

PAUL WALLIS



"Exciting. I absolutely recommend *The Scars of Eden*."
ERICH VON DANIKEN, author of *Chariots of the Gods*

THE SCARS OF EDEN

Has humanity confused the idea of God
with memories of ET contact?

What people are saying about

The Scars of Eden

There is absolutely no doubt. Our planet was visited by extraterrestrials in the deep past. Paul Wallis discusses the variety of views on the [question] of extraterrestrials. Exciting. I absolutely recommend The Scars of Eden.

Erich von Daniken

Paul Wallis' extraordinary works of investigation bring much humility and insight to one of the most contaminated fields of enquiry, 21st Century Ufology. History will recognise Paul's important works as a solid foundation in understanding humanity's origins.

Jaimie and Aspasia Leonarder

Fantastic book! A must read for all of those searching for answers! Paul proves yet again that human civilizations have been visited and influenced since the very beginning by visitors from the stars.

Matthew LaCroix

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Escaping from Eden

ISBN: 978 1 78904 387 7

The 10 Steps to Finding Your Soul-Mate – Guaranteed (results may vary!)

ISBN: 978 0 9873904 0 0

The Scars of Eden

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Paul Wallis

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Acknowledgements

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For the sake of people's privacy, I have altered some details to make anonymous any references to personal experiences not already in the public domain. Thank you for allowing me to do that. I dedicate this book to all those who have carried stories of contact in courageous silence, because of the taboo which surrounds this subject. I applaud you and, with you, I look forward to the day when our world is more ready to honour those whose experiences test and transform our understanding.

Contact me at www.paulanthonywallis.com

Introduction & Chapter One

What Happened to Paul?

Bath, England – 1985

I know what it is to be asleep and I know what it is to be awake. Right now, I am wide awake. I know exactly where I am and can see clearly what time it is. It is 2am. The glow from the streetlight outside, and an open gable window with the curtains drawn back mean that everything in my room is clearly lit. I just can't explain what I'm seeing.

I live alone in a top floor apartment in a chocolate box village on the outskirts of Bath. Being on my own in my apartment has never worried or unnerved me. I am not a fearful person. I love my independence. In fact, at this time of the night I am usually out on my own, exploring the dark hillsides, and the beautiful open spaces of Bath Golf Club, deep breathing in the moist midnight air. Usually I return home around 1:30am for a warming nightcap, and finally climb into bed around 2am. That's my routine. Being out and on my own in the middle of the night doesn't worry me in the least. Why would it? I am twenty years old. I'm indestructible.

For a good night's sleep, I leave my curtains open and the window ajar to permit a good draught of fresh air. Thanks to the well-positioned streetlight, the open window always bathes my bedroom in a soft light. But tonight, in the warm orange glow something is moving, and I don't understand what I am looking at.

I can see five things just beyond the end of my double bed. They are standing side by side between the foot of my bed and the gable window. The figures are short, grey, almost translucent, and moving just enough to show me that they are alive. But they are not human.

Knowing my voice will fail me, I hiss at them in a whisper. “In the name of Jesus, get out!!”

I am twenty years old, but I have pulled the bed covers over me like a two-year-old and I am shaking like a leaf. Suddenly, I am not indestructible. I am terrified.

Canberra, Australia – 2020

I have just stripped off for a shower when the bouncing tones of Skype panic me up the stairs in my bath towel. I really don’t have time for an interruption right now. I’m going to be on the air in a matter of minutes and I need to be ready. Why is the call coming through now, when the interview isn’t due for another half hour? Dripping and out of breath, I pick up.

“Joining us live all the way from Canberra, Australia is Paul Anthony Wallis, researcher of world mythologies and author of the controversial new book Escaping from Eden. Paul, welcome to Zone 51. How are you today?”

I do my best to slow my breathing and try and sound smooth and collected, “Thanks, Tim and Jay. It’s great to be with you today. I... I had in mind we were going to be talking in about half an hour!”

“Yes,” they laugh. “The clocks’ changing has thrown everybody out! So, Paul, your book is stirring up quite a hornets’ nest of debate. Yet a couple of years back you were a regular pastor going about your work in the church. In fact, you were a senior churchman – an Archdeacon! What got you caught up in world mythologies and ancient aliens?”

I sit at the end of my bed, wrapped in my towel, and thank my lucky stars this interview is audio only. We’re quickly going to get into some deep territory and all my notes are waiting for me in the other room. Can I get through a two-hour interview without my notes? Is my middle-aged mind up to the challenge? I feel I’ve been fumbling more for my words lately, starting a sentence and then having to work hard to make it coherently to the end. (I’m

guessing three kids and not enough sleep can do that to you.) I really don't want foggy memory to let my subject matter down and I'm feeling vulnerable sitting in my towel without my notes at hand. But it's not the first time I've been asked, and it is all about my own journey. It's about a sequence of discoveries that have upended my career, put my reputation on the line and changed the whole direction of my life. It is my own story. I can simply tell that. And so we begin.

We laugh about how an ultimate frisbee injury laid me up for weeks on end and gave me the time to get into some study while locked down in the shipping crate cabin at the end of my driveway. We talk about how I had been waiting for years to drill down into some of the logical and moral problems within the familiar stories of beginnings to be found in the book of Genesis. Anyone who has read those stories would know the kind of thing I mean. So, I run through the clues in the Genesis story which point to an even older narrative hidden in plain sight within the text.

