

# DANGEROUS GAMES:

## EXPERIENCERS AS HUMAN RESEARCH SUBJECTS IN UFOLOGY

Written by Emma Woods

Experiencers are in a vulnerable position as research subjects in ufology. The vast majority of us choose to remain anonymous publicly in order to protect ourselves and our families from the negative effects of the social stigma of the subject area. This, together with the widespread use of hypnosis by “abduction” researchers, the private nature of the research, and the control that researchers have over public scrutiny of their work, puts researchers in a position of power in relation to experiencers. In the event that a subject speaks out about abuse by an unscrupulous researcher, it is relatively easy for the researcher to defame them so that they are not listened to, as the iconic status of the researcher in the field means that their word is widely believed.

Within the field of ufology, David M. Jacobs and Budd Hopkins have been considered two of the top researchers of the “alien abduction” experience. I was a research subject of Dr. Jacobs for two years. During that time, he conducted 37 hypnosis sessions with me, totalling about 180 hours. The sessions took place over the telephone while I was unattended, and were each several hours long. Arguably, he used hypnosis to systematically implant false memories in my mind.(2)(3) These “memories”, including of violence and rape, certainly fit his theories.

Casual conversation preceded each regression, and in that conversation he freely discussed the cases of his other research subjects with me. I believe the

evidence shows that this was a strongly suggestive tactic for me to “recall” the same narrative. He continued to discuss their cases with me while I was hypnotized, thereby greatly increasing the suggestive effect. He eventually disclosed to me that he was writing his next book, and that my case was one of several that would be featured in it.

While I was under hypnosis, Dr. Jacobs implanted hypnotic suggestions in my mind that I had Multiple Personality Disorder rather than being an “alien abductee”.(4) In addition, he told me to send him my unwashed underpants and not to remember doing it,(5) and suggested that I wear a chastity belt that he would send to me.(6) He gave me post-hypnotic suggestions that I would not remember parts of the hypnosis, and consequently I had no conscious awareness that he had done these things to me until much later when I listened to the recordings of the sessions.

On several occasions, Dr. Jacobs did not bring me out of the hypnotic state at the end of the session, but left me to gradually surface from it myself over the following hours.

I think that most reasonable people would agree that Dr. Jacobs’ actions were a violation of my rights and protections as a human research subject. The question is whether or not I am considered one. Although I have taken steps to try to seek assistance from the various authorities

charged with protecting my rights as a human research subject, I have been unsuccessful so far. As a consequence, I have become aware that experiencers within the field of ufology are not protected in the way that they should be, and decided to investigate the history of human subject research. Here is what I found.

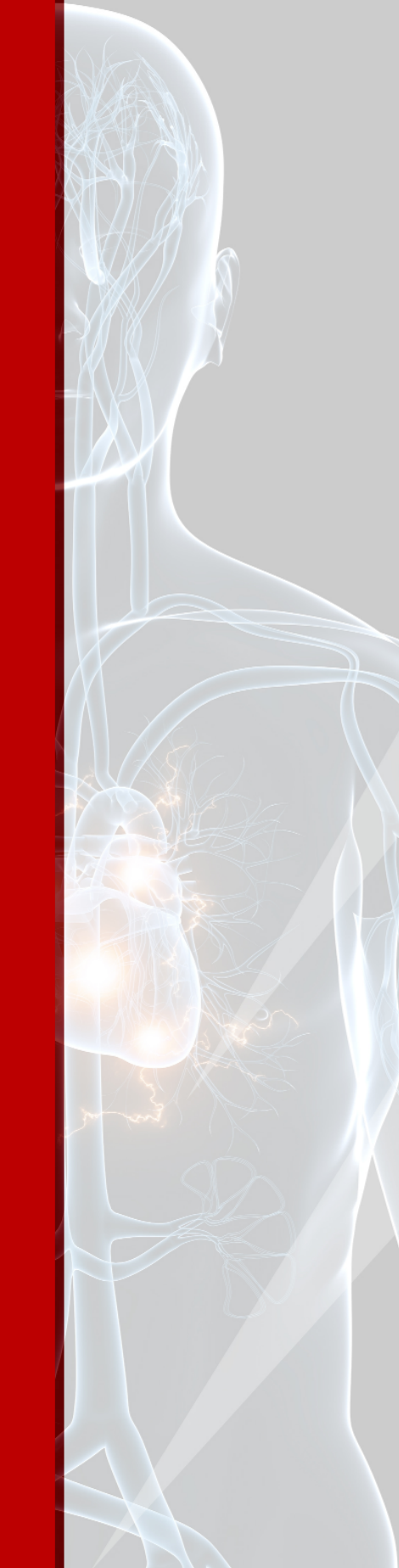
### Historical Development of Legislation

To understand the issues involved in the protection of experiencers as research subjects, it is helpful to review the historical development of the relevant legislation in place today. (As the leading “alien abduction” researchers are American, the focus in this article is on legislation in the United States.)

