

UFO

Classic Encounter

Review of: The Betty and Barney Hill Story 1961

By Joan Price

Our newer members need to have some of the thoroughly investigated and documented cases reviewed for them from time to time, particularly those that remain for decades without further challenge to the contemporary findings. The abduction case of Betty and Barney Hill is an instance.

Shortly after the investigation, our archives received a donation of press cuttings from Mr Anthony P. Lake of London, out of respect for the integrity of our newsletter to which he subscribed. His donation consisted mainly of five "major spread" weekly articles by John G. Fuller, published in London's Sunday Mirror. I have reviewed these, together with our own collection. I found the coverage to be informative and historically significant.

Betty and Barney Hill, an American couple, who were driving home through the White Mountains in New Hampshire at 10 pm on September 9th, 1961, believe they were abducted by aliens into a U.F.O., and subjected to medical examination. Their experience resulted in a time loss of two hours.

The Journey

For over an hour as they drove, they observed a strong light which they first thought was a moving star, then, because of its movement, an off course

satellite. On several occasions they stopped to walk their dog which had become restless. At these stops, they used their binoculars to observe the object which, now that it was closer to them, they could not identify as any known craft. It was cigar shaped, huge and emitted a series of colored lights. It appeared to be spinning, but no noise was heard.

At a certain point, Barney became aware that they were being observed. The object was circling them. They drove slowly to Cannon Mountain. At a darkened point known to them as *the old man of the mountain*, they saw the object only a few hundred feet to their right, and on a parallel course to them. Using the binoculars, Betty saw two rows of windows on a constructed craft which continued to emit colored lights, but with no sensation of spinning as before. She asked Barney to stop so he could use the binoculars.



They agreed that the U.F.O. was huge, but distance and altitude were hard to judge in those circumstances. They drove on, and when Barney again stopped and got out of the car, leaving the motor running, they were at Indian Head.

The U.F.O. was then hovering not more than two tree tops high, and about a short city block away from them. Its full shape was then apparent for the first time, and appeared as a large, glowing pancake. Barney was scared, but walked a short way towards it using the binoculars. The U.F.O. came closer, revealing its width to be the distance between three

The Betty and Barney Hill Story - 1961

telegraph poles, and having two rows of windows. For a reason he was never able to explain, he found himself walking across a field towards the U.F.O., which was raked on an angle towards him. Fin like projections on either side, each with red lights, were sliding out as it lowered. The windows curved all around the craft. The pancake like disk was now glowing with brilliant white light, but there was still no sound.

Shaken, but experiencing an irresistible impulse to move closer, he continued across the field. He was fifty feet away when it stopped to the top of a tall tree level. Betty, waiting in the car, became aware that he had disappeared into the darkness, and called him to come back, but there was no reply.

Barney, still using the binoculars, saw about six living figures wearing black uniforms beyond the windows. They were staring at him as the craft tilted towards him. Betty, still in the car, now two hundred feet away, continued to call him but he did not hear her. All beings behind the windows, except one, now stepped back to a panel a few feet behind them. Barney thought of the remaining one as the leader. The U.F.O.'s final descent was a few feet at a time, extending its "fins", and finally, a ladder like structure from its underside.

In terror, Barney tried to pull the binoculars away from his eyes and run back to Betty, but found himself physically incapable of movement. He saw the eyes of the "leader", and knew he had never seen eyes like them before. His terror increased, but he summoned all his energy, and was shortly able to wrench the binoculars away and turn to the car. He was near hysteria, jammed the car into first gear and sped down the road, shouting that he was sure they were going to be captured. He asked Betty to check on the U.F.O., but she could only see darkness above and behind them.

Suddenly they heard a strange electronic beeping noise from the boot of the car, which seemed to vibrate. The rhythm was irregular (beep, beep-

beep, beep, beep). They each began to feel an odd tingling sensation, and a kind of daze overcame them. Some time later, how long they were not sure, they again became aware of the beeping rhythm, but this time it was regular (beep, beep, beep, beep). As it became louder their awareness returned, and found themselves moving along in the car with Barney at the wheel. They were silent, numb and somnambulist. A road sign indicated that they were in the vicinity of Ashland, some 35 miles south of Indian Head where the inexplicable beeping first sounded. After a time, Betty saw a road sign indicating that Concord was 17 miles away. Barney remembered that this is where their minds finally cleared.

