

Sleep Paralysis vs. Alien Abduction

by Nadine Lalich

This paper is a response to an article written by Christopher C. French of the University of London and recently published in the British Psychological Society's newsletter. In that article he attributes the *abduction* experience to sleep paralysis. I have addressed some of the statements made by Dr. French below.

Dr. French: A **rare** form of the condition (sleep paralysis) which can involve hallucinations or the feeling of being dragged out of bed, may explain alien abductions that people sincerely believe happened but can't remember.

Response: How rare is "rare?"

In their 2011 paper Prevalence of Sleep Paralysis, Sharpless and Barber combined more than 30 studies on sleep paralysis prevalence from a variety of cultures and groups, giving them a sample size of over 36,000. They concluded that approximately 8% of ordinary people (with no extreme psychiatric illness) experience sleep paralysis. That would also conclude that approximately 8% of ordinary persons who are also ET contactees experience sleep paralysis. If, as Dr. French claims, sleep paralysis with hallucinations is rare, then the numbers of abductees that could attribute their experiences to sleep paralysis **with hallucinations would be far less than 8%.**

Response: Dragged out of bed.

Yes, there are some reports where experiencers may describe being dragged out of bed, but far more often, when it happens indoors it is a much more subtle experience, i.e., floating upward, walking out of the house, being wide awake when the event begins. Often times, an experiencer is overwhelmed with the desire to go outside or take a drive into a remote area where a contact later occurs. Contacts also happen outside in the daytime or evening, while driving a car and fully lucid, where two people are involved at the same time, and sometimes with mass sightings of the event.

Response: Can't Remember.

There are large numbers of experiencers who **do** remember an event spontaneously and immediately afterwards, without the aid of hypnosis. Certainly, as in all abduction/contact cases, whether recalled spontaneously or through hypnosis, an experiencer must always take into consideration the fact that portions of the memory could be distorted due to the fact that the abductors always attempt to mentally and emotionally subdue the abductee through unknown means. This includes stimulating false scenarios into the abductee's consciousness in order to more easily manipulate them, and also as an experimental tool to study human emotions.

However, after repeated contact the fear level drops, allowing many abductees to retain consciousness longer after a contact begins, thus improving attention and comprehension. Many of these experiencers are quite discerning and demonstrate a high degree of intelligence and competency in the management of their ordinary lives. Certainly in such experiencers these same attributes would also come into play when reviewing anomalous events. In analyzing their experiences they recognize that a good portion of these events occur under varying degrees of altered states, yet still find that portions of these experiences remain valid and worthy of investigation. Also, over time the intelligent and discerning experiencer instincts and intuition corroborate credibility.

Dr. French: He noted that most of the people making these claims are clinically sane, but their belief in life in outer space may influence what they see or feel in strange situations.

Response: Regarding belief.

If that is true, then wouldn't it also be true that Dr. French's lack of belief in life in outer space is also determining his inflexible view that all abduction claims have no basis in reality?

Dr. French: ...some people suffer from rare forms, which cause them to 'feel' an evil presence or hallucinate by seeing lights or grotesque faces, hearing voices...

Response: Regarding rare and evil presence.

Again, the use of *rare*. Regarding the *evil presence*, although many contactees are initially frightened of what is happening to them, there are also many accounts of abduction where the abductees **do not** see the experience or the abductors as evil. Regarding *hearing voices*, most, if not all abductees agree that ETs do not speak out loud (hear voices), but rather employ a form of telepathy for communication.

Dr. French : ...hypnotic regression therapy may be responsible for planting false memories in people's brains.

Response: False memories.

Personally, I have a great deal of conscious recall of the many contact/abduction events that have occurred throughout my life, and I have only experienced a half dozen or so hypnotic regressions. Before trying this approach, my tendency was to trust the conscious memories over those obtained through hypnotic regression. After experiencing this method of memory retrieval, focusing on instances where I already possessed a good deal of conscious recall (recorded in my journals), I was amazed at the results. The information revealed through hypnosis never contradicted my conscious memories, but only served to expand upon the information I already possessed.

In Summation: How can we tell sleep paralysis and abductions apart?

As a lifelong experiencer of anomalous contact, I have also experienced sleep paralysis on several occasions in my life, specifically, when I was physically ill. During those episodes my eyes were open, I was unable to move my body in any fashion, and I did feel fearful as though an unknown presence might be in the room, but I had no visuals nor did I hear any sounds. The feelings and the sense of paralysis passed in a minute or two. Analyzing the two types of events, in no way did the sleep paralysis episodes mirror my experience of what I do consider ET contact.