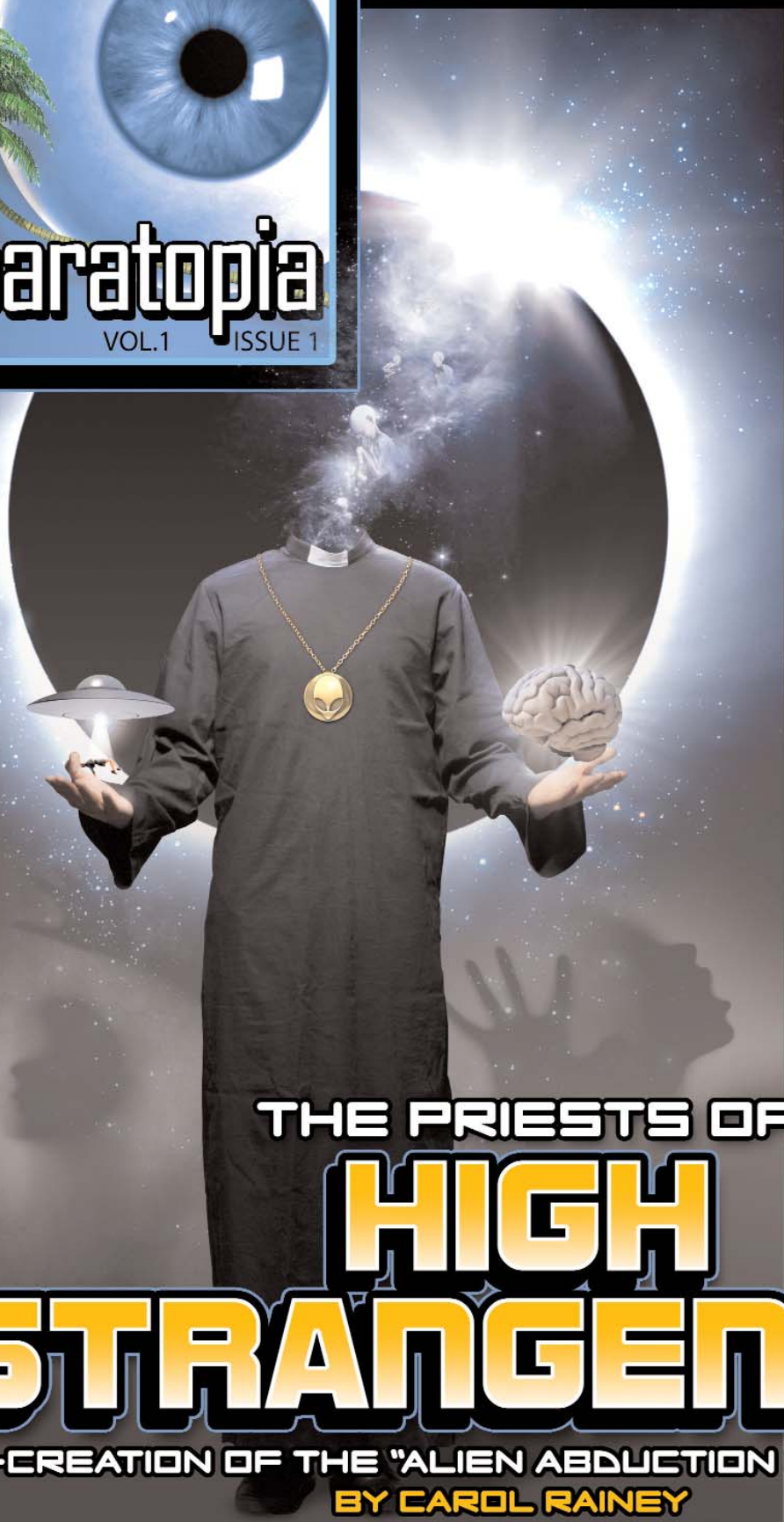


# TAINED, TOXIC AND TABOO:

A SCIENTIST'S ASSESSMENT OF ALIEN ABDUCTION RESEARCH BY TYLER A. KOKJOHN, PH.D.



**paratopia**  
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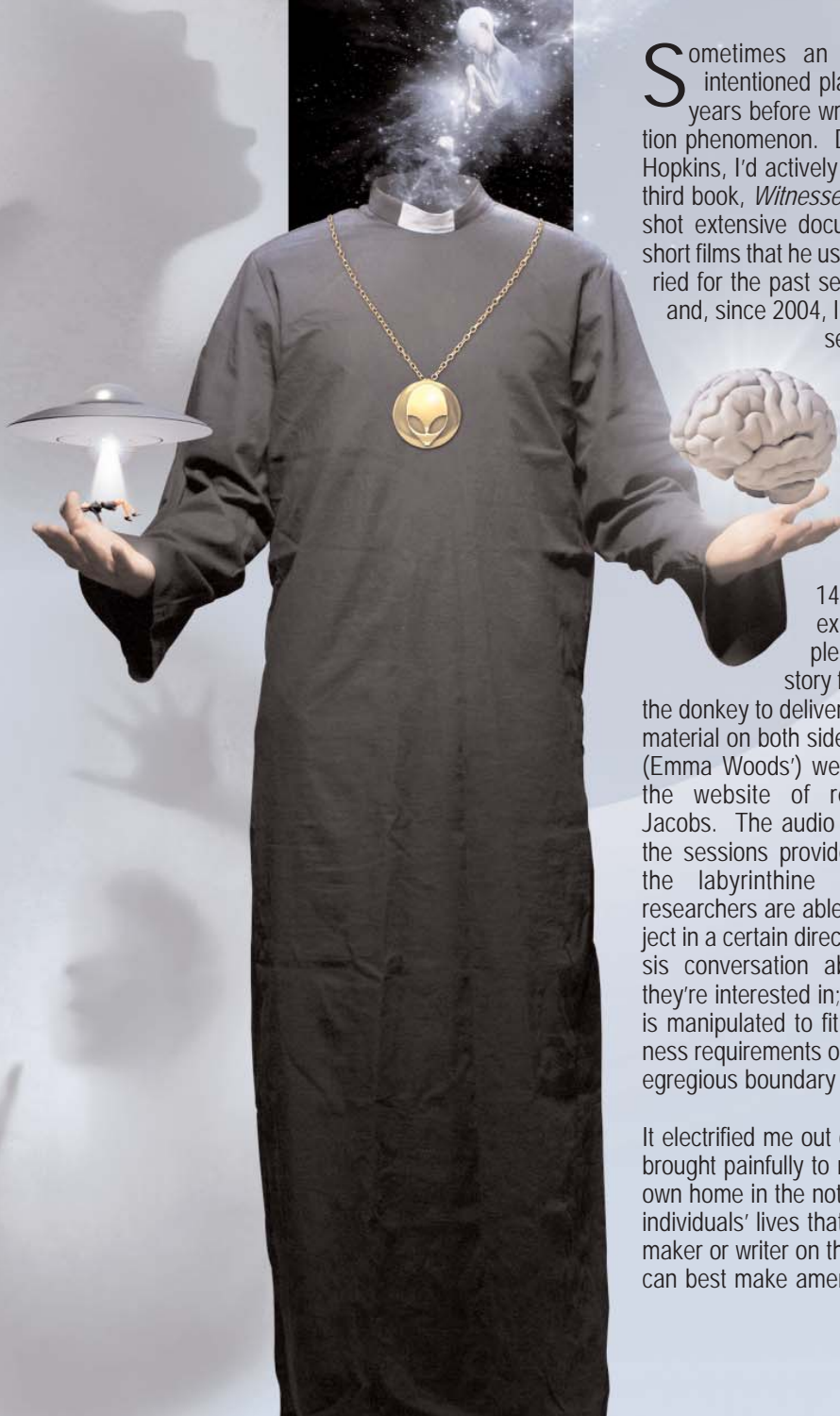
# THE PRIESTS OF **HIGH STRANGENESS**

CO-CREATION OF THE "ALIEN ABDUCTION PHENOMENON"  
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# THE PRIESTS OF HIGH STRANGENESS

CO-CREATION OF THE "ALIEN ABDUCTION PHENOMENON"

BY CAROL RAINEY



Sometimes an event comes hurtling along and scatters well-intentioned plans left and right. I had intended to wait several more years before writing about my hard-won insights into the alien abduction phenomenon. During my ten-year marriage to UFO researcher Budd Hopkins, I'd actively participated in some of Budd's UFO cases; edited his third book, *Witnessed*; co-authored the next book, *Sight Unseen*, with him; shot extensive documentary footage of Budd's research; and produced short films that he used on the conference circuit. But we haven't been married for the past several years, we've each gotten on with our own lives, and, since 2004, I've refused to participate in abduction research. There seemed to be a lot to lose and nothing to gain by speaking up, during my former husband's lifetime, about my perceptions of some researchers' ethical violations, misuse of human subjects, and their steady manipulation of the abduction narrative into a rigid doctrine. No need to rush to print.

