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IF Conference - Review

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A REVIEW OF THE FIRST ANNUAL INTRUDERS
FOUNDATION CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK CITY
by Harold Walter Egel

Budd Hopkins and friends are reaching out in a new and ambitious way. Not to those mysticians who are behind the abduction accounts, but to the general public, face-to-face. The Intruders Foundation (IF), the not-for-profit educational and information arm of Hopkins' research, held its first annual UFO Abduction Conference in New York City, around the block from Hopkins' home and studio where the artist has investigated UFO reports and written three books over the last 24 years. The April 10th conference, held at the O'Henry Learning Center in the Chelsea neighborhood, brought together nuclear physicist Stanton Friedman; Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) researcher Jerome Clark; documentary film maker Carol Rainey, Hopkins wife; Temple University history professor David Jacobs; two well-known abductees, Linda Cortile and John Velez; journalist and composer Greg Sandow, the moderator, and of course, pioneer Hopkins, with many people from throughout the nation taking it all in.

The conference, promoted as a "cutting edge crash course on what we know and how we know it," was a giant leap for IF as it launched a series of lectures, forums, dialogues, workshops, seminars and white papers, with a more frequently published "IF Bulletin," its newsletter, and the new "Journal of Abduction Research," due out later this year.

While the day-long conference did not break any new ground, it was enriched by the insights of the participants, making clear the problems in understanding and communicating a phenomenon so vast, complex and mysterious in its scope that no universal consensus exists in ufology, a field which requires a multidisciplinary, holistic approach.

That approach is advocated by such organizations as Dr. John

Mack's PEER, the Program for Extraordinary Experience Research, and SPACE, the Search Project for Aspects of Close Encounters, our seven-year-old support and research program sharing the New York City home base with IF, as well as the recently started SPACE-South.

The Presenters

David Jacobs, a man with a delightful sense of humor which transcends his fear of what he ominously concludes is an impending alien takeover of the Earth, focused on the abductees: the next generations, recounting his truly disturbing findings of a vast, unified operation that began in the late 19th Century with our great-grandparents with the one focus which he details, through logic based on his hypnosis studies, in his latest book, "The Threat: Revealing the Secret Alien Agenda."

"Abductions are the heart of the UFO phenomenon," Jacobs states. "They are the reason why UFOs are here. Understanding why abductions take place is the key to solving the mystery"

The operation is systematic, logical and goal-directed, he said, leading to a hierarchy of aliens in charge of this planet, followed by hybrids, abductees and, at the lowest order, non-abducted humans, the mass of humanity. At least, according to the scene as viewed through a historian's logic.

The mass media in the United States has been remiss and irresponsible in its distorted and dismissive coverage of the UFO mystery, more from a mindset that is in denial. Aside from the way the subject has been trashed in many TV talk shows, with a few shining exceptions, two revealing moments came in Rainey's presentation.

She videotaped the on-the-spot reactions of Hopkins and Velez as they watched the PBS-TV Nova special, which they hoped would finally bring the prestigious show's high quality of research into the field.

When a UFO critic said that the 1975 network TV movie, "The UFO Incident" about the Betty and Barney Hill encounter, was followed by an upsurge in UFO abduction reports, Hopkins and Velez shook their head vigorously, saying, "not true."

When the announcer said that the November 1977 release of Spielberg's "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" was followed by another upsurge in UFO sightings, Hopkins leaped from the couch with the words "blatantly false."

Commiserating in Hopkins' kitchen right after the show, the two men were fuming over NOVA's slipshod and dishonest presentation of a subject that demanded science's best scrutiny and research rather than the dishonest slant, with its ignoring of vital data, that the special gave the public.

The other highlight was a filmed interview that Rainey, who has never seen a UFO nor had an abduction experience but who is "astonished" by the lack of real hard news coverage, conducted with Jay Shapiro of the UPI international wire service. Shapiro knows that the mass media was ignoring and misreporting a subject that deserved journalism's best.

As with science and the mass media, a too heavy reliance on assumptions about what is possible dominates both fields. It was Stanton Friedman, focusing on the real possibilities of interstellar travel, who further dislodged faulty thinking by the scientists who brush off the circumstantial evidence of UFOs being spacecraft from other worlds.

Citing statements by intelligent, respected scientists, such as one who called heavier-than-air flight impossible in 1903 and by another in the 1920's who called space flight in Earth orbit and to the Moon as impossible because of the vast energy requirements far beyond human capabilities, Friedman sharply and clearly looked at the faulty thinking and assumptions.

Through energy conservation, such as the three stage rather than one stage rocket, and through gravity boosted assists from other planets, space flights became possible, as contemporary assumptions were discarded for "new ways of thinking" and the

rise of "the unpredictable," Friedman said.

