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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Abductions and Researcher Bias

From: **Tim Brigham - Devil's Advocate** <[devilsad@ksinc.net](mailto:devilsad@ksinc.net)>  
Date: Sat, 19 Dec 1998 22:00:27 -0600  
Fwd Date: Sun, 20 Dec 1998 04:52:47 -0500  
Subject: Re: Abductions and Researcher Bias

After following a few of the various discussions re abductions recently on this list (especially ones focusing heavily on social factors), thought the following might be of interest.

Source: The Devil's Advocate

[www.devilsadvocate.base.org](http://www.devilsadvocate.base.org)

(originally appeared in the print zine).

"Abductions and Researcher Bias" or

"Why Does every Abduction Researcher always find his own Favorite Breed of Alien?"

by  
Martin Kottmeyer

Excerpted from The Devil's Advocate #6

You have just surveyed a little over a dozen abduction investigators who have collectively handled over 1700 cases. You learn 4 of them say they have a generally favorable attitude about the nature of abduction experiences; 3 of them say such experiences are generally negative. You say to yourself this is a nice opportunity to test whether or not there is an investigator effect shaping the experiences of those they work with.

You meticulously compile and collate the survey data. Finally you get the following results:

Abductees with positive-attitude investigators more often feel positive about their abduction experiences. Their reactions to the entities are more often positive. The entities are perceived more often as warm and cordial. More often one of the entities seems familiar or caring. The abductees more often see themselves as partners in the experience. They more often may even identify themselves as alien. On the downside they more often have vague anxieties after their experiences.

Abductees with negative-attitude investigators, on the other had, more often feel negative about their experiences. They hate and dislike the beings more often. The beings themselves are more often perceived as cold and business-like. The abductees see themselves more often as victims.

Do you conclude A) Clearly it makes a difference which

investigator an abductee goes to and it would be prudent to recommend that anyone wanting to explore an abduction experience seek a positively-opinionated investigator; or B) Despite many claims and fears to the contrary, the investigators' hand proves almost invisible, its touch nearly negligible in formulating the abduction.

Though you have now resolved the pragmatic issue to everyone's satisfaction, your work is not yet done. You also want to know if these attitudes influence the imagery and plot of abduction stories. You look down the data columns and what you read goes something like this:

Positive attitude investigators have a lower percentage of humanoids and standard Grays and a higher percentage of human-like Nordics in their files. Their cases are less likely to involve missing time and the experiences are shorter in duration. Unexpectedly, examination experiences are more common, but they are less likely to involve implants, manual handling, and the genitals. The aliens less often give threats or orders to forget. More often they give tours of the ship and school the abductee. Like the Space Brothers of the contactees they warn about future catastrophes and cataclysms more often. Their abductees are more likely to show increased psychic abilities. There are some puzzles. Their abductions more often involve paralysis. The crafts are more often disc-like. The interiors are more often cool and indirectly lit.

Negative attitude investigators, in contrast, have higher percentages of humanoids, and standard Grays. Curiously, the trait of vestigial noses is more common. The examinations more often involve implants, manual handling, and the genitals are less likely to involve sample-taking. In line with the Hopkins scenario, there are more scenes involving nurseries and hybrids. Their abductees are less likely to be given tours of the ship. They are more often threatened and ordered to forget. There are fewer warnings about future catastrophes. They more often have body scars and marks. There is less about increased psychic abilities or changes in habits following the experiences. There are also some puzzles. There are more otherworldly journeys. There are more messages of reassurance. There is less anxiety during their capture, less paralysis. Their experiences are longer. The crafts are less likely to be disc-shaped. The rooms are more likely to be rectangular or wedge-shaped and less often indirectly lit. Finally, their abductees are less likely to suffer nausea or diarrhea after an experience.

Do you conclude A) The results make more sense than not. Those details that don't make sense seem less central to the drama of the story and might be resolvable by further study; or B) The meaning of any relationship between attitude and description escapes ready comprehension.

You have likely already guessed that this study is not hypothetical. It was part of a much larger study conducted by Thomas E. Bullard and recently published by the Fund for UFO Research under the title *The Sympathetic Ear: Investigators as Variables in UFO Abduction Reports*. The results reported here are my reading of data columns P and N of his Table 37. If you picked A for your conclusions, your assessment matches mine. If you picked B, your conclusions match the author of the study. They are quotes respectively from the summary after the title page and from page 89. I singled out that part of the study, most of which is excellent by the way, as the most relevant test of Philip Klass's observation that Leo Sprinkle's abductees report kinder, gentler aliens than Budd Hopkins. He felt it was not coincidence that the personal beliefs of the investigators seemed to color the experiences of their subjects. While Bullard cites Klass's opinion as what is under test, he seems to forget the specifics of what Klass says as the argument goes along and ends up fighting against some exaggerated position that no skeptic I know of ever advanced. Bullard's data replicates what Klass says and the central pragmatic issue of whether it is advisable to point abductees to positively-minded investigators is demonstrated as prudently correct.

Why does Bullard offer the conclusions in the B quotes? It appears to be that he regards the puzzles in the data as so paramount that they vitiate any claim for a real investigator effect. Some details are completely unaffected by the attitude of the investigator. Though fair enough as a question of what is

involved in a full portrait of the abduction phenomenon, the fact remains that the data does not contradict the specific claims that have been made by the critics he cites.

It would be interesting to know how many readers of this study accept Bullard's conclusion without looking at the table of results. The main reason I bothered to double-check things was because the two lines I quoted seemed too unlikely. One can't read the UFO abduction literature without seeing the hand of the investigator is all too visible. Some examples:

# Christie totally accepts the idea of Space Brothers and has participated in workshops where she chats with beautiful space beings. She attends a meeting between her boyfriend and Budd Hopkins and is eventually regressed, yielding an experience involving needles in her nose and vagina. Hopkins concludes that her change of mind proves the Space Brothers are a myth and that abductions are traumatically real (Int'l UFO Reporter, Jan/Feb. 1987);

# John Mack repeatedly asks abductees why hybrids, if they are to repopulate a post-holocaust earth, seem so listless and wan. Next we learn Jerry has an abduction where the hybrid is seen as beautiful, angelic, young adults. Peter proclaims they do not appear listless to him, but have a vitality all their own. (Abduction, p. 415);

# David Jacobs finds aliens that are totally non-human and avers that contactee claims are a convenient touchstone for deciding which reports are probably bogus. (Secret Life, pp. 236, 284.) Richard Boylan's subjects gets a variety suggestive of at least a dozen races and they often share human characteristics like a reverence for life and the importance of caring for children. A chapter devoted to messages from these experiences is filled with material identical to that of the contactees of the Fifties right down to an advocacy of vegetarianism. (Close Extraterrestrial Encounters, chapter 14, 15.)

Each would doubtless insist their methods are superior, their results more believable, than the prior views. Doubtless, too, their subjects agree. Somebody's wrong here. I would not be shocked if everybody's wrong here. Since ufologists are to some extent getting what they believe, be careful which views you side with. I wonder if we could convince Camille Paglia to take up ufology. I'd love to see what sort of aliens she'd find.

1-3-'97

)+( [www.ksinc.net/~devilsad/ufo.htm](http://www.ksinc.net/~devilsad/ufo.htm) The Devil's Advocate  
[www.ksinc.net/~devilsad/ring.htm](http://www.ksinc.net/~devilsad/ring.htm) Operation MindPhuck  
"Better to go hungry than to feast on lies."  
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