But then along came Emma Woods' story, reaching me last spring while I was living and working in the 14th century Moroccan walled-city of Fez. It was an explosive case of subject abuse that shook up many people and would later become the November 2010 cover story for *UFO Magazine*. During a long rainy day, waiting for the donkey to deliver my cooking gas, I took the time to carefully review the material on both sides—on the subject (Emma Woods') website and also on the website of researcher David Jacobs. The audio taped excerpts of the sessions provided a trail through the labyrinthine ways in which researchers are able to "lead" the subject in a certain direction by pre-hypnosis conversation about other cases they're interested in; how the narrative is manipulated to fit the high strangeness requirements of the researcher's upcoming book; the tapes also show egregious boundary crossing and ethical improprieties.



Before a subject's hypnotic regression with Budd Hopkins, the author secures the microphone. (Photo, still from documentary by C. Rainey)

It electrified me out of my silence and into action. Because Emma's case brought painfully to mind several other cases that had passed through my own home in the not too distant past—and for any adverse effect on these individuals' lives that I might have contributed to as the documentary filmmaker or writer on the scene, I am genuinely sorry. At this point, perhaps I can best make amends by responding to the question asked in a letter to

the editor of *UFO Magazine* by veteran UFO researcher Ray Fowler: "I wonder how many other Emmas there are out there?"

Let me begin to name them, because they are most definitely there.

And in their naming, it will become clear—despite Hopkins' and Jacobs' adamant and repeated statements to the contrary, like politicians working off of the same faxed talking point of the day—that the marshy ground of alien abductions is afloat in hoaxes and partial hoaxes. It will also become clear that what Hopkins and Jacobs claim as "the powerful evidence" for alien abductions and hybrids among us is based primarily on the powerful, hypnotic repetition of their own proclamations—and the public's gullibility in believing whatever unfounded theories these star paranormal investigators punt down the field. Further, it will become clear that these abduction investigators know that the people featured in their published books or conference lectures are not the norm for abduction experiences. The sensational cases published in Hopkins' *Intruders* and *Witnessed*, in Jacobs' *Secret Life* and *The Threat* are positioned as the anecdotal examples that describe the entire phenomenon.

The problem for the rest of us who are trying to understand this thing is that these particular cases are almost always "high strangeness," weirder than weird, spectacular exceptions to the rule. They are not representative of what Hopkins and Jacobs "discover" in their day-to-day, run-of-the-mill abduction reports.



The stout, grizzle-bearded man trembling on our studio couch was telling the hellish tale of his boyhood. At first, he seemed to be recalling a fairly standard "abductee" experience: a powerful beam of light, paralysis, levitation into a hovering craft, floating along a hall, lying nude on a table surrounded by

little grey beings with medical instruments, sexual manipulation or implantation of devices, return to the original setting with only fragments of memory of the events, and a realization of missing time. Under hypnosis, the middle-aged man remembered even more, screamed, swore, and wept. Under pretext of filming the session, I was keeping an eye on what was stuck down the side of the terrified man's boot. The label on my videotape says the hypnotic regression took place in Manhattan on June 30, 2002.

This was James S. Mortellaro, Jr., who had come to ask the help of my then-husband, Budd Hopkins. For the previous three years, Jim had admired Budd, read all of his books and come to hear his talks at conferences. To audiences around the world, Budd Hopkins was often introduced as the man who had single-handedly brought the alien abduction phenomenon to the attention of the world. Witty, a natural-born raconteur with a fatherly charm and a reputation for kindness, Budd had enthralled television, radio, and conference audiences for four decades with his bizarre accounts of humans terrorized and suffering at the hands of the supremely indifferent, technologically superior alien beings.

Today, Jim told us, he could no longer live without knowing what had happened to him as a child. Why he had fears of falling from heights and sudden lights. Why he tossed down prescription pills the way other people mindlessly eat popcorn at the movies. And why he entered our home with a pistol shoved into his right boot.

Several things about this case were making me increasingly uneasy. It wasn't just the pills and the pistol. Or the fact that none of Jim's claims had been checked or verified. Among his more mundane statements, Jim Mortellaro had earlier told Budd that he had two Ph.D.s (*Really? That's impressive, the skeptical wife thinks from behind the camera. From which universities?*) and that he'd been "the Marketing Director for Hitachi" before retiring early. (*Really? Was that Regional, National or International Marketing Director? Why is it you don't look or talk like any marketing director I've ever known?*)

Actually, when I got honest with myself, it

wasn't just this case. A sick-in-my-heart feeling had been growing for some time. It was a festering unease about the way the alien abduction phenomenon had been developing before my eyes and captured through the camera's lens for the last seven years of my marriage to Budd. A concern about what was truly being discovered during these hypnosis sessions and what was being manufactured—intentionally or not. And a mounting concern about the welfare of vulnerable people who had contacted Budd after reading his books or seeing him on television. Often some small detail or distinct image in his accounts had stirred up echoes of what seemed to be their own memories. Most of the people who came through our door had undergone genuinely inexplicable human experiences. Yet they came primed to cope with the possibility that their experiences or life traumas were caused by being abducted by extraterrestrials.



When I met Budd Hopkins in 1994, the abduction phenomenon, as Budd revealed it to me, filled

me with fascination and the allure of an entirely new intellectual mystery to be solved. Might this be the origin of the human religious impulse? What if we had been seeded here by highly advanced beings or a Big Being from "out there?"

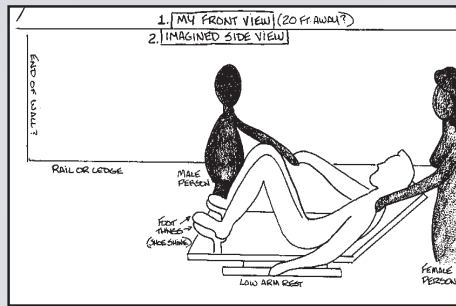
It's amusing and humbling to realize, now, that in the mid-90's I'd actually thought these ideas of mine were new, original and daring. In my forties, I was quite simply a UFO virgin. The short explanation for this odd state is that I'd grown up in a strict, fundamentalist religion and had no exposure to the popular culture and science fiction images of the '50s and '60s. No television, no movies, no comic books, or "worldly" magazines. Even after parting with that religious group, from my twenties through my forties I'd been semi-cloistered in academia, and then worked closely with scientific types where "that sort of thing" just never came up. I vaguely associated UFOs with pop culture and was completely unaware of serious research being done in paranormal fields.

But newly in love and excited by a fresh

adventure with a life partner, a fellow artist, who'd share it with me, I packed up and left Boston. There, for over twenty years, I'd produced and directed films about medicine with research scientists and epidemiologists. We'd brought in considerable funding with research proposals awarded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). After working that long, elbow-to-elbow with scientists, I'd come to know quite a bit about research design, protocols, data collection, and evaluation of data, testing of the hypothesis, and the need to protect subjects of the experiment. I'd also learned (although scientists aren't immune to this problem) that falsifying data or making out-sized claims for discoveries that weren't justified by the facts were career killers. They were ethical suicide. Researchers who did such things lost their jobs. They lost their prestige. They rarely published again. Who could trust such people?

Yet how very different are the standards for the so-called "researchers" of alien abduction! After a decade of involvement in the field, I'm struck that most people with a ufological fascination don't hold their leading researchers to anything like these scholastic, scientific, or even ethical standards. Many people may not even be aware that such standards exist. But they exist for a reason, folks, and sometimes UFO abduction research—as fascinating as it may seem—violates every one of the basic principles for the getting of knowledge and the protection of human subjects.

The two best-known abduction investigators, Budd Hopkins and David Jacobs, work almost exclusively alone (separately, although with extensive telephone exchanges), without supervision (and are unwilling to accept any), and without any training in medicine or psychiatry or neurology. A bit of comparative religion, anthropology, and folklore under the belt wouldn't hurt, either, in dealing with these difficult-to-interpret human experiences. They're not required to get authorization for their experimentation on human beings from an Institutional Review Board (IRB), a clearance that's required of every legitimate institutional researcher in the country. It's peer review of a proposed study using human subjects, it's strict, and researchers are required to report back to the IRB with their findings. None of this applies to UFO researchers.



Drawing by alleged abductee E.N. (Photo, C. Rainey with permission of E.N.)

But, to be fair, for over 40 years abduction researchers have had the courage to explore—and attempt to heal—often traumatic human experiences that virtually no university or institution will touch. The NIH, the nation's enormously powerful medical research agency, is made up of 27 Institutes and Centers, each specializing in a certain area of research. It is highly unlikely that any one of those institutes has ever seriously considered a proposal requesting funding for alien abduction research. In addition to lack of hard evidence, abduction investigators have such credibility issues that few would be taken seriously. That's a situation in desperate need of repair. A nascent field like ufology with no visible funding stream or peer-reviewed journals will fail to ever draw enough trained professionals or scientists to move the field out of the marginal realm and into the mainstream. The few researchers in ufology who do have legitimate research training end up funding their weekend, week-hours research out of their own pockets, just as non-scientists Hopkins and Jacobs do. It's lonely, seat-of-the-pants work that permeates *every aspect* of the researcher's life, often costing him or her dearly through the corrosion of status, income, and personal relationships.

