The Linda Cortile Abduction Case: Part II

“The Woman on the Bridge
by Budd Hopkins

In late November 1991, I received a large manila envelope addressed to my New York home rather than to my post office box, and bearing the name and return address of a woman from a small town in upstate New York. Typed onto a red-edged label, attached to the lower left of the envelope, were these words, arranged in two lines: “CONFIDENTIAL, RE: BROOKLYN BRIDGE.”

The reference immediately piqued my curiosity. Since the previous February, I had been investigating the “Linda Cortile” abduction case, an incident which had occurred within sight of the Brooklyn Bridge and which had apparently been witnessed by a well-known political figure and two security men parked nearby.*

For obvious reasons, these men desired confidentiality and had so far declined to meet with me in person. However, they had vividly described to me, in letters and an audio cassette tape, what they had seen from their location beneath the FDR Drive: A UFO hovering above a nearby building, a woman in a white nightgown and three small, non-human figures suspended in a beam of bluish-white light, twelve stories above the ground, and the final elevation of these four into the underside of the craft. The craft had then come towards their car, passing over the FDR Drive and finally plunging into the East River “behind the Brooklyn Bridge.”

The men stated that the encounter had taken place in late November 1989, between 3:00 and 3:30 a.m., and that they had been profoundly unnerved as they watched the event unfold. It had occurred quickly. First, the UFO lowered itself above the building, and then the four figures popped out of an apartment window in, as the men put it, “the fetal position.” Next, the four arranged themselves in a vertical pattern: two aliens below, the “girl or woman” above, and the third alien above her. Simultaneously, “as if on cue,” they unrolled into standing positions, and then, “as if on an invisible elevator,” all four rose up into the underside of the craft.

In my several interviews and single hypnotic regression session with Linda, the central figure in this case, I discovered that she had, with a few exceptions, remembered the same sequence of events that the government people had reported to me. One notable difference was that, once outside the window, she had been staring straight ahead, immobilized in some kind of altered state, so she apparently did not see the three aliens hovering in the light above and beneath her. (She had remembered encountering them inside her apartment, escorting her to the window, but then her memory becomes unclear.) Neither did she recall having been rolled up in a fetal position, yet otherwise the basic congruity of her account, with that of the three men, was remarkable. Naturally, Linda had no idea of the UFO’s route once she was inside it; she was shocked when I informed her the men said the craft plunged into the East River “behind the Brooklyn Bridge.”

As I held the envelope in my hand that November afternoon and looked at the words “CONFIDENTIAL, RE: BROOKLYN BRIDGE,” I barely allowed myself to hope that this letter and Linda’s abduction might be somehow connected, that its writer might provide more evidence about the event. The envelope contained a cover letter and photocopies of three drawings, all hand-colored, and an earlier letter. I read the cover letter first:

Dear Mr. Hopkins:

The enclosed letter and drawings dated July 17, 1991, are copies of the originals I have sent to you last July.

I expected some form of response from you by now, because the sighting took place in your own city. I’ve seriously considered the possibility that the originals I’ve sent to you were lost somewhere in the Post Office long ago. If I don’t hear from you, then I’ll assume you are aware of the goings on in New York City.

Thank you.

Sincerely.

Janet Kimble

The name “Janet Kimble” is a pseudonym I’ve invented; the actual letter writer gave me her real name, home address and home telephone number. (A later search through my box of unopened correspondence turned up the July letter and the original crayon drawings.) The letter reads as follows:

Dear Mr. Hopkins,

My name is Janet. I’m a middle aged woman and retired. Some time last May, CBS aired a one hour show entitled “Visitors From the Unknown.” I watched the show because it just so happened to be on my TV set at the time I walked into the room. From that evening on, I thought about what I saw in New York City about 1 1/2 years ago, more than I have ever thought about it before. It’s disturbing to me. I was getting along just fine until that show aired.

