

ESSAY REVIEW

Three New England Abduction Stories and One New Reality

The Interrupted Journey: Two Lost Hours Aboard a Flying Saucer by John G. Fuller. New York: Dial Press, 1966 (sixth edition). 301 pp. ISBN 978-0285624504.

Captured! The Betty and Barney Hill UFO Experience: The True Story of the World's First Documented Alien Abduction by Stanton Friedman and Kathleen Marden. Franklin Lakes, NJ: New Page Books, 2007. 319 pp. ISBN 978-1564149718.

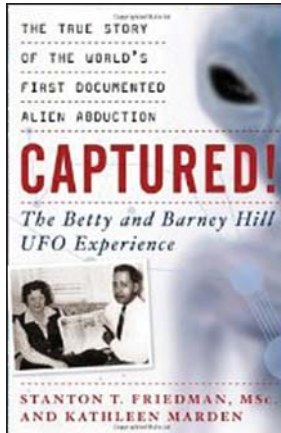
Encounter at Buff Ledge: A UFO Case History by Walter Webb. Chicago: J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies, 1994. 306 pp. ISBN 978-0929343600.

The Allagash Abductions: Undeniable Evidence of Alien Intervention by Raymond E. Fowler. Columbus, NC: Wild Flower Press, 1993. 347 pp. ISBN 978-0926524231.

Three stories that change what we know about the universe begin with the 1961 New Hampshire experiences of Barney and Betty Hill, first told in *The Interrupted Journey* by John G. Fuller in 1966. In 2007 that story was retold with new information and insights in *Captured!* by Stanton Friedman and Kathleen Marden.¹ A second story about a 1968 Lake Champlain experience was described in *Encounter at Buff Ledge*, written by Walter Webb in 1994. A third story, from Maine in 1976, was told in *The Allagash Abductions* by Raymond E. Fowler and published in 1993. The three stories span an interval of fifteen years.

I have not read all of the many books about alien abductions, so I cannot comment on the accuracy of the ones I have not read. But these four, among several others not reviewed here, report *facts*. The *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* defines *fact* as *thing that is known to be true or to exist; truth, reality, thing assumed as basis for argument*. These four books report *narratives* that were spoken or written by the people who experienced the events. The reported *narratives* are what I call facts. They are the “thing assumed as basis for argument.”

There is a difference between calling a *narrative* a *fact* and *explaining*



that narrative. The science of psychology recognizes that not all personal narratives respect external reality. A *narrative as fact* can be generated by a psychological reality, by an external reality, or by both. Do eight witness narratives—two from New Hampshire in 1961 (Barney and Betty Hill), two from Lake Champlain in 1968 (Michael Lapp and Janet Cornell), and four from Eagle Lake, Maine, in 1976 (Jim Weiner, Jack Weiner, Charlie Foltz, and Chuck Rak)—represent psychological reality, external reality, or a mix of both? If they represent only psychological reality, then they might be interesting to the narrator, to clinicians, and perhaps to novelists. If they even partly represent external reality, then they should be interesting to all of us, because they suggest that *our* external reality includes extraterrestrial vehicles with ET crews who catch and release humans to study them. How well do the eight narratives represent external reality? First consider the Barney and Betty Hill story.

Barney and Betty Hill

Barney and Betty Hill lived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. They had married about a year before they took a delayed honeymoon vacation trip in September 1961. They drove from New Hampshire through New York State to Niagara Falls, across the Niagara River to Canada and along the northern shore of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to Montreal. Barney took a wrong turn in Montreal, couldn't understand the directions he was offered in French, and so instead of staying in Montreal for another night as planned, they drove back to the United States and started home along US Route 3 through the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

A UFO played tag with them as they drove south along US 3. It hovered over the road ahead of them, close enough so that they could see humanoid figures through windows on the front of the craft. The UFO moved off to the left of the road. They accelerated down the road. They heard beeping sounds apparently coming from the roof of the car; the next thing they consciously remembered was that they were still driving along US 3, but much farther south. They arrived home, exhausted, as the sun rose; about two hours later than the trip should have taken them.

Barney and Betty recounted what they remembered of their experience to family, friends, and a church group. Word got out, and their story was written up in a Boston newspaper and they received more attention than they

had wanted or expected. Betty had disturbing dreams, Barney had various physical ailments; and they eventually ended up being treated by Dr. Benjamin Simon, a Boston psychiatrist, whose professional goal was to relieve them of the psychological and psychosomatic distress that they associated with fleeting memories of what might have happened during their period of “missing time” following the close encounter along US 3 in northern New Hampshire.

