



JEFFREY MISHLOVE, Ph.D.: Hello and welcome. I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. This is Part 2 of a two-part series on "Human Encounters with Aliens." My guest, Dr. John Mack, is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard University's Cambridge Hospital. He is the author of *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens*, and he is also the author of a Pulitzer-Prize-winning book called *A Prince of Our Disorder*, which is a biography of T.E. Lawrence, Lawrence of Arabia. Welcome back again, John.

JOHN MACK, M.D.: Good to be back, Jeff.

MISHLOVE: We covered some of the phenomenology of your clinical work with people who reported various encounters, typically abductions, with aliens, and we raised a number of questions as to what is the nature of reality of itself. Were these dreams? Were these fantasies? Were these physical encounters? It seems as if they're occurring across quite a spectrum of experience, and I wanted to bring up this. It was only a few weeks ago I interviewed a physicist, Fred Alan Wolf, who is the author of a book called *The Dreaming Universe*, in which he looks at the Everett-Graham-Wheeler notion of the multiple-universe or multiple-reality interpretation of quantum physics, and he suggests that according to this view, which is becoming a dominant interpretation of quantum physics, we might view dreams as being an actual physical space, and that the things that occur in dreams really on some level exist.

MACK: It may be that people when they're dreaming are tapping into some other reality that enters our world filled with meaning.

MISHLOVE: Yes.

MACK: The notion of multiple dimensions doesn't explain anything, but at least it makes sense, because this phenomenon cannot be explained from a purely four-dimensional, extraterrestrial universe; or the idea that we could argue that this isn't occurring because space vehicles would take X amount of multiple years to get here from some other place, and that's not possible, and so forth and so on -- that really is beside the point. I mean, if these are beings who have mastered technologies that are way beyond anything we can now know, it's very possible that they can go through wormholes that collapse time, or that they can come from some other dimension and enter into our universe, travel by thought processes. There are all kinds of possibilities that scientists have conceived of, but which our technology hasn't even begun to approach. So I think that rather than look upon this as extraterrestrial, I think it does make more sense to use Jacques Vallee's term a multiverse, a universe of multiple dimensions from which it is possible that these beings come.

MISHLOVE: In other words, if the facts don't fit our current theories, it's not the facts that have to change, it's our theories.

MACK: Well, that's right. In other words, what's happened to me so often as I've tried to speak about this phenomenon is that people try to force it into some sort of bed in which it will not fit; in other words, it will try to explain it in terms of demands for physical proof, rather than to expand our own notions of reality to take in something which, from the standpoint of our Western notions, our Western mind, just can't exist. It shouldn't be so; it shatters our ideas of reality, but here is something that perhaps invites us to expand the way we know, expand our ideas of what realities are possible.

MISHLOVE: I'd like to, if you don't mind, go over a few points that we covered in Part 1, and for the benefit of our listeners let's review that a little bit. One of the questions that has come up is the issue of when people in a clinical setting report to you their memories, how do you know that that memory is real as opposed to being a fantasy? And you responded that there's good evidence to suggest that when people are reporting a trauma, that the trauma itself is real, even if other memories are not.

MACK: That's correct. But in this case there's also a whole other set of data which makes the idea of fantasy extraordinarily unlikely -- namely, the simple fact that these experiences are so similar, so consistent, so congruent among thousands now, if not millions of people, according to some of the polls -- people who have not been in touch with each other, reporting details that are not in the media. Fantasy isn't like that. Fantasy is highly individualized. You would not have complex narratives of being taken by alien beings with big black eyes -- who were not known, by the way, in the culture until quite recently -- up through the air into spacecraft, subjected to various kinds of what seem like examinations -- skin samples taken, reproductive procedures which involve taking sperm from men, eggs from women, reimplanting an altered egg, then pregnancies later, taken, seeing small hybrid beings on the ships -- a whole elaborate narrative of an experience extraordinarily similar among thousands of people who have not been in touch with each other. And, by the way, when the people actually hear of others having this experience they are both shocked and relieved -- shocked because they've often tried to hold it as a dream, as a fantasy, and then when they realize other people have had the same experience they know it's not their private fantasy, and relieved because they know that at least somebody can listen to them and they're not crazy, although people sometimes would prefer to be crazy than to have this be real.

