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Regression Hypnosis: Should Ufology Take A Stand?

From: **Jenny Randles** <nufon@currantbun.com>
Date: Wed, 14 Apr 1999 16:17:28 +0100
Fwd Date: Wed, 14 Apr 1999 13:50:44 -0400
Subject: Regression Hypnosis: Should Ufology Take A Stand?

As a newcomer to the net, please excuse me if I do not follow proper etiquette. I am still learning. But I wanted to issue a comment on a major policy in force in the UK, which does not seem to have been adopted by any other country in the world (save, to some extent, parts of Scandinavia). That is the banning of the use of regression hypnosis as a viable way to explore alleged abductions.

I appreciate how this seems to work like a magic key unlocking the secrets of a case and making a light in the sky into a fantastic alien contact. That is part of the problem, in fact. It has, of course, made a few reputations and fortunes as well. But is it what proper UFologists should be doing? Are we not, in fact, putting self interest ahead of what ought to be our primary duty - witness responsibility? As a community should we not be more willing to consider taking stands that may be tough on some but necessary?

There are many sound reasons for having doubts about the value of hypnosis as a tool for uncovering the facts. Many of the pioneers of the field recognised this and issued warnings that were rarely heeded. From my point of view there are several key things that decided me against this matter.

Firstly, I underwent regression myself - to both a UFO event and other events that could be checked factually (as the UFO sighting - no big deal by itself - could not). Under hypnosis I saw images and described them but at least half the checkable facts (like day of week and reason for being in a certain town) were proven wrong. As a result any testimony on a completely unverifiable story like a UFO contact will provide at least some evidence that is false - and perhaps a lot of it. Yet we as a community are treating it all as reality. Moreover we are encouraging witnesses and society to do so on dubious grounds.

Secondly, witnesses told me more than once they felt worse after undergoing regression than they did before. It did not clarify their memory but created new, conflicting images about which they could not make fair judgements. It also triggered many nightmares they did not have before. One classic abductee (Alan Godfrey - November 1980 - Todmorden, Yorkshire) is in the list of top CE 4s compiled by Eddie Bullard. But he told me that he could not vouch for his testimony under hypnosis. This is a confusing mix of abduction imagery and stuff about Biblical figures and black dogs. There is no doubt where some of this came from if you probe into Alan's past. The point is that he - as a witness - could not be sure that this was a real memory or

just a fantasy based on books he had read between the sighting and the hypnosis. I doubt he is alone but I also doubt few UFOlogists create a climate with witnesses in which they feel they can express any such reservations. A lot of people are swept along by a tide of belief.

Thirdly, there are too many people with no medical qualifications doing regression - sometimes on children. In one UK case a witness I know had an epileptic seizure during regression to a childhood sighting. Nobody present had medical backgrounds. Luckily the witness was okay, but the point was surely made that in our zeal to get exciting stories the proper importance of witness welfare is being neglected.

There were other important issues beyond these that persuaded me but these alone were enough to convince me that we needed to take a step back from this mad dash towards using regression everywhere. That is why in 1988 BUFORAs investigation team took a free vote and issued a moratorium banning the use of hypnosis in its cases. I was forced out of BUFORA council and my Director of Investigations job 4 years ago (another sad story of UFO politics being far more important to UFO groups than doing the job we supposedly exist to do!). But the policy happily remains in force and I find it odd that BUFORA have never had the recognition due for taking what was a very important stand on behalf of the UFO community. Moreover, that nobody out there seems willing to follow this lead and do what I believe to be the right thing by the public at large and the witnesses who put their trust in us. I would be interested to know why UFOlogists consider 'benefits' of hypnosis to outweigh potential detriments to a witness to such a degree that a similar ban on hypnosis has not even been freely discussed, to my knowledge, by any of the world's major groups. I accept my view could be the wrong one here - but I am far from alone in the UK. I do feel that events since BUFORA took our stand - such as the rise in understanding of false memory syndrome and the lawsuit potential of regressing children - has done nothing but prove that we were right.

Comments requested, please,

Jenny Randles

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