

# Deconstructing The Debunkers: A Response

By Budd Hopkins,  
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I

Probably no one seriously involved in investigating UFO reports has escaped the hydra-headed debunking machine and its many busy attendants. It's long been understood that debunking and skepticism are two very different things, the former, an artifact of rigid ideology and the latter an objective, scientifically-inclined position. At the outset of any investigation of a UFO incident, the skeptic can accept the case as possibly legitimate or reject it as possibly a hoax or a misunderstanding or whatever, but the debunker has only one fixed option; he/she knows that the incident, whatever it was, could not have involved a genuine UFO. This rigid stance is akin to a kind of quasi-religious fundamentalism, and in my paper I intend to examine the various tenets of such true-believer negativity.

The reason I'm writing this article at this point in my life has to do with both health and age. I am about to celebrate (?) my 80th birthday and currently suffer from two almost certainly fatal diseases, so I've decided, while I still have the time and energy, to do a bit of deconstruction of the nature and habits of the debunking mindset. Also, along the way I hope that my piece will provide a little helpful information for those who, like me, are involved in the serious investigation of the UFO abduction phenomenon. As an armature on which to hang my comments, I have selected a debunking article which appeared recently, written, surprisingly, by my ex-wife, Carol Rainey. Though readers may find her authorship either irrelevant or curiously suggestive, the debunking piece she produced admirably illustrates many of my points.

II

Within the wide-ranging areas of UFO research, various subjects lead to different types of study: for example, the legitimacy of government cover-up issues might be resolved by a careful study of the layout and style of purported secret documents, and, in testing the veracity of alleged UFO photographs, many technical avenues of examination present themselves. The physical records of UFO sightings, radar cases and so on also lend themselves to objective, scientific study so we are not helpless in our quest to discover the truth about certain kinds of evidence. But rather than these categories of UFO cases, Ms. Rainey has chosen UFO abduction reports to use in challenging decades of work by many serious researchers, myself included, and it is here that she finds herself with a few different, but quite legitimate, problems. If scientific analysis can detect flaws in purported UFO photographs or government documents, thus settling the issue, how do debunkers such as she dismiss various detailed reports of accounts that may describe years-old incidents? She finds herself with one basic avenue of attack: if it is either a single witness account or one with supporting witnesses, a

committed debunker will disparage the event as a hoax, which, we will see, is her chosen method. Thus she says that the “marshy ground [of abduction accounts] is afloat in hoaxes and partial hoaxes,” thereby suggesting that thousands of those who, over the years have reported such experiences were liars.

Let me say at the outset that, unlike the all too common hoaxing of UFO documents and photos, abduction hoaxes, among the thousands of abduction reports I’m aware of, are extraordinarily rare, and for a number of reasons. First, a hoaxing abductee must lie and perform convincingly, over and over again, to the investigators, with no sense that any reward will necessarily accrue. Second, there are often additional witnesses who buttress the account, partly because a large percentage of UFO abductions originally involve more than a single individual. Third, hoaxers must be very assured of the truthful details of their carefully memorized “hoaxed” accounts, lest they be tripped up with the false leads which I often utilize in my interviews. As Mark Twain once said, always telling the truth means never having to remember anything.

But there is a genuine problem area for abduction researchers. In my experience, investigators are often contacted by people who show signs of mental illness but who may at the same time be telling the truth about their purported abductions. We refer such people to mental health professionals for treatment, and their (possible) abductions are tabled. But it is this group - those who are suffering from some form of psychological illness - who make the job of the investigator more difficult, rather than the mythical pile of numberless hoaxers that Ms. Rainey prefers to imagine.

### III

One of the basic debunking ploys one encounters is the marshalling of mainstream scientific opinion against UFO reports of every kind. Example: a trained military pilot, or perhaps several pilots flying in formation, sight a UFO at close range in bright daylight. A debunker, determined to explain the sighting away, brings in a credentialed astronomer who informs the public that distances are so great in outer space that ‘you can’t get here from there,’ and that therefore the pilots all must have made the same misidentification, of, perhaps, the planet Venus. So, the debunker may assert, who are these eyewitness pilots anyway, when measured against a mighty astronomer with a Ph.D. degree who never saw what the pilots saw and may never have felt the need to interview them?

