Magazine: Time, November 29, 1993
Section: COVER;

CONTROVERSY
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IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE

Dateline: Los Angeles;

NANCY, A WEST COAST ATTORNEY, REMEMBERED DETAILS of the incident only four months ago, after she began hypnotherapy sessions. Now, she recalls how one spring night in 1989 she awoke in a stupor to see a strange craft outside her window. She was taken into the vehicle and examined by a team of strange beings. A silver tube was inserted into her to extract an ovum. She breaks down as she describes the abduction. ''People say 'How do you know?' You don't know. You're never sure what happened.''

As thousands of therapy patients are ''discovering'' repressed memories of childhood sexual abuse, a smaller number are adding a new twist: they are recalling abductions by aliens. Under hypnosis, Los Angeles film producer Michael Bershad recalled his car being pulled to the side of the road by a bright object. ''I got out of the car and saw five guys under 4 ft. tall. They led me inside the craft.'' A leader examined him, opening up his back to poke around his vertebra. The extraterrestrials also extracted sperm. ''I had a lot of shame,'' says Bershad. ''It was humiliating and degrading.''

A painful sincerity unites those who have dredged up memories of UFO abductions. Many suffer from insomnia and shy away from telling anyone what they believe may have happened for fear of being perceived as crazy. ''Virtually all abductees are opposed to the idea that these things really happen,'' explains Budd Hopkins, author of two books about contact with aliens. ''They don't want these things to be real. There is no pleasure in this experience.''

Harvard psychiatrist John Mack, who won a Pulitzer in 1977 for his psychological study of Lawrence of Arabia, takes the stories literally. ''I encountered something here very early on, which I saw did not fit anything I had ever come across in 40 years of psychiatry.'' He has treated more than 70 abductees, whom he calls ''experiencers.''

A few researchers argue that alien abductions may be disguised memories of sexual abuse. Others assert that abduction memories may also be unwittingly planted by over-zealous therapists. ''I believe these victims believe it,'' says Ray Hyman, professor of psychology at the University of Oregon. ''People are trying to please the hypnotist. The therapist and patient collaborate with each other to produce the story.'' Hypnosis can be extremely effective in eliciting fantasies that therapists can use in treating patients. The technique, however, can also create false memories. Says Ray William London, president of the American Boards of Clinical Hypnosis: ''It isn't a way of validating an

abduction or anything else.''

William Cone, a psychologist in Newport Beach, California, who specializes in treating alleged abductees, finds similarities between some of his patients and people who recover memories of satanic-ritual abuse. Both have ''organizing personalities'' -- a loose sense of self given to paranormal experiences like seeing ghosts. Many are also highly suggestible. ''They are highly functioning, intelligent people and truly believe that this happened,'' says Cone. ''I try not to believe or disbelieve. I just sit and listen and try to help.''

PHOTO: Person's face. (Illustrations for TIME by Matt Mahurin)

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By Jeanne McDowell

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Magazine: Omni, August, 1993
Section: ANTIMATTER;

THE UP SIDE OF ABDUCTION

For the past 30 years, UFOlogists have characterized the alien-abduction phenomenon as terrifying and cruel. How else, after all, would you classify an experience involving bizarre medical exams, forced sex with slit-eyed E.T.'s, mind control, and more? Well, according to California psychologist Richard Boylan, the ugliness of abduction has been exaggerated. In fact, he claims, alien abduction is relatively benign. Boylan argues, for example, that most abductees experience posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, only when the abduction has stirred memories of other traumas such as childhood sexual abuse.

But UFOlogist Barbara Becker doesn't agree. Most people simply do not consent to abduction she points out, ''and abductees may be physically injured and psychologically abused. How can you call that benign?''

Boylan, for his part, responds that ''there's no Earthly precedent for alien abduction, so informed consent is impossible. What's more, any harm is unintentional, much like the pain inflicted by the dentist. On the other hand, aliens help abductees focus on spiritual, environmental, and humanitarian concerns.''

In fact, insists Boylan, negative reports from abductees are encouraged by the expectations of researchers themselves. ''These UFO investigators come from the severe-trauma school of research,'' he notes, adding that his own persuasion might be classified ''the expanded-consciousness school. Among the 67 abductees I have worked with, 61 percent felt positive about the experience while 37 percent were ambivalent. Only 2 percent said they wished it had never happened.''

