

# MY EXPERIENCES WITH THE VISITORS

By Whitley Strieber

I am a writer, and I would like to introduce myself to the members of MUFON. I have had a number of experiences with apparent nonhuman visitors, and have written a book about this called *Communion*, to be published in April of 1987.

I was born on June 13, 1945 in San Antonio, Texas. I received a BA in Law from the University of Texas in 1967 and spent a year at the London Film School in 1968. In 1969 I moved to New York and have lived here ever since. I have a wife and one child. Anne and I married in 1970 and had our son Andrew in 1979.

Before I became a writer I worked first in the newspaper business, then in the advertising industry, leaving Cunningham and Walsh in 1978 as a vice-president.

In 1982 I began to write serious fiction about important social and political issues. My first novel of this type was *Warday*, a collaboration with science writer James Kunetka. It concerned the problem of limited nuclear war. It was written with a strict adherence to facts, which were themselves derived from an extensive search of scientific literature as well as interviews with many military people. My next book, *Wolf of Shadows* was a story for young people about the idea of nuclear winter. It received the 1986 Olive Branch Award as the outstanding book of the year for young people on the subject of world peace, a Friends of American Writers Award, and was named Outstanding Science Book for Children by the National Science Teachers Association.

*Nature's End*, again written with Jim Kunetka, was published in 1986. It takes place 35 years from now, and presents a portrait of what the world will be like if we do not pay attention to the condition of the environment.

After *Nature's End* I published a novel I wrote in 1981 entitled *Catmagic*. This book was published under a

pseudonym, Jonathan Barry.

Before *Warday* I published four entertainment novels, among them the bestsellers *Wolfen* and *Hunger*. While these were horror novels, I have certainly never been a believer in the occult. My important books concern problems of the real world and are based on carefully researched fact.

I first became aware of the visitor experience in the early days of January, 1986. I remembered some extremely strange events that took place on the night of December 26, 1985. Although it was hard to understand what these memories could be, I eventually came to the conclusion that they might involve contact of some sort with nonhuman beings. But that took a long time.

Before this experience, I was not only disinterested in the UFO phenomenon, I must admit that I was pretty much of a skeptic. I really hadn't thought about the question in years. I thought that the matter was extremely unimportant, and that the people who reported seeing objects were probably simply making mistakes. I was not aware of abduction accounts at all, and it took weeks for me to connect what had happened to me to the idea of a nonhuman presence. The connection was made because — by a fortuitous circumstance — my brother sent me a book for Christmas called *Science and the UFOs*. At the end of this book they described a "typical abduction experience." To my acute embarrassment, I realized that this was very similar to what had happened to me. Budd Hopkins' name was mentioned in the book, and after an agonizing period of soul-searching I telephoned him. He in turn put me in touch with Dr. Donald Klein, Chairman of the New York State Department of Psychiatry, who became my therapist and hypnotist.

Hypnosis revealed little more of the experience of December 26th than

memory already had, doing no more than fill in details that I had in my fright and confusion forgotten.

Since realizing that I might be having an experience with visitors, my life has changed dramatically. Against all my expectations, the encounters have continued. I can remember seeing the visitors seven times between April and November of 1986. In a few cases they have appeared while I was awake, most notably on August 27. On the other occasions they waked me up. Even though I was not consciously afraid during the encounter on the 27th my body reacted with such stress that I had a "near death" experience and apparently then fainted. Before that I heard and saw the arrival of the visitors, at 11:35 pm.

Like many of our more direct encounters, this one took place in a relatively isolated cabin in upstate New York.

My wife and son were asleep. I was sitting in the living room reading. Both of my cats were awake, cuddled in my lap. I noticed that the area around the house had suddenly become as light as day. Light was streaming in the windows. Almost as soon as I noticed this, it disappeared. I thought to myself, "the visitors are here." I would describe my state as edgy, no more. I was also eager and becoming excited.

The cats, however, reacted very differently. The older animal, an eight year old female Burmese, leaped up and stood on the back of a nearby couch, staring wildly. The other animal, a two year old male Siamese, began pacing in agitation.

Then there came from a point eighteen feet from the ground, under the eaves of a roof too steeply canted to stand on, a series of nine loud, evenly spaced knocks. Both cats reacted in evident horror, staring at the area of wall from which the knocks were

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coming. Their hair then stood on end and they rushed out of the room. The Burmese remained hidden in a shelf of towels in the bathroom until the next night at nine p.m. The Siamese stayed under my son's bed until next morning. One cat remained hidden for approximately ten hours, the other for twenty, so their fear must have been really extreme.

