

BUDD HOPKINS' "MOST IMPORTANT" UFO-ABDUCTION CASE BACKFIRES--EXPOSING CREDULITY IN ACCEPTING TALL TALES:

When Budd Hopkins, chief guru of the "UFO-Abduction" movement, first went public in mid-June with the Linda Cortile (pseudonym) case at a UFO-abduction study conference in Cambridge, Mass., he proclaimed that "it powerfully supports both the objective reality of UFO abductions and the accuracy of regressive hypnosis..." The reason, Hopkins claimed, was that four witnesses had seen Linda being floated through the window of her 12th floor apartment in lower Manhattan along with three ETs and beamed up to a giant UFO hovering overhead. The witnesses, according to Hopkins, were "two security agents and the important official they were guarding as well as a woman driving across the Brooklyn Bridge." [See SUN-16/July 1992]

Hopkins provided a much more detailed account of the incident on July 11 at the MUFON UFO Conference in Albuquerque after which Linda herself--an attractive woman in her mid/late 30s--made her first public appearance to answer questions. When the session was over, one attendee commented to SUN: "If Linda offered to sell Budd the Brooklyn Bridge for \$29.95, he'd not only buy it but would ask if the Queens Midtown Tunnel was also available." There were other skeptics among the several hundred persons who heard Hopkins' tale. Following are the highlights of this bizarre case, as recounted by Hopkins at the MUFON conference--plus important information which Hopkins opted not to disclose.

In April, 1989 Hopkins said he received a letter from Linda saying that while reading his book "Intruders" she recalled a small bump near her nose which she suspected might be an "implant" from a UFO-abduction. She met with Hopkins and was invited to attend his monthly meetings of "abductees." On Nov. 30, 1989, Linda called Hopkins to describe how she had been abducted shortly after 3 o'clock that morning by three ETs who "floated her out the window" of her 12th floor apartment into a "blue beam" that transported her into a giant UFO hovering overhead. Hopkins said he found Linda's tale interesting, but added that he "thought nothing more about it (because) it was just so similar to so many other cases."

Hopkins might have paid more attention to Linda's story if she had thought to tell him that her six-year-old son also had been abducted two months earlier and "beamed up" to a hovering UFO, but she seemingly forgot to mention that incident until some time later.

In fact, Linda's abduction tale was unique in one respect which Hopkins withheld from his MUFON audience: she claimed that after she had been beamed aboard the UFO, it had dived into the East River. While under the water, Linda claimed she saw the wreckage of an aircraft known to have crashed into the East River many years ago. Despite this unique twist, for the next 15 months, Hopkins said he "went on with many other [abduction] cases." This changed dramatically in February 1991 when Hopkins received a letter "from two people who signed their names with their first names (only)--Richard and Dan--police officers." The letter, which would make Linda the "Queen-Bee of Abductees," began:

"We have decided we have to talk to somebody about what we saw back in November of 1989 [i.e. 15 months earlier]. We can't live with ourselves. We were under cover under the FDR (Franklin D. Roosevelt) drive in late November between 3 and 3:30 a.m. Dan was unwrapping a piece of chewing gum and in the reflected silver wrapper was some kind of orange glow and [he] looked up and saw a couple blocks away this very large object..." With the aid binoculars, the letter said the two men saw three "strange figures" and a "young woman in a white gown" floating through an apartment window, then transported up a blue beam to the UFO. Then, Hopkins said, "the UFO moved down towards them and crossed over the FDR drive and...plunged into the East River..."

"We have to find her. We can't live with the guilt of having done nothing. We have to know is she [i.e. Linda] alive, is she well. What happened? We had to tell somebody. We came upon your name and we decided we had to write this letter and we feel better for having done it."

Hopkins (seemingly) never questioned why two police officers would not promptly report that some sort of craft had plunged into the East River so that rescue operations could be quickly launched. If "Richard" and "Dan" did not know whether Linda had survived, how would they know Hopkins was even aware of the incident and in contact with her? The letter said: *"We have to talk to her to see how she is. And we will find her because we know which window she came out of and which building she lived in."* IF "RICHARD" AND "DAN" HAD CAREFULLY NOTED AND STILL REMEMBERED THE WINDOW LINDA FLOATED OUT OF, WHY HAD THEY NOT GONE TO HER APARTMENT DIRECTLY WITHOUT CONTACTING HOPKINS??

