

Second Review of *Secret Life*

I eagerly anticipated the publication of *Secret Life*, hoping for a scientifically oriented work which would depart from the anecdotal vein used by pioneer researcher Budd Hopkins, but I was bitterly disappointed.

Jacobs' book assumes the ETH (extraterrestrial hypothesis) to be correct, and supports the ideas proposed by other researchers that our visitors have a very well defined program which includes genetic experiments aimed at creating a hybrid species, in spite of the fact that some scientists in the biological disciplines have expounded on the impossibility of such an endeavor.

Although Jacobs has done a labor of love in gathering the recollections of numerous alleged abduction victims, he does not offer any convincing evidence that we are not dealing with subjective events. As in all books on abductions, the emphasis is on the narratives obtained from the victims under hypnosis. The author recognizes the absence of hard evidence and describes attempts to obtain it, as for instance, using video cameras. The details reported for such attempts strongly suggest that the subjects themselves could have been instrumental in the resulting failures.

The main point in support of the objective reality of abductions is that the narratives provided by witnesses unknown to each other include "exact and minute details previously known only to a few UFO researchers." The obvious interpretation is that the abductees are describing the same objective reality, a series of independent episodes comprising a large-scale genetic program. It is quite possible, but not indisputable, that this could be the case.

However, there is another common element underlying the whole research: the investigator himself. He did not seek the witnesses, rather the witnesses sought him or were referred to him by other abduction enthusiasts, such as his friend Budd Hopkins. I am not insinuating that the investigator influenced his witnesses, but the possibility can't be ignored, as the one-on-one contacts extended over lengthy periods of time. For instance, "Melissa Bucknell" has 30 hypnotic sessions, and since each session lasted between 3 and 5 hours, a conservative estimate of the contact time yields 90 hours, more than sufficient for two persons to know and influence each other, even if unconsciously. To this, we must add the intercourse necessary to set up a TV camera (p. 259), and the numerous telephone contacts.

As we are told, the research involved 39 witnesses claiming to have had two or more abductions, and 22 having had only one, 61 in total. Of those, 9 are primary witnesses, in the sense that the transcripts of their hypnotic sessions, representing 354 or more contact hours with the investigator, are extensively quoted in the book. In addition, we have 10 subjects quoted one or two times, and "Melissa Bucknell", whose transcript appears only once, although the repeated mentioning of her name throughout the text makes her also a star witness.

In short, we don't have a large pool of subjects: the whole research rests on the testimony of a limited number of witnesses, all having prolonged contacts

with the investigator. The possibility of undetected and unintentionally influencing a group of about 10 persons can't be discarded, thus providing an alternative explanation for the similarity of the narratives, which certainly are not identical. This could only be resolved if independent parties could study the original tapes.

A tenet of scientific inquiry is the replication of results. In the field of UFO abductions this is impossible, not only because the original protocols are not available – as deemed necessary for the protection of the witnesses – but also because the secrecy about their identities goes beyond reasonable bounds. As a result, we know only the ages and present occupations of the 39 witnesses having had two or more abductions. As individuals, they remain in a limbo, and any attempt to assess and evaluate their stories fails for lack of information. We know next to nothing about their education, mental and specially physical health, an essential ingredient if we are going to understand why those particular individuals were selected for a breeding program. Neither do we know anything about their daily lives, their families and their adjustment to society, all crucial factors for drawing conclusions about their credibility.

As a result, the characters in this book are ghost figures performing on a darkened stage. They might be very real to the researcher, but he has not managed to convey that sense of reality to the readers. A couple of examples will suffice: Patti, age 23, returns to her bed after perhaps hours of absence (p. 211), and elicits no curiosity from husband Roy who in the interim has moved onto her side of the bed, a rather incredible situation. Or we have Will Parker reporting two abductions many years apart, accompanied on each occasion by his wife at the time. One expects to find the corroborative affidavit of at least his present wife, Nancy, but she is no more than a name. These are disturbing omissions, subtracting luster from the work, as the reader is left wondering why those women did not come forward to confirm the events.

A shortcoming of the book, as in previous works on the subject, is the glaring omission of numbers. We are told how many hypnotic sessions were necessary to extract the information from each individual, but we can only estimate how many contact hours between investigator and subject were required to that end. More importantly, we are told only that the subjects listed (by assumed names) had multiple abductions, but the particulars, i.e., how many abductions each one reported, are omitted. And this includes the star Melissa, who claimed a daily abduction during some period of time (p. 258), a most extraordinary statement deserving more than one line of text! This is a serious flaw from a scientific viewpoint, making it impossible to look for relationships between the number of abductions and such variables as the contact hours with the researcher or the amount of information obtained.