During the course of this year and a half, I spoke of what I saw only once and was made to feel ridiculous. I have never spoken of it again. In fact, I have never traveled back to New York City after what I saw and I never will again, for any reason.

Budd Hopkins is the author of Missing Time (1981) and Intruders: The Incredible Visitations at Copley Woods (1987)
Although we don't know each other, and probably never will, I can't help but feel silly writing about his. On the other hand, I'm feeling some relief. Please let me explain how I found you. The day after the show aired, I was determined to find someone I could tell about what I saw, but I couldn't tell just anyone. I have never read anything on the UFO subject (maybe I should have). However, I knew that books were written on the subject, so I went to the local bookstore. There I quickly paged through many UFO books and liked the sound of your name. I read a little of what you wrote in your book entitled Intruders, and it piqued my interest. I'm sorry I didn't buy your book, but I will in the future, as soon as I calm down.

Janet explained in her letter, and in later conversations, a sequence of events in which she phoned my publisher for my address and was told that, though my address could not be given out, the receptionist thought I lived in New York. The next paragraph of Janet's letter contained a pair of oddly formal capitalized wordings which caught my attention. Unlike most people, she avoided the simple terms "information" and "phone book."

I called Manhattan Directory Assistance, asking if a Budd, spelled with two D's, Hopkins was listed somewhere in NYC, and she said yes! Had she said no, I would have forgotten about this letter, rendering my situation with what I saw hopeless. I went out to find the Manhattan White Pages and found your address in there. I'll feel humiliated if this letter is received by the wrong Budd Hopkins. I'm sure you won't be contacting me, but if you do, you'll find my phone number at the end of this letter. I do wish to remain anonymous. My family and friends do not take too kindly to the UFO subject. I have had first hand experience and I refuse to be made into a fool.

It has taken me two months to build up the courage to write you this letter and draw the enclosed drawings. I don't want to be involved with these unnatural goings on. However, I must know, if you know, what is going on in NYC and if it happens often?

One Wednesday evening, November 29, 1989, I attended a retirement party in Brooklyn for my sickly boss. The party lasted into the early hours of the next morning, Thursday, November 30, 1989, exactly one week from Thanksgiving Day. My boss invited me to stay at her house for the night, but I was anxious to get home. I drove to the Brooklyn Bridge, with the intention of crossing over to the Manhattan side, to drive to the FDR Drive to go home from there. I drove more than halfway across the bridge, when my car came to a slow, but dead, stop. I was so upset. It was about 3:00 in the morning, and I wanted to get home. I saw my headlights dim and then go out. None of the car lights worked after that. I didn't know what went wrong.

I was afraid to get out of the car, because it was so dark up there on the bridge. I didn't want to get hit by an oncoming car, nor did I want to get mugged if my car wasn't hit. I looked through the rearview mirror to see if other cars were coming, and they were. This scared me half to death, because they had no way of seeing my car parked. But their head-lights dimmed out, too, and their cars stopped, right behind mine. I just couldn't understand the strange coincidence, and I still don't. How could anything get stranger than this?

From the corner of my right eye, on the passenger side of the front seat window, I thought I saw a building on fire in Manhattan. The whole sky lit up. Mr Hopkins, words can't express what I saw that morning up on the Brooklyn Bridge. I can't begin to explain it verbally. You would have had to of seen it yourself.

Enclosed please find three drawings and one flap drawing taped to Drawing #2, explaining what I saw. You can have them. These pictures will always be in my mind. These drawings are of myself watching what was going on from the bridge as I sat in my car. After you finish looking through this little package I managed to send to you, you may think I'm crazy. If I am, so were all the other people sitting in their cars up there on the bridge with me that morning. If you don't think I'm crazy and you have questions, I can only say what I saw, and I know what I saw.

DRAWING #1 — From the corner of my eye, I thought a building was on fire. I was shocked to see what it really was. The lights were so bright, I had to shield my eyes. I was frightened and found this aircraft very threatening.