It was nearly daylight when they reached home. Both their watches had stopped and never went again. The kitchen clock read a little after 5 am. They had expected to reach home by 3 am at the latest. A time loss of two hours was unaccounted for.

Disturbing Aftermath

When Barney unloaded the car he found that the strap of the binoculars which had been around his neck, had broken in half, and the toe caps of his shoes were badly scuffed and scored across the top. They were both now experiencing a clammy feeling that they could not explain. Barney examined his groin and lower abdomen which seemed to bother him. They reviewed what had happened and retired to bed. After sleeping until 3 pm, Betty telephoned her sister Janet, and told of some of their experiences. Janet suggested that they could make a rough check for radiation on the surface of the car with a compass. Betty did this and found a dozen or so shiny spots about the size of a large coin. They appeared as though they had been buffed on over a circular stencil. She placed the compass on each, and the needle jumped and began spinning each time, but was normal on all other areas of the car.

The Betty and Barney Hill Story - 1961

In the meantime, Janet had spoken to a former Chief of Police for Newtown N.H., who suggested that Betty telephone the Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth, a strategic Air Force Command installation. Betty did this, and when told of the fin like side extensions with red lights, the officer's interest quickened, and he asked to speak to Barney. From this officer, Barney learned of other reports similar to his own. This removed Barney's fear of being considered irrational. Barney then suggested they go into separate rooms and each sketch their view of the U.F.O.. These proved to be remarkably alike.

First Nightmares Begin

About ten days after their experience, Betty began having nightmares each night, which continued to plague her throughout the day. They ceased after five nights, but returned to them both many times later.

What To Do?

At first they both feared ridicule, so remained silent and had no conscious awareness of what had happened to them during the time loss. Both had a nagging feeling that something must have happened because of the nightmares and physical discomfort they experienced, but neither could account for their conditions. Desperation forced Betty to write to Washington for assistance. This resulted some time later in a visit from Walter Webb, the scientific advisor to the National Investigation Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). He occasionally investigated the more serious and puzzling U.F.O reports in the New England area. He was extremely sceptical about cases involving sightings of living beings, and was very reluctant to talk with the Hills.

Walter Webb Interrogates

His investigation started at noon and continued until after 8 pm without interruption. He is quoted as saying, "I was amazed, impressed by both the Hills and their accounts."

He cross examined them together, separately, together, re questioned them again and again. He said, "I tried to make them slip up somewhere, and I couldn't. I simply couldn't. Theirs was an iron clad story."

After studying his notes, checking weather and compass positions, the moon and planets, their detailed descriptions of the craft and their sketches for five days, he made his official report. He concluded it with, "It is the opinion of this investigator, after questioning these people for over six hours, and studying their reactions during that time, that they are telling the truth, and the incident occurred exactly as reported, except for some minor uncertainties and technicalities that must be tolerated in any such observation where human judgement is involved. I was impressed by their intelligence, apparent honesty and obvious desire to get at the facts, and to underplay the more sensational aspect of the sighting."

Health Deteriorates

By mid 1962, Barney's discomfort had become ill health. A series of warts appeared in an almost geometrically perfect ring on his groin. High blood pressure had returned and an ulcer had developed. He sought medical aid. His physician recommended psychiatric assistance to combat his exhaustion. Barney agreed, and a long process of therapy began under Dr Duncan Stephens of Exeter N.H.. After a year, Dr Stephens thought it advisable to have the opinion of Dr Benjamin Simon.

The Betty and Barney Hill Story - 1961

Dr Simon's Hypnosis Therapy

Dr Simon, a distinguished Boston Psychiatrist and Neurologist, agreed to treat the Hills. During World War II, he had been Chief of Neuro Psychiatry and Executive Officer at Mason General Hospital, the American Army's chief psychiatric centre. He had remarkable success with hypnosis in the treatment of psychiatric disorders. Dr Simon's attitude to U.F.O.'s was neutral.

After the first consultation, he decided to open up the amnesia, if this is what the condition turned out to be, and to find out what happened during the two hours time loss. He would penetrate the amnesia through hypnosis. He also tape recorded the therapeutic sessions to preserve an accurate record. The Hills were in cautious, medically conservative hands. It was January 1964 when they arrived for the first of five sessions.

Barney's Story

Dr Simon worked firstly with Barney alone. Taking him through every detail of the entire journey with the expectation that Barney would bridge the amnesia gap under hypnosis. Dr Simon would block out Barney's memory again after each session, which would permit Betty to give her own story in later sessions, without influence from Barney.