What we have now is abduction research that not only lacks an outside funding source; it also lacks researchers who understand the epistemology of the ways in which knowledge is acquired and how that's connected to truth, justified belief, and skepticism. In such an arid moonscape as this, there are no structures, no boundaries, no standards, and no supervision.

So, given all this freedom and no credentialed peers to naysay them, what do you suppose happens to two investigators (who are also each others' best friends in the world) in their search for knowledge in a

wacky, marginal field like "alien abduction?" And, even more important, what happens to the *de facto* patients of researchers without boundaries? Let's open wider what was for me the Pandora's Box of the Emma Woods/David Jacobs case.

## The Emma Woods Case

November's cover story in *UFO Magazine*, written by Jeremy Vaeni, gave people a rare look behind the curtain that's drawn across the tactics of certain alien abduction researchers. While some people were vocal and heart-felt in their disgust and outrage, there was almost total silence from the leadership and more senior members of the community. Since returning to Manhattan, I've had many personal exchanges with Emma and listened to her painstakingly excerpted audio clips taken from 180 hours of "treatment" and hypnosis by Jacobs—over the telephone, no less, and across the sea. Wafted about for 180 hours on waves of alien/hybrid/sci-fi imagery, bits of memories and dreams, all mixed in with shivery slivers of Jacobs' pre-hypnosis suggestive anecdotes, the trusting and vulnerable patient delivered up to Jacobs his hoped-for narrative of predatory hybrids among us—exactly what he ordered for the book he was writing. However, it's anything but a typical abductee's experience: violent sexual encounters with a human/alien hybrid; a request by the good Doctor (Ph.D. in history, non-medical) to send him her panties, unwashed, so they could be tested for alien sperm; and a proposal that she wear a chastity belt with nails across the vaginal opening, which he'd locate for her from (in Jacobs words) "a sex shop that specialized in bondage/dominance, a place that I frequented quite often."<sup>1</sup>

In later sessions, Jacobs, hyperventilating, can be heard telling Emma that he's in terrible trouble—that an outraged hybrid (who knows that Jacobs is the only person on the planet, other than Hopkins, who knows the evil fate that aliens are planning for humanity)—that this hybrid is sending him threatening Instant Messages on his AOL account to make him cease and desist his work with the abductee Emma Woods. Jacobs is "the man who knows too much."

*Personal IMs from a bloodthirsty hybrid who is entirely theoretical. It doesn't get more*

hallucinatory than that.

Afraid for his life, Jacobs panics. To throw the wily hybrid off his trail, the good researcher deliberately instills into the hypnotized Emma's mind the information that he is now an expert on this "public epidemic," that she suffers from Multiple Personality Disorder—not alien abductions—and she "needs to take medication for the disorder." <http://www.ufoalienabductee.com/hypnosis-session-29-david-jacobs-suggestions-mpd.mp3> (Note to Jacobs: Multiple psychiatric journals state that medication is not recommended for someone with this disorder and that Multiple Personality Disorder, now known as Disassociative Identity Disorder, is serious, chronic and the sufferer is at risk for suicidal attempts, self-injury, violence, substance abuse, and repeated victimization by others. Good call, Doctor-Practicing-Medicine-Without-a-License. Save your own skin and the patient be damned.)

I ask you: What would happen to a licensed psychotherapist who falsely assured a hypnotized patient that she had an incurable mental illness which would make the rest of her life a living hell? He'd get the pants sued off of him, his license suspended or revoked and would possibly never be allowed to practice again. A panel of peers would review his professional conduct and make appropriate rulings.

But, evidently, in the unstructured world of ufology, nothing at all happens to such a "doctor." Jacobs underwent some drubbing on certain blogs and radio shows (especially in the bold coverage of the case by Jeremy Vaeni and Jeff Ritzmann of *Paratopia* and Gary Haden of *Speculative Realms*.) His employer, Temple University, didn't scent a powerful law firm in the offing and so claimed Jacobs wasn't doing research, just "taking an oral history." And Budd Hopkins jumped in with a letter to Emma that compared her to George W. Bush invading Iraq, causing the deaths of thousands, if she exposed his friend's long-distance bedside manner. Ufology's two best-known abduction researchers continue to take victory laps over the airwaves, while the leaders in the field are largely close-mouthed about the cringe-inducing revelations. Neither the two researchers nor the UFO community seemed to have learned

anything from the mistakes. In fact, on November 28, 2010, Hopkins stated on the popular *Coast-to-Coast* radio show that he and Dave "are very close in the way we handle abductees who come to us."



Through out December, both men have been heard on multiple forums still making extremely confident assertions about "what we know" and "our powerful evidence" for alien abduction and "our absolute certainty" that alien/human hybrids are living among us and that the prospects for humans are grim. Everything asserted confidently, without a mote or molecule of tangible proof. Not even a snippet of hybrid DNA, which would be fairly easy to bring back from one of these earthly encounters—especially the alleged violent and sexual ones. An object that is even touched by one of these alleged creatures could readily be analyzed with current DNA technology. The experiencer could discreetly pick up a glass, a hair, a spoon, anything the being contacted and bag it, then contact a lab or their local MUFON representative. If the claim of "hybrids among us" is indeed "a falsifiable hypothesis," as Jacobs often states, there must be a reason it remains simply all hot air.

People drawn to the great mystery of UFO sightings and abduction accounts are becoming all too aware that nothing new has been learned about the phenomenon for a very long time. For years, the abduction stories have remained essentially the same at the core: just the names, places, and a few details change. Once when I was on a Mindshift Institute panel in Maine, someone in the audience asked me if it wasn't just *fascinating and so exciting* to live in the middle of all this UFO and abduction activity. "Uh, actually, no," I blurted out. "It was fascinating for the first four or five years. But six, seven, eight years later and you're still hearing the same story over and over, it gets a little tedious. I kept hoping for a new perspective, another handle on what this thing is! But it almost never happened."

Budd Hopkins would never acknowledge this, but his actions showed that he felt equally frustrated by lack of new insights. After an initial interview and a hypnosis session in our home with a perfectly credible, yet run-of-the-mill abductee—especially one who regarded the grey beings with a sort of New Age, accepting gaze—Budd seldom did more than a single hypnotic regression with people like that and rarely returned their follow-up phone calls (some becoming increasingly frantic). To me, that was a bit like opening up someone's head with a rusty can-opener, then skipping town. We had arguments that went nowhere. It appeared that he dropped people because he was looking for something with a higher-octane level.

It was going to be hard for Budd Hopkins to find a case that had anything near the intrigue and high strangeness of the account that he'd presented in his 1996 book *Witnessed: The True Story of the Brooklyn Bridge Abductions*.

### The Linda Cortile Case



I entered the picture in 1995, when Budd was just completing *Witnessed*. He'd been investigating the complex case for approximately the past five years, putting together all the pieces of the puzzle as they continued to tumble in. Budd and Linda had shared in the advance money for the book (although Linda falsely told other investigators of the case that she and Budd would be splitting it, 50/50.) If *Witnessed* did well and sold to Hollywood, that's where the real money would come from—and both researcher and subject would share in that money, too (just not 50/50). I found that arrangement a bit puzzling. Where I'd come from, researchers might give study participants stipends of \$10 or \$20 a visit, say, or bus money to and from the clinic, but not amounts of this size. *Might not that influ-*

ence Linda to....What? I had no idea what this was or how things worked.

I tried to get up to speed and come to my own understanding of events by delving into the manuscript, editing as I went. *Witnessed* was a compelling read. I thought: *If any UFO case is going to be made into a Hollywood film, this is the one!* It was highly dramatic, paced like a thriller—full of otherworldly treachery, forbidden love, UFOs over Manhattan, twenty-two witnesses, a heroine whose red blood cells were immortal, lusty and dangerous Secret Service agents, a Prince from afar, gifts of many fur coats, chases on foot, more forbidden love, an X-rayed alien implant, Linda's abduction into a spacecraft accompanied by an important world leader, her abduction into a spacecraft with other members of Budd's abductee support group, and her abduction into a spacecraft accompanied by a famous Mafia don. Then, later, as the story continued to unfold (long after the book's publication), Linda's presence in the lobby of the World Trade Center when the planes hit and her bloody, barefoot escape over shards of glass.

Although...not all of those events reported above by Linda Cortile had been selected by Budd for inclusion in the book. I knew about them, but they weren't in the book. I sometimes got confused between what I knew from life and the artfully shaped version of life that I found in the manuscript. Linda was simply part of our lives, a friend, sometimes at the house being interviewed by the media, sometimes Budd's co-presenter at conferences. When the rest of Budd's people gathered in the living room for abductee support groups, Linda was always there. Many times, I schlepped my camera and lights to Lower Manhattan to interview Linda in her apartment, with her family, over her tomato sauce, in situ.

