

readable and elegant. It is spiced with Arp's pleasant sense of humor but avoids polemical digressions. Only occasionally does the wording betray bitter feelings about his treatment by the astronomical community. Considering that this treatment has not been very kind, often polemical and sometimes rather personal, the book is impressive testimony that a controversial point of view can be defended without falling into the trap of descending to the level of one's opponents.

*H. C. Spruit*  
*Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics*  
*Garching, Germany*

*Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 7, No. 2, p. 208, 1993

0892-3310193

© 1993 Society for Scientific Exploration

**Advanced Aerial Devices Reported During the Korean War**, by Richard F. Haines. Los Alto, CA: LDA Press, 1990. 75pp. ISBN 0-9618082-1-7 (available from LDA Press, P.O. Box 880, Los Altos CA 94023-0880).

This is a presentation of data on 42 UFO sightings in or near Korea from 1950 through 1954. Thirty-one are official reports by American pilots taken from military records and ten are ground observations taken from Project Blue Book files. One is an interview, conducted 36 years later, with a GI who fired on a UFO in 1951. The descriptions of the events vary considerably in length and detail. The sighting reports are preceded by a brief description of both sides' combat planes and their capabilities.

*Bradley C. Canon*  
*University of Kentucky*  
*Lexington, KY 40506-0027*

*Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 208-218, 1993

0892-3310193

© 1993 Society for Scientific Exploration

**Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions** by David Jacobs, Simon and Schuster, NY, 1992, 336 pp.; ISBN 0-671-74857-2, \$21.00.

In 1975 David Jacobs published *The UFO Controversy in America*, a widely acclaimed classic (for instance, described by Arthur C. Clarke as "one of the few volumes ever published on the subject that is worth reading"). For that reason alone, *Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions* would be an important addition to the literature; it is the more so because American ufology is currently being polarized between those who take claims of abduction seriously and those who dismiss them. In view of this polarization, JSE is publishing two reviews, by writers who hold different beliefs on the matter.

It seems fair to say that both reviews acknowledge that the evidence is not compelling; but there is no consensus over what to do about that, where to look for some way of breaking the impasse. Philosophers of science have long recognized that one must hold some sort of hypothesis simply as a spur to investigation, a heuristic, a way of choosing among the various available directions. In anomalistics, we are in such uncharted territory that the common guides to scientific plausibility may not serve. For example, I cannot agree with one reviewer's contention that replication is a tenet of scientific inquiry: certainly, demonstrated replicability may force a scientific community to accept the reality of the phenomenon, but on the way to replication inquiry must proceed by whatever the best available means happen to be or seem. And we need to be chary, too, about experts' assertions that something is impossible, even something like hybridization between humans and aliens; as Arthur Clarke's First Law states, "When a distinguished but elderly scientist states that something is possible, he is almost certainly right. When he states that something is impossible, he is very probably wrong".

*Henry Bauer, Book Review Editor  
Virginia Polytechnic Inst. & State University  
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0212*

### **First Review of *Secret Life***

The UFO abduction experience is one of the most puzzling anomalies of the twentieth century. Individuals have memories, often recalled under hypnosis, of being taken from ordinary contexts, such as cars and bedrooms, and being brought on board what appears to be spacecraft. They are subjected to odd physical procedures, which typically center on the reproductive organs. While on these "craft," they also experience unusual mental states, including telepathy. These abduction experiences appear to start early in life and to continue throughout the life span. They cause a very large amount of mental anguish and suffering on the part of those who experience them, and their impact on family life can be devastating. On the other hand, curiously, some persons who claim abduction experiences seem to view them (and their abductors) in a positive light. According to a recent study carried out by the Roper organization, symptoms which point to an abduction history are widespread in the American population, and 2% of the population are estimated as abductees.

The bizarre qualities of the experience, its striking lack of correlation with ordinary human experience, and its similarity to popular-culture images all make one doubt that this could really be going on. Surely this is the result of mental illness? Surely abductees are psychotics or are experiencing some form of hysterical contagion? How could this be happening without huge numbers of UFOs being sighted by the Air force or ordinary citizens?

But studies of abductees have shown that they are not psychotic, that they are not particularly fantasy-prone, that hysterical contagion simply does not

fit the contours of the experience. Psychiatrists who have dealt with abductees are for the most part as puzzled by the events as the patients who report them. We face a phenomenon which is disturbing, widespread, and completely unexplained.

