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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Scientific American 'Explains' Abductions

From: Greg Sandow <[gsandow@prodigy.net](mailto:gsandow@prodigy.net)>  
Date: Fri, 26 Sep 1997 17:58:21 -0400  
Fwd Date: Sat, 27 Sep 1997 08:01:59 -0400  
Subject: Re: Scientific American 'Explains' Abductions

About Elizabeth Loftus:

> From: [viggo.andersen@post3.tele.dk](mailto:viggo.andersen@post3.tele.dk) (Andersen, Viggo)  
> Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: Scientific American 'Explains'  
> Abductions  
> Date: Fri, 26 Sep 1997 05:11:10 +0100

> 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>

I'm then quoted:

> >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?

And Viggo notes:

> 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.

Nope. But her Scientific American article struck me as a good deal more moderate than her book. She never rejected normal forgetting and remembering, but she more or less slid around it. She argued against the idea of true traumatic memories suddenly coming to light. She said, in effect, that there's no theoretical basis for believing that there COULD be any such thing as buried traumatic memories. And she

did so with such vigor that it's reasonable to object: "But Dr. L, isn't what you're talking about in the end just an ordinary, everyday phenomenon?"

Greg Sandow

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