Hopkins said he called Linda to tell her that "you're going to receive a visit from these two policemen," and read her the letter. [According to an unconfirmed report from a source close to Hopkins, he rushed over to Linda's apartment with a bottle of champagne to celebrate, and told her she would become famous as the centerpiece of his next book.] Hopkins said he told Linda to tell the men to contact him so he could interview them. A few days later Linda called to say she had just been visited by the two men who seemingly found her apartment without any guidance from Hopkins. Linda said "Richard" told her: "You don't know how important it is for us to know that you're O.K." Linda said she asked the two men to call Hopkins but they refused. So Linda asked them to record their recollections of the UFO-abduction on a tape cassette, which they agreed to do if they could read from a written statement. Several weeks later, Hopkins received the tape, which he played for the MUFON audience. The audience heard one monotone male voice reading a prepared "script" with no evidence of emotion. [Hopkins admitted that he has never met either "Dan" or "Richard."]

Before playing the tape for the MUFON audience, Hopkins admitted that "many things changed about this case...They at first said they WERE POLICE OFFICERS. THEY WERE NOT POLICE OFFICERS." Later, Hopkins revealed that because "Dan" and "Richard" refused to contact him, he had tried to locate them through the New York Police Dept. (NYPD). But he had discovered that NYPD had no officers named Dan or Richard who matched Linda's descriptions or who had been on duty near her apartment on Nov. 30 at roughly 3:15 a.m.

After Hopkins informed Linda that he could not locate "Dan" and "Richard" within the NYPD, he received another letter--from "Dan"--admitting that he and "Richard" were not policemen, as originally claimed, but were "security agents" who had been guarding a "very important person"--whom they refer to as the "Third Man" or "Third Party." The "new version" was that they had been driving this VIP down to a helicopter pad in lower Manhattan when "all of a sudden our car started to die for no apparent reason." [Seemingly, the presence of the UFO two blocks away had caused their car to stall.] The letter said that "Richard had to ask the Third Man to lie down [in the back seat] so as not to be seen, at least not until we got the car started again. The third party had a sense of humor about it. He told us he wouldn't say anything about it if his escorts didn't and we all laughed...The Third Man saw everything that we saw...After the incident occurred and the object with Linda was nowhere to be found, the Third Party became hysterical." According to the letter, "The Third Party has been suffering guilt in the same way...and he's very happy that she's alive. He wanted to know everything about it. We had to check it out [with Linda] and tell him."

During the MUFON talk, Hopkins said: "We know the identity of the Third Man. I've received a letter from him, signed 'The Third Man.' I've been able to check on his identity in another way and it is clear far beyond a shadow of a doubt."

Hopkins reportedly believes "The Third Man" is: Javier Perez de Cuellar, who in late 1989 was Secretary General of the United Nations.

The UN Secretary General is accompanied by two regularly assigned security guards wherever he travels. But neither of them matches up with Linda's descriptions of "Richard" and "Dan." During the MUFON talk, Hopkins said "I've spent time in the Secret Service office in New York [but did not explain. He suspects "Dan" and "Richard" are Secret Service agents]. I've been dealing with security people who've been with the British delegation at the United Nations." ["Dan/Richard" reportedly now claim that two additional cars accompanied theirs--one from the British UN delegation and the other from the Yemen delegation.]

INTERESTING THINGS (allegedly) HAPPEN TO LINDA:

Midway in Hopkins' MUFON talk, he said that "a few interesting things have happened to Linda." SHORTLY AFTER LINDA (ALLEGEDLY) WAS VISITED BY "DAN" AND "RICHARD" BECAUSE OF THEIR GREAT CONCERN FOR HER WELL-BEING, SHE CLAIMS THE TWO MEN KIDNAPPED HER IN BROAD DAYLIGHT AS SHE WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET NEAR HER APARTMENT. Inside their car, Linda said she was subjected to intense interrogation. According to Hopkins, the two men asked Linda: "Do you work for the Government? Is this [UFO-abduction incident] some kind of Government thing? Is this some kind of trick, is this some kind of hoax you're pulling on us?" Hopkins said Linda assured the two men she was only a housewife and did not work for the Government. Then, Linda said they asked her questions such as: "What went on inside [the UFO]? What did they [ETs] look like? What makes the thing go--what are their motors like? What did they tell you?" Then, Hopkins said, "they got to the really tough question: Linda, do you think they saw us?"