Next, I walk Tim and Jay through the translation issues around various key words and show that the word the Bible often translates as "God" is really much better translated as "Powerful Ones". I explain,

"As soon as you make that translation switch the familiar stories of Genesis quickly reveal themselves for what they really are. They are the summary form of an even older body of stories – the Mesopotamian narratives of the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, Akkadians and Assyrians. And those stories are not about God. They're about our distant ancestors bumping up against visitors from another planet – Sky People – extraterrestrial visitors who came and colonised our planet and interfered in our evolution to make us a more useful workforce."

I am now shivering under the cold of the aircon, having sat myself right under the vent. I try to steady my voice by talking louder. I don't want to come across all anxious and nervous when in reality I'm simply going into thermal shock.

"Paul, after two thousand years of Christianity and more than three thousand years of Judaism, how likely is it that out of the blue, some random Australian researcher, yourself of course, could come along and say, 'Hey,

everyone! You've got this all wrong! I've got it worked out! The Bible isn't really about God at all. It's all about aliens.' How credible is that?"

This is a question I am ready for and as I jump into it I can feel my energy rising.

"Well, Tim, if I really were the first person to make these claims then, yes, you would be quite right to raise an eyebrow or two. In reality, I'm not the first. If you go back to the very early days of Christianity you will find some very significant Church Fathers who were totally comfortable with the explanation of human origins that I am putting forward in Escaping from Eden."

"I am talking about people like Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Marcion. And in their case they didn't get these ideas from the Mesopotamian stories. They got it from Plato."

"You see, four hundred years before Jesus, Plato had already told the ancient world about the extraterrestrial beings who came and modified our ancestors. He called them 'children of God'. He didn't say what they were or where they were from, only that they came and adapted our ancestors to give us a higher capacity for consciousness and intelligence. Plato also wrote about some other company in the universe. He talked about others who are more advanced than we are. He said they live longer, they are more intelligent than us and they have an advanced knowledge of outer space. And, he said, they live on islands in the sky."

"On top of all that Plato revealed that the Earth is a globe, floating in space, which every so often gets blasted by the movement of objects in space, triggering extinction level events. That's why, he said, we are not the first civilization on this planet. Every few thousand years or so, something happens to take us down to a virtual zero to start again."

"Now those Church Fathers I mentioned, who were strongly into Plato, knew everything he taught about ET interventions and past civilizations and they had no problem endorsing Plato in the strongest terms. So that put all those topics on the table and made them part of the mainstream conversation in early Christianity."

“So, I am not the first on this territory. I am bringing back to the table things that in the beginning were part of mainstream conversation – and should be today.”

I can feel my heart rate returning to normal and, although feeling a bit colder than I would prefer, I am beginning to get my groove on. I hope I’m not sounding too bullish. Talking about extraterrestrials is quite enough on its own to make people take a step back or get defensive. I am well aware that a hearer will automatically question the sanity of any speaker who trespasses into ET territory. I can’t take offence at that because it’s been a challenging change of mind for me in the last few years. It’s a big ask to expect people to take that turn with me in the space of a two-hour interview.

Before I made that turn, I lived and worked for thirty-three years in the world of Christian ministry. For much of that time I worked as a kind of “Church Doctor”. Like many in that field, I had my fair share of paranormal experiences. Somehow, though, I was always able to interpret any anomalous encounters as Divine, human, demonic or psychiatric. Those were my boxes and everything I ever encountered, one way or another, could fit into one of those boxes. Somehow, my theology had never really found a place for other kinds of entity or other intelligent life in the universe. So it was a revelation for me to realise that our ancestors embraced far more subtle thinking on these questions than I had ever imagined.

“But, Paul, if in the distant past our ancestors knew about ET entities, how did all that knowledge get forgotten?”

It’s a good question. It would seem a big thing to forget. So as swiftly as I can I lay out the dot point version of the answer:

In the Ten Commandments it was commanded out of Judaism.

In the C6th BCE it was edited out of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the C1st and C2nd CE it was excommunicated out of the early Church.

It was illegalized from the Roman Empire by Emperor Theodosius in 381 CE and buried in the caves of the Nag Hammadi desert to protect it from obliteration.

In the C15th it was confiscated and burned out of the libraries of Central and South America by the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors.

In the C16th its proponents were burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic Church.

In more recent times President Truman suppressed it when he signed the National Security Act of 1947 and that policy of suppression has continued unabated right up until last year when a number of cats got let out of the bag by US Department of Defense.

“... So, Jay, to answer your question, you’re right there has been a lot of forgetting and none of it by accident!”

I realise I have covered that ground rather quickly if you are not familiar with this history of official “forgetting”. But don’t worry, in the next few chapters I will show you exactly how all that played out.

I will also show you how a living memory of ET interventions has survived this history suppression in the form of indigenous memory – what we call folklore or mythology. When digging for what our ancestors knew that didn’t make it on to the news, our world mythologies and ancestral narratives are the most vital source. It is in these grassroots stories, passed from one generation to the next, that our ancient memories survive. In the pages that follow I will share with you my various notes on the subject and you will hear some stunning examples of “prehistoric memory” surfacing and resurfacing in cultures all around the world.

“So, Paul, after thirty-three years in ministry you have boldly gone where few pastors have gone before! You must have ruffled a few feathers along the way. How many colleagues and friends have you lost through putting this material out there?”

