

[An excerpt from Secret Life](#)

Foreword

The idea that men, women, and children can be taken against their wills from their homes, cars, and schoolyards by strange humanoid beings, lifted onto spacecraft, and subjected to intrusive and threatening procedures is so terrifying, and yet so shattering to our notions of what is possible in our universe, that the actuality of the phenomenon has been largely rejected out of hand or bizarrely distorted in most media accounts. This is altogether understandable, given the disturbing nature of UFO abductions and our prevailing notions of reality. The fact remains, however, that for thirty years, and possibly longer, thousands of individuals who appear to be sincere and of sound mind and who are seeking no personal benefit from their stories have been providing to those who will listen consistent reports of precisely such events. Population surveys suggest that hundreds of thousands and possibly more than a million persons in the United States alone may be abductees or "experiencers," as they are sometimes called. The abduction phenomenon is, therefore, of great clinical importance if for no other reason than the fact that abductees are often deeply traumatized by their experiences. At the same time the subject is of obvious scientific interest, however much it may challenge our notions of reality and truth.

The relevant professional communities in mental health, medicine, biology, physics, electronics, and other disciplines are understandably skeptical of a phenomenon as strange as UFO abduction, which defies our accepted notions of reality. The effort to enable these communities to take abduction reports seriously will be best served through scrupulously conducted research by investigators who bring a scholarly and dispassionate yet appropriately caring attitude to their work. In this way patterns and meanings may be discovered that can lead to fuller and deeper knowledge and, eventually, to the development of convincing theoretical understanding.

In this book Temple University historian David Jacobs has provided us with work of just this kind. In a field that lends itself to sensationalistic treatment, we have already come to expect of Jacobs a special standard of rigorous scholarship and careful observation. His 1975 book, *The UFO Controversy in America*, remains a classic history of the early years of UFO-related events. In the present work Dr. Jacobs presents his findings from the investigation of more than sixty abductees over a four-year period, using interviews and hypnosis to overcome their amnesia. His study uncovered more than 300 abduction experiences.

Dr. Jacobs's findings will, I believe, impress those who are open at least to the possibility that something important is happening in the lives of these individuals and countless others that cannot readily be explained by the theories and categories currently available to modern science. In Jacobs's cases, as in the work of other investigators, hypnosis has proven to be an essential tool in overcoming the amnesia of his subjects. Lest this lead skeptical readers to question the validity of Jacobs's findings, it must be pointed out that we have no evidence from this or any other study that under hypnosis abductees have invented or distorted significantly their memories of the abduction experience. On the contrary, memories brought forth in hypnotic regressions have been repeatedly shown to be consistent with what these and other abductees are able to recall consciously. Hypnosis appears to complete or add greatly to the process of remembering and has proved in this field to be a valuable therapeutic and investigative tool.

Dr. Jacobs's work covers a broad range of phenomena associated with UFO encounters. His focus, however, is upon the structure of the abduction experience itself. In case after case he demonstrates a pattern that is consistent--even in minute details and specific elements that are not available in the mass media--among individuals who have had no opportunity to communicate their experiences to one another. This pattern consists of what Jacobs calls "primary" experiences (physical examination, staring, and urological and gynecological procedures); "secondary" experiences (machine examination, visualization, and child presentation); and "ancillary" experiences consisting of various other physical phenomena, mental displays, and sexually related activities. At the heart of the abduction process there appears to be some sort of complex reproductive enterprise involving the conception, gestation, or incubation of human or alien-

human hybrid babies. In Jacobs's words, "the focus of the abduction is the production of children."

Another investigator might place greater emphasis upon phenomena that Dr. Jacobs regards as less central, such as the visualizations of planetary destruction and their impact upon the consciousness of abductees. But whatever the emphasis or interpretation of these data, Jacobs's work has given us a solid foundation of carefully documented experience upon which investigators can now build as we add to our knowledge and explore further the meaning of this puzzling and disturbing matter.