### Human Research Abuse in World War II

During World War II, egregious abuses of human research subjects took place. German Nazi doctors and scientists conducted gruesome experiments on thousands of concentration camp prisoners, and on the civilians of occupied countries. Research carried out to help Nazi military and occupation personnel survive injury and disease, to perform military actions and to further the advancement of Nazi ideology, included burning, drowning, and freezing people to death.(7)(8)(9)

A department of the Imperial Japanese Army conducted horrifying experiments on



prisoners while developing weapons of biological warfare, that included vivisection, dismemberment, and induced epidemics.(10)(11)(12)

In 1946, twenty-three doctors and administrators involved in Nazi human experimentation were put on trial in Nuremberg. Sixteen were found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity, and ten for membership in an organization declared criminal by the judgment of the International Military Tribunal.(9)(13)

However, not all perpetrators were prosecuted. Many former Nazi Scientists, including those who had committed human subject atrocities, were recruited by the United States. To facilitate this process, war crimes that they may have committed were covered up.(14)(15)(16) In addition, the United States gave immunity to members of Japanese units who had carried out human experiments in exchange for the results.(17)

### **Human Subject Abuse in the United States**

In the United States itself, as in many other countries, unethical research has been carried out. This has included human subjects being exposed to radiation(18) and used in torture experiments.(19)

### **BLUEBIRD, ARTICHOKE and MKULTRA**

In 1949-50, a CIA program called BLUEBIRD (later known as ARTICHOKE) conducted research on “special” interrogation methods, including the use of hypnosis and drugs.(20)(21)(22) A CIA document stated as one of its goals: “controlling an individual to the point where he will do our bidding against his will and even against such fundamental laws of nature as self-preservation”.(23) During one experiment, LSD was administered to thousands of military personnel. Many subsequently suffered psychiatric illnesses and attempted suicide.(24)

In 1953, the CIA set up the MKULTRA program. Research was conducted in this program on interrogation and mind control that incorporated the use of hypnosis.(22) The Proposal for MKULTRA included the following:(25)

“...the development of a chemical material which causes a reversible, nontoxic aberrant mental state, the specific nature of which can be reasonably well predicted for each individual. This material could potentially aid in discrediting individuals, eliciting information, and implanting suggestions and other forms of mental control.”

### **Development of Legislation to Protect Human Subjects**

The sad history of human research abuse in the 20th century prompted the development of legislation to protect human subjects.

### **The Nuremberg Code and the Declaration of Helsinki**

The trial of German Nazi doctors and scientists in Nuremberg led to the formulation of the Nuremberg Code in 1947. The code provided directives for ethical human subject research that focused on the voluntary and informed consent of the subject.(26)

In 1964, the World Medical Association published the Declaration of Helsinki, based on the Nuremberg Code. Ethical principles in the declaration provided guidance to physicians and other participants in medical research involving human subjects that assured that the welfare of the subject took precedence over the interests of science and society.(27)

Principle 13 of the Declaration of Helsinki states:

*“In any research on human beings, each potential subject must be adequately informed of the aims, methods, sources of funding, any possible conflicts of interest,*



*institutional affiliations of the researcher, the anticipated benefits and potential risks of the study and the discomfort it may entail. The subject should be informed of the right to abstain from participation in the study or to withdraw consent to participate at any time without reprisal. After ensuring that the subject has understood the information, the physician should then obtain the subject's freely-given informed consent, preferably in writing."*

### **The Office for Protection of Research Subjects (OPRR).**

In the United States, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office for Protection of Research Subjects (OPRR) was set up in 1966. It published Policies for the Protection of Human Subjects, and recommended that independent review bodies be set up to ensure the protection of subjects through prior review of all human subject research.(28)(29)

### **The National Commission and "Common Rule".**

The United States Public Health Service carried out an infamous Syphilis Study at Tuskegee in 1932–72. Poor African-American men were not told that they had syphilis and were not treated for it, so that researchers could study the natural progression of the disease.(30) This caused a public scandal when it became known.