This is another good question! The fact is I have lost a small number. Honestly, though, as I have begun getting out there on George Noory's Coast to Coast, Sean Stone's Buzzsaw 2020, and countless other interview shows and podcasts, what has amazed me more than anything is the constant stream of letters, emails and messages that come to me from all kinds of people, all desperately relieved to hear a calm voice speaking into the airwaves on the topic of ET contact, ancient and modern. From week to week I hear from people of all ages and from every walk of life – scientists, engineers, nurses, teachers, police, defence personnel, researchers, therapists and pastors. Often those who reach out to me have experienced phenomena they don't understand and can't fit into conventional categories. I hear stories of close encounters, sightings of craft, interactions with non-human entities, even abductions. What humbles me the most is when from time to time I hear mature men in their sixties saying something like this:

“I have told my wife and I've spoken to the person who was with me when the encounter happened. And I haven't told another living, breathing soul in the fifty years since.”

That's how powerful the fear of shaming and ridicule can be. Yet all these decades after their experiences, my correspondents still need to find someone to talk to about it. They still need to process what it was that happened to them all those years ago.

As I have listened, I have come to feel even more passionately about the importance of breaking the taboo surrounding these subjects. Surely, we only impoverish our understanding of the universe if we embarrass into silence anybody with an anomalous experience to share. After all, the history of scientific discovery shows us that anomalies are our friends – if we want to understand reality more accurately. We just need to be willing to put our pre-packaged assumptions and beliefs back on the table for a moment and listen with an open ear to some accounts and experiences which may be puzzling, confronting and hard to understand.

“So, Paul, why does this matter to you so much? Wouldn't you be better off to keep your head down, and keep your speculations to yourself? What makes it important to you? Have you had some kind of a close encounter yourself?”

If you had asked me this question only a few months ago, I would have simply said, “No.” Now, having compared notes with so many experiencers, I can feel something rumbling away in the back of my mind. There’s a restless memory, itching to resurface. I just don’t have a handle on it and find myself caught off guard by Tim’s question. Doing my best to think on the spot, I stutter my way through an answer. Whatever my own experience, I can say that, for whatever reason, I share a deep fellow-feeling with all those who share their stories with me.

As Tim has correctly surmised, not all have welcomed my trespassing into this controversial topic. And yes, I may have lost a few friends. Commenting on the publication of *Escaping from Eden*, two of my comrades in ministry told me just recently, “Paul, let’s stay friends. But I won’t be reading your book.”

Other friendships which were previously free and easy are perhaps not quite as free and easy as they were before. The fear of “What has happened to Paul?” or “What if Paul undermines my faith?” has kept some friends a degree more distant than in times past. Without a doubt, exploring ET territory can be somewhat isolating. With some at the fundamentalist end of the spectrum there is absolutely no possibility of a calm conversation. For those in that milieu I am a wolf in sheep’s clothing. I am, “Full of the pride of Lucifer,” says one. “Luring people to the pit of hell,” says another. “You need Jesus, man!” comes one reply. “Open your Bible and read it, idiot!” comes another.

Naturally, I want to defend myself. I want to tell my detractors, “No, you’re wrong about me! I have been a believer since I was 17. I have not only read the Bible through countless times, but I served for fifteen years as a theological educator. I have trained pastors in the principles of hermeneutics [the principles of interpreting ancient texts – the Bible in particular].”

I want to reply that I have designed training programs for pastors, served as a troubleshooter for churches, and as an Archdeacon in the Anglican Church in Australia. I really am a person of faith! For some, though, it is automatically impossible to acknowledge a person who accepts the possibility of ETs. Tony, my collaborator on *The 5th Kind TV*, jokes that I should merchandise a T-shirt that says, “I lost them at ‘Sky People!’”

“So yes, Tim, I have to admit there is a cost to exploring this kind of territory. But I do it because it’s my journey. I want to know the truth. And as an addictive writer I just have to share that journey with others.”

I sign off from Tim and Jay’s show, still sitting at the end of my bed in my bath towel. I think I did OK without my notes, which are still sitting undisturbed, patiently waiting for me in the other room. My hosts were right about how outlandish my claims sound on a first hearing and, generally, I am happy to take it nice and easy as I explain to anyone who’s interested the steps that have taken me from the safe, predictable world of ministry and on to the world stage on such a controversial topic.

When I published a book with the confronting subtitle, “Does Genesis teach that the human race was created by God or engineered by ETs”, I knew I was firmly nailing my colours to the mast. That ship has taken me a long way. In these pages I will share with you something of the amazing voyage that has followed.

Together we will travel around the world – to Greece, Argentina, England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland; to Italy, America, Peru, Kenya, Ghana, South America, the Philippines, India and Australia. We will sit at the feet of scientists and sages, scholars and saints to spur us on in our exploration. We will go to the Fesenkov Astrophysical Institute and the al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Kazakhstan and learn of incredible findings in the world of DNA from world-class researcher Maxim Makukov. We will take some time on America’s East and West coasts to hear from Psychologists John Mack and Barbara Lamb. We will delve more deeply into the abduction narratives of ancient indigenous narratives in the company of Aboriginal Elder Shane Mortimer. Hebrew scholar and translator for the Vatican, Mauro Biglino will point us to key historic words which have been hidden and suppressed through centuries of questionable translation.

In Argentina we will meet filmmaker Alan Stivelman, and in America the eminent UFOlogist Richard Dolan. In the company of Anthony Barrett on The 5th Kind TV we will introduce ourselves to a body of deeply challenging contemporary research. With anthropologist Maria Scholten we will see the evidence of a longer and more interesting story of civilization than the one you and I learned in school. And along the way experiencers in Argentina,

Ghana, America and Australia will add their personal stories to encourage us on our journey together and spur us on to keep exploring.