Under hypnosis, Barney described his thoughts, feelings and observations as he walked across the field to the U.F.O., and then in terror returned to

Betty in the car. He said the "leader" made him think of an evil German Nazi because he was all in black, with a black scarf thrown back over his left shoulder. One of the men who had fallen back to the panel, turned and looked over his shoulder. Barney was sure he was trying to be friendly. "I don't know why, but he made me think of a round faced, red haired Irishman." Barney said, "He's telling me, "Don't be afraid." I can see it in his face. No his lips are not moving, he's just looking at me and telling me not to be afraid." This session ended when Barney remembered running in terror back to Betty and the car.



Dr. Simon: "They saw SOMETHING..."

In the next session he continued by telling of noticing he was not on the right road, and he drove into a road block of six men dressed alike, in a well lit area. "They came toward me and I went up an incline. My eyes are closed because I am being told to keep them closed. They were carrying me up this incline, but my feet are dragging on the ground. They are by my side, and I have a funny feeling because I knew they were holding me, but I couldn't feel them. I felt like I was floating, suspended, and opened my eyes. I saw a hospital operating room, all pale blue. I was lying on a table and I thought someone was putting a cup around my groin, and then it stopped. I'm getting off the table, and I've got a grin on my face and am greatly relieved. I am walking and I am being guided. My eyes are closed, but when I open them, there is the car, and Betty is coming down the road. She gets in the car, and I am grinning at her and she is grinning at me. I'm thinking it isn't too bad. How funny, I had no reason for fear."

The Betty and Barney Hill Story - 1961

Dr Simon is Sceptical

Dr Simon was sceptical, but when this session was over he was beginning to believe that some incident involving a U.F.O., was at least partly responsible for Barney's condition. He was baffled by the details of the abduction. He looked to the next session with Betty in which her experiences and the long journey home might clarify some details.

Brave Betty

Betty's story of the trip was identical to Barney's details until the road block was encountered. She saw men standing in the roadway, "..... these men started to come up to the car in groups." At this point a kind of doze overcame her when the men took them both from the car. She said, "And I turn round and say, "Barney! Wake up!" but he doesn't pay any attention. He keeps on walking. One of the men said, "Don't be afraid, we are not going to hurt you." Only one spoke. He had a sort of foreign accent. We kept walking, and we came to a clearing and the object was there. I think it was the same one I had been watching in the sky. They are taking me up to the object, but I don't want to go in it. The man said to go on, and the two beside me took my arms. We go inside and up a corridor into a room. I turn around and am waiting for them to bring Barney in. But they lead Barney past the door where I'm standing. I say, "What are you doing with Barney? Bring him in here." The man says, "No, we only have equipment enough in one room to do one person at a time, and if we took you both in the same room it would take too long." Another man comes in and I think he is the doctor. They push up the sleeve of my dress, and they look at my arm. They have a machine like microscope with a big lens. I have an idea that they are taking a picture of my skin. They take something like a letter opener, only it isn't, and scrape my arm. They take something like cellophane or plastic, and scrape some flakes of skin on to this plastic. The

examiner opens my eyes and looks into them with a light, then my mouth, my teeth, my throat, my ears. Then he takes something like a swab and puts it in my left ear, and then on to another piece of plastic. They also pull out a couple of strands of my hair. He takes something and goes under my fingernail, and then cuts off a piece of nail. The examiner tells me to take off my dress. I do so, and lie down on the table on my back, and he brings over some equipment. There is a whole cluster of needles, and each needle has a wire going from it. They touch me with the needles. It doesn't hurt at all. He puts it on my knee and my leg jumps, then on my feet and my ankle. They ask me to roll over on my stomach, and they do the same all over my back. I roll back and the examiner has a long needle in his hand. I ask him what is he going to do with it. He just says he wants to put it in my navel, it's a simple test. I tell him no, it will hurt. "Don't do it, don't do it!" I'm crying and I'm telling him, "It's hurting. Take it out! Take it out!" and the leader comes over and rubs his hand in front of my eyes and says that it will be alright, I won't feel it. The pain goes away. But I'm sore from where they put that needle. I asked him why he did it, and he said that it was a pregnancy test. I said that I didn't know what they expected, but that was no pregnancy test, and he didn't say anymore. I put my dress on and said, "I can go now? I can go back to the car?" He said that Barney wasn't ready yet. I started talking to the leader, and said that it had been quite an experience that no one would ever believe, and that I needed some proof that this had really happened. He laughed and said, "What kind of proof did I want?" I said that he could give me something to take back with me. He told me to look around. On the cabinet was a fairly large book, and I asked for it. He told me to look in the book. It had pages and writing I had never seen before. It did not go across but up and down. It wasn't English. It was different, it had sharp lines, some thin, some were medium, and some were heavy. It had dots, straight lines and curved lines. The leader laughed and asked me if I could read it,