Similarly, in the debunking paper I’ve been describing, the writer employs the weight of mainstream, conservative science against those reporting abduction experiences. To buttress her case she brings in a man who holds a Ph.D. degree, one Tyler A. Kokjohn, to cast official doubt on those who report UFO abductions. However I was astounded that in this context the name of John Mack is never mentioned. Not once. Obviously, Dr. Mack, who was a Pulitzer prize winner, an M.D., a Harvard psychiatrist, and the author of two books on UFO abductions, ‘outranks’ Tyler A. Kokjohn, so Ms. Rainey perhaps felt it best to delete Dr. Mack’s name and credentials from her piece and hope that we’ve forgotten him. Perhaps she has also forgotten a fact that I mentioned several times in her hearing, that I had worked with six psychiatrists who had come to me about their own, personal UFO abduction experiences.

## IV

If, as I've suggested, Ms. Rainey chooses to believe that a multitude of those reporting abductions are liars, what happens when a single abduction report has many independent witnesses, such as the Travis Walton case (1975) and the Linda Cortile case (1989)? Well, for these cases to be debunked, as she attempts clumsily to do in her piece, she says that Linda Cortile, as in the multitude of single witness cases, has to be a hoaxer too, and though she takes a pass on Travis Walton, her logic demands that both absolutely have to be labeled as hoaxes, involving, say, five, ten, twenty or more participants or witnesses who must be conniving together and whose stories have remained consistent over decades. I worked from 1989 until the publication of my book *Witnessed* in 1996 - seven long years - on the Linda Cortile case, during which I uncovered over a score of witnesses to one or another aspect of this dramatic incident. One key witness, driving across the Brooklyn Bridge at 3:00 am, was stunned to see the UFO, blazing with light, above Linda's building, and, floating in midair, a white-clad female and three diminutive figures rising up toward the craft. She sent me a letter and several drawings to illustrate what she saw, and I ultimately spoke to her and a relative on the phone and drove to her hometown in upstate New York. We met at a restaurant and I tape-recorded a fascinating first-hand account of what she saw that night.

A second eyewitness described the glowing UFO above Linda's building as she and a friend drove down the nearby FDR drive. When we met she brought a swatch of scarlet, metallic Christmas wrapping paper to illustrate the color of the glowing craft, a red tone which matched two sets of colored drawings I had received from other witnesses. She also sketched the simple architectural details of the structure concealing the water tank atop the building and very close to the hovering UFO.

A third woman, a more indirect witness who lived in Linda's apartment complex, awoke and glanced out her window because the normally shadowed courtyard was flooded with light from above. She was able to date the incident perfectly because it was her husband's birthday, and she said she was almost paralyzed when she looked at the lighted courtyard. I spent time in her apartment and was able to see the view she had that frightening night.

I interviewed the three people I've described above, face-to-face, as well as all of the other witnesses to various later aspects of the case; the two security agents in the account are the only two witnesses I've never met face to face, yet I have received from them many letters and I have, as well, both their voices on audiotape. (Neither was willing to come forward, due to security issues involving their positions.) And in yet another important interview with one of the most central figures in the case I spoke at length to the so-called Third Man,' (Chapter 32 in *Witnessed*) in a VIP lounge at O'Hare airport.

I am discussing all of these face-to-face interviews because our writer, straining to turn this entire case and all its witnesses into a collection of hoaxers, stated the following: that though Hopkins received "letters, audiotapes, telephone calls, and drawings," he had "never come face-to-face with any of the major players in the story" [my emphasis]. What are we to make of that statement? A slip of the pen? An outright fabrication? (Fabrication is a nice way of saying 'lie.')

A need to hire a fact checker in her future musings? Clearly she wants to present me as an incompetent investigator, so she makes no mention of my contacts with the NYPD, the US Secret Service, the State Department, the UN Police Force, the British and Russian delegations to the UN, and so on. It's as if she never read *Witnessed*, a book which she claims to have edited! In an interesting aside, two of the eyewitnesses reported independently that their first thought was that they were seeing a special effects, sci-fi movie being filmed, an image which demonstrates just how dramatic this very short-lived incident appeared to them.