DRAWING #2 (Flap Drawing) — They came out of a window, one right after another, (second window from left). There were six windows on that side of the building. I purposely counted them. There was enough light for thousands of people to see what was happening. I'll bet you dollars to donuts that thousands did see what happened from other areas of the city. I didn't know what they were because they were all rolled up into little balls.

DRAWING #2 (Lift Flap) — I didn't want to look. I was petrified, but something made me look and I saw the balls unroll at the same time. It wasn't until then I realized that they were 4 children standing up in mid air. Yes, in mid air! While I watched, I could hear the screams of the people parked in their cars behind me. Their screams were from horror. They sounded like I felt.

Please excuse the stick figures I drew in this drawing, but this is honestly how I saw three of the children. It was obvious these children were rickets-stricken. Their heads were so large compared to the normal girl-child standing in the air with them. I don't know what gender the three sickly children were, but I could see that the normal child was a girl-child, because she was wearing some sort of a white gown. I would imagine that it was a white nightgown she was wearing, because of the early hour of the morning.

She was taller than the others. Perhaps she was a little
bit older? Maybe she was a porcelain mannequin? I don’t know, because I didn’t see her move, except to change position. Remember, I was far away, but close enough to see what they were and what was going on. I may not have seen anything if it weren’t for the bright lights.

Their next movement was when they all moved up closer to the craft. Then they quickly winked straight up into the object (underneath it) and disappeared!

DRAWING #3 — The aircraft quickly rose up above the building and flew away at a very fast speed. A speed I have never seen before. It flew behind the building drawn on the right. It passed over a highway, or drive, below and then proceeded to climb higher, over the center of the bridge. I was parked more towards the Manhattan side of the bridge. I watched in horror. I don’t know where it went from there, because I had to look up to see. There was a bridge platform [pedestrian walkway] above and I couldn’t see anymore. I do know that when this UFO passed over the bridge, my clothing clung to me and my body hair stood up. The clinging sensation went away after the object went away, and my car started again.

Mr. Hopkins, I wanted to talk to the people parked behind me. I was very shaken up and could of used some calming down, but they were much too upset themselves, and I couldn’t communicate with them. Some of them were running all around their cars with theirs hands on their heads, screaming from horror and disbelief. I was feeling bad enough without having to see these poor people in worse shape than I. So I took off and drove home.

I have often wondered what became of these poor children. It all happened so fast. It happened suddenly and finished suddenly.

It felt good sharing this with you, but I don’t think I will ever share this with anyone again. It’s just too unbelievable. Are you aware of what is going on in that dreadful city? Is anyone putting a stop to this? Mr. Hopkins. I thank you.

Sincerely,
Janet Kimble

At the end of her remarkable letter, Janet typed in her phone number and this instruction: Call any day (except Wednesdays) from 9 AM to 4 PM. I telephoned her immediately and began a careful investigation of her claims. Everything about her account reinforced the description of Linda’s abduction I had received from the other three witnesses parked beneath the FDR Drive. The emotions Janet expressed ran true. The only odd verbal note in her letter was the formality of her terms “Manhattan Directory Assistance” (instead of “Information”) and “Manhattan White Pages” (instead of “phone book”). When I first inquired into her background and employment, I learned that she had worked for years as a telephone operator; the formal usages were therefore quite natural, and the issue dissipated.

In the course of several phone conversations, and one hours-long, face to face, interview, she answered every question I asked with complete openness, accuracy and appropriate emotion. For the sake of brevity, I will telescope these conversations and present the most important information and the specific direct quotes which bear on this case.