By the time you and I reach the end of our journey together, I am also hoping that the writer who first challenged me as an eleven-year-old boy to ask bigger questions might make an appearance for a personal conversation. I wonder what more he might have learned in the decades since his story first intersected with mine. I am talking about the author of *Chariots of the Gods*, Erich von Daniken.

The white rabbits who will meet us in the next chapter and lead us into this incredible rabbit warren are members of my own family. I will introduce you in the next chapter where we will descend the first dip of this roller-coaster and, let me warn you, you will need to hold on to your hat.

Before we accelerate down that first dip, I want to take a moment to thank you personally for picking up this book and agreeing to share this journey with me. It is my pleasure to have your company. Because, for me, as an addictive writer, it's about sharing the experience, and putting into your hands the book I wish someone had given me many years ago! When I first set pen to paper to map out what I am now going to share with you, I actually had no idea what forgotten treasures would resurface in the process – least of all, buried in the depths of my own memory.

Chapter Two

The Secret Commonwealth

Canberra, Australia – 2020

What company must we be keeping on planet Earth to generate the incredible stories I have been uncovering? What traumas must lie in our ancestral past to have scarred our collective memory with such disturbing mythologies? And how much of what our ancestors have reported bears any relationship to the real world of the C21st?

My burning questions have led me to publishing two books which I fully realise put my reputation on the line and lay me open to ridicule. As I bring *Escaping from Eden* and now *The Scars of Eden* into the light of public scrutiny, I have to be willing for people to judge – both before and after reading. However, for me, coming from a background of thirty-three years in ministry there is another layer of challenge. A pastor should be a reassuring figure, and some consider even the mention of prehistoric ET contact to be an assault on their theology – let alone ET presence today, let alone contact, let alone abductions. Some religious believers respond as if I must be an agent of the devil to raise questions which, on first glance, appear to be outside the ambit of mainstream religion. So, you can probably imagine that it was with some trepidation that I prepared to sit down with my parents-in-law to let them know the topic of my forthcoming book.

My wife Ruth's mum and dad are devout Christian believers and their spiritual tradition is Baptist and Pentecostal. I had no idea how they would react to what some would regard as an attack on orthodox Christianity. On a visit to our place in Canberra one weekend, we sat down together after a Sunday feast of Ghanaian cuisine and, as disarmingly as I could, I laid out my thesis concerning the Bible's narrative of extraterrestrial interventions in

our evolution, as well as the stories the Bible shares with other world mythologies concerning a pattern of abduction and hybridization through the ages.

My parents-in-law listened quietly and politely. Then with an animation that completely took me by surprise, they leant forward and said, “Paul, we already know this story. People in Ghana know about this. Our story goes back for generations. And we know people who had this thing that you are talking about happen in their own family...”

So it was that I came to hear a personal story from my own family that I previously had no idea about. The events it relates are nearly forty years old. I will now pass the story on to you, but please permit me to leave some details blank for the sake of protecting our friends’ privacy.

Anloga, Keta District, Volta Region, Ghana, West Africa October 1984

Dazed and anxious, walking on the beach of Anloga is a young woman. Akua is twenty-six. As she gets her bearings, she begins to make her way back to the family house a few blocks away. When Akua walks through the door her family is stunned. They gather around her with tears of joy and confusion. She has been missing for three years.

As they scurry around to make her comfortable and help her to settle, Akua’s family cannot help themselves plying her with questions. Where did she go? What happened to her? Why has she not contacted them in all this time?

Gradually, sadly, Akua reveals her story. She was taken from the beach in 1981. The place where she was taken was somewhere she didn’t know; somewhere hidden and secure, and free of any devices by which she could get messages to the outside world. Her captors held her against her will and forced her to bear children. Exactly how they have returned her to Anloga beach is something of a mystery to her. Concerning that journey, her mind is a fog.

Akua's account is deeply disturbing for her loving mother and father to hear, and their immediate concern is to help her begin to feel safe and secure again in her family home. They do their best to reassure Akua that all is now well, and that they will do everything in their power to help her forget and move on with her life.

But as the weeks go by it becomes clearer that Akua has kept something secret about her abduction. It is a secret that has left a cloud of anxiety perpetually darkening her young face. After long pleading from her mother, Akua finally agrees to tell them what it is that still terrifies her concerning her ordeal. What she has to say is like nothing Akua's mother has ever expected to hear. Between tears, Akua whispers her secret.

"My captors," she hesitates, "were Mami Wata. They were not human."

Canberra, Australia – 2019

When Akua returned to her home in Ghana three years after her vanishing, her family prepared for the unfolding of a horrible story – a forced marriage, a secret elopement, kidnapping or slavery. Such things are hardly unknown. However, the account their daughter brought them was far and away from anything they had expected. Yet when Akua spoke the words, "Mami Wata," they knew what she was talking about.

For centuries Ghanaians have told stories of Mami Wata abductions. The history of this narrative is so ancient that its roots have become lost in the mists of time. On my own account, before that Sunday lunch with my parents-in-law, I had known nothing of the Mami Wata tradition. As I sat and listened to the ancestral wisdom of my own family, I learned that accounts of Mami Wata are not necessarily stories of ET contact. The Mami Wata people are generally identified as highly intelligent, extraordinarily beautiful, and humanoid in form. They are often very compelling, with promises of advancing the intelligence, health, and prosperity of those they take. And they operate, so the tradition goes, out of underwater bases.