MISHLOVE: You know, if I look at the literature of these things and talk to other therapists, I realize that there's a group of people who are dealing with alien abductions very similar to what you've described. There's another group of people dealing with Satanic ritual abuse, another group of people dealing with past-life memories, another group of people dealing with spirit possession, and another group of people dealing with apparitions of the Virgin Mary. And they all, each group, has a certain coherence about it. Are we to take them all as equally credible?

MACK: I don't think we should accept anything as for sure. I think we should be skeptical about everything. And by the way, I'd like to define the word skeptical, because it's abused in this field. Skeptical means having an open mind, inquiring, looking into something, wondering, and not being sure. The way skeptical is used in this field means debunking, basically; in other words, something doesn't fit our notions of reality, therefore it's not so. That's the way skeptical is being used -- sort of vigilantes of the Scientific, with a capital S, paradigm.

MISHLOVE: I couldn't agree with you more about the abuses that occur in the name of skepticism.

MACK: You mentioned a number of different areas of study -- Satanic abuse; we might put near-death experiences in there. There are many experiences that people are having which don't fit into our notions of reality. You mentioned past lives. I think that what tends to occur is that because none of that is supposed to be true, or can't exist in our way of knowing, which is restricted to a certain methodology -- in other words, you have to have proof. You have an observer over here, who's quite detached from the material, which is the object of what he's studying with instruments or with the senses, and that's all that really we can consider to be reality. Anything that comes because we use our whole psyche, or we investigate experience by connecting with people and learning and hearing about their experiences, or the corroboration of experiences among different people -- and by the way, there is physical corroboration for this phenomenon. It's not purely an experiential, psychological matter -- but we have no place in our way of knowing, our epistemology, for something like this. I'll give you an example about the past life, because you mentioned that; that's very illustrative. What will often happen with the people that I work with is that when they relax -- again, we should talk about hypnosis a bit, because we have to detoxify that term again; there's all kinds of efforts to destroy this -- in other words, to reject this because, "Well, he got it by hypnosis, which is something spooky, and it's full of distortion." Not so; but we'll talk about that. But a person will say in a relaxed way, as they recall, say, an encounter with an alien being when they were a few days old -- and again, we're not supposed to be able to remember what happened when we were a few days old, because our notion of the brain doesn't allow that, but that doesn't prevent the memories from being real. So the person will say, "Oh, I'm back here" -- meaning born into this culture, this physical world -- "again. I'm back." Now, at that point I have a choice. I can say, "Never mind you're back again. Tell me what happened when you were a baby, and then what did the aliens do, and what did your mother do?" and so forth. Or I can pick up the word "back again," and say, "What do you mean, back again?" Now, I started to kind of cue on those words and not ignore them, and I would pick them up, and then the person would say, "Well, I was here before." "What do you mean, you were here before?" "Well, I was a poet in England in the eighteenth century, and I ran afoul of the authorities." And then a very detailed story would come, which is told with just as much conviction as you and I would tell about our accounts of an adventure on a vacation or an adventure in some kind of professional work, and those are told with extraordinary detail, and in a number of instances there's been a possibility, they've been corroborated by other evidence. That isn't something I've been particularly out to prove --

MISHLOVE: Dr. Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia.