Janet Kimble is a widow of about sixty, a mother and a new grandmother. At the time it occurred, she related what she had seen the morning of Nov. 30 only to her son, her daughter, her sister and her brother-in-law, and since her brother-in-law is the town supervisor, she is very careful to whom she tells her story. Yet even her own family members were dubious. “My children, and my sister and brother-in-law asked me, ‘What were they drinking at that party?’ ”

She told me her first reaction to the events she was seeing: “The huge, bright lights made me think they were making a movie.” The entire experience, as we tried, together, to reconstruct it in real time, might have lasted for as long as three minutes, but was more likely to have taken place in considerably less time — perhaps a minute or a minute and a half. As we sat together, I asked Janet to close her eyes and picture to herself the UFO’s arrival, the four “balls” tumbling out the window, unrolling into standing positions, and then lifting up into the craft. I counted out the seconds as she did so; this part of the encounter probably lasted only about twelve seconds. The UFO’s subsequent flight behind a building, and then up over the bridge, could not, I believe, have lasted much longer than a minute, and possibly much less. Things did happen quickly.

Janet’s actions followed this sequence: After her engine died and the car began to coast to a stop, her headlights and the lights illuminating the roadway began to dim, reminding her of “when we had the famous [1965 northeast] blackout.” Alarmed, she tried to find out what time it was, an act which required taking her cigarette lighter out of her purse and lighting it so she could see her watch. It was 3:16 a.m. She realized this could not be a city-wide blackout, since her car lights had also dimmed out. “But then, (whispering nervously) when I saw (the floating figures) my first impression was, ‘They’re making a movie. What are they, crazy? What did they do to the bridge? What happened to all these cars?’ ... It didn’t look real.” She said that she thought the film they were making might be “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.” She thought of the little “vegetable people” in the TV commercials for the Jolly Green Giant, explaining it this way: “Because he stands so tall against these little people, and they look funny. They don’t look like real people. I’m telling you, it was so weird. I thought it was a movie, but, you know, there were no lights, the car died. I thought they’re using some kind of equipment for this movie that’s knocked everything out. And then I thought I must be crazy ... I have to be ... you know, this isn’t real.”

I commented on the accuracy of her drawings. “Yes, because I kept staring, and look, I was watching a movie
being filmed in New York.” I asked if she remembered deliberately counting the windows in the interest of accuracy. “I was saying to myself, If I tell somebody this, they’ll never believe me. It’s a terrible thing to be alone. There’s nobody to say, ‘Oh, my God, look at this!’ or ‘what could it be?’ or something. I’m saying to myself, ‘How could I tell somebody this?’ I just kept kind of concentrating on them. I remember saying to myself ‘There’s only one window in the corner there, and they’re not coming out of that window. They’re coming out of the next. It looks like there’s four more windows there.’ I was so directed on that spot that I really couldn’t tell you what was happening beneath that. There’s that particular row of windows and that little cap on top that you told me was a water tower ...”

I decided to test Janet’s visual memory, to make absolutely certain she had made the drawings as she claimed. I took out a pad of paper and a pen and asked her if she would re-draw the facade of Linda’s building. Without hesitation, she rendered the side of the building with its six windows, the smaller penthouse floor above it, and, crowning the structure, the square housing of the water tower. Her memory was obviously accurate and her drawing style the same as the drawings she’d originally sent me.

We returned to her memories of the event as it unfolded. “First it looked like an explosion almost. Because it was so red and white ... that’s what caught me, and then the red subdue and it got white ... (whispering) ‘What the heck is this?’ And the light from underneath, it was like sharp, where the rays were coming down, but then it got like a haze as it went down ...

“Then I saw these balls ... they all just tumbled out. And from a distance I thought it was a little girl ... but you know, I’m glad you told me that this was seen by other people, so it definitely wasn’t a movie, or some kind of film-flam thing. And it looked like they all tumbled out, and they all unraveled ... unarranged.”