This was a story like nothing I had heard before. My Ghanaian family are Pentecostals, Catholics and Methodists. I had not realised how close I was to another, more indigenous tradition.

In some places Mami Wata has morphed into a kind of religious or spiritual practice, not unlike the local rituals of appeasing territorial spirits which can be found in other places. The religious version of the story sees Mami Wata as a female entity with power over the seas. Not necessarily malevolent, but so superior in power that you would never want to get on the wrong side of her.

Mami Wata is a tradition of abduction narratives which stretches back in history for hundreds, maybe thousands of years. The Mami Wata reports relate more often to males being taken from near the beach, though abductions of females such as Akua are part of the narrative too. The purpose of these abductions, so the tradition tells us, is a program of hybridization. For some reason, so the mythology goes, the Mami Wata people wanted to create a new lineage of Mami Wata people, modified with human DNA.

I realise I have taken us quickly into the deep end. Without a doubt, abduction and hybridization probably constitute the hardest to swallow of all aspects of ancient ET claims. Yet in the panoply of world mythology and ancestral memory they are possibly the most widely recurring themes.

My earliest awareness of ancient hybridization narratives came from the Bible. It appears in the pages of Genesis 6 when the “benei elohim” (Ones like the Powerful Ones) came down to planet Earth to take human females. Their interbreeding produced a lineage called the Nephilim, who were the giants of legend. Both the author of Genesis 6 in the Hebrew Canon and the author of the letter of Jude in the New Testament assume that their readers are familiar with this piece of history as told in another famous text – the Book of Enoch – a text to be found today in the Ethiopian Orthodox canon of the Bible.

The Book of Enoch describes the abductions referenced in Genesis 6 in even greater detail. It names those doing the abducting as “Watchers” and describes how they had transgressed fundamental ethics governing relationships with the human race, arriving from somewhere among the stars

to begin their program of producing hybrid offspring.

Josephus, the Jewish historian of the C1st CE appeals to this scriptural episode, to explain the presence of giant human beings through the annals of history and at the time of his writing. Josephus understood the Jewish tradition to be only one iteration of this legend of human hybridization with advanced beings. Furthermore, he identifies the Ancient Greek legends as vehicles of the same memory. The Greek name for these hybrids was Titans.

The Greek legends and the Hebrew mythologies are not the same, but both report external interventions in our evolution as a species. Both outline a program of hybridization which was not only traumatic for our ancestors, but which deeply divided the community of superior beings associated with “project Earth” at that time. These strange notes sound again in ancient Indian, Norse and Celtic narratives. Ancient Egyptian and Native American traditions also hint at something similar.

The name “Mami Wati” for the ancient Ghanaian version of the story is a new name. It dates from the British occupation of the Gold Coast, which shortly after its liberation in 1950 took the African name of Ghana. However, by other names, the Mami Wata tradition is far older and wider. Reports of Mami Wata abductions are told from Kenya on Africa’s east coast, down to the southernmost tip of South Africa, all along Africa’s Western seaboard and into the Caribbean, Haiti, Brazil and Cuba. Curious parallels can be found in stories from Alaska and the Philippines.

For instance, the Luo people of Kenya have curated the story of Nyamgodho Wuod Ombare. It tells of a man, Nyamgodhu, and it tells us quite a lot about him. Nyamgodho was a Bantu man of the Waturi tribe, who lived in the C14th and C15th in the village of Nyandiwa, in the Suba district of Kenya, on the shores of Nam Lolwe (Lake Victoria). One morning, so the story goes, he found a strange-looking woman caught up in one of his fish nets. The fisherman agrees to marry the woman and live with her because she persuades him that she can bring him unimagined wisdom and prosperity. Which she does. But she gives Nyamgodhu a condition, that he must never speak of her true place of origin in the water. Some familiar notes are sounding.

In Kenya Mami Wata are identified with the Jini – the Swahili equivalent of the Jinn of the Arabic peoples. Moslem and Swahili people on the Kenyan coast also associate these abduction stories with entities called the Mahurani. Like the Mami Wata tradition, the Mahurani tradition is for some a ghost-like, spiritual phenomenon, while for others a more concrete story is told – a story in which a Kenyan man or woman encounters a strange person who is tall, white and unbelievably beautiful.

These tall white visitors – the Mahurani – appear to individuals by teleportation. Their visits begin in the contactee's childhood and continue into adulthood. On later visits, the Mahurani take their contactees to bases underneath the waters of the Indian Ocean. Here the contactees are used to produce hybrid children, who from time to time, they are allowed to see. However, the children are kept by the Mahurani who, after each abduction episode, return their contactees to their Earthly homes, unharmed and often healthier than when they left.

The families and religious communities of Kenyans who report these experiences are often confused and upset when their loved ones return, speaking affectionately of their beautiful, tall, white captors. Indeed, in Kenya such testimonies are often regarded as evidence of mental illness or demonization. This kind of dissonance reminds us that these kinds of abduction narratives are part of a tradition that stands separate from and previous to the official mainstream religions. The abduction traditions of Kenya find their source neither in Christianity nor in Islam. They exist within the unofficial, indigenous knowledge of the people, carried orally, and puzzled over, from one generation to the next.

Elements of Mami Wata or Mahurani folklore repeat in the indigenous Filipino story of the Engkantos. The Engkantos are shape-shifting entities, associated with the water. Their humanoid appearance is almost identical to our own. They could almost pass for regular Filipinos, apparently, save for their unusual skin-colour and the lack of a philtrum on the upper lip. The Engkantos are known for abducting human beings who get too close.