At one point during the interrogation, Hopkins said, "Linda was forced to take off her shoes so they ["Dan/Richard"] could examine her bare feet. We found out what that meant a long time later--because I'm only telling you the beginning of this story. The reason they had to look at her feet was because they had this on-going fear that maybe she was one of them [i.e. that Linda herself was an ET.] As they said in [one] letter, THEY KNOW WHAT ALIEN FEET LOOK LIKE AND THEY DON'T HAVE TOES."

HOPKINS DID NOT TELL HIS MUFON AUDIENCE SOME OF THE MORE BIZARRE ASPECTS OF LINDA'S CLAIMS OF ALLEGED ABDUCTION BY THE "SECURITY AGENTS." According to SUN's Inside Sources (SIS), Linda told two MUFON investigators that she was kidnapped a second time off the streets of Manhattan by "Dan," who drove her out to a "CIA Safe House" located on the North Shore of Long Island. According to Linda, "Dan" asked her to put on a white nightgown--similar to the one she was wearing when he saw her being beamed up to the UFO. When she did, "Dan" reportedly dropped to his knees and in a religious fervor, called her his "Lady of the Sands." Linda told two MUFON investigators that Dan then tried to kill her but she was saved when "Richard" suddenly appeared to rescue her. [Hopkins said that "Dan" later suffered "a major nervous breakdown." According to SIS, Hopkins received a postcard from "Dan" saying he is in a mental institution. The postcard was mailed from the U.N.]

NEW WITNESS APPEARS--IN THE NICK OF TIME:

In the summer of 1991, after Hopkins had been unable to locate "Dan" or "Richard" (possibly prompting some doubts about Linda's story) a new witness fortuitously appeared on the scene. A woman (who reportedly lives in Connecticut) wrote Hopkins because she had seen him on a TV show and "thought she had to report this to someone." According to the woman's letter, she had been driving over the Brooklyn Bridge at 3:15 a.m. on Nov. 30, 1989, when "my car suddenly stopped and all the lights went out." Fearing she would be "rear-ended" by another car, the woman got out of her car and was surprised to see "that the other cars [on the bridge] were all stopped too." [Presumably the other cars on the bridge were stalled by mysterious emanations from the UFO hovering over Linda's apartment several blocks away.]

Hopkins said the woman's attention was attracted to a large orange-colored object hovering over a building and then she saw "these figures hop out from a window, rolled up like balls...she said she had never seen anything like it. She said, 'I thought they were making a movie and to tell you the truth, Mr. Hopkins, I thought they must be making Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.' She was absolutely terrified. She said that all of a sudden they moved upwards into the craft, disappeared, lights went off...it went over the Brooklyn Bridge" and she couldn't see it any more.

Hopkins ignored the significant discrepancy between Linda's account (and that of "Dan/Richard") that the UFO had plunged INTO the East River and the woman's report that it flew over the Brooklyn Bridge which spans the East River. The woman reported her watch had stopped at 3:16 a.m. While "Dan" and "Richard" reported their car--like the woman's--had stalled mysteriously in the vicinity of the UFO, neither reported his watch had stopped.

If mysterious emanations from the (alleged) UFO were powerful enough to stall the "Dan/Richard" car, the woman's car, and several others on the Brooklyn Bridge, one should expect that many dozens of cars in lower Manhattan would also have experienced mysterious stalling. And that at least a few of these motorists would have reported the incident to one of the New York newspapers. Yet no story describing mysterious car stallings appeared in any of the New York newspapers.