I tried, deliberately, to lead Janet, or rather to mislead her. I asked, “Did one unravel and then the next one unravel and then the one next?” “No,” she replied, and became thoughtful, searching for the right image. “It kinda looked like ... let’s see ... like those commercials when they sprinkle water on flower buds and all of a sudden the flowers open? That’s what it looked like. To be honest with you, it’s silly looking ... it couldn’t have been real. I’m telling you what I’m thinking at the moment, while I’m looking. This is so silly looking ... and then ... I was thinking of Peter Pan. I expected everybody was going to go like this any minute (moves her hands in flitting, flying motions). And then all of a sudden they were moving up under the bottom ... it started moving up. It was red ... a big ball of fire ...”

Next, we discussed the UFO’s apparent size, and Janet stated that it was wider than the side of the building. From that I explored issues of time, her drive home, and so on. But in a moment she brought up the CBS program which had caused her to write to me. This conversation was extremely interesting, because she had been struck by the differences between the three abduction cases dealt with on the program, and her own experience as a witness. “Both of those people (Mike Rogers in the Travis Walton case and John Salter) were driving pickup trucks ... the gentleman that’s a professor and the lumberjacks. They both had pickup trucks. The policeman (Alan Godfrey) had a car. And I noticed, ‘cause I was looking for it ... how come their lights were on and their motors were going? And the policeman’s flashlight was on? He was, you know, dazzled, but those lumberjacks turned their pickup truck around and went back. And, like, I felt the same thing they felt. Fear. It’s normal to be afraid of the unknown. That professor (Salter) said everybody (the group of aliens) was very friendly. Well, let me tell you something, if any strange creatures start punching needles in me, no they’re not friendly. How could you say unknown is friendly? And he is a learned man!”

“And the thing that puzzled me was how come this (the Brooklyn Bridge incident) happened? Those three incidents were in rural areas and this was in the city! I’m saying to myself, ‘Other people had to see it.’ New York never sleeps.”

Janet went on to describe the initial reactions of those on the bridge when their cars stopped. “It occurred to everybody, ‘What the hell is going on? Move that car!’ And then it was, ‘Oh, my God! What the hell is that? There are people in the air!’ When somebody yelled it — and I can’t even tell you if it was a man or a woman — I thought, all right, I’m not seeing things. These other people are seeing the same thing.”

Janet had a few questions she wanted to ask me, one of which brought up something extremely interesting, which I had never even considered. She wanted to know how the strange creatures found their way into the apartment building, since she had not seen them going in — only coming out as little rolled-up balls. I could not answer her question; it had not crossed my mind. It is an interesting question, indeed. It suggests once more that the latter part of the abduction was deliberately made visible, staged, as it were, for the three men in the car below, while the beginning, the entrance of the aliens into Linda’s apartment building, was like that of so many other bedroom visitations, magically “unseemly.” I shall return to this theme in a moment.

One other detail of Janet’s account interested me in particular. In many car-stopping UFO cases, witnesses report that the car engine simply dies and then suddenly starts up again, spontaneously, after the incident is over, either seconds or hours later. I asked Janet if, once the UFO passed over her and disappeared from sight, her car engine started up again spontaneously. “No,” she replied, “I had it turned off. Thinking it was mechanical (when it first happened), I immediately shut everything off. I shut the headlights off.”

She explained that after the UFO incident, the first thing
to let her know that her car was functioning normally was this: "The inside light went on ... It went on because I had first opened the door and I guess I didn't really close it all the way, 'cause the (dome) light went on."

Much, much more transpired during the interview in Janet's hometown, and in our various telephone calls. Each recollection and emotional reaction was appropriate and consistent with her personality and background, and her observations echoed those of the three other witnesses in the car beneath the FDR Drive. One of the key aspects of this extraordinary case is the fact that a UFO abduction was observed at all, by anyone. Virtually all abductions are witnessed only by other participants — friends, family members, and so on, as in the classic Hill abduction.