The Filipino word diwatas is another word that invokes ancestral knowledge of non-human entities, who abduct human beings. The diwatas – so the tradition goes – like to maintain a covert presence and don't take too kindly

to their cover being blown. For that reason, people often refer to these entities obliquely in whispered conversations as “dili ingon nato”, which means “those unlike us” or “lamangdagat” which means “those who dwell under the sea”. These strange diwatas are physical beings, similar enough to humans to be able to procreate with those they take in order to create hybrid people. Does any of this sound familiar?

The very fact that such specialised language has been developed to carry this story reveals how important it has been to memorialize this information both in Filipino culture and beyond. The word diwatas suggests that the Filipino version of the story may have originated in India. This is because diwatas is derived from an ancient Sanskrit word devata which means a “god” or “superior being”. In a similar vein the vodou tradition of Haiti speaks of Simbi Nan Dlo, the spirit of the water. African slaves brought the tradition to the Caribbean with the name Yemoja.

Some of the words that belong to these traditions are incredibly intriguing. They have associations with spirits and serpents and, just like the word elohim in the Hebrew stories, they can often be translated to mean either a god or a demon. This 180 degree ambiguity is another reminder that we are dealing with ancient stories, stories that long predate the familiar binaries of good and bad, light and dark, that came with later importations of organized religion. With these ancient abduction stories, we are really in at the deep end.

Now some might want to suggest that I am taking these stories too literally. Might these ancestral stories be carrying the memory not of alien species but of foreigners? Could these mythologies of abductions be metaphors for the experience of the slave trade. The coastal homes of the mythologies in question would all have experienced a measure of slave trafficking.

For me this explanation holds little water. The patterns that repeat in the stories like those of the Mami Wata, Mahurani, Yemoja, Jini, Jinn, Engkantos, Diwatas, Dili Ingon Nato, and Lamangdagat are of young people being taken from near the water, held for only a short time in an underwater base, and then returned unharmed, but having been exploited for hybridization. Suffice it to say those are not the patterns of human slavery. It is a different pattern.

As I researched these indigenous mythologies, and began joining the dots from continent to continent, I found more and more cultures offering similar narratives. To my surprise I soon learned that the same phenomena of abduction and hybridization, along with specialised language for it, exist within European narrative traditions. In the nineteenth century folklorist Edwin Hartland argued that behind the “fay” and “faerie” traditions of Europe’s Celtic peoples lay a real world phenomenon. With great courage he put forward the view that there is in Celtic folklore the memorialisation of a flesh and blood program of hybridization between human beings and another human-like presence occupying planet Earth, going back hundreds and maybe even thousands of years.

Two centuries before, Reverend Robert Kirk published his own research into the indigenous narratives of the Scottish Highlands. His book is still in print. The picture he pieced together described a covert layer of non-human interference or even governance over human affairs, which he referred to as “The Secret Commonwealth”. It was a shocking conclusion for people to hear from a Scottish Presbyterian Minister.

The Irish iteration reinforces the notion that this other presence wishes to keep itself secret. It echoes the curious detail from the Filipino tradition of not naming these other entities directly, referring to them instead with epithets such as “those who dwell under the water” and “those unlike us”. The whispered Irish epithets are, “The Good People” or “The Noble People” or “The Other Crowd”.

A Welsh telling can be found within the accounts of the “Tylwith Teg”. Though often taken as fairy tale of the fictional kind, some familiar notes resound. The eminent American anthropologist Walter Yaeling Evans-Wentz noted an unusual story within the Tylwith Teg canon, which described the existence of human-like beings who had the appearance of beautiful young women. They would meet young men near the water’s edge and then entice them to follow them into their underwater communities to live with them as their “husbands”. Should any of the husbands choose to leave, they would have to return alone.

Within the Irish canon we can find stories of abduction for hybridization which would be indistinguishable from the testimony of twenty-first century

claimants of abduction or close encounters with extraterrestrial beings – right down to the shape of the craft, the shape of the alien beings' faces and their speechless mode of communication. All that differs is the vocabulary used. Absent of terms such as extraterrestrial, alien, small grey or interdimensional, Irish stories tell the tale of “faeries” and “little people”. So perhaps reporter Richard Carleton’s reference to being “off with the pixies” was not so wide of the mark after all – even if it was not meant kindly.

As I reflect on the geographical spread of these narratives, my mind goes back to the first time I heard a story of abduction and hybridization. It was far away from Scotland, Ireland and Wales, far away from Africa and the Caribbean, in a place whose legends have inspired and fascinated people for thousands of years.

Knossos on the island of Crete July 1985

It is the era of terrorism. Around the world bombings and hijackings are regularly punctuating the international conflicts of the day. My dad’s work is in combatting the impact of these troubles on our ability to travel the world. It is as a thank you for his work that our family is in Greece this summer, exploring the unique treasures that this beautiful country has to offer. We are touring the Greek islands as the guest of the Greek shipping magnate Andreas Potomianos, and the amazing world of antiquity is a revelation for me.

Crete is a beautiful island, and Knossos is its most significant megalithic site, dating from the Bronze Age. It is an inspiring feeling to stand in the place of an ancient civilization. In its heyday, Knossos was home to the Minoan people. Their culture thrived here between 3000 and 1000 BCE. The Minoans were an advanced, maritime culture, whose cities were impressive multistorey environments, with exquisite architecture, plumbing and airflow management. Their advancement in technology catches my attention. So, I put a question to our guide.