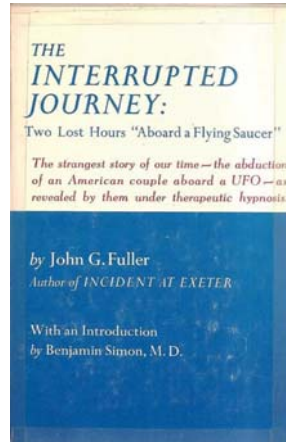
John G. Fuller and Benjamin Simon

John G. Fuller, a writer and columnist for the *Saturday Review* magazine, had been investigating UFO sightings reported near Exeter, New Hampshire, not far from Portsmouth. He was told about the Hills by a local journalist, so he followed up his UFO investigations by contacting the Hills and writing about what happened to them. He wrote *Incident at Exeter* (Fuller 1966) about the UFO sightings. He wrote *The Interrupted Journey* about the Hills and their experience. He had the support and cooperation of the Hills as well as of their psychiatrist, Dr. Simon.

Dr. Simon hypnotized Barney and Betty separately in order to elicit memories about what happened to them after the close encounter. All of the hypnosis sessions were taperecorded. Dr. Simon used posthypnotic suggestion to prevent Barney and Betty from recalling the memories elicited under hypnosis until after all of the therapy sessions had been completed. Only then did he let them listen to the tapes.

The hypnosis transcripts, which correspond to Betty’s earlier and consciously recalled dreams, show that their car was guided off US 3 onto a dirt road and into a hidden clearing; that they were escorted into a landed UFO and examined, the examination including in Betty’s case an ovarian probe and in Barney’s case a sperm sample;¹ and that Betty exchanged telepathic messages with one of their captors. They were escorted back to the car, Barney drove their car back to the road, and they regained full consciousness only when they were back on US 3 and travelling south again.

Hypnosis is controversial: It can be used to plant “false memories” as well as to retrieve repressed memories (Erickson & Rossi 1979). Much depends on the motivation and professional ethics of the hypnotist. No one has ever questioned either Dr. Simon’s professional competence or his ethics. In fact, Dr. Simon never accepted the external reality of the memories that he elicited under hypnosis from Barney and Betty Hill.



R. V. Jones and Scientific Intelligence

It is nearly half a century since *The Interrupted Journey* was published. Why should we now accept that Barney and Betty Hill's hypnotically reported memories were externally real when their own psychiatrist, Dr. Simon, didn't? Many accounts—including the two other New England stories to be reviewed here—provide corroborating details that match the Barney and Betty Hill experience. In making sense of narrative accounts, we should use an approach that belongs, not to science as such, but to the art of scientific intelligence. The intelligence approach to the UFO and abduction evidence is based on the insight of an eminent scientist (and, incidentally, a UFO skeptic), Dr. Reginald V. Jones, who was the head of British Scientific Intelligence (a branch of MI6) during World War II (Jones 1978). Jones used what he called "touchstones" (Jones 1978:447) to decide whether an intelligence report should be taken seriously. A touchstone, in Jones' vocabulary, meant that the report contained some information that he could rely on. This gave him confidence that the other information in the report was likely to be true. In the case of the German V-2 rocket, Jones had reliable information that one component of the rocket fuel was either liquid oxygen or liquid air. When that information was included in intelligence reports with new information, he had reason to credit the new information—particularly if that new information was consistent across reports.

Barney and Betty Hill *consciously recalled* seeing a UFO and humanoid occupants at close range. Their UFO close encounter report was reliable; they told their friends and family about it soon after they returned home. They also knew that they could not remember driving over a long stretch of US 3 and that they had returned home two hours later than they should have. Their *missing time* report was also reliable: It was consciously recalled. There were marks on their car that had not been there before the close encounter; there were scuffs on Barney's shoes that had not been there before the close encounter; Barney developed a unexplained case of groin warts shortly after the encounter and Betty had clothing damaged in a way that was consistent with her dream (and hypnotically recalled memory) of a medical examination.

