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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Scientific American 'Explains' Abductions

From: [viggo.andersen@post3.tele.dk](mailto:viggo.andersen@post3.tele.dk) (Andersen, Viggo)  
Date: Fri, 26 Sep 1997 05:11:10 +0100  
Fwd Date: Fri, 26 Sep 1997 01:48:53 -0400  
Subject: Re: Scientific American 'Explains' Abductions

>From: Greg Sandow <[gsandow@prodigy.net](mailto:gsandow@prodigy.net)>  
>To: "'UFO UpDates - Toronto'" <[updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)>  
>Subject: RE: UFO UpDate: Re: Scientific American 'Explains' Abductions  
>Date: Wed, 24 Sep 1997 21:02:59 -0400

>A few words on Elizabeth Loftus.

<snip>

>That, though, doesn't mean that her research is worthless. Take her  
>most famous work, in which (as John mentioned) she showed that false  
>memories could be implanted in childrens' and teenagers' minds. The  
>key, I think, was repetition. If Loftus's subjects heard it suggested  
>over and over again that they'd gotten lost at the mall some years  
>before, they eventually came to believe it, and would even volunteer  
>details they didn't realize they were making up.

Unless there has been more than one experiment about getting lost  
at a mall there weren't any children and not just teenagers among  
the subjects; they were aged 18 to 53. Source: SciAm Sept. 97,  
Loftus, "Creating False Memories."

<snip>

>This said, however, there are some real problems with her theories  
>and her work. For one thing, she won't believe there's any such thing  
>as repressed memory, in any situation. My sister, a psychologist with  
>no patience for abduction stories, calls Loftus an "extremist"  
>because of that view.

This is what Loftus has to say in the SciAm article:

"Of course, simply because we can implant false childhood memories in  
some individuals in no way implies that all memories that arise after  
suggestion are necessarily false. Put another way, although  
experimental work on false memory creation may raise doubt about the  
validity of long-buried memories, such as repeated trauma, it in no  
way disproves them. Without corroboration, there is little that can be  
done even the most experienced evaluator to differentiate true  
memories from ones that are suggestively planted."

<snip>

>Other psychologists would disagree. Of course the prosecution, too,  
>had an expert witness, Lenore Terr, a psychologist whose two books on  
>traumatic memory I strongly recommend for anyone seeking a balanced  
>view of this complex and controversial subject. (Even though the  
>defense eventually won this court case, on appeal.) And I don't see  
>how Loftus can deny that these sudden flashbacks -- which

>psychologists sometimes call "flashbulb" memories -- really do occur.  
>Hasn't she ever mislaid her car keys, then suddenly remembered where  
>she'd put them?

That's normal forgetting and remembering, not repressed  
and recovered memory. I hardly think that Loftus has ever  
denied that there is such a thing as normal forgetting and  
remembering.

Viggo.

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