The Betty and Barney Hill Story - 1961

and I said no, but this was going to be my proof that this happened. He said I could have it and I was delighted. So then I said that I knew he was not from Earth, so where did he come from? He asked me if I knew anything about the Universe, and I told him that I knew practically nothing. He went across the room and pulled out a map and asked me if I had ever seen such a map before. There were all these dots scattered all over it. Some as small as pinpoints, and some as big as a nickel, and lines going from one to the other. There was one big circle with a lot of lines coming out from it, a lot of lines going to another circle quite close but not as big, and there were heavy lines. I asked him what they meant. He said that the heavy lines were trade routes, the other solid lines were places they went to sometimes, and the broken lines were expeditions. When I asked where was his own home port, he said, "Where are you on the map?" I looked, then laughed, and said that I didn't know. So he said, "If you don't know where you are then there is no point in my telling you where I am from." And he put the map away. Suddenly some men come in with the examiner, and they are excited. The examiner opens my mouth and tugs at my teeth, and I ask what they were doing. The examiner said that Barney's teeth came out, but mine did not. I was laughing saying that Barney had dentures. They asked me what are dentures?" In her explanation, Betty used the term *old age*. They asked what was *old age*? In explaining this, Betty used the word *years*, and they asked what was a *year*? She then declared herself to be a *limited person* for answering their questions, and that there were other people in this country that would be very happy to answer all their questions. Betty then said that she wouldn't know where to meet him when he came back. He laughed and said, "Don't worry, if we decide to come back we will be able to find you. We always find those we want to." Betty says, "I hear Barney coming and we can go back to the car. I've got the book, and about to go down the ramp when some of the other men, not

the leader, are talking excitedly. The leader comes over and takes the book. I'm furious. I said, "You promised that I could have the book." He said that the others object. When I said, "But this is my proof." He said, "That was the whole point. They don't want you to know what has happened. They want you to forget." (Betty is now screaming with emotion), "I won't forget about it! You can take the book but you can never make me forget! I'll remember if it's the last thing I do!" He laughs and says, "Maybe you will remember, but I hope you won't. It won't do you any good if you do because Barney won't. It would be better if you forgot it anyway." I am standing by the side of the ramp, and I'm not so mad now. They have taken Barney ahead. The leader walked some of the way with me, and I again said that I wished I had something as proof. He said that he was going to leave me here and that he was sorry that I was badly frightened at the beginning. I went to the car and Barney was in it, but he was still in a daze with his eyes open. The object starts glowing and gets brighter and brighter. Now it rises and goes down, and there is a dip, and then zoom, it keeps going further away. Barney starts the car, and I'm just so happy."

Play Back Session

Betty and Barney approached the final session knowing they were going to hear some of the tapes. By this method, Dr Simon expected to raise the experience of the two lost hours to their conscious level. He anticipated that they would then recall additional facts and details. This was so. Barney immediately remembered more detail, and at the end of this session, could not separate which detail came before or after the hypnosis. The journey had become one continuous memory, including the two hours previously lost to him.

The Betty and Barney Hill Story - 1961

Dr. Simon's Summary

Early in his work with the Hills, Dr Simon concluded that they were speaking the truth as they saw it. He also felt it highly improbable that both Betty and Barney could be suffering so markedly similar hallucinations. He explored in detail the possibility that their experience was an illusion. As the sessions drew to a close, the question of illusion or reality dominated the discussions. Dr Simon pointed out that he was not going to say it was either. Ultimately, the acceptance or non acceptance of the occurrence would have to rest with the Hills.

The Book

John G. Fuller published this story with details of the tapes , illustrations and photographs under the title "The Interrupted Journey." (Dial Press)

Our Investigation

Our chief investigator, Paul Norman, spoke with Betty Hill during a visit to the U.S.A. after this story was released.