Conscious recall, while demonstrably imperfect, can be a foundation on which we can begin to build an understanding of reality—if that recall is elicited by straightforward questioning, if it is consistent across independent witnesses, and if it is sustained as a consistent narrative about a phenomenon over an extended period of time (in the narratives reviewed here, over a span of fifteen years) (Poole & White 1991, Erdelyi & Kleinbard 1978). The *consciously recalled close encounter*, the *supplementary witnesses*, the *missing time*, and the various *physical phenomena* are touchstones:

consistent and reliable narratives relating to external reality that give us reason to think that other elements of narratives that include some or all of these touchstones also relate to external reality.

Walter Webb and Raymond Fowler

Walter Webb, who wrote *Encounter at Buff Ledge* about Michael Lapp and Janet Cornell, and Raymond Fowler, who wrote *The Allagash Abductions* about Jim Weiner, Jack Weiner, Charlie Foltz, and Chuck Rak, both made a career (if not a living) investigating and documenting UFO and close encounter reports. Walter Webb is a professional astronomer who was a senior lecturer, assistant director, and operations manager at the Charles Hayden Planetarium of the Boston Museum of Science. He wrote the first report on the Barney and Betty Hill case for the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). Raymond Fowler graduated magna cum laude from college, joined the Air Force, became an electronic espionage specialist, and after leaving the Air Force worked in private industry on defense projects. He is an amateur astronomer and has written several books on the UFO and abduction experience. Webb and Fowler, like John G. Fuller, are credible reporters. While the narratives they report must be evaluated on their own merits, the reporters are people whose professional careers and scholarly credentials inspire confidence that they have reported *narratives as fact*.

Put yourself in the shoes of a scientific intelligence chief like R. V. Jones. From that perspective, the Barney and Betty Hill story, as told in *The Interrupted Journey* and then later in *Captured!*, is your first report about a new and potentially upsetting development. It is the modern equivalent of the first intelligence report suggesting that Jones' World War II adversary, Nazi Germany, had developed a new weapon like the V-1 "buzz bomb" or the V-2 ballistic missile. Your first intelligence report was delivered by a trusted source, John G. Fuller. A second report about your adversary's development has been produced by another trusted source, Walter Webb, in *Encounter at Buff Ledge*. What happened at Buff Ledge?

Encounter at Buff Ledge

The two witnesses, camp counselors Michael Lapp and Janet Cornell, were left behind one evening in August 1968 at the Buff Ledge summer camp on the shore of Lake Champlain. All the other campers and counselors had gone to a swim meet in nearby Burlington, Vermont. At about 8 p.m., Lapp and Cornell were sitting on the camp dock when they saw a distant UFO in the sky over the lake. The distant UFO disgorged two smaller UFOs, one

of which maneuvered near them, plunged briefly into the lake, and then reappeared in the air and approached the dock on which they were standing. Lapp consciously remembers seeing a transparent dome on the top of the UFO and consciously remembers communicating, telepathically, with the two humanoids he could see inside the dome. Janet Cornell remembered seeing the UFO approach the dock. The UFO hovered over them, shone down a beam of light, and that is the last thing either of them remembered until they heard car doors slam and voices as the campers returned from the swim meet at about 9 p.m. Michael Lapp as well as several returning campers and counselors consciously recalled seeing the departing UFO.

Michael Lapp eventually contacted the Center for UFO Studies, a national UFO investigation group, to try and learn more about his memories of the close encounter and about the missing time. The Center referred him to Walter Webb, who lived in the Boston area. Webb interviewed Lapp, who lived in the Boston area. Webb was then able, with Lapp's help, to contact Janet Cornell, who had moved away, but who was willing to come to Boston to be interviewed. Both witnesses wanted to get to the bottom of an experience which was more clearly remembered by Lapp, but which occupied a troubling fringe of Janet Cornell's memory.

At Webb's suggestion, both Lapp and Cornell volunteered to participate in hypnosis sessions that Webb arranged with Boston-area hypnotherapists. Lapp and Cornell narrated, under hypnosis, that they had been levitated in a beam of light from the dock into the hovering UFO and had then communicated telepathically with the occupants. Lapp remembers watching Cornell undergo an examination that was similar to the experience described by Betty Hill. They remembered being transported to a larger ship at what appeared to be a great distance from the earth, which they could see through the dome of the smaller UFO as it approached the larger one. Lapp's memories were more specific; he remembered seeing other humans aboard the large craft and then being returned, in some uncertain fashion, to the dock, where he remembered consciously seeing the smaller UFO depart and hearing and seeing the campers returning from Burlington.