Hopkins showed slides of colored sketches he had received from the woman in Connecticut, showing Linda and the three ETs floating through the window and being beamed up to the UFO. These sketches looked remarkably similar to those which Hopkins said he had received from "Richard." Linda's six-year-old son seemingly recalled his abduction experience well enough to make primitive sketches of the incident, which Hopkins showed, but no sketches attributed to Linda herself were shown. Hopkins did not explain this curious omission nor say when Linda had first informed him of her young son's experience.

LINDA REFUSES TO REPORT HER KIDNAPPING TO POLICE:

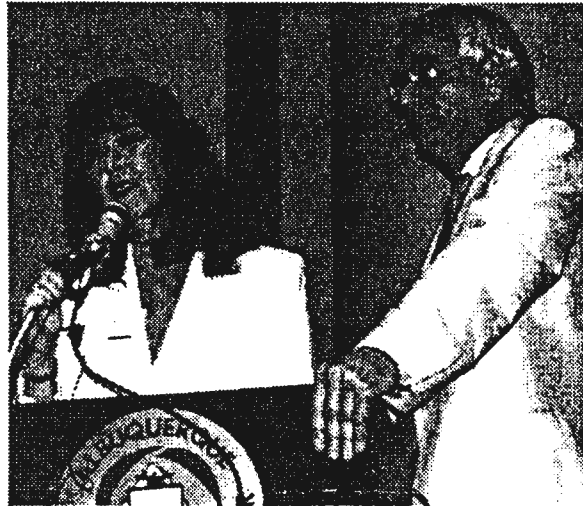
During Linda's brief appearance to answer questions, a man in the audience asked if she had reported her kidnapping by "Richard/Dan" to the police. Linda responded: "The fact remains, in reality, this kidnapping WAS LEGAL because it had to do with National Security." Hopkins commented that while he and Linda "get along wonderfully, I have been pushing Linda to do that very thing [report it to the police]. But Linda was very reluctant to do it." Linda spoke up to explain her refusal: "Surely you didn't (sic) think I would go head-to-head with any Government agency and then maybe they'd find my pieces in the East River. I was literally afraid they were going to chop me up in little pieces and they'd find little bits of me here and there." But Linda expressed no fears of being abducted again by ETs.

After Linda was introduced by Hopkins as a "brave lady," she very modestly pontificated as follows: "I'm not different from any other abductee...the only difference between myself and the others is that I have witnesses--that's all." [SUN comment: In Hopkins' eyes, that's a mighty big difference.] Linda added: "Other abductees must have been seen by other people. Their abductions must have also been witnessed but these people won't come forward, and I can't blame them. People will call them fools, just like we've been portrayed as fools."

During the Q&A session, Hopkins said: "We have very few witnessed abduction cases. It's almost as if somehow [they are] shielded. We don't know how this works. It's very much like how UFOs sometimes show up on radar and sometimes they don't--as if they can somehow switch something on or off...It seems to me that this was a deliberate production on the part of the UFO. They wanted to be seen because of the [prominent] man in the car. Every single thing points, as far as I'm concerned, to this being a kind of STAGED event. Linda, unfortunately, was an unwilling actress in this." [SUN wonders: UNWILLING actress??]

Will the "Third Man" ever publicly confirm that he witnessed the incident? Hopkins said: **"I think, ultimately, he can be persuaded to come forward--which would be a major event. We're hoping this will happen."** [SUN predicts this will not occur until shortly after "Hell freezes over."]

In Hopkins' concluding remarks, he explained why he had opted to go public with the Linda case at this time: "It's important for people having these experiences to know that in fact--in this one case for sure--based on lots more physical evidence than I've presented, this is a physically real thing." Hopkins said he wanted UFO-abduction researchers "to know that year after year after year we are making solid progress in unraveling these mysteries. We are able to go forward to the skeptics with evidence that is getting solidier (sic) by the minute."



Linda "Cortile" (pseudonym)--the new "Queen-Bec of Abductees"--made her first public appearance at MUFON's recent conference in Albuquerque where Budd Hopkins described and endorsed her bizarre story.