Now I am surely here not going to re-write my four-hundred page book, and I feel there is no need to defend the case any further. After so many years, neither it nor the Travis Walton case requires any more support. And if the reader has any remaining doubts about the Linda Cortile case, please reread my book. As a final note, I should mention that one of the crucial witnesses in the case was Linda's son Johnny, nine years old at the time of his involvement. His role is of extraordinary importance because of an incident in which he dealt face to face with the Third Man. (If a reader wishes to learn - or recall - the full text of the complicated story, please consult Chapters 25 and 26 in *Witnessed*).

When Johnny told me over the phone what he had experienced, I went to the Cortile apartment that afternoon to interview him in person, but first I made some preparations. Without telling either Linda or Johnny I clipped the similarly posed photos of 19 businessmen out of old Business Sections of the Times and added a related photo I had of the Third Man. After I interviewed Johnny I told him that I had some pictures that I wanted him to look at to see which ones, if any, resembled the man he'd dealt with. I used the term 'resembled' so Johnny would not expect to see an actual photo of the subject. His father had a small video camera, and I asked him to tape the inquiry.

Johnny entered into the photo game with smiling excitement, as if he were participating in a real-life police drama. I instructed him to make two piles - one of pictures which did not resemble the Third Man, and another of those which did, even if perhaps only a little. I had put the Third Man's photo close to the end, and as I went through the 20, one by one, he had found three or four which somewhat resembled the man he's conversed with. But when I got to the actual picture, he said, "Wait a minute...now that looks more like him. Maybe that's him...yeah, maybe that's him."

The videotape of this identification shows that Johnny never once glanced inquiringly at his mother, desperate for clues; he behaved exactly like a nine-year old involved excitingly in a real-life police procedural. Everything that he said and did that day was, to me, limpidly honest and direct.

Obviously, either Johnny's behavior and testimony had been unerringly memorized and he had been professionally coached by his mother, or he was simply telling the truth. Logic demands that if he'd been forced into a more than twenty-person hoax, his mother would have thereby handed him an enormous Damocles sword to hold over her head for the rest of her life. For any reader with a nine-year-old, think about what that would mean: "Do what I want, Mommy, or I'll tell on you!"

Finally, remember that the little boy in the recent 'balloon hoax' accidentally spilled the beans the same day as the incident.

## V

Now to bring up another aspect of the debunking mindset, there is the "tail wagging the dog" device in which any trivial piece of 'disconfirming evidence' is adduced to supposedly refute the mass of supporting evidence. This device is used frequently, not because it is persuasive but in the hope that it may plant a doubt in the reader's mind about the case.

Example: One evening in 1973, in Pascagoula, Mississippi, two friends, Charlie Hickson and Calvin Parker went fishing. A UFO landed near their pier, they were paralyzed and taken aboard. After they had been returned and the UFO departed, the terrified men went to the police to report their experience. Put in the interrogation room, the officers left to 'get them some coffee,' after switching on a hidden recorder. The police fully expected them to whisper about how their 'hoax' was working, but when they later played the tape, one of the men was praying and both were lost in the terror of the moment. The police officers, as well as Dr. J. Allen Hynek the next day, stated that the two had truly experienced something traumatic; there was no possibility that they had invented the story and were just consummate actors.

Other evidence in the case surfaced, including an eyewitness to the UFO as it sped away. I will not dwell more on this incident, the 'dog,' in my homely metaphor, except to describe the 'tail' that a debunker presented. Some distance away is a drawbridge which contained a small room where the man in charge sits and listens for toots from boats wishing to have him open the bridge. (There are few at night.) But because this man apparently didn't witness the abduction - Was he napping? Looking out the wrong window in the wrong direction? Reading? Watching TV? Whatever he was doing, since he hadn't seen the UFO, it proved to the debunker that the incident never happened. This flimsy little tail was wagging a very substantial dog. And oh, yes, sometime later Hickson requested, and passed, a polygraph test.

Reading her piece I realize that Ms. Rainey is a master at introducing such scrawny, tail-wags-the-dog details in her attack on Linda Cortile. An example is this beauty: "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." Really? Has our author never done the same, in the same situation? I certainly have, because an invented family excuse often seems easier on the caller's ego than telling him the truth: I don't want to see you, or I'm too busy to bother, or something similarly dismissive. Does an anecdote like this - the scrawniest of dog tails, deserve even to be recorded?