Webb worked hard to track down and contact other campers and counselors who might have seen the UFO depart as they were returning to camp or who might have talked to Lapp and Cornell immediately after their experience. Years after the event he was able to locate some people who remembered the lights over the dock amid the bustle of returning from the swim meet. Webb's thorough investigation, and the care with which he gathered and presented his results, again make it clear that Michael Lapp and Janet Cornell's experiences were *narratives* reported as *facts* in the sense reported earlier. And their narratives come with touchstones, in

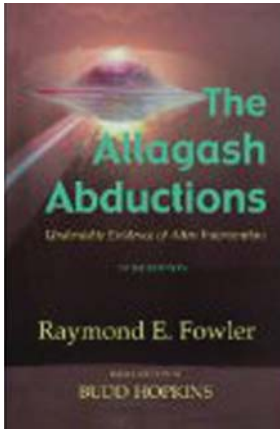
the language of R. V. Jones: consistencies that strengthen the intelligence analyst's confidence in the new information. In this case the touchstones include Lapp's and Cornell's *consciously recalled UFO memories* before the abduction experience, their conscious experience of *missing time*, and the *eyewitness testimony of Lapp and other witnesses* who saw the UFO leave as the campers returned. Their touchstones are similar to Barney and Betty Hill's.

The Allagash Abductions

The third intelligence report comes from Raymond Fowler, who wrote *The Allagash Abductions*. Fowler, who had written several books on UFOs, was contacted by UFO witness Jim Weiner after Fowler gave a talk at a UFO symposium in 1988. Weiner had for years wanted to talk to a knowledgeable person about his August, 1976, experience in the Maine woods.

Jim Weiner, his twin brother Jack, and their friends Chuck Rak and Charlie Folz went canoeing in the Allagash Wilderness in Maine from August 20 to August 26, 1976. After climbing Mount Katahdin, the highest peak in Maine, they took an air taxi service into the wilderness, landed on Telos Lake, and began canoeing through the Allagash chain of lakes. Their first campsite was on Chamberlain Lake. After dark on that first night, a UFO rose into view above the trees. Seen through their binoculars, "It was an object only a few miles away and approximately 200 feet above treetop level." The next day they paddled from Chamberlain Lake into Eagle Lake, and toward the end of the day they camped at a remote and deserted campsite. After failing to catch fish in the afternoon, they decided to try again after dark. They built a large beacon fire at the campsite so they could find their way back to shore on the moonless night, and then all four campers set out in one canoe. After they had canoed about a quarter-mile from shore, "I turned around and saw a huge, white/yellow spherical object hovering just above treetop level at the southern shoreline. It was approximately the size of a two-story house in circumference" (*The Allagash Abductions*, p. 25). All four of the canoeists remember seeing the object. One of them flashed an S.O.S. at the object. It approached and hovered over the canoe, shining a beam of light down on the canoe.

The next conscious memory the campers shared was paddling to shore toward the embers of the dying beacon fire they had lit earlier in the evening. From the time the UFO hovered over their canoe, shortly after they left the shore, until they found themselves paddling back toward the shore, they remembered nothing. They did remember seeing the UFO from the shore, as it tilted, shone a beam of light upward, and disappeared into the dark sky. They felt tired and disoriented, and fell asleep shortly afterward.



After the excitement of the remembered close encounter, and the puzzling failure of memory from the time the UFO hovered over the canoe until they paddled back to shore, the remaining days of their trip passed in a desultory fashion. Several years after the incident, Jack Weiner started having nightmares. Like Betty Hill's dreams following the New Hampshire incident, Jack Weiner's nightmares were terrifying recapitulations of an alien abduction experience that began when the campers were levitated out of their canoe, and into the hovering UFO, inside a conical beam of white light. It was Jack's nightmares, and his own troubled recollections of the close encounter, that led Jim Weiner to seek out Ray Fowler and—as was the case with the Hills, and with Michael Lapp and Janet Cornell—to arrange with Fowler for therapeutic intervention in the form of hypnosis, so that all of “the Allagash four” could try to bring to consciousness any further details that could fill in the missing time following their consciously remembered close encounter.