I liked Linda's spunkiness in her role as a traditional Italian-American housewife and mother—one that might well have driven me to take a dive off the Brooklyn Bridge so visible from her living room. It was also fascinating to watch her adapt to her new role as the star abductee in Budd's group, many of whom were artists, writers, social workers, actors and a pastor or two. For her, it must have been like entering another life. Although I'd often heard Budd's assertion

that Linda simply didn't have the mental capacity to pull off this complex case as a hoax, I soon discovered that Linda was quite smart. Not well educated (a different matter entirely), but quick on the draw. I've never met anybody, for example, who could get an unexpected phone call from an admirer and so effortlessly spin a spontaneously fabricated, intricate, family-related reason for not meeting him for coffee, all the while winking broadly at me. She'd just finished telling me she was dying to head home for a nap.<sup>2</sup>



In 1996, as my tape rolled, Budd went on an international conference and media tour to promote the book. We traveled to London, Paris, Switzerland, San Marino, and later, Istanbul. The publisher clearly expected *Witnessed* to do well. On television sets, in radio stations, at podiums, Budd called the Linda Cortile case "the most important case of the century." Budd would go on to tell the riveting story of the November 30, 1989 abduction of Linda Cortile out of her Lower Manhattan building at 3:00 a.m. His investigation had revealed that a top international diplomat, two federal security agents, and at least 20 other people witnessed some aspect of the spectacular light show and the abduction of Linda, as she was pulled up a beam of light towards a red UFO in her white nightgown, accompanied by three alien beings. Most of these alleged witnesses had contacted Budd via letters, audiotapes, telephone calls, and drawings, although he'd never come face-to-face with any of the major players in the story. Budd stated that the case powerfully supported "both the objective reality of UFO abductions and the accuracy of regressive hypnosis as employed with this abductee."<sup>3</sup> He also drew the startling conclusion that the Linda Cortile case provided compelling evidence that the aliens were deliberately demonstrating to the world their presence, their power, and their intent to take

command.

But even before the book *Witnessed: The True Story of the Brooklyn Bridge Abductions* had been published, the case—along with Hopkins' reputation—was in big trouble. *Witnessed* was being severely criticized by independent investigators, bloggers, and journalists—both inside and outside the UFO community. Many said he'd fallen victim to a bored housewife's fantasies or an elaborate hoax. Eventually, although the book had been optioned twice, the pending Hollywood movie deal fell through, largely because the story had been so publicly discredited.

It was hard to watch these things happen to a man who had devoted over six years of his life primarily to this single UFO abduction case. But Budd never once backed down or gave an inch of credence to the "debunkers'" attack on the case. (In our house, the words "debunkers" and "skeptics" were used very much in the way that devout Christians use the words "unbelievers" and "the unsaved.") He continued to tout the major significance of the case long after he knew that Linda had lied to him on multiple occasions.

One June night in 1996 (seven years after Linda's alleged 1989 abduction), I was filming in our kitchen as Linda recounted to Budd and a dinner guest yet another recent, frightening attempt by government agents Richard and Dan—characters in the book *Witnessed*—to kidnap Linda and her cousin Connie into the back of a van. Linda described the struggle in great detail, including the two women's successful escape. Budd was aghast that she hadn't told him earlier and said he urgently needed to speak with Cousin Connie. Linda left, promising she'd have her cousin call Budd so he could question her version of the event. Later that night, the phone rang, and as Budd answered, I watched a peculiar look come over his face. The usually voluble Hopkins was very quiet, mainly listening. After he thanked the caller and hung up, I asked who that was. His smile was as tight and wry as a killer Martini: "That was Linda, pretending to be her cousin Connie."<sup>4</sup>

This, of course, is only the prelude. The complete story behind the Linda Cortile case will be told in my feature-length docu-

mentary with the working title of *Something Hidden*. It will be released in the summer of 2011, if adequate post-production funding is raised. More information and video clips can be found on my website: [www.carol-rainey.com](http://www.carol-rainey.com).



These two leading abduction investigators, I now believe, are driven by the rules of the game they're in to whip up their best cases, to drive them hard. These ufologists, whose ego supplies are dependent on their standing in this marginalized field, are desperate to keep bringing home the magic. Unless they're to become quickly obsolete, alien abduction experts are expected to deliver the goods: newer, fresher, stranger, and ever more strange reports. It is not incidental that David Jacobs was intending to write a book about Emma Woods and several other experiencers, people who shared a high strangeness narrative focused on the infiltration of hybrid beings into our society. In Emma's audiotapes, we can hear Jacobs, before the regression, telling Emma about his other cases, which included their hybrids' violent, sadomasochistic sexual behavior and warning her that they just might discover that in her own upcoming hypnosis session. That isn't even "leading": it's an outright push for her to then deliver, under hypnosis, the exact narrative he needs for his book. It is also not incidental that Budd Hopkins does not ever express doubt about the reliability of Linda Cortile's story and the seminal importance of her case. If he did, he might be forced to question his own ability to sort fact from fiction or to spot a rising hoax before it crests and breaks over him.

It's my personal belief, knowing both Jacobs and Hopkins, that they are trapped, like Br'er Rabbit in *Tar-Baby*, by the very phenomenon they attempt to confront. They can no longer extricate themselves from the surreal, richly imaginative blend of fantasy and reality that is generated around anyone who is deeply involved in paranormal research.<sup>5</sup> While I was most active in Budd's work, I also felt the powerful, suggestive influence of this ambiguous phenomenon. If I'd come into a room and hear my husband on the phone, asking: "Did they come through the wall this time, too?" it no longer struck me as bizarre. In relationship, close to a partner holding firm to such ideas, I

sensed an almost gravitational influence of that other person's emotional world. Something like an unconscious resonance. For a short time, I had come to accept that the alien abduction phenomenon was what Budd and Dave said it was. But I never stopped asking skeptical questions—questions that grew increasingly unwelcome.

These investigators believe so completely in the reality of their own interpretation of these experiences that they have lost touch with both consensus reality and the everyday ethics of human behavior that go along with it. They genuinely feel that the fate of humanity is at risk and any tactic taken is justified by the need to warn the world of the coming takeover. That's a powerful belief system and in these two men, it is rigid. There's nothing ambiguous or shifting in their ideas. In a most disturbing way, such a fundamentalist type of belief structure leaves them highly vulnerable to credulosity, loss of critical judgment, and outright hoaxes.

Given the stakes (and audio/visual evidence gleaned from my own videotapes over a ten year period), I believe now that these abduction investigators are sometimes trapped by their own deeply held beliefs into becoming the victims of hoaxers—which they adamantly refuse to acknowledge. I'll review one such case below.

In other cases, there's evidence that these same abduction investigators are co-creating the strangest of high strangeness cases with the cooperation of the experiencer/abductee. Sometimes co-creation of the narrative is conscious—by one or both parties—and in other cases, the collaboration seems to be primarily unconscious.<sup>6</sup> Of course, abduction researchers are acting as de facto therapists for the "abductee," as well as investigators into the phenomena. And a certain type of "co-creation" is often considered part of the therapeutic process, discussed in psychiatric journals and on therapists' websites. One author states: "Interaction between patient and therapist is now considered to be a co-creation of the patient's inner world resonating with the analyst's inner world."<sup>7</sup> Both psychodynamic and Gestalt therapy work with the idea that what is created in the therapy is a co-creation in which both the therapist and the patient play a vital role.

I'm in no way implying a relationship of equals in this "work." The imbalance of power between subject and researcher is tremendous. It only takes listening to Emma Woods' audio clips or my own videotapes of hypnosis sessions to realize that. The researcher is the authority figure—"this famous author," as Linda Cortile refers to Hopkins. The researcher is also often the object of transference, whether he realizes it or not; he is working with a hypnotized patient; and so he has the full responsibility to be aware of and manage the relationship with the subject, using the highest ethical principles.

But the entire enterprise can skid off the side of a cliff if the investigator/therapist is not constantly aware of and analyzing his own conscious and unconscious positions and his own motivations in these delicate encounters. In actual psychotherapy, of course, many therapists often periodically sit down with another more experienced psychotherapist to discuss their clients' issues, as well as their own response to them. Many professional organizations require therapists to incorporate third-party supervision into their practice as a way to protect the client.<sup>8</sup> When an impartial third party reviews what's occurring between therapist and client, serious lapses in judgment or oversights can be caught before something harmful happens—as in Jacobs telling Emma that she suffers from Multiple Personality Disorder. Unfortunately, these ufologists work without supervision of any kind. In the Emma Woods case and in the four cases below, I believe we see two psychologically naive investigators who are completely unaware of their own unconscious positions—and completely unaware of the powerful force field that sets up in their encounters with vulnerable experiencers.

Before getting back to Jim Mortellaro, who's still undergoing trauma on the old studio couch, let's look briefly at two earlier cases that I participated in and made short films about.