There are more such tail-wagging-the dog attempts in her piece, but in the face of the masses of evidence supporting Linda's veracity, they do not warrant my spending any more time on them. (One involves my original misunderstanding of an incident with Linda and her cousin Connie; if anyone is interested, ask me about it.)

## VI

As I said at the outset, my health and advanced age have sapped my energy - plus I'm a terrible typist - so I will soon have to shorten my rejoinders to this kind of hyperbolic - and endless - debunking. But first I want to mention another aspect of the debunkers' game, and it has to do with boundaries, an issue which causes them serious problems. The truest among them do not believe that there are any unknown, solid, metallic objects maneuvering in our skies, and that every single UFO sighting, photograph and radar return, no matter how many people report it, can somehow be explained away. This is, naturally, a very difficult position to maintain, but should a debunker then narrow his/her boundaries and say that such mysterious foreign craft do, or might, exist, the question arises: if so, and UFOs have been seen for decades, what are they doing here? For this, the debunker has no coherent answer, but abduction researchers do. And what if a debunker like Ms. Rainey posits the theory that a huge number of abduction accounts are lies and hoaxes, does she believe that there are some legitimate cases? Does she think that genuine UFOs actually exist and are flying around? If so she doesn't say, and her article goes begging. If she should later say that not all abduction accounts are lies and hoaxes, which, then, are legitimate, which are not, and how can she tell the difference? Boundaries, boundaries, problems, problems!

## VII

The case in which she seems to be most heavily invested involved a man named Jim Mortellaro, and it was here that I made a major error: I went public with the case before I had thoroughly checked out all of its many dangling appurtenances. In my quasi-therapeutic role I automatically seek to protect the witness in order to gently learn the details of his/her claimed experience, but at the same time it was becoming clear to me that psychologically, Mortellaro was decidedly fragile. Yet since his case seemed to provide a wealth of physical evidence, I continued with it longer than I should have. After working for decades with hundreds of people reporting UFO experiences and trying my best to help them, I guess I'm entitled to at least one unfortunate error of judgment.

One of the problems with the Mortellaro case is the fact that the man was personally rather odd which cast him into an unusual category, a rarity among abductees I've worked with. Also, Ms. Rainey clearly did not like him from the first moment, and since the poor, arrogant man seemed to have few friends or supporters and a seriously ill wife at home - or so he claimed - I granted him more leeway than I should have. (I seem to instinctively gravitate to the underdog, a personal quirk I discuss at length in my memoir, *Art, Life and UFOs*.) Though my ex was never what one would call an independent investigator of UFO abduction cases, she did function as a kind of kibitzer in the Mortellaro case, wandering into meetings of our IF advisory committee, listening for a bit, expressing her anti-Mortellaro position, and then leaving. But essentially, this case is the centerpiece of her article, occupying as it does about eight columns of print.

Here, again, the reader must be on the alert for her characteristic hyperbole and exaggerations of fact. About the increasing dissension among us over Mortellaro's trustworthiness, she asserts that "three...Committee members eventually resigned including two psychotherapists and an engineer." Pretty damning stuff, except that it's not true. One of the only two therapists in the group, Jed Turnbull, is still with us and the second had to drop out months after the Mortellaro affair because he had married, moved far out on Long Island, become a new father, and consequently found it difficult to come to Manhattan to our meetings and seminars. We had no 'engineer' on the committee, though my friend Joe Orsini, a medical writer and researcher, did resign, partly because of the Mortellaro question. The irony of all of this is that Mortellaro's increasingly bizarre claims - mostly about non-UFO issues - were uncovered 'in-house,' and it was a final phone call I made to him and a trick question that ended all doubt. So, instead of the case being undone by an intrepid outside debunker (or by Ms. Rainey), it was ultimately broken by us, the IF advisory committee, and that was that. Why she now makes so much of it is a mystery to me.

In retrospect, because of my early interviews with his parents in which they described Jim's childhood behavior as similar to that which I'd often noticed in traumatized young abductees, and because of certain things he later said in my interviews with him, I am still not sure if he is simply a fantasist, lying and inventing because of some major psychological flaw, or if he is an abductee with unusual mental problems. You pay your money and you take your choice, though mental problems obtrude in either decision.