And as was true of the Hills, of Michael Lapp, and of Janet Cornell, all four remembered being levitated into the UFO, being examined by the occupants, and eventually being levitated back into their canoe. *The Allagash Abductions* includes illustrations of the occupants produced by two of the artistically talented friends, and it includes clear narrative accounts by all four friends of their hypnotically recalled experiences inside the craft. The touchstones that lend consistency to this report and credibility to the other parts of the narrative are the *conscious recall of the first UFO and the subsequent close encounter*, the *missing time* between the time they left the shore and returned to it, and the *physical evidence of the dying embers* of the large beacon fire that they had lit on the beach, as well as their *conscious recall* of the departing UFO. The touchstones from the “Allagash” four narratives are similar to the touchstones in the Barney and Betty Hill narratives and the Michael Lapp and Janet Cornell narratives.

The Intelligence Analysis

Touchstones are the indicators that the eight narratives summarized here represent some aspect of external reality. Each of the narratives includes conscious recall of a *close encounter*, and each includes conscious recall of *missing time*, and each narrative includes other touchstones as well. The presence of these repeated and reliable references to aspects of the external

reality in the eight narratives gives us reason to think that other parts of the narratives also express aspects of external reality.

As R. V. Jones knew from his own experience, skeptics start by assuming that something they haven't figured out how to do can't be done, so they cannot believe that someone else has figured out how to do it. Scientific skeptics certainly can't build—or explain how to build—an extraterrestrial UFO; therefore, in the skeptics' minds, there are no extraterrestrial UFOs, and consequently narratives about extraterrestrial UFOs and abductions, however consistent, cannot possibly represent external reality. Jones had the same problem when he discovered—in contradiction to experts' opinion that it could not be done—the very real electronic guidance beams that the Luftwaffe was using to navigate to British targets, and then again when he gave an accurate estimate—in contradiction to experts who did not have access to his “touchstone” intelligence reports—of the very real size and payload of the V-2 rocket.

I have discussed only a small part of the intelligence analyst's case for stating that extraterrestrials are catching and releasing humans in order to study us. The rest of the case includes scores of other *narratives* as *facts* describing similar experiences, presented in books and papers beyond the scope of this review. It also includes the results of research papers that report the psychological profiles of self-reported abductees which show that the witnesses do not suffer from major personality disorders (Rodeghier, Goodpaster, & Blatterbauer 1991). The evidence about extraterrestrial UFOs and abductions has been accumulating in trade books, specialty magazines, monographs, and peer-reviewed scientific journals for the past sixty-five years.²

Why aren't the *people who matter* paying attention? In R. V. Jones' day, the people who mattered were the senior scientists who said that electronic beams couldn't be used to navigate over England, until Jones sent up airplanes with radios tuned to the beam frequencies and found the beams. They were the senior scientists who could not accurately estimate the size of the V-2 rocket because they didn't know how to build a liquid-fueled rocket motor and who did not have Jones' information about how the rocket worked. In our day, the people who matter are the establishment scientists and media gatekeepers who refuse to look at the evidence that some UFOs are extraterrestrial vehicles because they don't have a theory about how UFOs work—despite the overwhelming evidence that extraterrestrial UFOs are here.

Thomas Kuhn, writing in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, highlighted the extraordinary resistance of modern scientists to recognizing the simple existence of observable facts that are not subsumed under an

existing scientific theory or that are not explained by a newer or competing theory. According to Kuhn, if there is neither an existing theory nor a competing theory to explain an observation, the observation is of no interest to establishment science. He wrote, “to reject one paradigm [theory] without simultaneously substituting another is to reject science itself” (Kuhn 1962:78–79). In the mindset of most establishment scientists, because we don’t know how to make machines that do what extraterrestrial UFOs are observed to do, extraterrestrial UFOs *simply cannot exist*.