Still, Becker isn't convinced. ''Benign?'' she responds. ''If humans did what the aliens allegedly do, they would be arrested.''

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PHOTO: "I've never met an abductee who had sex with an alien," says Boylan. Besides, it would be impossible.

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By Paul McCarthy

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Magazine: Omni, February, 1993
Section: UFO UPDATE;

SECRET CONFERENCE AT MIT: DESPITE AN OATH F SILENCE, ABDUCTEES SPILL THE BEANS

In the spirit of academic freedom, MIT placed no onstraints on subject matter and provided upport like food and lodging at cost.

Despite the drama and obvious heartbreak of their stories, UFO abductees have long been mired in disrepute. From the small, slit-eyed aliens to the surgical theaters in starships, the horrors abductees describe have become objects of derision and the butt of jokes. That's why when Massachusetts Institute of Technology physics professor and UFO advocate David Pritchard decided to hold an abductee conference, respectability was key. As part of his game plan, he even arranged to hold the conference at his home institution, that hallmark of science and technology, MIT. But in what may have been a tactical error, last summer's MIT abduction conference was declared a secret before it even began.

One of the reasons, of course, was MIT's refusal to be labeled a conference ''host.'' In the true MIT spirit of academic freedom, the university placed no constraints on the subject matter of gatherings sponsored by faculty members. On the contrary, MIT provided, at cost, a host of support functions, from registration to food and housing. However, one strict requirement was that the gathering not be called an MIT conference, but rather, ''the conference at MIT.''

Before attendees were accepted for registration, in fact, Pritchard had them sign an oath pledging to call the conference just that. And while he was writing a formal oath, he added some requirements of his own. Foremost was the stipulation that attendees promise not to discuss the proceedings with outsiders or reporters, or for that matter, in any public forum at all. The restraints, Pritchard told attendees, were necessary to ''encourage discussion.'' Presenters could ''speculate wildly,'' then carefully edit their contributions so that they ''appear judicious and restrained in print.''

But despite all efforts to maintain secrecy, the event was barely over before accounts began circulating among UFOlogists by word of mouth, on computer bulletin boards, and at flying-saucer conferences around the world. UFO newsletters and magazines in North America and Europe carried reports. And in all these forums, the meeting was referred to as ''the MIT abduction conference'' after all.

The details of the conference, say attendees, ranged from the mundane to the bizarre. A number of papers addressed dry research techniques, from methods of hypnosis to models for questionnaires. Others outlined the latest evidence for alien visitation, including the case of New York condo abductee ''Cathy,'' who says she was beamed to a starship from the

windows of her high rise, and South American witnesses allegedly forced to have sex with crew members from UFOs. Veteran California UFOlogist and conference attendee James Harder even distinguished between two types of aliens. ''Camp B aliens, the less experienced and far less careful, are recent arrivals and may treat humans much like we treat animals under study,'' he explained. ''Camp A aliens, on the other hand, have been around for a long time,'' and are ''much more likely to display a benevolent attitude.''

Some conference details even leaked out on national TV when abduction researcher Budd Hopkins told viewers that ''four extraterrestrial implants are being verified in university labs.'' The implants, he explained, helped aliens track the movement and behavior of ''tagged'' abductees. The claim was disputed by Pritchard, who, after studying some of the implants, called the evidence ''totally unconvincing.''

With a yen for respectability, Pritchard promises to release published conference proceedings any day. ''I hope it will present a comprehensible and scholarly overview of this phenomenon,'' he says, ''one that is broad and balanced enough to attract some competent, skilled people into the field.'' The published proceedings, he adds, will hopefully counterbalance ''single-author books, which do not necessarily present a balanced view.''

PHOTO: MIT

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By JAMES OBERG

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Magazine: Omni, December, 1992
Section: ANTIMATTER;

ETCH-A-UFO

UFO debunkers claim that we have all been conditioned by science-fiction novels, movies, and TV to convert any unexplained aerial phenomenon into the classical mental image of a UFO. But psychologist Linda Kerth is not so sure. In an effort to test the skeptic's claim, Kerth, of the Rosebridge Graduate School of Integrated Psychology in Concord, California, compared UFO drawings made by self-professed witnesses with imagined UFOs sketched by nonsighters. Her finding? Witnesses produced drawings far less complex than their imaginative counterparts.