Hopkins Rejects Warnings About Linda's Tale:

When Hopkins had difficulty in locating "Richard/Dan," two pro-UFOlogists volunteered to help: **Joseph J. Stefula**, MUFON's State Director for New Jersey, and his deputy, **Rich Butler**. Stefula had worked with the NYPD during his earlier years in the Army's Criminal Investigation Div. Butler, who earlier served in the Air Force Security Police, was invited and attended some of Hopkins' monthly meetings of "abductees" where he first met Linda.

Stefula and Butler had two multi-hour interviews with Linda--one last fall and again this past April. **Both noted many disturbing discrepancies in Linda's story and the language used by "Richard/Dan" which they shared with Hopkins but which he chose to ignore.** Recently, after hearing Hopkins' talk in Albuquerque, Stefula and Butler asked to meet with Hopkins to discuss their concerns. Hopkins insisted that they first submit them in writing, which they did. Then, according to Butler, Hopkins called and dismissed the issues raised as "silly, preposterous" and refused to meet with the two men **until after his new book had been submitted to the publisher.** According to Stefula, when he and Butler interviewed Linda in April, she reportedly told him that Hopkins had agreed to a 50/50 split of the proceeds of his planned book and possible movie rights.

CURIOUS COINCIDENCE?

Recently, New Jersey MUFON member **Vince Creevy** chanced to buy a science-fiction book titled "Nighteyes," authored by **Garfield Reeves-Stevens**, whose plot centers on a woman named Sarah and her daughter Wendy, who are abducted from their Manhattan apartment and beamed up to a UFO hovering overhead. This prompts them to contact a leading UFO-abduction expert who lives in New York City--where Hopkins lives. Later, Wendy is abducted by two Government (FBI) agents and taken to a CIA "Safe House" on Long Island, as Linda claims. Creevy, noting the similarity of the book's plot to Linda's account, brought the book to the attention of Butler and Stefula--because of their intimate familiarity with Linda's tale. **Butler and Stefula discovered many more similarities.**

BY A CURIOUS COINCIDENCE, THIS SCIENCE-FICTION BOOK "NIGHTEYES" WAS PUBLISHED IN APRIL 1989--SEVEN MONTHS BEFORE LINDA FIRST INFORMED HOPKINS OF HER ABDUCTION EXPERIENCE.

SUN acknowledges that there is a possible "prosaic" explanation for this remarkable similarity. During Hopkins' Albuquerque talk he noted that "there's a psychic dimension obviously to every UFO experience." Perhaps Hopkins will explain away the similarities by suggesting that the author of "Nighteyes" is clairvoyant and thus could foresee Linda's future UFO-abduction and her subsequent kidnapping by Government agents.

If Hopkins publishes a book and sells movie rights on the Linda case it could raise the legal question of possible plagiarism. SUN wonders whether Hopkins will be able to get "Dan," "Richard," the "Third Man" and "Brooklyn Bridge woman" to testify under oath.

Pro-UFOlogist Obstetrician Challenges Missing Fetus Claims:

The cornerstone of Budd Hopkins' UFO-abduction hypothesis is that ETs are engaged in an extraterrestrial cross-breeding experiment in which young girls are impregnated with ET sperm and several months later the ETs return to remove the embryo for transplant to an ET female. In Hopkins' book "Intruders," he cites a number of examples of "disappearing pregnancy" to support this hypothesis.

Hopkins' claims were sharply challenged at the recent MUFON conference by Dr. Richard M. Neal, a practicing obstetrician/gynecologist (and long-time pro-UFOlogist). Dr. Neal said he had "personally researched three [disappearing pregnancy] cases in Southern California; however, each one can be explained as a [prosaic] complication from pregnancy not associated with any alien intervention." Dr. Neal discussed a variety of possible prosaic explanations for "disappearing pregnancy" reports.

He noted that Eddie Bullard's extensive review of UFO-abduction reports failed to show any cases involving "disappearing pregnancy" until around 1987--when "Intruders" was published. Without mentioning Hopkins by name, or his principal deputy David Jacobs, Dr. Neal said: "Why do some of our top researchers say they have numerous cases in their files related to Missing Embryo/Fetus Syndrome, yet they fail to produce anything that can be investigated or documented when questioned thoroughly?"