### Dora's Case

Sometimes the most publishable abductees are not even mentally sound. Dora (a pseudonym) was a middle-aged woman with a



family in the Southwest, who had corresponded with Budd for several years. Every letter described abduction tales that got more and more outlandish. During lengthy phone calls with her, Budd's interest grew. Dora's story had always been filled with accounts of meeting aliens in insignia and khaki and now they were taking her to meet their human collaborators—high-level U.S. government personnel. She'd also sent him drawings of a brutal Hispanic hybrid named Pedro, who tormented her, and a drawing of a spacecraft filled with tanks of floating human body parts. When we attended a conference in her area in July 1997, Budd did a hypnotic regression with Dora and she gave me permission to film. During the session, she "remembered" being conducted into an underground chamber where the grey beings were waiting for her, along with Colin Powell and Ralph Nader (go figure!). They forced her to memorize information essential to humanity's survival, but Dora became so agitated and hysterical that Budd brought her out of the trance.

Back home, I went to Dora's file to find the drawings she had talked about. I planned to incorporate them into the short film I'd make for Budd to show on his lecture tours. At the very back of the file, there was a letter to Budd from a therapist and a consulting psychiatrist who had administered the MMPI-2 tests to Dora and did extensive counseling with her and her husband. (MMPI-2 is a standard test that many psychiatrists use to assess personality structure and psychopathology.) The psychiatrists did not believe Dora's claims of being powerless over abductions were credible, according to the tests. The doctor evaluated her as a volatile, severely sexually and physically abused woman by both her father (from childhood to her teens) and also by her husband; she'd lived in a battered women's shelter and had been a victim most of her life. The consulting psychiatrist stated: "She has tremendous anger bottled up inside that

she needs to get out. I have strong doubts that this abduction material is the real thing." The recommendation was for Dora to use therapy to focus specifically on issues of sexual abuse and her anger. The original therapist, who had had his own anomalous experiences, wrote to Budd that he would no longer treat Dora for her alien abduction trauma, referring her, instead, to the more-qualified psychiatrist. He stated that he wanted to be sure he was serving his client's best interests "and not allowing someone with rather deep mental/emotional disturbances to use the scenario of alien abductions to bleed out a lifetime of her abuse."<sup>9</sup>

The letter was dated January 27, 1995, but Hopkins continued to do either hypnotic regressions or telephone interviews with her about alien contact for at least three years after receiving the doctors' letter.

Earlier in 2010, I attended the New York City premiere of a new UFO film. It featured Dora, in her still unchanged role of victim/abductee attempting to regain control of her life from the enemies who surrounded her on every side, black helicopters from above and khaki-clad aliens below. In this case, the welfare of the patient clearly took second place to the investigator's need for a high strangeness "discovery"—confirmation for the alien/military conspiracy theory.

### The Beanie Case – A New Crash Retrieval Claim in the Early '60s



Veteran UFO investigator  
Walt Webb (Photo, courtesy  
W. Webb)

Budd first investigated the Beanie case in 1995 with veteran ufologist and astronomer Walt Webb, who had trained under Dr. Allen Hynek and was one of the first investigators on the Betty and Barney Hill case, among others. Budd and Walt Webb traveled to the tiny town of Santa Rosa, New Mexico to interview a retired X-ray technician in the hospital, Bina "Beanie" Bean. She had reported to local Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) representatives that in either the spring or winter of 1963, she had been riding shotgun in an ambulance that sped to a crashed saucer site on a remote desert road and returned with several non-human little bodies. She'd X-rayed them, she said, and described them in detail. A



military entourage burst into the hospital and cleaned out every scrap of evidence, threatening the hospital staff to keep their mouths shut. Beanie drew maps and named names. But, as Walt Webb wrote to me several years later: "We had only one anecdotal story by one alleged eyewitness to a 32-year-old alleged episode!"<sup>10</sup> It would be tough to build a case on that. The two investigators returned home in 1995, leaving a long list of possible witnesses for Beanie and Budd to contact.

on the X-rays of the bodies. The location of the crash site exactly the same.

I was disturbed, however, by a number of contradictions. She told MUFON that there were two bodies rather than three. One half out of the craft, the other halfway out. (In our version, all bodies were placed on the ground side by side by the troopers ours but not MUFON's, she mentioned an attempted medical exam bodies at the scene—at least a check for pulse and pupil dilation. With MUFON, Beanie talked about a "coroner's inquest" at the which involved bringing in a number of officers and people of street to witness the death declaration. According to her account, Dr. Galvin was the only official present, and he declared entities dead. There was no mention of outsiders present at

Excerpt, Walt Webb's letter to Hopkins shortly after their 1995 joint investigation of Beanie's case.  
(Photo, C. Rainey, permission of Walt Webb.)

In 1997, Budd and I returned to follow-up on the Beanie story while in nearby Roswell. I taped Budd's interview with the eccentric Beanie, noticing that she was starting to embroider a great deal around the edges of her original story of a crash retrieval, including claiming her own abduction experiences and asserting that her older sister was the famously elusive nurse who warned off the mortician at Roswell, shortly after that alleged crash. Neither she nor Budd had tracked down or spoken to any of the long list of possible witnesses. The only glint of confirmation of this single eyewitness's story came during our visit to the elderly widow of the ambulance driver. When pressed, she seemed to vaguely recall that the Air Force had indeed once stripped the ambulance clean and taken the billable trip ticket, as Beanie claimed. But the widow had no idea what year or what decade that might have occurred in. Upon returning home, I made a short film out of the questionable venture. Beanie



was quirky and entertaining and I left the validity of the case up in the air. But Budd showed the film in several conference lectures and seminars around the country. It became his exciting new case, this previously unknown crash/retrieval in early 1960's Santa Rosa, New Mexico. He presented the case with his typical well-spoken conviction and the clear impression of his own personal integrity. Based on the testimony of his implied impeccable eyewitnesses—Beanie and the widow—Budd publicly asserted that alien remains had been found in Santa Rosa in the spring or winter of 1963 and confiscated by the government.



Hopkins' unverified report of Beanie's claims garnered its own chapter, "Santa Rosa" in *Majic Eyes Only*, a book that covers "74 crashed saucer cases supported by compelling evidence." (Photo, still from documentary, C. Rainey)

Disturbed that he'd never tracked down any other witnesses for such a major claim, I reviewed Beanie's file. In it were two letters to Budd from Walt Webb, written several months after their 1995 expedition.. Webb expressed grave doubt about Beanie's credibility, citing major discrepancies in her stories, told to three separate interviewers. Sometimes she cited three bodies were found and sometimes two. In one account they were lined up under a sheet near the crashed craft; in an account to MUFON, she described the bodies as half in, half out of the craft. In that same report, Beanie talked of a "coroner's inquest" at the hospital, bringing in people off the street as witnesses; in her account to Webb and Hopkins, she and a Dr. Galvin were the only people present for examination of the bodies.<sup>11</sup>

But it was too late for such reservations. The other investigator's grave doubts had been eliminated from the official story now. Based on Budd's unproven assertions and my footage, the case ended up enshrined in the official literature of the field in Ryan Wood's book on famous UFO crash/retrieval cases, *Majic Eyes Only*.<sup>12</sup> Beanie's story was the start of a case--but far from an established,

well-researched study of a possible UFO event. Unfortunately, it had all the hallmarks of a tale co-created by a lonely old woman hungry for attention and an investigator who needed to generate his next new thing.

### The Jim Mortellaro Case



A breath-taking special hook, a new twist on the standard abduction story--that now seems to be the Holy Grail for some abduction researchers. That's precisely how Jim Mortellaro caught and held Hopkins' attention after several years of hanging around at the edges of the UFO community. It was how he would take Hopkins for a two-year ride along the lecture circuit, humiliate him, and cost him the resignation of nearly half his Advisory Committee--and, indirectly, cost him his marriage.

*In my opinion, the Jim Mortellaro case is one of the best examples of what's wrong with the abduction research that I observed, second only to the Linda Cortile case.*

Jim claimed to have earned two Ph.D.s, and implied he'd held a national or international marketing directorship with Hitachi, none of which was confirmed by the investigator. We learned that he was technically skilled in work with computers and electronics when he donated and installed in Budd's Intruders Foundation office a completely new PC, with printer, scanner, and the newest software. As the one tech-savvy person in our duo, I'd always kept up on Budd's computer and other equipment, so I was there to see how the system was being installed. That's when I first became aware of Jim's high intake of prescription drugs and asked why he kept a pistol stuck in his boot. It just didn't seem like a good combo to me and I said so. That day, Leslie Kean, Budd's new protege, advisor, and all-round organizer, was in the studio, too. Just beginning to learn about alien abductions from Budd, she agreed with me. *Not a good combination,*

*Jim.* But Jim explained that he was a nervous guy and belonged to the police auxiliary, a volunteer organization for local law enforcement, so he needed to have the gun handy.