MACK: That's right. He's corroborated the stories of children who report past lives, in that there's evidence that they're actually telling about events they could not know about, which are then found to be actual occurrences. So one of the cases, actually, along those lines is a young woman who knew almost nothing about ancient Egyptian culture and civilization -- this is written about in the book -- who had a past-life experience. She was a male court painter in probably someplace between the Middle and the New Kingdom in Egypt. And as a painter she knew the process about how the paints were mixed and how they were made and what the different dyes were like, and that came about, again, because I picked up on the word "again," or "I'm back again." So it really depends, what we can learn, on what we are capable of listening to and perceiving. In our official reality -- I don't use the word consensus anymore, because consensus is really breaking down about what's reality.

MISHLOVE: Sure, if you talk to people in general, the consensus is very different than the official version.

MACK: So I use the word official, but even that seems to be under some assault now. But according to official reality, there are no past lives; there is no Satanic abuse; there are no near-death experiences. All of that is somehow either -- you know, the last refuge of the Western scientific resistance is to call people liars, so a lot of the abductees get called, "Well, they're just lying." Well, if you ever actually talked with them, you'd see that they're very sincere, straightforward, balanced, healthy people. I've had several of them tested psychologically; they're people of great integrity, and they don't believe their experiences any more, at first at least, than anyone else would. So they're very skeptical, in the sense we were talking about earlier. So a number of people actually, though, do report these past-life experiences. I've taken people through deaths. One, this poet, was martyred, was actually starved, and then died in an English prison, and his report of the death was as powerful as any kind of agonal throes of anything anybody would go through in this life -- absolutely convincing. And it's interesting, because we don't actually have a way of talking to someone about what happens to them when they die. So by taking someone through an experience like that we learn something about what the agonal experience of death can be like. Maybe we can learn something about that.

MISHLOVE: Well, as a therapist and a hypnotist myself, one of the counter-hypotheses that I feel I need to be especially sensitive to is the one that I may be, either through subtle bodily cues or tone of voice or even through telepathy, implanting my ideas in the minds of the people who I hypnotize. And I see that because I know some therapists who use hypnosis, all of their clients will conform to some model that they have, and another therapist with a different theoretical model seems to get patients who always come up under hypnosis with evidence that conforms to their model.

MACK: Yeah, except -- that's possible. It's possible that they're somehow reading my mind. I try to be particularly scrupulous about that, and say nothing about anything, in spite of --

MISHLOVE: Of course, but as soon as you admit the possibility of telepathy, you can't protect against it.

MACK: Well, then you get into a whole other matter of how does information come. Is it really I'm over here as the objective observer, and they're over there as the person who is or is not telling the truth? Or do we always, when we're alive, co-create, in a certain sense, our reality? So it may not be that they are like this repository of fact and I'm this neutral hypnotist or neutral interviewer who's trying to bring out the facts. You and I are creating something that never was before here, information that hasn't happened before, if we're doing our job right. And so it isn't as if one is simply dealing with the literal kind of nodule of factual experience, and that I'm taking it out like a kidney stone. It may be that there's actually some powerful core of experience, but that I am empowering in some way the person to

bring that forth. Now that could be seen as distortion. It's certainly not leading, because no experimenter I've ever worked with has suggested that I lead them, and when people go in the consulting room with me, are present when this is occurring, no one has ever said that I lead people. But they do come away shaking their heads, saying, "I know this person. Something powerful happened to this person. I can't explain it, but they wouldn't be making this up. This is not following your lead. It happened." And that's how I've gotten some colleagues to join me in this and actually be available for referrals.

MISHLOVE: Now, you mentioned the physical evidence. I think that's very important, because it's one way to counter the argument that this is -- what's the term? a folie à deux, a folly created by two people. What's the physical evidence that has impressed you the most in the cases you've seen?