Unfortunately, such psychological problems as his are not rare. All of us have probably at one time or another known people who project a heightened, even perhaps grandiose and infallible, sense of themselves, despite a real lifetime of quite middling accomplishments. Such narcissists paper over their own failings with invented or padded C. V's (two Ph.D.s in Jim's case), forged documents or the like, and present themselves as accomplished authorities in some often arcane field of endeavor (his was electronics). When challenged they often react with anger and a growing sense of paranoia; thus they invariably have few friends (Jim had almost none) and fraught personal and family relationships. They can also be extraordinarily vindictive. (In Mortellaro's case, I knew that he sometimes carried a gun.) Such mentally skewed people are to be pitied, of course, and I, to my ultimate regret, pitied Jim Mortellaro.

## VIII

**The Beanie Case:** During a trip to Albuquerque in the early Nineties, I worked with a delightful woman, “Brenda,” who recalled a number of personal abduction experiences. Her husband, “Tom,” a retired New Mexico State Police officer, was completely supportive of his wife’s explorations with me, and some time after I returned to New York Brenda and her husband phoned me with an intriguing story. At a local MUFON meeting they had been approached by a woman about their age (mid-to-late-sixties?) who wanted desperately to talk to someone about troubling memories of a UFO experience she’d had some thirty years before. Beanie, so nicknamed because her last name was Bean, had seen a notice in the paper about the MUFON meeting and attended, seeking help.

She told Brenda and Tom that she had been watching a TV program which included troubling images from Somalia of starving children with wizened bodies and disproportionately large craniums. These distorted bodies caused her to remember an incident she had long ago tried to put out of her mind. At the time, around 1963, she was the medical technician in a tiny hospital in the town of Santa Rosa, some distance down the highway from Albuquerque, and one of her jobs was to ride in the ambulance, answering emergency calls and administering first aid. She explained that one day she had received a call and her friend; the owner of the ambulance, a reconfigured station wagon picked her up. The only information they had, she said, was the location and the report that there had been an accident. When they arrived in the designated area, she saw two state police cars parked in one of the barren fields, so they drove up to the site. Each police car was manned by a single state trooper, and when Beanie and the ambulance driver got out, the two men showed them three little bodies laid out, all three somewhat burned and all obviously dead. She vividly recalls asking, “Where are their parents?” The older trooper, a friend of Beanie’s, explained, “I don’t know what we have here, but I better call the Air Force.” Now for anyone reading this account of the case who finds himself/herself bored or confused, please understand that the incident is unfamiliar to most everyone in the UFO field, having never been much written about or publicly discussed. The account my ex presents in her screed is extremely brief, concentrating as it does on any little details that she felt might tend to make it seem false or outrageous, so I feel an obligation to at least get the facts down clearly and accurately.

Beanie told Brenda and Tom what she later told me, that she saw some metallic wreckage wedged in a hillock, and that the wrecked object was about the size of a Volkswagen beetle. She checked the bodies for vital signs and then she and her driver put two of the obviously dead figures on the gurney and took them to the ambulance; a folding stretcher was used for the third. At the hospital the bodies were taken as usual through the rear emergency room door and into the X-ray room where she X-rayed all of them. “I could get all of one body from the neck to the pelvis on one palette, they were that small,” she later told me. The sole doctor in the town was summoned to examine them and sign the death certificates, but apparently few if any others went into the room. (It may be significant that the hospital was run by a religious order of nuns, a regime that ended a few years later). Beanie made some notes and hung her X-rays on their hangers to dry, but shortly thereafter a group of military officers and men arrived and brusquely removed both the bodies and the X-rays. They demanded all

of Beanie's notes, ordered no one to ever speak about the incident, made a few final threats - "Remember, the army has a long arm" - and left. "They even took my hangers for the X-rays," she complained later.

After hearing many of these details from Brenda and Tom, I chatted with Beanie by phone and said that I wanted to come to Santa Rosa and talk with her face-to-face. I queried her on many details, far more than I've mentioned here. Meanwhile I spoke to Brenda's husband Tom, the retired state trooper, and he told me that Beanie well remembered the older trooper who had been at the accident, and she was insistent that they locate him. "She was extremely anxious to find him, not knowing where he might reside or even if he was still alive," Tom said. "It seems like ever since she had allowed herself to remember the incident, she was determined to find corroboration, and she'd known that trooper, Dutch, very well."