Leslie Kean had begun her exploration of UFO abduction by allegedly vetting the Linda Cortile case (from Hopkins' book *Witnessed*). After doing her own review of source material and interviewing both Budd and Linda, she concluded that it was a sound, well-researched case. Now Kean took up the Jim Mortellaro case in a big way, once she was let in on the spectacular opportunity of his case. It would be the first time that ufologists would be included in a major mainstream, scientific study of the medical evidence of alien abductions. According to Jim, an upstate group of physicians had discovered, to their shock, that they each had people under their care who had medically inexplicable symptoms, just like Jim's. Each had between two and five patients with missing time, scarring without having surgery, phobias that seemed inappropriate to the person's experience, low self-esteem, and embarrassed reports of encounters with strange grey beings. The physicians were fascinated and now had a large number of Jim's fellow abductees enrolled in a self-funded, longitudinal study of patients with this constellation of symptoms. *Which would prove, beyond doubt, that something was going on.* They were, however, extremely secretive about the study and Jim was not allowed to give out anyone's number or talk much about it. He did assure Budd, though, that a "Dr. Nancy" was going to put in a confidential call to Budd because she was scared to death of something and needed his advice. Since Budd was notoriously lax about listening to voice messages and returning phone calls, Jim Mortellaro and Leslie Kean went in together and bought Budd his first cellular phone and a year's service plan, so that the two of them could be in direct touch with him at all times and move this case forward.

One evening after Budd had gone down to the studio to check his messages, he came running back upstairs in great excitement. I must come listen to the message that "Dr. Nancy" had just left on his machine. By now, I was a bit skeptical about several matters, but willing to listen. Budd replayed the message. A woman's voice came up, iden-

tifying herself as “Dr. Nancy.” A high, agitated voice, rushing through her hope to speak to Mr. Hopkins about an urgent matter regarding James Mortellaro. She was concerned, wanted his opinion, would call back, and couldn’t seem to get off the phone fast enough. Listening, I felt my spirits sink toward the rough floorboards of the studio like a deflated party balloon. *Oh, no.*

Budd looked at me in triumph and clapped his hands together. “Now we’re really going to get somewhere!” he said.

“Did you hear that voice?” I asked. “Don’t you recognize it?”

“What? What do you mean?” Now he was getting angry. “It’s Dr. Nancy and I’ve never heard her voice before *this instant!*”

“It’s Jim.” I said, very sorry to bring the news. But startled, too, that he didn’t hear it. “It’s Jim’s voice, electronically altered.”

“It absolutely is not!” he shouted. “How could you say such a thing? That’s a woman, that’s not Jim! Why would you tell me that?”

“Because I’ve spent twenty-plus years in post-production suites, with the editor or the mixer altering voices up, down, and sideways,” I said. “It’s certainly not rocket science and Jim knows electronics. Listen, that’s his syntax, that’s the way he says ‘very concerned’ and drops his ‘gs’ on certain words.”

But Budd was furious with me, vehemently denying it. Over the next month, three more voice messages were left. One, a baritone male voice, identified himself as “Noah,” Jim’s neighbor. He wanted to testify that while standing outside on his own deck, he’d seen Jim lifted up by a beam of light into a craft. There was another woman’s voice, higher yet, but with words emerging at a snails’ pace, who identified herself as Jim’s wife and she wanted Budd to know Jamie had been in awful shape, he really had, coming home that night with blood running down both legs, okay, if she could help, just let her know;



and another voice message from “Dr. Nancy,” still on the run, still agitated, still desperate for Mr. Hopkins’ advice.

*They are all Jim,* I tell my husband. But Budd will not listen, will not be stopped. Leslie Kean, now actively involved in the case, supported him completely. Budd began to do the lecture circuit, speaking at various conferences and on radio shows and podcasts about the Mortellaro case he was building and the coming day of justice for all of ufology when what is known by us will have to be reported and confirmed to the world by the scientists engaged in this ground-breaking study. One such lecture on the case, now sold by a major UFO media distributor, has become a permanent part of the field’s literature. It is entitled “Budd Hopkins Presents *A 2002 WATERSHED ABDUCTION IN THE ENVIRONS OF NEW YORK CITY’ DVD.*”

Jim, meanwhile, set up a massive presence on the Internet, posting regularly and noisily to *UFO UpDates* and multiple other sites about his experiences and perceptions as an abductee. He posted several documents related to his case on the Internet, one of which purports to be a medical record written by the physician who treated him in the emergency room after a nasty abduction. In it, the alleged physician used language and style I’d never before seen emerge from a doctor’s pen. In this clinical document, the alleged physician reports “nearly miraculous healing of the contusions in the bladder... Very strange, indeed. Very strange.” The medical record continues: “We have never before seen such a bizarre case”. The phrase “bizarre case” is sprinkled throughout the medical record. The physician’s text was obviously forged.

Okay, that was it. I was done and urged Budd to stop, too.

Instead, Budd and Jim together began to address the audiences of several popular paranormal radio shows, with Jim narrating his savage treatment by alien abductors and Budd playing an audio taped hypnotic regression session with a terrified Jim railing and wailing at the aliens. This case, minus the audio, is now part of the publicly available record of abduction research at the BUFO Paranormal Radio website. On November 9, 2002, the Intruders

Foundation hosted a New York seminar in its series called “*Jim Mortellaro & Budd Hopkins, An Important New Abduction Case With Extensive Medical Evidence.*”<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the only medical evidence was that *hoped-for, future evidence* that would have to be made public by the upstate physicians when they’d completed their study of abductees. That and the forged ER physician’s letter. I was too embarrassed and alienated to attend the seminar.

Jim’s internet claims were getting broader and deeper. He came off as somewhat unhinged and was attacked on several of the public forums as being a fake. People on the Intruders Foundation’s Advisory Committee—a strong, bright group of people that included an astronomer and two psychologists—were getting increasingly uneasy. They had no first-hand knowledge of Jim’s case at all, yet Budd had gone completely public with a case for which he promised to produce evidence in the future. They had never been shown any of the so-called evidence or heard the doctor’s voice messages. They had been treated to a highly dramatic audio taped hypnosis session with Jim, punctuated with screams and shouting. Such emotion, Budd assured the committee, was never faked. “How could it be faked? He’s not a professional actor. This is a terrified man!” At least that’s what his office assistant reported back to me. I’d also stopped going to the Advisory Committee meetings, even though I was a member.

Jim’s *High Noon* moment occurred one day in 2004—after two years of collaboration with the world’s preeminent abduction researcher. That day Jim came into our house, saying that he’d just killed a man. As a member of the auxiliary police in his small town north of the city, he’d spotted a burglary in progress and, unfortunately, had to use deadly force to stop him. Now he was considered a hero around town and two days ago he’d been presented with a certain police association’s highest award by the town mayor and the head of the policeman’s association and he was feeling much more confident about things in general. Oh, and he’d meant to bring the local newspaper article telling all about the robbery and award, but his elderly mom and dad wanted to hold onto it.

The office assistant and I glanced at each other. *This story was so checkable!* We left the men to their coffee and went to our respective studios. She immediately called the Chief of Police in Jim's town. He said there had been no break-ins in the area for over a year and that no shootings of any kind had occurred there for at least five years. I went to the website of the policeman's organization mentioned by Jim and discovered that they only gave awards to cops who were quite, quite dead and permanently underground. Posthumous awards to heroes, that's what they specialized in. That appeared to rule out our Jim. No newspaper article ever materialized, and, eventually, neither did the great hope for that elusive study of abductees by physicians.

When word of this obvious hoaxing on Jim's part leaked out to the Advisory Committee members, many of them came to the Intruders Foundation and insisted on listening to the voice messages on tape—"Dr.



Some members of the Intruders Foundation Advisory Committee in 1998, planning activities long before the disruption of the Mortellaro case. (Photo, still from documentary, C. Rainey)

Nancy," the wife, and 'Noah," the neighbor. They just shook their heads. Then one member, a medical writer by profession, stated that the physician's letter Jim had posted online was a complete hoax. Physicians don't write that way. In fact, the Committee believed that the entire case was a hoax, that the man was pathological, that the very public forum of the case was a disgrace—and that Budd must stop this investigation. They requested a formal meeting with him, a forum for the whole group to discuss what had happened and how there were no checks and balances here. If they were going to continue lending their names and services to his organization, they wanted to be part of the process of teaming up to vet new cases.

Budd responded by getting novice Leslie Kean to write the experienced Advisory Committee a chastising letter about the need to not prematurely restrain Hopkins from proceeding on a case-in-progress. Budd himself wrote the Committee a letter in which he seemed to dismiss all but one of their many suggestions for "a deepened degree of participation by the committee." That suggestion—that for all cases in the future the advisory group should gather, bi-monthly, to listen to recordings of hypnotic regressions done in the previous weeks by Budd with an alleged abductee—Budd conceded was "an excellent idea," then added the kicker: "I may excuse myself during those meetings, however. Since I sat through these hours of often depressing, grueling sessions the first time, maybe I could just slip off to the Met for a little personal uplift!"<sup>14</sup> In other words, he had no intention of playing on a team that included anyone but himself and would not put himself in a position to have his actions or judgment questioned by anyone.