SUN's editor was unable to attend Neal's lecture on Sunday (due to prior commitment to attend an international aviation communications satellite conference in Montreal) but I assumed that Hopkins would attend because Neal's paper (printed in the conference proceedings) so sharply challenged the cornerstone of Hopkins' theories. I called Dr. Neal on Aug. 8 to ask if Hopkins had attended and challenged any of his statements. Neal replied that he did not know if Hopkins heard his talk. He said about a dozen people had come up to talk with him after his lecture, but Hopkins was not among them. When Dr. Neal was asked if he had heard from Hopkins during the intervening month, Neal said he had not.

Photo-Analyst Gives Qualified Endorsement of Ed Walters UFO Photos:

Jeff W. Sainio, MUFON's State Director for Wisconsin, provided MUFON conference attendees a useful "short-course" in analysis of UFO photos, pointing out important clues for spotting hoaxes. Sainio's lecture included a report on his computer analysis of some of the Ed Walters UFO photos. To the surprise of at least some in the audience (including SUN's editor), Sainio said he could not find any anomalies in any Walters photos which proved they were a hoax or which prompted his suspicion that they might be.

The problem with some of Sainio's Gulf Breeze photo analyses is that when he finds an anomaly and cannot readily deduce how it could have been created by an ingenious hoaxer or lucky accident, he concludes that a miraculous unknown ET technology is responsible. In some instances he depends on "after-the-fact" explanations by Ed Walters. (Photos used by Sainio in his analyses were supplied by Bruce S. Maccabee and the "Gulf Breeze Research Team" (GBRT)--who have strongly endorsed the authenticity of the Walters UFO photos.)

Sainio expressed doubts that the Red-light UFOs (RUFOS) that are so often sighted near Gulf Breeze at night--especially when a TV crew is on hand--could be balloon-borne emergency road flares. His doubts are based principally on spectral analysis of photos of a RUFO and a road flare provided by GBRT. Both the RUFO and road flare have intense emission in the red part of the spectrum, with lower emissions in the green and blue. However, with the road flare, the green emission was brighter than the blue whereas the reverse was true for the RUFO. [Sainio failed to mention that even Maccabee has admitted that there were a "couple cases" where ground observers "could in fact see the balloon holding a flare," as reported in SUN-12/Nov. 1991. Sainio is a SUN subscriber.]

IF some Gulf Breeze RUFOS are ET craft and ETs have discovered that hoaxers are flying balloon-borne flares near Gulf Breeze, conceivably ETs intentionally outfit their craft with red flares so that observers will think they are only hoaxes. If so, perhaps ETs manufacture their "decoy" flares using a different casing material which emits more strongly in the blue part of the spectrum. [Another possible explanation which Sainio fails to consider is that the person(s) flying balloon-borne flares knew in advance that GBRT planned to take spectral photos and therefore dipped the flare casing in a chemical that would alter its emission to make it appear slightly different than an off-the-shelf road flare.]

In the printed copy of Sainio's talk, published in the conference proceedings, he wrote: "Within a week (this is the beginning of May), I hope to receive a photo [that was] witnessed by 50-odd people, showing a UFO 'strikingly like' Ed Walters' photos." Two months later, when Sainio spoke in Albuquerque, he did not discuss this photo.

Sainio noted that it is more difficult to create UFO hoaxes in video which has the added advantage of providing another dimension--time. He reported on his analysis of "an impressive video" taken in broad daylight on Mar. 13, 1992 by a Green Bay, Wisc., TV newsman--David Hooker. The UFO was not noted until the video later was viewed in the studio. Based on the "known elevation and distance" of a windmill visible in the foreground, and the 25,000 ft. height of the clouds which periodically obscured the object, Sainio calculated that the "UFO" was moving at approximately 14,000 mph. Sainio ventured no possible prosaic explanation.

Based on the UFO's appearance in several not-very-good quality individual frame enlargements published in the proceedings, and Sainio's calculated speed, SUN speculates that the object might have been a meteor-fireball enveloped in the usual sheath of plasma.