This detail was, of course, extremely important, because the last person a hoaxer wants to locate is a "designated witness" who says, "I don't know what you're talking about. What incident?" Hoaxers of anything, when the subject of possible witnesses arises, will say something like, "I don't remember him exactly but I think he might have had...blonde hair... I don't remember his name." Beanie's intense search for Dutch was a mark on the side of her honesty. Despite the strangeness of what I was hearing, that detail alone left me eager to learn more.

In my many phone calls back and forth between Tom and Brenda and me, I learned that Tom, through a state police old boy's network, had located the town where Dutch had retired. Beanie, he said, was ecstatic, but when she and Tom inquired further they discovered that the poor man had just had a serious heart attack and was in the hospital. Beanie wanted to go to the city where he lay in the hospital and talk to him there, but Tom demurred. The man was evidently very sick and in fact died a few days later. Beanie then wanted to attend the funeral to talk to his widow, and actually persuaded Brenda and Tom to take her there, but according to Tom the widow was far from interested in talking to anyone about such a subject at such an emotional moment. Interestingly, Beanie did talk to Dutch's brother, himself a sheriff, who said that his brother had never said anything to him about the incident, but he was not surprised; his brother was such an intense patriot that if the army had sworn him to secrecy, he would never have said anything about it, even to his own brother.

Meanwhile my friend Robert Bigelow agreed to pay my way to Santa Rosa, and that of astronomer Walter Webb, to look further into the case, and I immediately took him up on the offer. I flew to Albuquerque, met with Brenda and Tom, and began to spend time with Beanie. She was a short, plump, feisty woman who, like me, had suffered from both polio and cancer, but she seemed to be truthful and quite intelligent, speaking in a charming, homespun, country argot. Later, when Webb arrived, we chatted about the case which seemed to him rather dubious; for many researchers, UFO crash-retrievals were - and still are - a hard sell. I was also aware that he was not informed about many aspects of the Beanie case of which I had become aware. Essentially Walt was an astronomer, not someone with extensive experience in working face to face with people like Beanie and I was right to be concerned.

In a rented car Walt, Beanie and I drove out to Santa Rosa and when we arrived at the house of the widow of the ambulance driver, I asked Walt to wait in the car for a few minutes until I came out and invited him in. I was afraid that two strangers 'from the East,' charging in together at an elderly woman's house, bearing a tape recorder and microphone, might seem a bit off-putting. I hoped that, along with Beanie, I could make some ingratiating small talk to put the widow at her ease, thereby beginning our questioning as gently as possible.

We were received politely by our hostess - in years past she and Beanie had been friends - and by several other family members, but it was clear that a visitor like me, inquiring about this strange subject, would have a job putting everyone at ease. After a few minutes of small talk, I decided to bring Walt into the conversation. I excused myself, saying that a colleague was waiting in the car and, making up some excuse for his absence, went out and brought him in. He came in quickly, bearing his equipment, and immediately asked the widow for a table so that he could put his instrument in the center of what he hastily improvised as a kind of circle so that he could record everyone. Since I had not yet mentioned tape recording any of the family, or asked permission, one can imagine the family's shocked response.

If Walter Webb had set off a small cherry bomb in the room he couldn't have caused more of a disruption. Family members scurried around, moving furniture and glancing uncertainly at one other, while I sat frozen with embarrassment. On the drive home I never said anything to Walt about his gaffe, not wanting to hurt his feelings, but I did tell Bob Bigelow about the problems his brusque and thoughtless behavior had caused. Needless to say, very little emerged from this first abortive visit to the family home, but my next visit, months later, at a calmer time and absent Mr. Webb, was extremely rewarding.

Because I was no longer a total stranger to the widow and her family I was received with warmth and a sense of friendship, so I will, at this point, jump ahead to what I learned during this last trip to Santa Rosa. I've made it clear that neither Beanie nor anyone else seemed to know, beyond, probably, 1963, exactly when the central incident with the bodies and the military's arrival occurred. However, the family ambulance service was then a kind of cottage industry and the driver's wife, now the elderly widow I was visiting, had managed all its business - paperwork, trip tickets, billing and so forth. It was on this visit to Santa Rosa that she explained to me they were never paid for the trip to pick up the bodies, and what's more, she recalled that her trip book had a number of consecutive pages missing around the same time. And then came the shocker. She said that the next day the Air Force had gone to the ambulance and removed everything from the rear area - the sheets, various pieces of portable equipment and so on. "And we were never paid for any of it."