I got up from my chair and went outside onto a deck overlooking my swimming pool. I was around the corner from the part of the house from which the knocks had come, and intended to have a look. I was aware of a mild fear. Interestingly, I did not remember what actually happened when I went out onto the porch for some weeks after the experience. I was aware only that I had been very startled, had seen something that was bright yellow and quite appealing, and that I had been gone for two hours and forty three minutes. When I re-entered the house, the clock said 2:18, while it had said 11:35 when I left. (This was a battery powered clock. While there have been other times when clocks in the house have been disrupted, that was not the case on this night.) I feel that, as soon as I rose from the chair, I entered some sort of an altered state.

As I pushed the screen door open, I saw beside my right knee and about a foot from it, three very small beings. They were surrounded by a faint gray glow, and were themselves gray. They were wearing dark blue jumpsuits. Their heads were large and they had slanted eyes like black patent leather. They were no more than two feet tall, and I was surprised by their smallness as I had never before encountered visitors so tiny. I am led to understand that such small ones have only been seen in the far east heretofore.

When our eyes met I felt a very pleasant sensation go through my body. A moment later I beheld a magnificently beautiful illusion: a field of yellow flowers. I was aware that the three beings were quite real, but that the "field" was a hallucination. Had I tried to walk into it, I have no doubt that I would have fallen into the pool.

After seeing the field my memory

deteriorates. I can recall seeing something of awesome size in the sky over the house, a huge thing that really astonished me. But the remainder of the two-plus hours is "missing time."

I have not been hypnotized since March of 1986. I have preferred to struggle with the memories, to try to learn how to overcome the biological fear that seems to be impeding this experience. I practice dealing with my fear by doing things like walking in my woods at night, especially on nights when there has been some evidence of a possible visitor presence in the area. This has helped me to become used to the sensation of fear, and to overcome it to a degree.

Repression leads, in my opinion, either to greater fear or unconscious falsification of reality, such as the emergence of religious experience or encounters with kindly, handsome "space brothers." Right now my experience is hard, but it is quite real. I do not want it to become congenial on any terms except those of reality. I will not allow myself to think that it is a religious experience, or an experience with kindly space brothers. I do not know what the visitors are, where they are from, or what they are doing here. I know how they appear to me.

I have a relationship with them, and I have it on my own personal and human terms. Whether they have anything similar with me I do not know.

While they present an initial impression of being emotionless, repeated exposure reveals them as extremely passionate. They have exhibited extreme anger in my presence, as well as made gestures that appeared to be tender, even loving. They have exhibited such care in controlling me that I must conclude that they also fear us, at least to a degree. They take exactly the same care with me that I would with a polar bear in the wild.

Coming into the life of a skeptic, this experience at first terrified me because I thought I was going insane. Then it shocked and confused me. I soon discovered, however, that the experience — while not necessarily common — has been reported by many other normal, sane people. They have seen the same beings and had

experiences of their own every bit as hard, as terrifying and in some cases as richly rewarding as my own.

I have gotten used to living with a high degree of uncertainty. I want to do as much as I possibly can to improve man's ability to deal with the visitors. So far we have not been doing too well. Our best minds often feel threatened by the idea of supposedly super-intelligent visitors, and so engage in elaborate dramas of denial. Many people who have had the visitor experience have reacted to the absolute terror that it produces by covering their real impressions with imaginary memories of "space brothers" and kindly "guides" who whisper good advice into their psychic ears. A few people, more steeped in religion, appear to screen their visitor memories in ecstatic experiences. I have no doubt that some people have been driven mad by what has happened to them. The fact that so few institutionalized individuals report UFO fantasies makes me wonder if the abduction experience cannot also be screened behind psychosis. There may be people who have preferred insanity to facing the reality of the visitor experience.

There is no clear evidence that we should be as afraid as we evidently are. I have had intimate visitor experience and I am physically unharmed and psychologically enriched. I have experienced an intellectual and spiritual reawakening.

I do not have the faintest idea where the visitor experience — or my life — will now lead. I do know one thing that is true, though. Despite all the difficulty that these encounters involve, they can also be immensely productive, as I have personally discovered.

