

Close Encounters: The More We Learn, the Less We Know

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During a recent thread of e-mail correspondence, I was asked what conclusions I could draw from several years of work with close encounter experiencers. An extended discussion resulted, during which we talked about a lot of different theories behind the phenomenon. What I found most notable was how little resolution there was to the topic. There are many theories about what the phenomenon might actually be, and there are some researchers who believe we are close to the final answer. There are also many common themes described by experiencers suggesting that although diverse and mysterious, the UFO/CE4 phenomenon has a deep self-coherence. But the phenomenon itself remains a mirage-like enigma. My best description of it is: “The more we learn, the less we know”. In spite of what some researchers suggest, I believe that we still know very little about the true nature of the CE4 phenomenon.

As a CE4 researcher, I have been interviewing close encounter experiencers and sighting witnesses for about six years. The last several years, as a hypnotherapist, I have heard many abduction accounts, enough to concur in an arm-wavy way that the close encounter phenomenon may well be as common as the Roper Pollsⁱ suggest. Many of the events that people describe are quite similar to the “standard model” of UFO abduction, initially framed by Budd Hopkins, David Jacobs, Joe Nyman, and othersⁱⁱ. This model includes the capture of an abductee, typically from their bedroom, or while in their car in a remote location. The abductee is escorted by small gray aliens, to a waiting UFO, and given a medical examination – frequently of a sexual or reproductive nature. They are then returned to their original location, with one to two hours missing from their lives.

While this “standard” encounter is common, many accounts from experiencers suggest that this is by no means the only scenario. In my own work with experiencers I have found a considerable variety of accounts – possibly more varied than I have heard from many researchers. For each classic abduction event, I often hear one or more other accounts portraying a completely different scenario. Other times, events may bear some resemblance to the “Standard scenario”, but differ in others. So we are left with a scenario with some common elements, but also a wide variety of differences.

“We Are Close To the Answer”

Several researchers now claim that we are nearing the point where we can find the answer to the CE4 mystery. They paint a very well defined portrait of the close encounter phenomenon – what it is, who the entities are, and why they’re here. Among these are what I would refer to as the “standard-abduction” scenarioⁱⁱⁱ described above, and what I refer to as the “New Age” model^{iv}, widely accepted by those who are more metaphysically/spiritually oriented. Each hypothesis, and the myriad of variations on them, makes differing claims – and each appears to be backed up by accounts from close encounter experiencers (some events related while under hypnosis, others related during full conscious recall). Are they all true? Are there many different explanations for close encounters? Or is there one greater truth behind the phenomenon? These are questions which I feel we are just beginning to address.

“Katherine” Classic Abductions and Spiritual Events

Frequently, experiencers have described to me events which initially seem to support one or another of the commonly described theories, but then add some detail which tends not to fit that theory. One such case involved an experiencer whom I will refer to as “Katherine”, who reported to MUFON a series of traumatic close encounters. MUFON investigators interviewed her and extensively documented these events. They also conducted ground trace surveys, finding evidence suggesting that physical close-encounter events had indeed occurred at that time.

I later conducted hypnotic follow-up work with her, both to help her deal with the traumatic effects of the events, and to help understand what had happened to her. On the surface, the key events that emerged appeared to closely fit the “standard-abduction” mold. They had all of the details: such as the capture, being taken aboard a UFO, the physical examination, and the subsequent amnesia. The entities also appeared to closely match the common descriptions of small grays. These key events were indeed very similar to those so commonly described in “classic” abduction accounts.

Yet, mixed in with these descriptions were other details which very much contradicted the “standard model” of UFO encounters. In Katherine’s case, this involved the significant inclusion of spiritual and metaphysical events. A few months before her key encounters began; she had experienced an encounter with a metaphysical “dream” entity. She apparently had a positive relationship with this being, which also appeared in the context of her encounter experiences. The entity, which she described as humanlike but with some significant variations, did not resemble any I have noted in the close encounter literature to date. In addition, her positive relationship with the entity appeared to be in sharp contrast to the traumatic nature of the subsequent abduction events.

As we explored her relationship with this entity, it became evident that it was metaphysical in nature. She described him as her companion in another time and place – apparently in another lifetime. It would seem that his association with her abduction experiences was tenuous, yet in another way he was inextricably bound to those same events. His initial appearance seemed to herald the beginning of her key encounters. She also noted that he was present at least once when she was returned from an encounter. This relationship between the entity and Katherine’s encounter experiences appears to be ambiguous, and does not seem to fit the “standard” encounter model.

While Katherine’s experiences also have many of the “standard model” elements to them, they seem to provide support for a more spiritual/metaphysical understanding of the phenomenon. Are the two theories mutually exclusive? Could they both be true at the same time? The more we learn, the less we know....

“Good or Evil?”

Among the variety of encounter events, some are described as dark, ominous intrusions, while others are described as more benevolent. This polarity of good and evil seems to be a strong theme in the CE4 phenomenon, as if they were two sides of a coin. On one side is the notion we are being genetically exploited by the visitors. David Jacobs takes this dark side concept the farthest “The Threat”, where he portrays the phenomenon as a means by which the aliens plan to take over this world for reasons that only they understand.

On the other side of the coin is the idea that the purpose of the phenomenon is to provide some form of nurturing and assistance/guidance to humanity. The focus seems to be heavily oriented towards the spiritual growth of the experiencer, and of humanity. For unknown reasons, they feel it is important that we mature at a faster rate. This may be to prevent us from destroying our own world, but perhaps it might also be to bring us to a point where we are no longer a threat, and/or can be welcomed into some greater community “out there”. This view is taken by much of the “positive” community and is related in books such as “Preparing for Contact” by Lyssa Royal and Keith Priest, and “Healing Shattered Reality” by Alice Bryant and Linda Seebach. Most commonly however, experiencers describe their encounters as a “mixed bag”. Both positive and negative events seem to occur, frequently during the same encounter.