Referring to the famous holographic-like star map shown Betty Hill in September 1961, Friedman told of astronomer Marjorie Fish's three-dimensional recreation of the star map, which at first did not show the Hill star patterns until other stars were discovered. Then the pattern fitted with precision, linking several sunlike stars, such as the Zeti-Reticuli stars, one light year apart and a billion years older than our Sun, and Gezela, etc.

Within 100 light-years of Earth, there are 1,000 stars, 54 of which are sunlike with their possibilities of harboring conditions for planetary life. Over a dozen Jupiter-sized exo-solar planets have been discovered around nearby stars, their existence inferred by wobbles in their stars.

When Astronomy magazine published articles about the research, followed by a booklet, "The Zeti-Reticuli Incident," which included an article by Carl Sagan in 1974, it was the magazine's most popular publication in its history. Now Friedman has secured the last 1,000 plus copies remaining, which Astronomy's current editors regret their predecessors publishing 25 years ago, when the magazine was new.

Veteran researcher Jerome Clark, astronomer J. Allen Hynek's successor at the Center of UFO Studies, CUFOS, took a hard-look at pre-Hill UFO CE-3's of the 1940's and 1950's to see if there were any indicators of abduction-type clues by researchers of that time, except for the 1957 Antonio Villas-Boas case in Brazil.

Unfortunately, he said, except for a few possible accounts and the UFO landing flap in France in 1954, there were no solid clues in investigators reports back then as to abductions nor the most common type of nonhuman beings as reported in more present times.

Rather than being dismissive of abduction reports in the 1950s and accounts retrieved under later hypnosis about possible events that occurred back then, Clark said that "new language" was required to define what is now indefinable and largely unknowable, as the core source of the UFO mystery remains elusive.

"The cases that are potentially most important are those that involve multiple witnesses and physical evidence," he states. "If we are to prove that something truly out of the ordinary is taking place, we have to show that the most puzzling abduction incidents are events, not experiences."

Abductees Speak

With Hopkins, Cortile and Velez, there was no doubt that the experience occurred, stealthily and intrusively, as evidenced by scars, marks, conscious recall and the emotional impact retrieved through hypnosis. For Velez, IF's webmaster, hypnosis may not provide the answers to what happened to him, but it was very helpful, he strongly said, "as a catharsis," thanking Hopkins for the chance to release buried and disturbing emotions stirred by abductions.

For Cortile, the focal person in "Witnessed: The Brooklyn Bridge Abductions," the unwanted impact it has had on her life and the effect on both Cortile's and Velez's children and each of their families, was the most disturbing part of all.

No matter if an adult had a negative, positive or ambiguous experience, Hopkins said that it was virtually universal that any adult did not want their children to have the experience.

During the panel discussion, the prime argument of negative versus positive hallmarks of the encounters, and the spins researchers may put on the accounts, given their own backgrounds and perspectives, was scrutinized.

People who come to historian Jacobs, he admitted, can view the experience as hurtful or helpful. The danger, Hopkins and Jacobs said, lies in not sticking to "the facts" uncovered in the research, or constructing belief systems, such as new age or

spiritual approaches, to the phenomenon.

When Hopkins and Jacobs participated at a UFO conference in Istanbul, Turkey this March, they worked with a woman who had possible abductions, seeing the abductors as "jin," an Islamic term for a mischievous spirit. But the researchers noted that the core account was the same as in the U.S.A.

Whether it is Jacobs, Hopkins or Dr. John Mack who work with abductees, Hopkins and Jacobs agreed that the therapeutic support given an experiencer was vital and essential.

With such a vast mystery, Friedman said, without knowing its true core source, it all depends on "whose lens" the experience is viewed, whether it be the participant, the researcher, the nonhumans, the witness or whoever. After the conference, it was clear, more than ever, that an interdisciplinary approach was an absolute necessity to travel through the labyrinth of the UFO mystery, with cooperation from every segment of ufology, perhaps employing think tank techniques to the enigma and redesigning our research tools to fit a mystery that does not fit known concepts of reality, with a direct and more proactive stance by those of us directly affected by the encounters.

That has been the basic thrust of SPACE, giving non-judgmental compassionate support, researching the experiences, and experimenting with proactive techniques and on-site field work to engage the mysterious, elusive and evasive non humans and the forces behind the UFO enigma.

For more information on Intruders Foundation, write: P.O. Box, 30233, New York, NY. 10011. E-mail: IFCentral@aol.com On the web: <http://www.if-aic.com>

Harold Egelin, Jr.

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