This was, of course, an absolutely crucial piece of information. There is no reason that any 'government body' should seize sheets and other objects without explanation from the back of someone's privately owned ambulance - unless it is a matter of so called "national security." The combination of the missing pages from her ticket book, the stolen sheets and ambulance equipment, and the widow's still obvious anger about it after thirty years went a long, long way to establishing the veracity of Beanie's account.

I should mention that Ms. Rainey was present during this visit, and she video-taped the widow's words, but considering her recently expressed theory that the UFO phenomenon is "afloat" with hoaxes, she must now believe that this elderly woman is also a hoaxer. In her paper she dismisses the widow's testimony in this way: "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." Ms. Rainey is good with adverbs: note the word "vaguely." But she also wields verbs as well: "when pressed" I assume that what she is trying to get across is the idea that since she believes there was never an Air Force visit to the ambulance and no missing trip ticket, (facts Beanie had only learned from the widow) she is claiming that Beanie somehow forced the old lady to join her hoax by accepting her - Beanie's - lies and then passing them on to me.

Another important statement was made that day by the widow's son. Beanie had earlier thought that the ambulance might have been driven by this young man that fateful day, but she later decided that it had been his father. During this second visit to Santa Rosa, the son, now thirty years older, and with his family present, told me this: "I worked part-time in those days as a police dispatcher, so I was often around the police station, and I remember there was some talk about alien bodies." Score another one for Beanie - unless, in Ms. Rainey's rather paranoid view, the son, too, was also party to a gigantic, purposeless hoax.

The first time I visited Santa Rosa, Beanie and I made a long drive to another town some distance away. She thought that a certain young trooper just may have been the officer in the second car that day, and through Tom we learned his address. I suggested that we not call the man in advance, that we just show up to take anyone there by surprise and thereby get a thoroughly unrehearsed account. So we drove and drove, endlessly it seemed, and when we arrived, the ex-trooper's divorced wife was home and told us that her husband had moved out years ago and she had lost contact with him, though she recalled that he was possibly working for a security company in the far east somewhere. That was that, and I only mention this abortive trip because my ex put it this way: "Neither she [Beanie] or Budd had tracked down or spoken to any of the long list of witnesses." [Emphasis mine] I wish we had had even a short list of witnesses from this thirty-year-old incident, but we didn't, so apparently the helpful Ms. Rainey invented such a list for us, but then scorns us for not trying to find them.

She quotes from an early letter from Walt Webb in which he berates Beanie for reporting some details about her initial experience which vary, one from one another. In isolation it doesn't bother me that a woman of her age gets a few things mixed up about a frightening thirty-year-old experience; hoaxers, in fact, usually try to keep everything very straight, lest they trip themselves up. Obviously, Beanie had no such fear. My ex also attacks Beanie for "embellishing" her account, an activity which often accompanies a witness's recollection of a long-ago experience; he or she often begins to wonder just how many odd incidents in one's past might be UFO connected. For a long time a necessary aspect of my work involves trying to convince such witnesses that not every odd thing in their past is UFO connected, and that common sense must be brought to bear to sort things out. Also, the UFO community has accepted - perhaps uncritically - the complex, ongoing nature of one's actual UFO experiences. One ostensible abductee has had three substantial books written about her ongoing UFO experiences by a prominent researcher, and no one seems to have complained. Beanie's similar adventures might fill a paragraph or two.

I must apologize for trying the reader's patience by their having to read all of this, but Ms. Rainey's rather vicious tactics require it. Because it comes down to this: to be taken in by someone like Jim Mortellaro and to solve the case 'in-house' is unfortunate but it harms very few people, while, in effect, to claim or imply that innocent people like Beanie and the elderly widow and her son, and Linda and her little boy and the score of witnesses in the Cortile case are all hoaxers is to call all of them liars, lowlife...virtual criminals. Just think, if they are simply telling the truth and that some of them were genuinely traumatized by actual events, they are being labeled as crooks and so on by my angry ex-wife. What a travesty of justice that would be. I can excuse readers who were temporarily taken in by her honest-seeming literary style, but I cannot excuse her, herself. She knows better, and if she has even the slightest doubt about her accusations, then she owes the individuals an apology and a retraction.