Yet, built into this case is a plausible reason why at least some independent witnesses were allowed to watch the abduction unfold; the UFO occupants apparently wanted at least one of the witnesses, an important political figure, to see the event take place. It is as if they were announcing, "see what we can do? We're real, we're here, and we can do this anytime we wish." Of the four people who've reported seeing Linda Cortile floating in mid-air beneath a hovering UFO, all attest to the presence that night of other witnesses who have not yet contacted me. Do these other people presently remember what they saw, or are their memories being blocked in a pattern UFO researchers have found to be so common? Are they just afraid to come forward, or self-doubting, or literally unable, now, to remember?

At any rate, the witnesses I've heard from all report the theatrical nature of the abduction drama. Janet thought immediately of a movie being made, while one of the men in the car down below described the sight as "the greatest light show" he'd ever seen. I've investigated many abductions which took place in New York City, some of which occurred during daylight hours, yet they were all apparently (and magically) unseen. In one nighttime case, the UFO hovered above a rooftop with all of its lights off; the abductee reported being floated up into a dark, circular mass that would have been virtually impossible to see from the street. And the Linda Cortile abduction was as hyper-visible as one can imagine, with the witnesses feeling that hundreds, or even thousands, of people, even at 3:15 a.m., should have seen it. The inference is inescapable — the incident was a deliberate display of UFO power and being.

One of the first things I did after I received Janet's letter was to drive across the Brooklyn Bridge at about 3:00 a.m. to see what she could have seen. The traffic was very light — perhaps three or four other cars were on the bridge at the time — and Linda's building was clearly visible some distance away. I was able to count the individual windows, and could even see the air conditioners in some of them. (The distance was later determined to be approximately 1560 feet.) With the intensely bright light the witnesses reported streaming from the UFO, visibility would have been no problem. Since I could easily make out the windows, I had them measured to give myself a comparative unit. They are 55 inches high, but Linda is 65 inches tall. Standing in front of them, she would have been taller than the windows and, because of her very full, floor-length nightgown, she might seem even wider. Watching this distant, but astonishing, scene. Janet could not tell if the unearthed figure was a child, a woman or a mannequin, though she thought the three others, once they unrolled, must be "sickly children." Or, ironically, the four might be "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs!"

At each step of the way, I've been checking and re-checking each detail of this extraordinarily important case as it emerged through the testimony of the many witnesses. As an example, there are two identical descriptions of what we may regard as electromagnetic (E-M) effects. Janet Kimble, from her position on the bridge, and the government agents beneath the FDR drive each reported their automobile engines dying and their lights going out before either saw the UFO. It was only after they had begun to deal with this unsettling occurrence that the UFO appeared, suggesting a deliberate, selective process on the part of the UFO occupants. (Were they, perhaps, carefully setting the stage and preparing the audience for their demonstration?) The sensations of "static cling" and of their hair standing on end, reported by Janet Kimble and by the men below the FDR Drive, were not felt until the UFO passed very close to each car in turn. This two-stage, two-part E-M effect demonstrates again the subtle consonance between the two witness accounts.

I have presented to the public to date about ten percent of the evidence in this case; all will eventually be made known in full. As we've seen, Janet Kimble's testimony supports in virtually every detail the testimony of the two government agents and the political figure in the car below. Her account also buttresses Linda's recollections, as well as the testimony of another witness who, from a location farther up the East River, saw what was apparently the same orange-red UFO, at the same hour on Nov. 30, 1989. In the ensuing days, weeks and months, four other individuals reported seeing, at close hand, and three even speaking with, the government agents involved in this case. But, as I said in my earlier piece, the very nature and importance of this encounter will mark it as an essential target for assault. The usual, tired old "official" debunkers have already risen to the attack, dutifully spreading the usual lies, trash ing reputations and sowing doubts. There are signs that more insidious disinformation agents are also busy. Sadly, it will only get worse before it gets better. Janet Kimble saw Linda Cortile in that beam of light as Snow White, an accidental, but apt, description of her natural innocence and unspoiled character. Unfortunately, Linda and the rest of us will soon be seeing and hearing from a disheartening array of intellectual and ethical dwarfs, trampling the truth beneath their muddy little feet.