Political scientists Alexander Wendt and Raymond Duvall, drawing on a psychological theory developed by Leon Festinger, explained that accepting the reality of extraterrestrial UFOs upsets many important apple carts. Our species spent millenia before outgrowing the habit of appeasing powerful gods of nature: crocodiles, floods, volcanoes, hurricanes, and the like. The technocratic bureaucracies that now run modern societies are not interested in ceding power to, or even acknowledging the existence of, technologically superior beings who happen to be visiting earth and who are catching and releasing some of us for purposes of study. Festinger’s theory of “cognitive dissonance” explains how easy it is to ignore uncomfortable facts by adjusting one’s mental attitude toward them. This can be done by finding a way to metaphorically “shoot the messenger.” For example, if you persuade yourself that the scientist who tells you that there is strong evidence that ET crews “catch and release” humans is a ‘wacko’ or a ‘contactee’ or a ‘believer,’ then or his or her statements can be ignored. It is routine in science, in politics, and in everyday life to dismiss evidence by denigrating the reporter. The political and media meritocracies follow the easy line taken by establishment science: Because “science” doesn’t recognize the existence of extraterrestrial UFOs, the people who report such evidence are “unscientific;” therefore they must be wrong, and the rest of us don’t have to worry about it. Following the same line of reasoning, the U.S. government won’t publicly recognize the existence of extraterrestrial UFOs because that would upset everyone (Wendt & Duvall 2010:269–281).

John J. Callahan, formerly the Washington, D.C.–based Division Chief of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Accidents, Evaluations, and Investigations Division, received a query from the FAA Alaska regional office about a giant UFO, tracked on radar, that had, in his words, “chased a Japanese 747 across the Alaskan sky for some 30 minutes” on November 7, 1986. The Alaska office wanted to know what to tell the media. Callahan asked them to send him the radar tapes and the taped conversations between the 747 crew and the air traffic controllers. He played the tapes in a radar simulator, first for his FAA boss and then, by request, to a meeting of a White House experts. At the end of the White House meeting, a CIA agent

took the tapes and said “This event never happened; we were never here. We’re confiscating all this data and you are all sworn to secrecy.” Callahan was not impressed; when he retired, he wrote up the entire incident and it was published in 2010 (Kean 2010:229–229).

The U.S. Department of Defense website says this about UFOs:

- No UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security.
- There has been no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings categorized as “unidentified” represent technological developments or principles beyond the present-day scientific knowledge.
- There has been no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as “unidentified” are extraterrestrial vehicles (<http://www.defense.gov/faq/pis/16.html>).

As Callahan said in the last sentence of his report: “So, who are you going to believe, your lying eyes or the government?”

The theme of this report can be summarized in one short sentence spoken by Samuel Johnson and recorded many years ago: “Human experience, which is constantly contradicting theory, is the great test of truth” (<http://www.samueljohnson.com/writing.html>). Despite the institutional blindness of modern science to anomalous observations, our scientific predecessors of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries knew, and we know, that knowledge begins with systematic observations, observation being the foundation on which experiment, and eventually theory, is built. Before there is science, before there are experiments, before there is theory, there are observations and there is knowledge. Knowledge precedes all of science. Knowledge is in the possession of anyone with the patience and the competence to read and understand it. We know, based on sixty-five years of accumulated observation, that some of what both people and instruments report as UFOs have characteristics that exclude explanations such as psychological aberrations, visual misperceptions, natural phenomena, or human artifacts like airplanes, balloons, or satellites. Having excluded other explanations, extraterrestrial vehicles—not psychological aberrations, visual misperceptions, natural phenomena, or human artifacts—become the residual and default explanation. Neither the failure of scientists to produce a theory to explain how extraterrestrial UFOs work, nor the failure of the U.S. government to admit there is any such knowledge, invalidates the conclusion drawn from human experience. The conclusion that some UFOs are extraterrestrial, based as it is on a vast database of *narratives*

as fact and supplemented by an almost equally vast database of corollary instrumental evidence, is established, in my opinion, beyond reasonable doubt, which is the high standard of proof required to convict someone of a crime. The conclusion that UFO crews “catch and release” humans, based on almost fifty years of “touchstone” *narratives as fact* presented by reliable reporters, is, in my opinion, established on the balance of probability, which is the standard of proof required to win a civil lawsuit. The extraterrestrial UFO evidence, strong enough to win conviction in a criminal case, should certainly get our attention. We had also better pay attention to the “catch and release” evidence, strong enough to win a civil lawsuit—because sooner or later we are most likely going to have to do something about it.

Notes

- ¹ Not reported in *The Interrupted Journey*, but revealed when all of the hypnosis session tapes were released to Kathleen Marden and Stanton Friedman, and reported in their book, *Captured!*, which was written after Barney and Betty Hill had died.
- ² Much of this evidence is reported in my book *UFOs, ETs, and Alien Abductions: A Scientist Looks at the Evidence*, San Francisco: Hampton Roads Press, 2013.

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