an erratic and tempestuous father. As a freshman Congressman in the 1940s, Nixon had allied himself with Hoover's war against the "public enemy" of the Communist menace. His alliance with Hoover had helped him break the Hiss case. Nixon exploited the fear of Communism to rise to national prominence and be selected as Eisenhower's running mate in 1952. As Eisenhower's Vice President for eight years, Nixon endured rejection and distance from the fatherly President. In a move for independence, when Nixon first ran for president in 1960 he did not seek the help of the popular Eisenhower until late in the campaign, and may have lost the presidential race as a result.

For the next eight years, Nixon endured the slings and arrows of fortune, many of them self-inflicted, until he barely won the Presidency himself in 1968. As the resentful son who had finally earned the role of Supreme Commander,

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