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- [People](#)
- [Places](#)
- [Area 51](#)
- [Random](#)
- [Top 100](#)
- [Catalog](#)
- [What's New](#)

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- Page Contents
- Book Title/Author
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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Hypnotic testimony

From: **Mark Cashman** <mcashman@ix.netcom.com>
 Date: Tue, 9 Sep 1997 12:38:54 -0700
 Fwd Date: Tue, 09 Sep 1997 17:11:23 -0400
 Subject: Re: Hypnotic testimony

>From: c549597@showme.missouri.edu [Barbara Becker]
 >Date: Mon, 08 Sep 1997 22:42:42 -0500
 >To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
 >Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: The Question of UFO Witness Anonymity

>I think it would be more appropriate for an "experimenter" to seek out a
 >qualified therapist, someone familiar with the syndrome, preferably in
 >the UFO field

I'm not sure I agree that the hypnotist should be in the UFO field. It would be preferable (for therapeutic reasons), and more credible as well, to have a hypnotist who was not in the field. This is one reason that the Hill case has retained a special status for so many years, and it may, as well, be the reason that the Hills emerged from the therapeutic process fairly well adjusted to the trauma of their experience.

In addition, I have read some comment, which I generally agree with, indicating that the qualities required from the hypnotist for an abduction hypnosis session are not entirely therapeutic. First, there is the issue of whether the witness is describing objective truth. This would seem to require a

forensic psychiatry background. Second is the potentially violent emotional reaction of the abductee to the experience, which requires a certain amount of therapeutic background, preferably with abuse / rape cases. I would imagine that the combination of these two skill sets in one individual is relatively rare.

It seems to me from a casual reading of the abduction literature, that the emphasis has been largely on the second aspect of the abduction, but that the first - the objective truth aspect - has been somewhat neglected.

While discussion of IFOs is de rigeur in UFO studies, I have seen nothing of the sort in abduction studies. I perhaps have asked this before, but I don't recall there being a clear answer: what proportion of hypnotically elicited or consciously recalled abduction accounts can be attributed to some cause other than actual abduction? If we don't know that, or the figures are soft, it is yet another sign that forensic psychiatrists are needed in the investigations.

Keith Basterfield wrote recently on UFO-L about the studies of FPP (Fantasy Prone Personality) (I believe by CUFOS) and its relation to abductions, with the conclusion of those studies performed so far being that FPP could not account for all abductions. But can anyone answer whether these studies found any proportion of abductions which could be attributed to FPP?

Finally, it seems to me that there are several possible scenarios to account for any specific abduction account revealed through hypnosis

- 1) An abduction actually occurred
- 2) The hypnotist caused the witness to confabulate some or all of the experience
- 3) The witness confabulated some or all of the experience out of a desire to please the investigator and / or the hypnotist
- 4) The witness is FPP
- 5) The witness is affected by some other psychological disorder, possibly previously unknown

Obviously it is critical to distinguish between these, but since a UFO-knowledgable hypnotist could bias the result incorrectly toward (1) or to a (2/3) whose likelihood will not be able to be determined, and may not perform the tests required to establish (4/5), it seems to me that a UFO-knowledgable hypnotist is undesirable for reasons of determining the objective truth of the account.

From the viewpoint of therapy, it seems to me that the only time UFO knowledge is beneficial is in therapy related to (1). Any other time, such therapy could emphasize the reality of a confabulated or fantasized experience and would actually be counterproductive.

Of course, I'm only an interested layman with regard to psychiatry, so I certainly would be interested in the comments of any professional psychiatrists with regard to the above opinions.

If anyone is interested in the recent post on FPP and abductions, I could post it to the list.

Mark Cashman, creator of the Temporal Doorway at
<http://www.geocities.com/~mcashman>
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