Kerth argues that if both groups call on the same cultural imagery for their sketches, the two sets of drawings should be similar. Since they are not, she believes, the witnesses are observing something unique.

Still, it will take more than this study to win over University of Kentucky psychologist Robert Baker. Baker says the study is flawed because you would expect to find more detailed recollections from people who did not see an actual aerial phenomenon and thus were influenced by the media alone. The reason: UFOs on TV are just physically closer than allegedly real UFOs.

But Kerth does not agree. ''Many sightings are lengthy and quite close,'' she says. Still, to allay criticism, she will analyze a number of drawings of alleged extraterrestrials as well.

To be part of Kerth's study, please sketch the given entity on a postcard and mail it to Linda Kerth, P.O. Box 5064, Pittsburg, California 94565.

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By Paul McCarthy

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Magazine: Omni, June, 1993
Section: ANTIMATTER;

ABDUCTION SURVEY

In the so-called abduction phenomenon, people claim they have been whisked off to alien starships for intrusive medical exams. But individuals fitting the description of abductees are rare, right? Not so, according to a recent Roper Poll of 6,000 Americans. According to the poll, an astounding 2 percent of the adult population, or some 3.7 million people, may be abductees, even if they don't quite know it themselves.

The questionnaire was nothing more than a marketing survey augmented with indirect questions thought to be indicative of the abduction experience. The telltale questions, supplied by abduction researchers, asked respondents whether they had ever awakened paralyzed, flown through the air, experienced a time loss of an hour or more, seen unusual balls of light in a room, or found puzzling scars on their bodies. According to UFO buff Bob Bigelow, the Las Vegas real estate developer who anted up $100,000 for the survey, some 2 percent of respondents answered yes to four out of the five questions, just like those who actually claim to be abductees.

But the numbers don't impress University of Oregon psychologist Ray Hyman, who says the study was poorly controlled. There are all sorts of commonplace reasons for the positive answers, Hyman says.

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By Paul McCarthy

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Survey
14 / 10 yes = 71% said yes
- 4 NO = 29% " NO
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Magazine: Omni, December, 1992
Section: ANTIMATTER;

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FIFTH KIND:

Using whistles and bells to speak with UFOs

Close encounters of the first, second, and third kind (CE-1s, CE-2s, and CE-3s in UFO vernacular) were first described by astronomer J. Allen Hynek 20 years ago. In a thumbnail guide for the uninitiated, CE-1s include UFO sightings closer than 500 feet. CE-2s involve close sightings accompanied by physical evidence such as markings on the lawn. In CE-3s, witnesses report coming face to face with aliens. Just a few years ago, UFOlogists established the CE-4 label to cover cases in which humans are allegedly abducted by ETs.

Not satisfied with the current groupings, however, emergency medical physician Steven Greer of Asheville, North Carolina, has recently come up with another category: Close encounters of the fifth kind, in which humans and aliens intentionally communicate through ordinary light and sound.

But the Center for the Study of Extraterrestrial Intelligence (CSETI) members don't just head for the nearest cow pasture at night and wait for UFOs. Instead, after a consistent pattern of UFO reports has been made in a limited geographical area over an extended period of time, CSETI sends a team.

To attract UFOs, CSETI fills the night air with prerecorded beeping sounds allegedly made by UFOs and flashes 1-million-candle-power lights. This, says Greer, has led to the exchange of on-and-off blinks, what he calls a ''photon dialogue.'' The result, adds Greer, is ''coherent thought sequencing''--a phenomenon in which the team telepathically welcomes the aliens, conveys CSETI's peaceful intentions, and encourages the craft to land. When mental contact has been made, adds Greer, ''consciousness lock-on has been achieved.''

Within a few years, Greer hopes, this technique will encourage UFOs to land so that CSETI researchers can go aboard. ''Anonymous government officials,'' Greer notes, ''want to be briefed before this occurs.''