MACK: Interesting twist on that -- that's impressed me the most. OK, the most striking thing to me is not the cuts, the scoop marks, the lesions on people's bodies, although those are powerfully corroborative, but the association with the UFOs. In other words, any theory is going to have deal with the UFO connection, and the way that will go often is that the person experiences the abduction, they come to you. I'll give you an example of a case that's in the book. A woman in her mid-twenties; she comes home from working as a nightclub receptionist. She finds herself drawn, compelled, to drive in a northeasterly direction from Boston, ends up in the woods. There's a brilliant light, and she's taken. There's a period of missing time, which is typical, and as we explored it there's a characteristic abduction experience that occurred. Now, the next morning -- she gets home; she didn't see a UFO or anything -- the next morning she is shocked to see on the television that the major channels reported a UFO moving in exactly the same direction she was moving -- independently viewed, in the community. And she just did not know anything about the UFO. The UFO association people just ignore, with all these fancy theories about the psyche. Children as young as two and three years old have had these experiences. How will a sophisticated personality/hallucinatory/whatever theory account for the fact of a two-year-old boy -- I'm thinking of a particular kid -- who says, "Mommy, don't let the little men take me up into the sky." He wakes up with nosebleeds from the procedures that have been done to him, recoils when shown a card of an alien being, a very simple picture of the alien being, when he's gone through a whole series of other cards, including other much more scary looking skeletons and ghosts, and he does not recoil. He points at it and indicates, says that's the one that takes him up. We have to, if we're going to discuss this, if we're going to try to explain it, we have to account for every piece of the phenomenon. We can't just take what looks psychological and deal with that. There's other physical evidence though. There's the experience of the missing pregnancies. There's the burned earth outside of the house where the UFOs are seen to be landed. There's many where -- I was working with a man who had abduction experiences from his family farm when he was a small boy. A UFO was seen by his father. It created a thirty-foot burned-earth pattern. Nothing would grow there in a thirty-foot circle for several years, and the family corroborates that. So there is physical evidence. The problem is, for the critics of this, or the skeptics -- not skeptics, the debunkers, basically -- it's not about physical evidence. It's about what I call the politics of perception, or the politics of ontology. Nothing will satisfy them. They want a dinner plate, or they want an artifact -- a piece of a wing off a UFO, you know -- something tangible, physical. But if you gave it to them it wouldn't satisfy them; they would simply question the pedigree of it: "Well, who found it? A little boy in the field? Well, maybe he made it up. Maybe he told the wrong story." If your mind is already set that things are a certain way, it makes no difference what the physical evidence is. There's a science writer in Boston, and I have had a very kind of amusing exchange -- he's probably going to add another lick to this discussion; we've been going back and forth in the Boston Globe about this. His name is Chet, and he's been trying to liken all this to medieval witchcraft and all kinds of stuff. And so I was told, after a rather debunking article in the Boston Globe, I should talk to him. I was reluctant to do it, but I did, and I'm glad I did. But he was absolutely -- it didn't matter what I told him; he knew what he knew. But finally in exasperation I said, "Chet, look," I said, "A UFO could land on the Boston Commons. All the channels could run footage about it. It could be reported in all the Boston dailies, and you still wouldn't believe that it happened. You'd still think it was a hoax." And he stopped and he was silent, and he had the integrity to say, "John, I think you're right." So in that kind of situation you're not dealing with matters of physical evidence. You're dealing with a mind set, an ideology, a world view, which has no room for this. So I guess one of the reasons I wanted to write the book was to see if I could at least make some inroads into that world view, to allow that there are other ways of knowing, that perhaps even the methodologies of knowledge, the ways we know when we're trying to look at reality beyond this physical world. Maybe Science, with a capital S, as we've known it, our kind of antiquated scientific approach, is OK for studying things which are simply in this physical world. But, as quantum mechanics is showing us, when you're dealing with complex, ambiguous realities, maybe you need something more profound, something like the whole consciousness or the whole self, an expanded ways of knowing.

MISHLOVE: I sometimes wonder, since some of these debunkers are, in the name of rationality, so clearly irrational, if they themselves aren't unconsciously a part of the very process that we are trying to study, which in some larger sense is the human psyche.