A refreshing novelty is the *Abduction Scenario Matrix* (p. 330) which systematizes the different characteristic events reported by the abductees. Unfortunately, the essential ingredients to validate it are lacking. Presumably, and we are even told so, the described procedures are well defined parameters of the abduction phenomenon, repeating from one incident to the next. But for

each of those characteristics the frequency of its appearance in the sample is missing. For instance, how many times is sexual arousal (in the Mental-Primary box) reported? Or, how many of the witnesses have claimed implants (Physical-Primary box)?

The significance – if not the credibility – of those events would be completely different if the incidence turned out to be 80%, or merely 5%. Those numbers can't be obtained from the text because the narratives of a few individuals (the primary witnesses) strongly predominate. Thus, the repetitive character of the incidents is not firmly established. And, as a matter of fact, the total number of subjects is not even clear, although one could assume there are 61.

Curiously, the abductees say little, if anything, about the presence of an actual craft prior to the main event, and although the narratives are rich in details about the internal arrangements of the UFO, practically no information about its external characteristics and behavior are provided.

This has two immediate consequences:

1. We have no compelling evidence that the UFOs involved in abductions are identifiable with those described in the literature, whose characteristics are well-known.
2. The size of those crafts must be considerable, to accommodate the facilities described by the abductees, which include nurseries, very large rooms containing tables for 50 to 100 babies, and display tubes for 60 to 70 fetuses. Diameters of hundreds of feet are quoted (p. 82).

Such large craft would increase many fold their chances of detection, while in fact the number of credible reports have decreased with the years, and even in the heyday of UFO waves the sighting of very large craft were few and far apart. Moreover, today radar coverage makes it almost impossible for vehicles from outer space to approach undetected, to land, and take off from practically anywhere. How could this be?

This particularity, as well as two other details mentioned by Jacobs, suggest the possibility of a hypothesis that has been around for quite awhile, but has been systematically ignored by the proponents of the ETH and others, namely, the Parallel Universe Hypothesis, which postulates that the origin of UFOs is another three-dimensional universe parallel to ours in a superior dimension. The transfer would require a "window", a threshold, which the operators could place at will anywhere (and hence witnesses are not safe even in Ireland!) and the actual passage would entail a period of disorientation and confusion, which is indeed reported by Jacobs' abductees. The victims will not really pass through closed windows, as reported, but will be transferred through a singularity between those universes located adjacent to the actual window. True, the witnesses describe being taken into the air, but also indicate a vertical motion and no sense of weather (p. 54) while this is occurring, both meaningful de-

tails. I suspect that this significant inference has totally escaped the attention of the author of this study.

If anything, this book has brought into focus the difficulties with abduction claims, and the absolute lack of supporting independent evidence. As such it is a valuable contribution.

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Response to Westrum and Smith

The problem with publishing a book about the abductions is that there are precious few people who understand the problems and difficulties of abduction research and can therefore make informed judgements on a book about the phenomenon. The two reviewers represent examples of the informed and the uninformed. Ron Westrum is a dedicated researcher with impeccable academic qualifications and a depth of knowledge about abductions that few scholars possess. Westrum has written important articles about UFO research and anomalies in general and has helped to define the parameters of abduction research. He has dedicated himself to the rigorous and systematic pursuit of knowledge. Smith is not an abduction researcher and has limited knowledge of the subject at best.

I toyed with the idea of addressing Westrum and ignoring Smith. But, I have decided to deal with Smith's somewhat confused critique because for the lay individual who has no knowledge of the abduction phenomenon, Smith's review might seem as if it had substance. I will not answer all of the criticisms, some are trivial, others are confused, bizarre, and nonsensical.

First, I would like to thank Ron Westrum for his kind and generous words. I would, however, like to make a brief comment about his statement that the abduction phenomenon is "messier" than I appear to believe. The abduction matrix upon which the book is based, constitutes a typical or common abduction scenario. This means that a myriad of atypical experiences have been left out. Westrum is correct in saying that the totality of the abduction phenomenon is messier. It is not a natural phenomenon. It involves intelligent choices with a variety of complications and permutations. We are still in the process of discerning its parameters. Researchers are bound to find many other events that happen to abductees. So far, I have found no reason to expand my matrix significantly. If, however, I were to expand the matrix, I might add some category about "extra-vehicular activity," but that is for the future.

And now for Smith. Smith first takes me to task because I accept the idea of a genetic breeding program even though "some scientists" (unnamed) have said it was an "impossibility." I am afraid that neither Smith nor "some scientists" know what is possible or impossible in the abduction phenomenon. It is