Greer's new group has garnered support throughout the UFO field. Psychologist Leo Sprinkle, a retired University of Wyoming professor who's worked with so-called UFO contactees, recently helped to launch CSETI at the International Association for New Science conference. He feels that CSETI ''represents the next step in UFO investigations.'' And physicist Brian O'Leary, former astronaut trainee and author of Exploring Inner and Outer Space and The Second Coming of Science, to be published this winter, also backs CSETI. ''Contacts between extraterrestrials and Earthlings seem to have been going on for decades,'' he says, ''but we still don't want to admit it.''

Not everyone agrees. Mark Rodeghier, director of the Center for UFO Studies, asks, ''How do you know what contact is? And where would you look? If it hasn't happened in fifty years,'' he adds, ''CSETI has to assume that the ETs are just waiting for us to act. I find that hard to believe.''

Maybe, but CSETI efforts are moving ahead. In addition to establishing groups in the United States, Greer also plans projects for Belgium, Great Britain, and some South American locales. Greer and Paul Von Ward, a former U. S. diplomat and author, have also discussed the possible benefits of developing a diplomatic protocol for human/alien relations based on citizen diplomacy, in which private individuals ease the way to cooperation and peace. Says Greer, ''We feel that's really the missing link.''

ILLUSTRATION: Some UFOlogists say aliens are hoping for a sign.

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By Paul McCarthy

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Section: Science Newsfront;

WHAT HYPERSONIC AIRPLANE?

Something very strange is flying around at terrific speeds. Although no one has managed to photograph the craft itself, its radar image, unique exhaust contrail, engine sound, and sonic boom have all been characterized in multiple reports by observers in the Western United States and Great Britain. Yet questions directed to the prime suspect in mystery-plane cases-the U.S. Air Force-yield only denials of any knowledge.

The aircraft betraying its shadowy presence may be a high-altitude hypersonic spy plane code-named "Aurora" that's presumed to have replaced the retired SR-71 Blackbird ["Revealed! Mach 5 Spy Plane," Nov. '88]. On five occasions since June 1991, the U.S. Geological Survey's extensive network of earthquake-monitoring seismographs in Southern California has recorded window-rattling sonic booms produced by an airplane traveling northeast at several times the speed of sound.

The booms have all occurred on Thursdays at about 7 a.m., says U.S. Geological Survey seismologist James J. Mori at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. "We call them airquakes," he says. "This mystery plane has a distinctly different sonic-boom waveform than other large, supersonic aircraft like the space shuttle and the SR-71. We track it because people have been calling us wanting to know if there's been an earthquake."

Many observers in several states have reported hearing very loud, deep rumbling and pulsating sounds coming from an aircraft moving at high speed. An aircraft emitting these sounds was spotted this past February taking off at night from Beale Air Force Base near Sacramento, Calif. Its propulsion system may be a pulse detonation wave engine a known type that develops thrust in intermittent bursts, rather than continuously-according to reports in the trade journal Aviation Week & Space Technology.

Bill Sweetman, an expert on classified "black" military programs, suggests in Jane's Defense Weekly that the aircraft may be capable of reaching Mach 6 (4,000 mph) burning liquid methane or hydrogen fuel. He believes the plane is returning from hypersonic (greater than Mach 5) flights over the Pacific Ocean and decelerating over the Los Angeles area as it heads northeast for a landing at the highly classified flight test base at Groom Lake, Nev.

Sweetman reports that a Royal Air Force air traffic controller tracked an aircraft leaving the remote NATORAF base at Machrihanish in western Scotland last November at a speed of Mach 3. No acknowledged aircraft capable of such speed is based there.

Call it Aurora, the mystery plane, or whatever. The ultrafast,

groundshaking high-flyer may be one of the latest in the long line of exotic aircraft that have resulted from Lockheed Corp's fabled Skunk Works. Financial analysts note that the company's budget and work force can only be fully accounted for by one or more substantial black programs secretly funded by the Pentagon-and perhaps the intelligence services.

PHOTOS (2): These photos of the unique, pulsing exhaust contrail of an aircraft flying of high altitude over Amarillo, Texas, were taken on March 23. The plane passed out of sight before the photographer could locate it. (AVIATION WEEK & SPACE TECHNOLOGY/STEVEN A. DOUGLASS)

PHOTO: U.S. Geological Survey seismic profiles show the space shuffle's distinctive N-shaped sonic-boom waveform and the mystery plane's more complex signature. (U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY)

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By Stuart F. Brown
Edited by DAWN STOVER

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