MACK: Indeed. It may be that, for example, the distinction between physical reality and psyche is not so sharp as we like to think. If you ask certain physicists, "What was there before the big bang?" they'd say, "That question is not meaningful according to the physical laws that we study." And yet what are they saying -- that the universe appeared out of nothing? Perhaps it appeared out of consciousness, out of the divinity, or the universal mind. But again, that's not physics. That's the boundary perhaps between physics and consciousness.

MISHLOVE: One of the things that you have written about is that this journey has taken you from a very respectable, and I think largely mainstream, career in psychiatry, to explore the field that is now transpersonal psychology, which deals with these kinds of questions and realities.

MACK: Well, transpersonal psychology really is kind of a fancy word, but basically all it means is that our consciousness is not simply the same thing as our bodies and our brains -- that consciousness can separate. We can identify beyond ourselves to connect with realities, with beings, beyond our own skin, so we can move -- and this is transpersonal in the sense that the psyches of the abductees, as well as their bodies, can travel into realities that are not supposed to be there.

MISHLOVE: I thought some of the most interesting cases were the ones -- and I'm thinking of one in particular that you wrote about in which a woman believed herself to be an incarnation of a being who was an alien in a past life, and was sort of sent here as like an advance scout, to be in the Earth plane.

MACK: Well, we have to back up a little about that, because there are several cases like that. A very powerful dimension of this phenomenon is what I call the double-identity aspect. When you go deeply into the experience, when you get past the trauma of the reproductive insults that are involved here, and you come to a place where the individuals acknowledge, particularly through a connection through the eyes, which is a very profound aspect of this -- the joining, the bonding, that occurs through the eye connection -

- when you get past that, the experiencers, as they're called, will often experience themselves as aliens, that they have a whole other identity as an alien. And from that perspective they see, computer-like often, all of what we're doing to the earth; they may be involved in human-alien -- they being alien -- reproductive processes, creating the hybrids. And from that perspective they will often feel that that alien self represents the lost souls, in a sense, of human beings. Now, people ask, "Well, why do these aliens look so humanoid? If they're really some otherness, why do they look so much like us?" Well, one of the answers there -- and I'm not saying that it's true, but it is one of the areas where I have a fair amount of data -- is that people experience that we both began separated from a common source. In other words, there was a common ground of being where we separated, became densely embodied in the form that we are. The aliens remained less embodied; they are part of our being, but they are seen as emissaries from the Source, with a capital S, or home, or God, or divinity -- again, all these are loaded words, but we have to have some language to talk about the ineffable, what Wittgenstein called the ineffable; we don't have language for that -- and that we were split off and separated, and that one of the many, many dimensions of this phenomenon is the bringing together of our alien self, that alienated soul self, with the physical, embodied self, to become whole once again, so that it isn't really two species joining, but a completing of our own identity and wholeness.

MISHLOVE: I think there's something very profound in that. It reminds me of all of the religious, spiritual, mystical teachings around the world that suggest that ultimately we are one with the whole universe, and if that's the case then truly nothing could really be alien from our deepest nature.

MACK: You wouldn't think that little beings with big black eyes who, when you first look at it, are doing nasty, traumatic, rape-like, reproductive experimenting -- we don't know that it's experimenting -- would be the source of mystical openings, as you're suggesting, but in fact they are for many individuals. It may be that this is kind of hard-sell mysticism, you know. If what is occurring -- now we're really blue-skying, OK? -- If what is occurring from an evolutionary point of view is some kind of reconnecting of us with the ground of being, with Source, then it may be we can't wait for everyone in the culture to become Buddhist meditators, or discover the Source from their own psycho-spiritual opening. It may be that some kind of more intrusive, invasive hit is required -- abductions, if you will -- to open us up. It's an intervention, in a sense; it's the crossing over of beings that should stay in the spirit world, coming over into the physical world, because most of us really don't have a way to recognize anything that isn't at least showing up in the physical world.

MISHLOVE: John Mack, we're out of time, but you've put it quite eloquently. Thanks so much for being with me.

MACK: Thank you for having me, Jeff.