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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Budd Hopkins And The Big Lie

From: Peter Brookesmith - Mendoza <DarkSecretPE@compuserve.com>
Date: Sat, 19 Jun 1999 21:39:15 -0400
Fwd Date: Sun, 20 Jun 1999 10:03:27 -0400
Subject: Re: Budd Hopkins And The Big Lie

With the compliments of the Duke of Mendoza:

>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>From: Jerome Clark <jkclark@frontiernet.net>
>Subject: Budd Hopkins And The Big Lie
>Date: Thu, 17 Jun 99 21:16:10 PDT

Recently we have read charges on this list that Budd Hopkins hypnotizes children while pursuing research into UFO-abduction reports. I have had deep doubts about this very serious allegation, which runs contrary to everything I know and have observed about Budd's ethics, judgment, and sensitivity to others.

<snip>

>Even more astonished than I to read these fantastic claims, he >phoned Budd to ask about them.

The tone of outrage and righteous indignation that this and related posts have displayed strikes me as a trifle belated, apart from being bloated. I particularly wonder why it took Jerome, a devoted and assiduous reader of "Forcean Times", six years to crank his glands into an uproar of "astonishment" or (alternatively) to notice that his morality meter had long since bent its needle.

>Jacobs informs me -- not >surprisingly, to those of us who know Budd -- that Hopkins has >_never_ conducted hypnosis with children. Nor, for that matter, >has Jacobs.

I am pleased to hear it. Given the passage of time since this--

"...Hopkins [did not] make any attempt to address the radical criticisms and doubts about his technique and competence that others have made concerning this case and others he has pursued (for a brief review, see FT 67, page 53). And when one learns, out of his own mouth, that he is - without qualification or training - hypnotically regressing children 'down to the age of two and a half' to ask them about their 'alien abduction' experiences, some instinct screams in protest at his arrogance. Doesn't it ever occur to Hopkins that he could be wrong in his conviction, and that he may be implanting nightmares in these children's heads?"

--was printed in FT 72, and the silence thereon until now, I am not about to ruffle myself unduly to check whether I (or Jenny Randles, or those sitting next to me in the body of the hall) have misinterpreted what Hopkins said. However, my memory is

that his words were, approximately, "_We_ have testimony from hypnotizing children as young as two and a half now." If that is essentially correct, it's not difficult to see how it created the impression that the "we" included Hopkins and described his practice. But I now suspect that "we" means "abductologists", and that Hopkins meant something like "The evidence from hypnosis includes some from subjects as young as two and half". Consider this:

"In the more than two and a half years since I have been working with abductees I have seen more than a hundred individuals referred for evaluation of abductions or other "anomalous" experiences. Of these, seventy-six (ranging in age from two to fifty-seven; forty-seven females and twenty-nine males, including three boys eight and under) fulfill my quite strict criteria for an abduction case: conscious recall or recall with the help of hypnosis, of being taken by alien beings into a strange craft, reported with emotion appropriate to the experience being described and no apparent mental condition that could account for the story. I have done between one and eight several-hour modified hypnosis sessions with forty-nine of these individuals, and have evolved a therapeutic approach I will describe shortly."

That is on pp2-3 of John Mack, "Abduction", Simon & Schuster 1994. It is of course entirely possible that Mack didn't hypnotise any of the very young children he mentions, but that Hopkins thought Mack had when he spoke at Sheffield in 1993.

>In other words, we've been at the receiving end of the Big Lie.
>Those who have passed it on, innocently if recklessly, owe Budd Hopkins an apology. Those who knew or suspected it was a lie but >circulated it anyway are beyond redemption. The former are >urged, in the name of common decency, to apologize publicly.
>This list would be a good place to do it.

O, la! - what unctuous hyperbole. Some people really do need to get a sense of proportion. At worst this is not a lie, let alone The Big Lie, but a misunderstanding, and one generated by Hopkins's ambiguity. I *hope* Jerome is not here implying that I am a liar. Recklessness hardly enters into it.

Neither common decency nor the facts call for a public anything unless you're addicted to something akin to the traditions of the Christian flagellants or Maoist self-criticism. In many respects the Clarkian style of ufological correctness - to whose props we may now add sackcloth and ashes for the plebs, and a book, a bell and a candle for theologian Clark - resembles these, but that doesn't mean their (or his) less couth proclivities should be encouraged among hoi polloi. If a blunder has been made - which has yet to be established - a clarifying note to Budd Hopkins is in order. Whether an apology is required depends on the nature of the mistake, if any, and that too has yet to be determined. Let me here echo Jenny's appeal for hard evidence if it can be made available quickly.

Watching Jerome in one of his officious lathers usually leaves me suspended uneasily between sensations of queasiness and profound mirth; more than usually in this instance. This is the man who described my objections to the supremely tasteless speculations about John Napolitano's paternity in which Hopkins indulged in "Witnessed" (see Chapter 25, and have your sick bag ready as you read) as "moral grandstanding". Perhaps I am singularly blessed: not only with beautiful green eyes ("rather wasted on a man I always think" - Lady Caroline Moore, 1999) but with a talent for misunderstanding - sincerely, of course - the import of what people say. But this struck me as (a) an implicit defense of Hopkins's grotesque and potentially damaging musings and (b) taking one thing with another, an indication of a tendency to moral confusion on the part of the Boy Bishop of Canby, if not actual evidence of it.

With or without hypnosis, it seems to me that in his dealings with children Hopkins is running a severe risk of "implanting nightmares in... children's heads", and in "Witnessed" he gives us an illuminating and depressing blow-by-blow account of how he plays with this fire in his dealings with Johnny (aged nine when interviewed). Adults can believe what they want about what's happened to them, being theoretically mature, and there's no question but that some actually feel better about themselves and their lives through believing they've been abducted. That's fine

by me. But children intrinsically lack an adult's experiential defensive armory against suggestion and insinuation: those who nurture the terrors in children by encouraging or accepting at face value their tales of abduction are, in my grandstanding morality, child abusers. I would guess that if any group of people associated with abductions is going to sue a "researcher", it will be those who are children now, so I hope abductologists in general have hefty pension funds, an excellent investment portfolio and paid-up personal accident insurance.

The older I get the better I understand the rage of Robert Todd.

best wishes
Postman D. Messenger
Not Shot Yet

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