Sainio concluded his paper by predicting that "the proliferation of low-cost, high-quality camcorders will revolutionize the quantity and quality of UFO physical evidence." SUN would rephrase his prediction: If ET craft are making hundreds of visits to Earth every year, as suggested by the number of UFO sighting reports, with many millions of home camcorders now in use we should soon expect to have many authentic videos showing craft-like objects.

Sainio's background and expertise is in computer enhancement rather than in photogrammetry--the specialty of William Hyzer whose analysis prompted him to conclude that at least some of the Walters photos are hoaxes [See SUN-15/May 1992] While Sainio is clearly a "pro-UFOlogist," he graciously accepts challenges and questions on his work. This suggests that Sainio can make an important contribution to UFOlogy.

Spanish Air Force To Release UFO Files

The Spanish Air Force recently announced plans to declassify and release all UFO reports it has collected since 1962. The announcement came from Lt. Col. Angel Bastida, during a recent four-day conference on UFOs, sponsored by Universidad Complutense de Madrid at one of the University's many summer "short-courses," held in El Escorial, about 30 miles outside Madrid. The Air Force action resulted from prodding by a respected Spanish UFOlogist, Vicente-Juan Ballester, which he began in 1984. Lt. Col. Bastida said the Spanish Air Force has accumulated a total of 66 UFO case files during the past 30 years--oran average of roughly two per year. [Clearly Spain its not as popular a tourist attraction for ETs as Gulf Breeze.] Of the 66 cases, 13 involved "radar sightings" and in seven instances aircraft were scrambled to investigate.

Bastida indicated that there might be some minor censoring of military reports if their contents revealed capabilities, or shortcomings, of military aircraft or radar which are considered militarily sensitive, or if non-military personnel who made reports do not want their names made public. Because the review of the 66 UFO case files has a low priority, they are not expected to be released until mid/late 1993. During the question/answer session that followed Bastida's presentation, some UFOlogists challenged the modest number of UFO cases in Spanish Air Force files and harshly charged "cover-up." At one point Bastida commented: "The Air Force is not as interested in UFOs as some of you here."

Featured speaker at the four-day UFO conference was Erik von Daniken, who achieved fame more than a decade ago with his "ancient astronaut" books. The UFO conference was organized by a well-known Spanish writer who specializes in the "paranormal"--Juan Jose Benitez. In addition to papers on "ancient anstronauts" where were presentations on "apparitions" and the Miracle of Fatima. When University officials belatedly discovered that Benitez had selected speakers who would present only one side of the UFO controversy--and a very "far out" side at that--they attempted to get him to include a few Spanish UFO-skeptics, but he refused.

So the University then scheduled a separate several-hour UFO-skeptics roundtable, chaired by Dr. Miguel Angel Alario y Franco a member of the University's science faculty. Speakers included Dr. Felix Ares, chairman of a Spanish skeptics group (A.R.P.); his deputy, Dr. Javier Armentia, an astrophysicist; and SUN's Editor.

Short Shrift: Old UFO-Abduction Tales don't fade away (like famous military officers)-- they're made into Hollywood movies. Travis Walton's 1975 tale reportedly is slated for release early next year, with a script written by Tracy Torme, who has long wanted to make a movie on the subject. Torme was the co-writer of the recent CBS-TV "Intruders" mini-series dealing with UFO-abductions with a "crashed saucer" thrown in for good measure. Also the 1973 "abduction" of Charlie Hickson and Calvin Parker (Pascagoula) reportedly is destined for movie immortality, according to an article in the July 24 edition of the Biloxi Sun Herald. At a press conference, Midge Sonderbergh, of Baton Rouge, announced that shooting on the \$10 million film--titled "Snatched"--was slated to begin this month and the film was to be released in January. (A very optimistic timetable.) Screenplay is to be written by Ed Conroy, who authored a book purporting to be an independent evaluation of claims of UFO abduction made by Whitley Strieber in his best-seller "Communion." Not until the last chapter of Conroy's book did he inform readers that he believes he too is an abductee.

 NOTE: Opinions expressed in SUN are those of its Editor, unless otherwise noted, and do not necessarily represent the views of any organizations with which he is affiliated--or his spouse. Thanks to Dr. Gary Posner for help in proof-reading.

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