About a year ago one of my close friends, a person I have known for ten years, suddenly told me that she was an abductee. We were sitting around the dinner table, and I almost fell out of my chair. "How many times have we talked about this? Why didn't you tell me?" I wanted to know. She said very simply, "I didn't want to be made into one of your subjects." When she was young, she used to wake up face down in the grass for no obvious reason. She has grown to hate the smell of grass. As an adult she would wake up with bright lights suddenly shining in her second floor window. She is not alone. I have spent a lot of time talking to abductees, listening to their stories, trying to comfort them, and trying to understand their experiences. I have often been impressed with the great courage and fortitude that people have shown in the face of the most disturbing invasions of their lives and families.

Now David Jacobs has chronicled the inner world of abductees in his book *Secret Life*. Jacobs is a professor of history at Temple University in Philadelphia. Interested in reports of abductions, Jacobs learned to hypnotize and used it to elicit repressed memories. In his book he talks about the contours of these repressed experiences, when they begin, the odd medical and mental procedures, the removals and returns, the experiences on board what appear to be spacecraft, the strange scars and the mental suffering that so many (but not all) abductees experience. A surprising discovery by Jacobs is the recurrent experience of abductees of having a grey alien staring into their eyes while they experience a mind scanning procedure, or while they experience intense sexual feelings.

The focus of most alien interventions appears to be the reproductive organs, and collection of sperm and egg samples seems to be an invariant part of adult abductions. Taken at face value, these accounts suggest that aliens are engaged in a gigantic genetic-engineering program. This is very hard to accept. So are the pregnancies which appear to be started and terminated by alien intervention. A good deal of what Jacobs has written about is hard to accept. Nonetheless, this is what his subjects report. So are they relating things which really happened or things which they have imagined? Obviously we can deal much more easily with the latter possibility.

In a later chapter of the book, Jacobs confronts these experiences with psychological theories and shows that most of the theories which attempt to explain abduction experiences as mental aberration or social contagion fail. The abduction experience is hard to explain because it is so multi-faceted. Whole families, including several generations, appear to be involved. Interlocking networks of testimony show that people living with or near abductees possess fragmentary memories of the abductions of their spouses, neighbors, and friends. Some cases include physical traces of the abduction event. Significant

psychological changes follow abduction experiences which show that something has had a big impact on the person's life. Jacobs details these and many related matters.

Jacobs is not the first researcher to write a book about abductions. Two earlier books by Budd Hopkins, *Missing Time* (1981) and *Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods* (1981) helped to open up this remarkable area of research. And there have been many others, largely drawing on Hopkins' and others' research. But Jacobs' book shows the incredible pains that an historian can take to get the details right. He has pushed hard to get at the underlying bedrock of the experiences.

This is a landmark book, but it does have a few flaws. One of them is Jacobs' failure to connect his work to the psychological literature. While Jacobs can be commended for his straightforward approach, there is a lack of psychological sophistication in dealing with experiential issues. While his attention to detail in the experiences is outstanding, one would like to know more about a variety of psychological issues, including individual differences, coping strategies, and perception. The small number of footnotes suggests that a lot more connective research might have been done.

Another flaw is the concentration on the common elements of the experience. Abduction phenomena are messier than the book depicts. A greater range of beings is experienced. There is more connection with psychical and other paranormal phenomena than Jacobs acknowledges. Perhaps discussion of such phenomena will come in a later study.

One criticism sure to arise is the use of hypnosis to collect the data. While I do not view hypnosis as skeptically as some do, I think this is an issue that requires more discussion. Nonetheless, in a minority of abduction cases (about 10%) hypnosis is not necessary to elicit the memories and testimony gained under hypnosis largely agrees with testimony obtained without it.

Finally, one has to admire the courage it took to write a book of this kind. Whatever the abduction phenomenon appears to be, it cannot be ignored. But someone has to be the champion of these odd encounters, and David Jacobs has staked his reputation on the veracity of these accounts. One hopes he has not committed professional suicide. Academia takes its time in rewarding pioneers, and little sympathy is given to them in the mean time. It is now incumbent on other UFO researchers to scrutinize the facts and conclusions at which Jacobs has arrived and to move us closer to a resolution of this intriguing and frightening subject.

Ron Westrum

*Departments of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Technology  
Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI 48197*