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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs

From: John Rimmer <[j\\_rimmer@library.croydon.gov.uk](mailto:j_rimmer@library.croydon.gov.uk)>  
Date: Fri, 31 Jul 1998 15:56:46 +0100  
Fwd Date: Fri, 31 Jul 1998 16:03:24 -0400  
Subject: Re: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs

> From: Mark Cashman ,[mcashman@ix.netcom.com](mailto:mcashman@ix.netcom.com)>  
> Date: Thu, 30 Jul 1998 11:09:20 -0400  
> Subject: Re: Why Migraines Don't Explain UFOs

Mr Cashman notes that the Batelle study and a GEPAN study found that there \*was\* a difference between UFO reports which were subsequently identified and those which remained unidentified. Other researchers, e.g Hendry and Monnerie found otherwise. The real problem with Mr Cashman's approach is that he seems to have decided in advance what a "UFO" is: "metallic, structured, contains occupants", claiming that these may be safely removed from the class of reports which might be explained as misinterpretations of natural phenomena. I am not so sanguine about this, particularly if the original sighting triggers psychological reaction in the percipient. This need not necessarily be one of panic, although as Hendry has shown this can induce remarkable reports. The fact that the concept of the extraterrestrial UFO exists, allows percipients to immediately place a puzzling experience into a acceptable context.

Mr Cashman also has a great deal more faith than I do in the capabilities of investigators:

> an interview is usually capable of determining the witnesses perceptual  
> ability and the degree to which they are capable of distinguishing  
> natural phenomena

> Most investigators use on-site reenactment to determine if the  
> witness is prone to identifying non-UFO stimuli as UFOs.

From the first quotation I assume that Mr Cashman is not a lawyer in his day job, or he would be more doubtful about the ability of individuals to accurately describe events months, days or even hours afterwards. Still less than these are of an unprecedented nature or experienced in periods of anxiety. Even if I believed that "most" investigators used on-site reenactment, I would still be doubtful as to how accurately such a reenactment really duplicated the original event, at the same time of day, weather conditions, etc. How, for instance, would they ensure that a suitable UFO-stimulus just happened to be passing by? Presumably the witness simply has to say, "oh, that's a plane, nothing like what I saw", and the investigators can rule out a conventional explanation and start looking for ETs?

Mr Cashman considers that any suggestion that rather more than the "tiny percentage of reports [that] have been explained as hoaxes" might actually be hoaxes is 'not scientific', yet later he tells us that "unreported but witnessed unusual natural phenomena are more frequent than UFO reports". If they are

unreported, how does he know? Is this scientific? Presumably there is no such thing as an undiscovered hoax?

I am surprised by the qualifications which Mr Cashman makes when considering his class 'd' reports:

> d) The phenomenon occurred largely as reported and represents a  
> genuinely unusual phenomenon.

<snip>

> Certainly some noise remains in this category, and given the  
> variability of the UFO phenomenon, it is difficult to filter this  
> material. Generally the analyst wishing to reduce the noise level  
> in category (d) rejects accounts of communication with UFO  
> occupants, repeater sightings, and any suggestion that the witness  
> has been "chosen" by the UFO source.

There seems to be no logic to these qualifications. Our 'analyst' seems happy to include 'clearly structured objects, engaged in distinctive behaviour, often leaving physical traces', but starts getting cold feet when this 'distinctive behaviour' includes contact with the predominant life-form of the planet the presumed ETs are visiting! Is this science, or just a hunch?

John Rimmer  
Magonia Magazine

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