Consequently, in 1974, the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects in Biomedical and Behavioral Research was formed. It was charged with identifying the ethical principles underlying the use of human research subjects, and developing guidelines to ensure that human subject research abided by those principles.(31)

The United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare created Title 45 of the Code of Federal Regulations in 1975. This was part of a collection of regulations

known as "The Common Rule".(28) The regulations stipulated that Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) should ensure the protection of human subjects, and Section 46.111 currently states the following:(32)

§46.111 Criteria for IRB approval of research.

(a) In order to approve research covered by this policy the IRB shall determine that all of the following requirements are satisfied:

(1) Risks to subjects are minimized: (i) By using procedures which are consistent with sound research design and which do not unnecessarily expose subjects to risk, and (ii) whenever appropriate, by using procedures already being performed on the subjects for diagnostic or treatment purposes.

(2) Risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to anticipated benefits, if any, to subjects, and the importance of the knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result. ...

(3) Selection of subjects is equitable. In making this assessment the IRB should take into account the purposes of the research and the setting in which the research will be conducted and should be particularly cognizant of the special problems of research involving vulnerable populations, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons.

(4) Informed consent will be sought from each prospective subject or the subject's legally authorized representative, in accordance with, and to the extent required by §46.116.

(5) Informed consent will be appropriately documented, in accordance with, and to the extent required by §46.117.

(6) When appropriate, the research plan

makes adequate provision for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of subjects.

(7) When appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of data.

(b) When some or all of the subjects are likely to be vulnerable to coercion or undue influence, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, mentally disabled persons, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons, additional safeguards have been included in the study to protect the rights and welfare of these subjects.

### **The Belmont Report.**

In 1979, the National Commission published the Belmont Report, containing a statement of basic ethical principles and guidelines regarding the use of humans in research. It highlighted three basic principles relevant to the ethics of human subject research:(31)

Respect of persons - The autonomy of subjects must be respected, and those with diminished autonomy protected. Subjects should enter the research voluntarily and only after being provided with adequate information about it.

Beneficence - The research does no harm, maximizes possible benefits, and minimizes possible harms, to the subjects.

Justice - Subjects should be selected for reasons directly related to what is being studied, and not because they are easily available, in a compromised position, or able to be manipulated. In addition:

"...[that] whenever research supported by public funds leads to the development of therapeutic devices and procedures ... [t]hat these not provide advantages only to those who can afford them and that such

research should not unduly involve persons from groups unlikely to be among the beneficiaries of subsequent applications of the research.”

The Office for Human Research Protections and Institutional Review Boards.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office for Protection of Research Subjects (OPRR) was changed to the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) in 2000, and it was incorporated into the United States Department of Health & Human Services.(28)(33)

The primary role of the OHRP is to implement the Federal regulations 45CFR46 for Institutional Review Boards (IRBs).(32)



All of that is a cursory examination of how the U.S. formed its rules and ethical principles as pertains to human research. But I believe that I am the first “alien abductee” to have sought relief from the OHRP, so allow me to share with you what happened to me when I filed a complaint in practice, not principle.

### **An “Abductee” Seeks Protection**

In my opinion, Dr. Jacobs’ actions towards me violated my protections as a human research subject. Moreover, I became his target for defamation so that I would not be listened to if I talked publicly about his abuse. Seeing little other recourse, I decided to seek protection from the official bodies charged with protecting the welfare of research subjects. In 2008, I filed a complaint with Temple University’s Institutional Review Board about Dr. Jacobs’, in my opinion, misconduct towards me as a researcher.

Temple University did not speak to me about the substance of my complaint. Nor did they ask me for my supporting evi-

dence, which included the recordings of my hypnosis sessions. They initially responded to me by telling me that they had investigated the matter. However, the fact that they had not spoken to me about the substance of my allegations, nor asked me for my evidence, in my opinion, made it clear that they had not done so. They reported that Dr. Jacobs had not disclosed my identity to anyone and that no further action was necessary. In my opinion, they tried to cover it up to avoid liability for it.

In 2009, I filed a complaint with the Office for Human research Protections (OHRP) about what I believed was Temple University’s failure to properly investigate my complaint about Dr. Jacobs’ misconduct.

### **The OHRP’s Decision**

The definition of ‘research’ under Federal regulations is that it is:

“... a systematic investigation, including research development, testing and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.”(32)

However, in 2003, the OHRP determined that taking oral histories does not constitute “human subject research” as defined in the regulations governing research involving human subjects, and that it is therefore is not covered by those regulations(34)(35) (although this is a gray area and some Institutional Review Boards do review oral history projects.)(36)

In response to my complaint to the ORHP, Temple University made a case to them that Dr. Jacobs was not conducting ‘research’, but that he was taking ‘oral history’, and that therefore the OHRP did not have the mandate to investigate it through the university. The OHRP told me that they had accepted Temple’s characterization of Dr. Jacobs’ work as not constituting ‘research’, and that therefore that they could not investigate. They were neverthe-

less concerned about it and said they would ask Temple University to investigate it voluntarily. At that stage, Temple changed tactics. Instead of claiming that they had investigated my complaint, they told me that they could not investigate it because Dr. Jacobs was not conducting 'research'.