Through his meticulous documentation of the structure and content of the UFO abduction phenomenon, Dr. Jacobs has deepened the mystery that lies before us while at the same time bringing us closer to some form of understanding. He has made clear that we are dealing with a phenomenon that has a hard edge, a huge, strange interspecies or interbeing breeding program that has invaded our physical reality and is affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people and perhaps in some way the consciousness of the entire planet. Jacobs has given us no explanation, but he has set forth explicitly the phenomena for which any theory must account.

Among ufologists and abduction researchers, explanations have generally fallen into psychosocial (or cultural) and extraterrestrial categories. Psychosocial hypotheses, at least in the Western materialist sense, are difficult to take seriously. For unless we are willing to extend our notions of the powers of the psyche to include the creation of cuts, scars, hemorrhages, and bruises, the simultaneous production of highly elaborate and traumatic experiences similar to one another in minute detail among individuals who have not communicated with one another, and all of the physical phenomena associated with the UFOs themselves, such explanations appear quite inadequate. At the same time a literalist extraterrestrial hypothesis must account for the relative paucity of solid physical information-- the lack of photographs of the beings, for example--and the virtually insurmountable problems related to accounting for the location, origins, and lives of the aliens themselves within the framework of the physical laws of our space/time universe. This last frustration has led some ufologists to posit a "multiverse" and the intrusion into our familiar reality of other dimensions or forces outside of the known physical universe. Others have turned to alternative notions of the nature of the cosmos, more familiar to Eastern religions and philosophy, that depict the universe and all its realities as a vast play of consciousness with physical manifestations.

My own work with abductees has impressed me with the powerful dimension of personal growth that accompanies the traumatic experiences that David Jacobs so accurately describes, especially when these people receive appropriate help in exploring their abduction histories. An intense concern for the planet's survival and a powerful ecological consciousness seem to develop for many abductees. Whether this is a specific element, or even purpose, of the abduction enterprise or an inadvertent by-product of integrating a self-destructing traumatic narrative remains to be explored.

For me and other investigators, abduction research has had a shattering impact on our views of the nature of the cosmos. This has led me to offer at least a parable, if not a theory, to illuminate what is going on. Virtually all peoples throughout history, with the exception of the Western culture of the Newtonian/Cartesian era, have experienced the universe as possessing some sort of intelligence or consciousness in which human beings participate with other animate beings and inanimate things in an enterprise that has meaning, purpose, and direction, however unfathomable these may be. In the West, we seem, for reasons perhaps as mysterious as the abduction phenomenon itself, to have cut ourselves off almost totally from awareness of any form of higher intelligence. But let us suppose that such an intelligence did exist, and, what is more, that it was not indifferent to the fate of the Earth, regarding its life forms and transcendent beauty as one of its better or more advanced creations. And let us imagine that the imbalance created by the overgrowth of certain human faculties, a kind of technodestructive and fear-driven acquisitiveness, were "diagnosed" (perceived? fathomed? felt?--we really do not know how the divinity might experience itself and its creation) as the basic problem. What could be done as a corrective?

The two natural approaches of which we can conceive would be the genetic and the environmental. Is it possible that through a vast hybridization program affecting countless numbers of people, and a simultaneous invasion of our consciousness with transforming images of our self-destruction, an effort is being made to place the planet under a kind of receivership? This would not necessarily be for "our" good if this planet, on which humankind has broken the harmony of being, does not exist just for our pleasure, but in order to arrest the destruction of life and to make possible

the further evolution of consciousness or whatever the anima mundi has in store. I do not say that this is true or offer it as a theory. I would merely suggest that if we could allow ourselves to reintroduce the possibility of a higher intelligence into the universe, and experience the numinous mystery of creation, this scenario is consistent with the facts of the abduction phenomenon.

David Jacobs has written in this book, "No significant body of thought has come about that presents strong evidence that anything else is happening other than what the abductees have stated." He has made his case well and has greatly enriched our knowledge of what the abductees have to tell of their experiences. We must now go on from here.

John E. Mack, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry
Harvard Medical School
