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About this Guide

The cases in this field guide have been carefully selected. I did my best not to include any case I knew to be a hoax, although, human nature being what it is, there are no doubt a few of them in this guide. I also excluded, for purely practical reasons, many well-known UFO occupant cases, as most entity descriptions simply do not provide sufficient detail for their inclusion in a field guide of this kind. Witnesses either do not remember enough details of their encounters with these creatures for an artist to reconstruct what they saw, or the observers were not close enough to obtain the necessary details. It's also possible that the reporters or investigators of the incident failed to note the necessary details in their written accounts.

A few cases, surprisingly enough, provide no details at all of the entity observed. One is the famous case of Sonny Desvergers, the Florida scoutmaster who on August 19, 1952, walked into some woods to investigate what he thought was an airplane crash. Leaving three Boy Scouts behind in his car, Desvergers cut his way through 200 yards of palmetto thickets and came to a clearing where, upon looking up, he saw a metallic object blotting out the sky. Then, just before being hit by a fireball and blacking out, the scoutmaster saw a horrible being peering at him from the turret of the object. When asked by an investigator afterward what the being looked like, Desvergers replied, "I can't tell you!" Asked by the investigator if it was too horrible to describe, the witness replied, "Let it go at that. I don't want to talk about it." One can't help but wonder if what the scoutmaster saw more than four decades ago could be all that different--or more horrible 'han some of the stranger creatures described in this field guide.

The lack of observational precision in most entity cases means that the most detailed descriptions we have of the aliens come from UFO landing reports, where the occupants of the craft were observed at close range, or even better yet from abduction reports, where the abductee by definition comes in close contact with the aliens. I have deliberately chosen cases drawn from a variety of observational situations so as not to skew the guide in favor of one kind of UFO experience or another.

I should also make clear that I never dismissed a case solely on the being's description, no matter how preposterous it seemed or how much it offended my common sense. The history of UFOlogy is littered with discarded beliefs based on such personal notions of what is and is not possible or acceptable. In the mid-1960s, when my interest in the subject developed, the premier UFO organization in the country accepted reports of strange lights in the sky but looked warily at reports of UFO "landings," and should any mention be made of "occupants," the case was automatically rejected.

Not until the late 1960s, with the publicity surrounding the Betty and Barney Hill case, did UFO organizations begin to take seriously the reports of entities, though as I've noted, these aliens had been reported in considerable numbers since the emergence of the "flying saucer" phenomenon in 1947 and even before. Now, of course, UFO organizations are interested in little else but the closest of all encounter stories--the abduction reports. Many of these are bedroom encounters with the black-eyed creatures and never even seem to involve a UFO or flying saucer. The craft have become superfluous.

But the presence of a craft in relation to an alien entity is essential to this field guide. There are innumerable reports of

strange entities, some of which are seen the same day as a UFO is spotted or in the area of recent UFO activity, but these were not included in this volume. Unless there was a direct connection to a UFO of some sort, the entity report was excluded from this guide. As far as I'm concerned, unless the entity is described as emerging from, seen in, or at least in very close physical or temporal proximity to a strange unidentified object, the already slim chance of that entity being extraterrestrial becomes just too vanishingly small. It seems to me that without a craft of some sort, the observed being might just as well be a ghost, fairy, demon, or some other kind of occult, electromagnetic, or mental creation.

For this reason I have also chosen to exclude reports of the mysterious Men in Black who have been known to harass some UFO witnesses after their sightings. The Men in Black are usually described as tall humans in black suits but with something not quite right about them. Their skin may be of a corpselike pallor, or their eyes may be in some sense unusual, or their voice may seem mechanical. In any case, while some researchers believe these are government agents, others think the MIB, as they are commonly known, are extraterrestrials in human disguise. But with only one questionable exception I know of, the MIB are never seen in conjunction with a UFO.

My proposed classification scheme for the alien horde does not pretend to be scientific. I am not trying to lay out the basis of an extraterrestrial anthropology. I'm simply trying to establish a typology of creatures that are reported to be of an extraterrestrial nature. It's really the best anyone can do considering the eyewitnesses are not biologists and the information they provide might have been distorted by errors of perception and belief, by the state of consciousness or situation they experienced, or by the investigators and reporters who have drawn the details of their experiences out of them.

I have not been able to classify the observed aliens into species, families, or such, as we know nothing or next to nothing about their genetic makeup or their breeding capabilities. And without actual specimens to examine, it is impossible to assign these creatures to any true taxonomic classification system. To make matters worse, I have never seen an extraterrestrial and neither has my illustrator. Nor have most scientists, I might add.

So how does one describe creatures whose existence is not only not recognized by science but vehemently denied? Well, you go with what you've got, and what you've got is a plethora of anecdotal reports. And then you make the best of them. The problem is that, for the most part, the physical descriptions of extraterrestrials differ substantially from one eyewitness to the next. Yet after examining dozens of such cases, hundreds actually, I have found that the entities reported fall naturally into a few broad categories that help to bring some much needed order to the bewildering variety of alien reports.