### **Dr. Jacobs' Use of Temple University's Name**

During a conversation that I had with Richard C. Throm, Program Manager & Coordinator for the Temple University Institutional Review Board, he told me that a Research Consent Form citing Temple University that Dr. Jacobs had me sign before conducting hypnosis with me was "unauthorized" by Temple. He further informed me that they had told Dr. Jacobs that he was to remove all references to "Temple University" and "research" in his work with experiencers in the future. In my opinion, they did this to try to avoid future liability for his abuse of his research subjects.

If what Mr. Throm told me was correct, then, in my opinion, Dr. Jacobs' use of an "unauthorized" Research Consent Form citing Temple University to obtain my written consent to being hypnotized by him constituted fraud.

During a telephone conversation that I had with Dr. Jacobs in 2007, when I was no longer his research subject, and when he was concerned that I might file a complaint with Temple, he announced to me that, contrary what he had initially led me to believe, his research was not done under the university. He cavalierly added: "Although I did have you sign a university form because that's a way that they can get at me." (37)

Dr. Jacobs continues to present himself publicly on his website about his "alien abduction" research as an academic researcher. His Biography states that he is

"Associate Professor of History at Temple University", and a glowing description of his research portrays him as a competent expert who abides by a "strict scientific and ethical research methodology." (38)

I have not found any statement on Dr. Jacobs' website that alerts members of the public to the fact that Temple University does not consider his work to be 'research', and that therefore his subjects are not protected by Temple University's Institutional Review Board. Neither am I aware of Temple University having taken any steps to alert members of the public to this fact.

### **Where To From Here?**

At this stage, I intend to seek a review of the OHRP determination that Dr. Jacobs' work does not constitute 'research', and that therefore they cannot investigate it through Temple University. If no individual(s) or institution steps up to take responsibility for Jacobs' unethical treatment of his subjects, I will consider additional courses of action.

During 2010, Dr. Jacobs' abuse of me as his research subject became widely known in the field of ufology. This was thanks to the efforts of people who recognized what occurred and who used their position in the field to make it known. These people include Kim Carlsberg, Jeremy Vaeni, Jeff Ritzmann, Bill Birnes, Nancy Birnes, Alfred Lehmberg, Gary Haden, Carol Rainey, Christian Fedor Flores-Cordova, Deb Kauble, Glen Means, Lan Lamphere, Matt Graeber, Regan Lee, and others. I am extremely grateful to all of them.

Other research subjects have recently spoken out about aspects of "abduction" research in ufology. Deb Kauble talked about how her experiences were investigated by Budd Hopkins, who interpreted them differently than her, and how the media subsequently promoted Budd's

interpretation in an exploitative way, while wilfully disregarding or misrepresenting her own view of them. (39) Whitley Strieber spoke about his experience with hypnosis and proposed alternative ways of researching the phenomenon. (40) "Brian Reed" (pseudonym) related his own experience as Dr. Jacobs' research subject that was in some respects similar to mine. (41)

Experiencers are in a vulnerable position as research subjects. The need that most of us have for anonymity, the widespread use of hypnosis by researchers, the private nature of the research without peer review or oversight, and the celebrity status of researchers in the field can be a toxic combination in regard to the welfare of human subjects. My ordeal as Dr. Jacobs' subject demonstrates that experiencers are falling through a crack in the system and are not being adequately protected.

I hope that open examination of "abduction" research in ufology like this will eventually lead to experiencers being protected as human research subjects in the way that we deserve to be.

*Emma Woods* (a pseudonym) is an experimenter who has an agnostic view of the cause of the phenomenon. At the suggestion of her former therapist she began to keep a record of her experiences in order to learn more about them. She is in the process of publishing this record on her website. As a consequence of her two-year psychologically abusive ordeal with Dr. Jacobs, she has become interested in the welfare of experiencers as human research subjects. She is attempting to contribute to changes in the field of UFO research that lead to improvements in this area.

Emma's source references available at [www.paratopia.net](http://www.paratopia.net)

Keep up with Emma online:  
[www.ufoalienabductee.com](http://www.ufoalienabductee.com)