**NOTE:** Use of Mr. Mortellaro's real name does not violate his confidentiality because he has both signed a release for my use of his image and words and he has voluntarily been using his name over the Internet and on radio broadcasts for a number of years.

When the Mortellaro case blew up, I resigned from the Advisory Committee and never again filmed a regression session or participated in abduction research. Three other Committee members eventually resigned, including two psychotherapists and an engineer. Budd conceded to the remaining members that a public statement needed to be made about the case. For a brief period, a one page statement was posted on the Intruders Foundation website. It said, among other things, that "this case was of great interest because of the alleged medical injuries resulting from [Mortellaro's] abduction in 2001. Unfortunately, Mr. Mortellaro has never produced credible evidence in support of these claims. Furthermore, he provided us with two allegedly official documents, which have proved to be fabrications. Therefore, Budd Hopkins and the Advisory Committee of the Intruders Foundation no longer consider this case worthy of investigation." The page, summarizing two years of work on a hoax, *a case not voluntarily stopped by Hopkins*, concluded by stating that: "As always, the

Intruders Foundation continues to apply a detailed, cautious and methodical protocol to the consideration and investigation of all potential abduction cases."

It was positively Orwellian. Language with the meaning turned inside out, scientific-sounding language used to deny and deceive. The bottom line seems to be that an abduction researcher is free to make absolutely any claim he cares to make, and as long as the claim is made convincingly and often—*they will believe*.

There are many complex reasons that the UFO community often finds itself twisted in knots, attempting to defend the validity of a case, even one that is as clearly hoaxed as Mortellaro's. Reasons, too, that any criticism of an abduction researcher with Hopkins' standing in the field will be ferociously attacked. The subject requires far more development than this article has room for, but George Hansen's erudite and compassionate book, *The Trickster and the Paranormal*, offers one explanation that is especially apt for the situations covered in this article: that "Ufology is a tiny field with a tenuous existence and an attack on Hopkins [and to a lesser degree, Jacobs] has greater repercussions than one on a comparable person in a larger field." Other ufologists, Hansen continues, identify themselves so closely with the field and with the ET hypothesis, that they perceive any criticism of these men to be personal attacks on them, as well.<sup>15</sup>

There's another, simpler reason that "they" will continue to believe. Because it was essentially *denied as a hoax* by Hopkins, its primary proponent, the Mortellaro case still exists as part of the historical record of UFO abduction case studies—in a Hopkins lecture on the case from *FortFest 2002*, posted on YouTube; in online pages containing the case materials; audio files of hypnosis sessions; and in multiple DVDs for sale of Hopkins' conference presentations about it. Anyone attempting to study the evidence of alien abduction might be just as likely to study the Mortellaro case as the Travis Walton case.

The page on Hopkins' Intruders Foundation website was quickly pulled down and there seems to be little evidence that anything

went wrong. (However, the official statement is still posted on the Rense.com site, along with numerous other articles by Mortellaro: <http://www.rense.com/general50/IF.htm>). What about demanding a recall, in such cases? Even a cannery for green peas has to recall a few batches of cans when the product turns out to be spoiled. But when it comes to the wholesale creation and public offering of an entire genre of performance art called "the alien abduction phenomenon," nobody's held responsible for anything. Especially not the man lauded for his role in its creation—an artist whose brief, shining moment in the art world passed over forty years ago.

The final irony occurred barely 19 months after the Mortellaro debacle. At the March 3, 2006 UFO Congress, preeminent abduction researchers Hopkins and Jacobs took the stage. They both spoke on the topic of transgenic beings (otherwise known as "hybrids") among us. While Jacobs stated (without evidence) that "the evidence has been amassing for years," this is what Hopkins asserted before the large assembly—and to future researchers who will view his statements on the DVD for decades to come:

"This is something that I'm very proud of... that in all the years of the work that Dave has done and I have done, along with a number of other people, we have never had to take anything back, and say: 'Boy, did we make a whopper of a mistake.' We've been very, very cautious. We haven't had cases, one after another... blow up... despite the efforts of many, many, many debunkers. And that's why we can say... that the material we presented tonight, as strange and complicated and difficult as it is—is, I believe, going to stand the test of time, like the rest of it has."<sup>16</sup>

So there you have it: no mistakes were ever made; the flawed, overly credulous, and at times unethical research tactics in the Emma Woods case, in Mortellaro's, Dora's, Beanie's and Linda's cases did not exist; and so neither the researchers nor the UFO community learned a damned thing. Denial is such a terrible waste of an opportunity. There's often enormous power in not being paralyzed by the fear of failure, especially when people learn from either watching or making the mistakes. Certain abduction

researchers have been making a lot of mistakes, not just lately, but in the past, as well. Serious gaffes that keep mainstream scientists and public funding of research far, far away from that circus. Serious gaffes on an ongoing basis that send fairly knowledgeable people like me and many others running from the field.

But when will ufology, as a community, both-  
er to learn from those mistakes? And will the community ever have the courage to step up to the two *Priests of High Strangeness* and say:

*"Thanks for your courageous and dedicated work in this field, Hopkins and Jacobs. It's been great; you were true pioneers and we know that your belief system is strict, heartfelt, and sincere as death. But we'll take it from here.*

*We just don't think it's possible that you alone, you two, exclusively hold The Truth about this human experience with The Other. Face it, you've been engaged in an activity that makes it impossible for you to see clearly; not any more you don't.*

*So, thanks, but we'll take it from here.*" ©



*Carol Rainey has been making award-winning documentaries for PBS, cable networks, and commercial distribution for over two decades. Many of those films focused on scientific and medical topics. Rainey is currently working on a feature-length documentary about the story of UFO researcher Budd Hopkins' investigation into the Witnessed case (with Linda Cortile). She has also published short stories, written feature-length screenplays and teleplays, and co-authored the book *Sight Unseen*, published in 2003 by Atria: Simon & Schuster. [www.carolrainey.com](http://www.carolrainey.com)*

**NOTE:** All of the cases referred to in this article will also be featured in the author's up-coming feature documentary, *Something Hidden*. Focused on the story of Hopkins' investigation into the Witnessed case (with Linda Cortile), the film is also the parallel story of Rainey's uniquely personal journey into the heart of a human enigma—the UFO abduction phenomenon. Additional footage and an opportunity to participate in the film can be found at [www.carolrainey.com](http://www.carolrainey.com).

All photos used in this article are owned by Carol Rainey unless otherwise noted.

- 1 <http://www.ufoalienabductee.com/hypnosis-session-28-chastity-belt.mp3>
- 2 From a personal conversation with Linda Cortile in the author's Manhattan home, 1996.
- 3 Hopkins, Budd, Abstract for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Abduction Study Conference, June 1992.
- 4 From a personal conversation with Budd Hopkins, June 11, 1996.
- 5 Hansen, George P., *The Trickster and the Paranormal*, Xlibris Corporation, 2001, pp. 216-217.
- 6 The term "co-creation" is used here as most lay people would use it: two people get together and make something. It is important for the reader to be fully aware that in the situation under discussion, the imbalance of power between subject and researcher is enormous.
- 7 "Beginning: The Art and Science of Planning Psychotherapy by Mary Jo Peebles-Kleiger," a book review by E. James Lieberman, M.D., M.P.H. at <http://ps.psychiatryonline.org>.
- 8 Dr. Greg Mulhauser at <http://counsellingresource.com/aboutcouns/supervision.html>
- 9 Excerpt from psychotherapist's written correspondence about "Dora's" case with Budd Hopkins, January 27, 1995.
- 10 Excerpt from e-mail correspondence from Walter Webb to Carol Rainey, December 3, 2009.
- 11 Excerpt from written correspondence from Walt Webb to Budd Hopkins, February 9, 1996.
- 12 Wood, Ryan S., *Majic Eyes Only: Earth's Encounters With Extraterrestrial Technology*, Wood Enterprises, November 2005, p. 133. The chapter entitled "Santa Rosa: New Mexico, USA, Spring or Winter 1963" was taken directly from the written account presented by Hopkins, entitled "The 1963 Crash Retrieval North of Albuquerque, New Mexico: Budd Hopkins, UFO Crash Retrieval Conference Proceedings, 14-16 November, 2003."
- 13 [http://www.intrudersfoundation.org/if\\_events.html](http://www.intrudersfoundation.org/if_events.html)
- 14 From a letter to the Intruders Foundation Advisory Committee from Budd Hopkins, February 23, 2004.
- 15 Hansen, pp. 258-263.
- 16 [http://www.ufocongressstore.com/Budd-Hopkins-and-Dr-David-Jacobs-Presents-Transgenic-Beings-DVD\\_p\\_621.html](http://www.ufocongressstore.com/Budd-Hopkins-and-Dr-David-Jacobs-Presents-Transgenic-Beings-DVD_p_621.html)

# TAINTED, TOXIC & TABOO:

## A Scientist's Assessment of Alien Abduction Research

by Tyler A. Kokjohn, Ph.D.