## IX

A few added remarks: I am not addressing the so-called Dora case because I remember very little about it except my view that her bizarre "Colin Powell and Ralph Nader" claims made me reject the case at the time. No colleague I've talked to recalls my ever mentioning the case to them, either. The problem may be that I often receive calls from people whose psychological problems are obvious, and I may speak to them if only to offer some kind of friendship and support to obviously needy people. I might have done so in her case.

Readers will note that David Jacobs and I, being two different people with different case portfolios, are not both dealt with in my paper. We are not identical twins, as Ms. Rainey would like to imply. David, I believe, is writing his own response to "Emma's" endless attacks, while I have produced this overlong reply.

I had not intended to be so detailed and long-winded, but once I got started I realized how many of Ms. Rainey's false and misleading statements had to be answered. And the Beanie case, not being widely known, needed an extended discussion.

Now some brief comments about my investigative methods: For some thirty years I've been aware of the problems inherent in researching such a bizarre subject, one that's compounded by the trauma and fear experienced by many of our subjects. Since the established psychological community does not take the subject of UFO abductions seriously, those concerned that they may have had such experiences have few choices about where to go for help. I've always been concerned that some of those who contact me have read books about UFOs and abductions, and so are aware of my work in the field and the things I've learned over the decades. Obviously I'm not able to control how this factor might affect any future interviews, hypnosis sessions, or any expectations the subjects may have as a result; I can only stay as neutral as possible and inform the person that I will not be able to tell him whether his experience is "real" or not. My mantra is to say, "I wasn't there when those things happened to you and I can't be in your head; therefore only you can decide if it was all real or not."

To mitigate some of these problems, I've always asked those contacting me with suspected abductions what they've already read, so I have a kind of baseline about their level of information. I also tell them to immediately cease reading anything about the subject (although in many instances they have not read anything). I inquire about additional witnesses or anyone they may have spoken to about their experiences shortly afterwards, and I ask them not to have any further discussions about the incidents. Obviously these other witnesses might be able to provide useful information in future independent interviews. In short, I'm very clear about the need to minimize outside influences on case information as much as possible, and Rainey's concerns about this manageable problem within the investigative process - exaggerated and used by her to dismiss decades of careful work by many researchers - are nothing new to me or to other serious investigators. At this point, it is the large volume of independent, similar accounts from around the world that compose a compelling wealth of case data.

When someone first contacts me about a possible UFO abduction, I always look for a number of different clues which indicate that the individual may, in fact, be an abductee, such as a few dramatic missing time episodes, childhood memories of 'little people' in their room, a scoop mark or two and signs of PTSD. So, by the time I agree to work with that person I feel I'm not wasting my time. I'm an artist and I have a life, so I don't want to deal with iffy cases, and always want to avoid all time-wasting moments (such as the necessity for this long response). Also, both in general conversation and under hypnosis, I always pose a few false leading questions to see if the person is susceptible and thus seems to be trying to prove to me that he is a 'real abductee.'

Finally, as for the issue of hypnosis, I've written, in a peer-reviewed, university press book, what I feel is a definitive statement of its value. I'm not hopeful enough to assume the readers of this piece have read this more academic piece in *UFOs & Abductions - Challenging the Borders of Knowledge*, edited by Dr. David M. Jacobs, and published by the University Press of Kansas, but if you have doubts about hypnosis, please look it up. One example: a large percentage of abductees report their experiences, or major aspects of them, from conscious memory, without hypnosis. But what they recall is virtually the same as what emerges from others under hypnosis. So what can we assume?

Many more things can be said about my investigative technique. In all my books I've published long transcripts of interviews and hypnotic sessions, but apparently no one ever seems to find fault by pointing out errors. So go back to my books if you wish, and good luck in finding any mistakes or leading moments you'd like to quote against me. I'm actually quite content with the investigative methods I've used for decades.

Lastly, throughout all this work, my priority has always been, first and foremost, aiding the person with the experience. Research always follows as number two, and I've done the best I could following those priorities. My only regret at this point in my life are that there is not a larger pool of qualified people willing to continue this challenging work, despite the many lives that have been helped along the way, and despite the massive amount of intriguing data that have already been accumulated.

Budd Hopkins, New York  
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