One event which seemed to be a classic abduction, turned out to have many “surprises”. In this event the experiencer, whom I will call “Nancy”, recounted to me under hypnosis, an event in which she was abducted in the typical manner. In deep trance, she described how she was taken into the domain of the phenomenon. Once there, instead of her being subjected to the “standard” experience, she was taken to a large education center, where she was given an often-described lesson on the environment and future apocalyptic events. At the conclusion of the scenario, Nancy noted that the place where she had been was “an education ship”. Were the entities working for our benefit, or otherwise? What was the purpose behind this “lesson”, and who administered it to her?

While deep in trance, another experiencer I will call “Susan” described a scenario in which she underwent a medical procedure at the hands of “spiritual scientists”. She was abducted (again in the usual manner) and taken to a UFO. She was then seated in a room in which the scientists lectured her on some type of advanced mathematics. The entities appeared to be humanoid, wore long robes, and had facial features that were partially, but not completely human. At approximately the same time, two smaller entities conducted a medical procedure on her, “giving her brain a checkup”.

During this same regression, as we worked back through a chain of earlier similar experiences, Susan also found herself reliving an experience in a metaphysical domain in which she was a non-human entity. She felt that this had been in an earlier lifetime, and was somehow associated with her current experiences. It emerged from the regression that the phenomenon’s purpose in her life was largely spiritual, and that the present-day abductions were but a small part of that process.

While in both of these cases, aspects of their experiences were unpleasant; their relationship to the phenomenon appears to have a longer-term positive tone. Both experiencers have described many similar (but not identical) aspects to their encounters. Both have also described how in the long term, their spiritual lives had been profoundly deepened by their encounters. While many events were traumatic, they consider their overall encounters to be positive events in their lives. Thus, rather than being good or evil, experiences such as those of Nancy, Susan and Katherine seem to be a mixed bag, or even to defy this polarity altogether. Perhaps good vs. evil is a human value superimposed on a non-human phenomenon.

“Richard” and “Mike” – Two Non-Standard Encounters

Another encounter event, described by an experiencer whom I will call “Richard” shows a wide variety of aspects which do not fit the “standard model”. In this event he found himself and several other people in a car, which was being approached by a UFO. They found themselves being taken as a group into a “scout craft”. This then took them to a larger ship where they were met by human-like entities. The entities appeared to be wearing military uniforms characteristic of the 1940s. They conferred with him on a military struggle in which they were apparently engaged, in which they said that he had sided with them. However he felt suspicious of their intentions, and resisted their questions. He and the other abductees in his group were then taken back to a “base” where he was met by a leader of the opposing forces – also human appearing. They were then returned to their “earthly” reality and placed back in their car.

Another such “non-standard” event was one which occurred to an experiencer I will call “Mike”. Late at night, he felt the sense of presence and paralysis common in the beginning of encounters. He then observed entities that appeared to emerge from the nearby mirror. The entities indicated that they were from “Andromeda”, and accompanied him back through the mirror with them. Mike then found himself in a vast alien realm which looked both paradise-like and technological. The entities (looking completely unlike “standard” types of aliens) escorted him to meet a leader figure, who interrogated him. The leader informed him of a mission which they had planned for him. They then returned him to the normal realm, and back to bed.

Neither Richard nor Mike described their experiences as good or evil, and neither felt that the events were metaphysical, per se. However, much about these experiences appears to be different from the “classic CE4” model described in the literature. Yet, they do tend to contain a few “standard” elements such as the paralysis at the experience onset, and being assigned a mission or a role in coming events. This varying level of “standard-ness” seems to be typical in the anomaly “careers” of many close encounter experiencers – some events fit the model, some don’t.

Ambiguity and Paradox

The examples described above only scratch the surface of the variety, ambiguity and paradox inherent in the UFO and close encounter phenomenon. Often, encounters are dreamlike in nature, having an “illogical” character to them. Yet often, as in Katherine’s experiences, the phenomenon also leaves physical evidence – such as body marks, ground traces, etc, - a tangible manifestation in their lives. Thus, these descriptions suggest that rather than being totally nuts-and-bolts or totally dream-like, they are both at the same time. This suggests a degree of plasticity to the reality of the phenomenon, multiple forms of reality superposed within the experiencer’s consciousness.

In the cases of Mike and Richard, their experiences as described in this article bear little resemblance to the “standard” scenario. But for both they are part of a lifetime of encounters that also include standard type events. Still, for both of them the phenomenon seems largely metaphysical in nature, suggesting a deeper dimension than a simple “nuts and bolts” model of close encounters. In both cases the phenomenon seems to have played a key role in their lives – with profound physical, mental and spiritual effects.

The ambiguity and the wide variations of experiences described suggest that at its core, the phenomenon does not have a simple explanation. In the end, the only conclusion I can reasonably draw is that we still know very little about close encounters. Truly, the more we learn the less we know....

ⁱ Roper Poll of Unusual Personal Experiences: 1991 and 1998 - National Institute of Discovery Sciences http://www.nidsci.org/news/roper_surveys.html

Discussion of the 1991 and 1998 Roper Poll of Unusual Personal Experiences

Notes: The criterion for being an experiencer is experiencing 4 of 5 indicator phenomena more than once. The overall estimate of the 1998 poll is that approximately 1% of the population fit this criterion.

ⁱⁱ “Alien Discussions, Proceedings of the Abduction Study Conference at MIT”

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ⁱⁱⁱ David Jacobs, “The Threat”

^{iv} Bryant and Seebach, “Healing Shattered Reality”