### Disclosures

*I am an educator and scientist working in the area of Alzheimer's disease biochemistry. I also have a longstanding interest in the UFO subject. Although I have performed laboratory studies for UFO investigators, I conduct no independent research of my own in this field. My opinions are those of a scientifically trained outsider with no connections—financial, professional or personal—to any individuals actively engaged in abduction research.*

Carol Rainey's article reveals that the standards and practices used by some alien abduction investigators differ radically from those of scientists conducting biomedical research. Ms. Rainey's assessments hit core aspects of research conduct and are so devastating because she has inhabited two almost entirely parallel worlds. A firsthand witness to alien abduction investigations, she has also worked extensively with mainstream biomedical researchers. An exceptional combination of experiences gives her the specific knowledge as to what constitutes an investigation based on good and ethical research practices and the perspective to recognize when such standards are absent. If what she has exposed represents the norm for alien abduction research it carries important implications regarding the underlying scientific value of such investigations.

To safeguard the welfare and confidentiality of participants, scientists conduct research that involves human subjects under the direct, proactive and authoritative supervision of review boards. Here is how it works at my institution—written proposals must be submitted to an Institutional Review Board (IRB) for formal approval before any investigations begin. The obligatory documentation includes background, the explicit research hypotheses to be investigated and complete experimental protocols. In addition, methods to ensure all subjects recruited are fully informed of the risks and benefits involved with participation and plans to safeguard their health, safety and confidentiality must be provided. The IRB is responsible

for the evaluation of all proposals with particular attention to the adequacy of participant safeguards. Full compliance with all IRB directives is mandatory for every investigator.

Is it fair to apply the stringent norms of professional biomedical scientists to abduction researchers? After all, this is just storytelling, so what could possibly go wrong? Investigators operating outside academic and medical institutions without the benefit of IRB oversight or otherwise able to dodge meaningful peer evaluations run several risks. First and foremost, their subjects may face an increased threat for adverse events. Having several persons evaluate methods, informed consent documents and plans for emergencies in advance of the project start increases the likelihood of catching errors or omissions—before a catastrophe. While at first glance collecting oral histories seems benign, under some circumstances such activities pose sufficient risk that IRB oversight to ensure subject wellbeing is justified. Ms. Rainey's article reveals abduction subjects may experience extreme emotions and stress under hypnosis. What happens during a session if someone has a heart attack, a psychotic episode or acts out violently? Any emergency equipment like defibrillators on hand, personnel trained to perform CPR, calm agitated persons or plans regarding how to manage until help arrives? Precisely what could investigators conducting hypnosis sessions over the telephone do in the event of an emergency? Whether exempt from IRB oversight or not, no investigator is ever absolved of the responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all research study participants.

The other risk investigators evading oversight run is more insidious. Scrutiny and constructive criticism provide the vital reality checks essential to maintaining research quality. Scientists are subjected to frequent, anonymous peer reviews as they submit papers to professional journals, participate in research conferences and seek funding support. The central means of ensuring frank appraisals of merit and rooting out error, these reviews help minimize the dissemi-



nation of suspect data and propagation of unfounded conclusions. Science is justifiably lauded for its capacity to police itself and correct errors. Under conditions where investigators are free to shut out substantive criticism, self-correction becomes more difficult, perhaps impossible. Succumbing to the temptation to avoid tough criticism outright or seek only the counsel of sympathetic colleagues is inadvisable.

A need for caution is obvious. Much information regarding alien abductions has been acquired using hypnosis. However, that method may uncover as much inaccurate information as truth and might also be sensitive to investigator bias. Beyond significant issues surrounding basic methodology are concerns that what the public has been sold could represent a collaborative synthesis between an investigator looking for the next book contract and attention-seeking abductees. As a direct consequence of its nature, collection and management, much of the basic information regarding alien abductions seems tainted.

Having your research critiqued by colleagues can be emotionally upsetting, but it's a small price to pay for preventing the potentially deadly threat of self-deception. Probably many scientists can recall a cherished theory that withered under the harsh scrutiny of their peers. I believe most scientists might also confess they've produced an off-the-wall hypothesis or embarked on a wild goose chase. And a few might admit to having such reluctance to dispatch a favorite brain child they persisted too long trying to validate an untenable hypothesis. Lacking any personal (emotional) investment, peer reviewers can expose factual, logical and procedural shortcomings, hopefully with some degree of diplomacy. We all make errors and it is not only wise to be diligent against fooling ourselves, it is essential. In a very real sense, some of us have met The Trickster—and discovered sometimes he is us.

Here is how peer review works for me—when I submit a manuscript to a scientific journal, the editor consults a list of scientists knowledgeable in the subject and requests at least two read the manuscript to judge its suitability for publication. To ensure the critiques are as frank as possible, the reviews are provided to me on a strictly anonymous basis and the editor serves as the intermediary for all correspondence. In

addition to the experimental results, manuscripts must include full descriptions of all experimental methods and analytical protocols or cite published sources where the reader may find that information. Questions, comments and concerns are the norm and authors are often allowed to address the reviewer criticisms with the editor, make necessary changes and proceed to publication. Almost every paper I have ever published in peer-reviewed journals has required some modifications. In some instances, anonymous peers have caught errors or misstatements and I have been grateful for their assistance. And sometimes the process has left me frustrated and angered. Judging from what my colleagues reveal, my impressions of the publication process are not unusual. The peer review process is considered so essential to scientific quality that my colleagues and I donate considerable uncompensated time to participating in it.

Anonymous peer reviews cannot prevent all mistakes, but they are vital quality assurance activities. Allowing unsubstantiated claims and erroneous information to accumulate unchecked creates a toxic atmosphere that ultimately stymies research.

While indisputable facts are few, the hypotheses of some alien abduction investigators have certainly grown remarkably florid. Years of hard-earned experience have sensitized me to signs investigators are extrapolating objective data beyond the reasonable limits. That experience has also trained me to formulate testable hypotheses and recognize productive investigatory approaches that will yield hard confirmatory data.

Free to pontificate and charged with the zeal to sell lurid and frightening tales of a nefarious alien agenda, some abduction researchers have created hypotheses that are actually subject to direct experimental confirmation. Perhaps this will represent a fatal error of sorts.

If, as some investigators stipulate, human-alien hybrids, transgenic or otherwise genetically adulterated quasi-human entities walk among us now, if some are exhibiting independent activity and if human females are incubating alien spawn, superb opportunities to collect key corroborating genetic evidence are at hand. The molecular analysis methods available today are very powerful and capable of resolving claims definitively. As Ms. Rainey pointed out aptly, we've literally had decades of overheated lecture circuit rhetoric and book



after book featuring terrifying testimonials; getting some hard data by applying genetic analysis methods is long overdue. Alien abduction research is at a crossroads because some investigators have painted themselves into a corner. Pressured to come forward with the corroborating evidence that must exist if their hypotheses are correct, they will be unable to retreat behind a 'you can't prove they don't exist' argument to conceal failure. They've got to produce the goods—or not.

While the alien abduction story has captured the public imagination, unless corroborating genetic evidence is forthcoming, no upsurge in professional scientific interest in this mystery seems imminent. Although I suspect the large majority of my scientist colleagues would vehemently deny having ever read any alien abduction literature, I bet most are familiar with many aspects of the phenomenon. I cannot say for sure how many of my coworkers are interested in such things because my experience parallels that of Ms. Rainey; the subject is discussed rarely in my academic circles. To mention that you were seriously considering delving deeply into the alien abduction phenomenon might lead to questions about your professional judgment or perhaps whispers regarding your state of mind. Decades of dubious investigations have not only yielded precious little understanding of the alien abduction mystery, they have also firmly established an unsavory image that discourages many scientists from exploring the field.

Start with a mysterious phenomenon often buried deep within the subconscious mind and far outside ordinary experience. Investigate it using controversial and perhaps entirely unreliable methods. Present the findings in ways virtually guaranteed to undermine credibility and foster conflicts of interest. Put them all together and you have one scientist's perspective of the alien abduction phenomenon—tainted, toxic and totally taboo.

### ***Empower Yourself***

In the alien abduction realm, the consumers of books, articles and videos play a unique and crucial role as the ultimate evaluators of quality. Your decisions will determine the evidentiary standards and research conduct that will prevail in this field.

*The Belmont Report* and other information regarding the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects are posted on the website: <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/>

[belmont.html](http://www.belmont.html). Guidelines concerning IRB oversight of oral history studies may be viewed at [www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-history/oral-history-and-irb-review](http://www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-history/oral-history-and-irb-review). A discussion of some issues regarding hypnosis and human memory with Dr. Scott Lilienfeld is available in the Paratopia archive; <http://hosted-with.cyberears.com/9284.mp3> (Episode 55) ©

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