“Who exactly were the Minoans that they were so advanced? Where exactly did they come from?”

The answer comes in the form of a story I have never heard before.

“The Minoan culture appeared five thousand years ago,” the guide begins. “They were the people of the great ruler, Minos. Minos was a powerful man – although not really a man. He was a hybrid. The mother of Minos was a very beautiful woman. She was a daughter of Agenor, a king of the Phoenicians. One day she was walking on the beach with her young friends. Her beauty drew the attention of the ruler of the gods, whose name was Zeus. He instantly decided that he must have her.”

“Then, as if from nowhere, a beautiful and gentle bull appears on the beach beside her. The bull captivates the young woman with his animal beauty and gentle spirit. She strokes the animal and pets it. Something compels her to climb on to its back whereupon the bull gallops into the waves, taking her far from her home and family in Phoenicia, all the way here to the island of Crete. It is here, on this very island, that the young girl discovers that her captor is not a bull but a handsome god. You know what they say about Greek gods? They are very, very good looking! Zeus seduces the young woman and when the time comes she produces three sons – Rhadamanthys, Sarpedon and Minos. Minos became the ruler of the Minoan culture. His mother’s name was Europa. The entire continent of Europe is named after her.”

I had never heard this story before.

“So she was abducted?”

“Yes, exactly! Europa was abducted by a handsome Greek god!”

“And what happened next?”

“Europa was an unmarried mother with three children – which could have been difficult. But fortunately for her she was a very beautiful woman. She knew the King of Crete, and he loved her so much that he married her and was willing to adopt her three sons as his own. And so they all lived a happy life. All except for Europa’s first lover, Zeus, who was killed in a battle.”

I was open-mouthed. This was something I had never learned in school. The

whole of Europe is named after an abductee – a young lady who was taken from the beach. I had always thought that Zeus was an ancient Greek almighty God. This legend paints a different picture. Zeus is flesh and blood; something similar enough to a human being to hybridize with a human. Yes, he is powerful. He is able to manipulate the consciousness of Europa so as to cloak his true appearance. But he is not all-powerful. He is not even immortal. In the end someone kills him in a battle. This most famous of the “gods”, according to this version of events, was an advanced being who used his superior power to abduct and hybridize. The very name of Europe embodies a story of prehistoric hybridization. My time in Greece has sown a seed of curiosity that will grow for many years to come.

On our final evening in Athens we settle into our cabins on our ship, the World Renaissance, then the flagship of the Epirotiki cruise line. It is as we change into more formal attire for dinner that I notice something odd. Standing bare-chested in front of the bathroom mirror I see something that does not belong. Three raised lines on my belly, just below and to one side of the navel. The lines are about eight centimetres long with a pinprick effect that looks uncannily like the scar of a multiple vaccination. What is it? I haven't had an inoculation in my belly. It's hardly something I would forget. Being a mere twenty years old, I take myself into the next cabin for my mum to provide a more expert diagnosis.

“It's probably just some kind of rash,” she says offhandedly.

But it doesn't look like a rash to me. I don't know what it is. And how long has it been there? Whatever it is, I put my mind on other things and forget about it. Indeed, it will be many years before I even remember the thing that happened in 1985.

Today I wonder more than ever how a testimony so widespread, carried by so many diverse cultures and traditions could remain so unknown? In the West of the twenty-first century when people like our friend Akua in Ghana claim to have experienced an abduction at the hands of something non-human, we startle as if we have never heard the like. As I journey through Greece, South Africa, Ghana to Kenya, Cuba, Brazil, the Caribbean, the Philippines, India, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, it is becoming clear to me that “the like” has in fact been told to us since time immemorial. We just haven't taken it

seriously.

Western culture today appears unable to take these kinds of reports seriously. What we now call “close encounters of the fourth kind” must be categorised as fable or fiction, metaphor, or madness. The one thing we will not do with a person claiming a flesh and blood abduction experience is listen with respect. At least that is what I thought. Then one day in 2018, the revered journalist and national icon, Ita Buttrose, chair of Australia’s ABC, spoke some words on national television that made my jaw drop.

Chapter Three

Look at the sky!

Canberra, Australia – 2018

“Jane’s first experience of aliens – greys – happened when she was a toddler.”

I have lived in Australia for more than twenty years and for all that time I have been aware of Ita Buttrose. She is a national icon, a celebrated journalist and editor. As a woman in national journalism, as the pioneering editor of Cleo magazine and as a popular figure in the Australian media Ita has become part of everyone’s wider family. In 2018 she was appointed as the new chair of the Australian ABC at a time when the independence of Australian journalism has needed a hero and a champion. I say all that to let you know, if you’re not familiar, that Ita Buttrose is an absolute pillar of Australian society. That’s why my jaw drops as I hear her speak calmly, respectfully and without judgement to a lady by the name of Jane Pooley on a topic far from Australian mainstream culture – alien abduction.

Jane Pooley is a retired nurse and mother of three from central New South Wales. In the words of Ita Buttrose, she is a “mild and assuming woman.” Her claim is that she is a lifelong experiencer of extraterrestrial visitations. She also claims to have been used by her visitors as part of a program of human-ET hybridization, and to have produced two hybrid children, who were taken from her mid-term.

Before the interview on national television on Studio 10, Jane presents the show’s team with medical documentation evidencing her pregnancies, along with other objective indicators of her story. The team then invites her to take a polygraph test to be quizzed on the key elements of her story, to which Jane

readily agrees.