I have made extensive efforts to assess my own state of mind, because I feel that it is very important that people reading *Communion* should be reassured that I am sane, and not a liar. I have taken psychological tests. I have had a CAT scan and a test for temporal lobe epilepsy, as well as been given a neurological examination and a thorough physical. What has happened to me cannot be a "temporal lobe transient" because it is too protracted. I

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have taken a lie detector test, administered by a leading polygraphist. The net result of all this is that I am sane, that I do not have any disorder of the brain, that I am healthy and that I am not lying.

When I wrote *Communion*, I was uncertain about what the visitors were. I was sure only that they represented some sort of absolutely extraordinary experience. Now I know a tiny bit more about them, but it is still very, very little. I have read extensively in the literature of the UFO experience, and I do not believe that anybody knows much more about who they are than I do.

I would like to say at this point a few words about *Communion*. It is a true story, as true as I have been able to make it. The book ends with a statement from Dr. Donald Klein that makes it completely clear that he believes me to be sane. This is followed by the results of my lie detector test.

The book created a large amount of excitement in the publishing

community, and was sold in just a few days. Even though the book was sent to thirteen publishers, there was no "auction." I sold it to an editor I have known for ten years. Neither my agent nor I expected the warmth of the reception it received.

I have been a bestselling author for some time and the *Communion* selling price was not a sudden bonanza for me, as my tax returns will confirm. I wish it to be understood that — in context with my previous earnings — I did not receive an astronomical amount of money for the book.

To write *Communion* I put aside another project for which I could easily have been offered a similar sum.

I mention this because I am aware of the existence of the vociferous "skeptical" community and I want to make it difficult for them to attack my good intentions or my honesty. The visitor experience is very important — even sacred — to humanity, and it is past time that the debunkers abandoned their nihilistic and absurdist position and started applying their

talents to a more realistic and honest approach to the question of the UFO.

Had it not been for the many dedicated MUFON members who have offered me their expertise and support, I do not think that I could have ever understood the least bit of what was happening to me.

I can only say thank you to every member for your courage in keeping your study alive despite the ridicule that has been heaped upon you by the fearful, the confused and the culpable. Had you not cared so much about the truth — or simply been a darned curious, refreshingly clear-minded and fairly stubborn bunch of people — I do not know where I would have turned for the knowledge and understanding that have sustained me.

It will be an honor to join MUFON.

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## POST ABDUCTION SYNDROME

By Dr. Ron Westrum

**Dr. Ron Westrum is an associate professor of sociology at Eastern Michigan University and a MUFON consultant in sociology.**

In the paper that follows, I am going to describe some common symptoms of what appears to be post-abduction disturbance in certain kinds of UFO witnesses. We could define a UFO abduction case as follows:

A. An individual has a period of time for which he or she is amnesic.

B. Under hypnosis or sometimes without it, the individual can recall an abduction or direct intervention by UFO aliens during the missing time period.

C. After the event the individual's psychological state shows the effects of a repressed traumatic experience. In this article I will attempt to deal with these post-event thoughts and feelings.

My interest in UFO abductions began with a case that I just couldn't

seem to make sense of, a case that I was ready to discard because the pieces did not fit together. I had been alerted by a reporter from the *National Enquirer* about a case that occurred in a small settlement near Toledo, and I called the woman in question, got in my car and set off. When I reached the woman's home, I listened while she talked virtually non-stop for eight hours, through the dinner hour (without dinner), and into the late evening. She paced around the kitchen table, narrating one event after another, and the phrase "bouncing off the walls" would easily apply to her manner. I have never seen anyone this wired, and I just couldn't seem to pin down what was causing the intense arousal and anxiety. Every star or airplane in the sky seemed to be a UFO for this lady, and after a second interview, I gave the case to someone else in frustration.

The woman, Ellecia, called me about a month later to check on the

qualifications of another investigator, female this time, with whom she had begun working. I called the new investigator and discovered that she was not only competent, but had done a much better job than I had of unraveling the case. The hyperkinetic pacing, the total distraction, the poltergeist experiences which Ellecia was going through were due to two close encounter experiences, one in her childhood and one a month before I interviewed her.

The investigator, Iris Maack, had put Ellecia under hypnosis and had managed as a result to resolve not only what had happened to her but also relieve many of Ellecia's anxieties. When I next met Ellecia, I discovered a totally different person, more relaxed, more confident and possessing a very earthy sense of humor.

Ellecia was only the first of a number of people with whom I have  
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