“Did you meet an alien?”

“Do you have part-alien children?”

“Have you been part of an alien breeding program?”

Jane underwent the polygraph test three times and the result, says Ita, “No deception was indicated.”

The piece on Studio 10 presents no more than the bare bones of Jane Pooley’s account. It makes no reference to the corroborating evidence that Jane has presented in terms of medical papers. Neither does it refer to the support of other eyewitnesses. No doubt it was easier to get the show’s producers to agree to a “You decide...” type piece, than a piece that says, “The evidence clearly points to an astonishing conclusion!” I can understand that. But what strikes me is that this is the first time I have seen any reference in Australian mainstream media to the kind of things I have been learning from my Ghanaian family, and from mythologies around the world concerning a widespread and ancient report of forced human hybridization with an extraterrestrial presence on Earth. To see a figure of the standing and credibility of Ita Buttrose take the story on, albeit non-committedly, but calmly and with respect – is astonishing. Something in our culture is shifting. In fact, something has shifted a long way. Fifty years ago, it was a different story.

Westall, Clayton, Melbourne, Australia 11:00am – April 6th, 1966

A young boy bursts open the doors of the science room on to the school playground.

“Mr Greenwood! Mr Greenwood! There’s things in the sky! There’s flying saucers in the sky!”

Until now it has been an ordinary day for the children of Westall Primary and Western High school. Now the corridors are full of children and staff racing on to the school playground. As Mr Greenwood the science teacher runs out of the building another student shouts out.

“Look at the sky! Look at the sky!”

Children are running, screaming, shouting and crying. One girl even faints as three silver, saucer-shaped craft hover over adjacent the schools. The chemistry teacher, Mrs Sandleby, grabs her camera and starts taking photographs.

After ten minutes one of the craft appears to put down on the Grange – a lightly wooded area immediately adjacent to the school grounds. The boys and girls charge down to the fence to catch a closer look at the flying saucer. Two of the girls, Jacquie and Tanya, jump over the fence and Tanya runs ahead through the pine trees, hoping to touch the craft. Within seconds Tanya reappears, running back towards the fence, screaming and hysterical. Minutes later she has been taken to hospital.

In the skies above, five small aircraft now appear, and for about twenty minutes they manoeuvre around the other two flying saucers, trying to get a closer look at whatever these unusual craft might be. As more children approach the Grange, the landed craft rises to an altitude of about twelve feet, leaving marks and a circular impression in the ground below. It then rotates on to its side and retreats into the sky at phenomenal speed. As it does so, the five small planes do their best to track it but are simply left standing.

Within thirty minutes of the saucers’ arrival military jeeps arrive at the school, carrying army personnel in fatigues. Cars and vans now converge on the schools, bringing police, a high-ranking government official, and press reporters. At the school fence a twelve-year-old student, Joy Clarke, is talking to an interviewer from Channel 9, explaining what everyone has just seen.

From out of nowhere a man in a dark blue suit steps up to Joy and orders her to stop talking and go inside. The man then commands the film crew to stop filming. Inside the school another man in a dark blue suit has accosted the

chemistry teacher who has been taking photographs of the three craft. After a heated exchange the man wrenches the camera from the teacher's hands and takes it away – never to be seen again.

The same day, that very afternoon, the schoolchildren find themselves herded into a special assembly. Their principal has an important announcement to make. He says,

“Nothing happened this morning. Any child who claims that something did happen will be punished.”

The stunned children sit dutifully as the principal makes clear to staff and students that what they all witnessed, what had sent children into a panic, what within thirty minutes had brought the police, the air force and the army out to respond was in fact a weather balloon. Any student offering a different explanation will be put in detention.

The next day Jacquie – one of the two to jump the fence into the Grange the day before, ran round the house of her friend Tanya – the one who had been taken to hospital. She wanted to know if Tanya was feeling better. To her utter amazement the door of her friend's house was opened by a stern, English-speaking woman. Tanya's parents spoke Yugoslavian. The woman insisted, “Your friend Tanya doesn't live here and has never lived here.”

Jacquie never saw her friend Tanya again.

Years later Jacquie learned that Tanya had been removed from the school overnight and put into a convent. More than a hundred students have been willing to speak publicly about what happened. But to this day Jacquie's friend will not speak of the incident nor the part of her life which followed.

This is the Westall Incident. It is the biggest mass sighting of UFOs in Australian history. More than two hundred students witnessed it, along with teaching staff, local workers and residents. Army, Air Force, Police and Press all responded to the incident. And yet to this day the official government report is that nothing happened. There was no incident.

Ten years ago, Australian researcher, Shane Ryan, conducted an investigation

into the case and published his findings. Not long after, Shane received a phone call from a brother and a sister, now in their fifties. They were the son and daughter of the government official who had been despatched to Westall on that fateful day. At that time, their father was a senior public servant in the Department of Supply.

When Shane sat down with the man's son and daughter in 2010, a sad story unfolded. They told him that their father had died, still a young man, only four years after the incident. After what he had witnessed at Westall, he had been determined to get to the truth of what had really happened on that April day in suburban Melbourne. But, evidently, their father's determination had clashed with strict instructions from on high to stop digging into a story that the government wished to keep under wraps. The pressures – and no doubt threats – which issued from that clash were, in the view of his son and daughter, the cause of his untimely death.

Shane Ryan then took a trip to the Channel 9 archive to take a look at their film reportage of the incident, including the interview footage which had got two students into detention all those years ago. Scanning the archive of dusty tins, Shane was thrilled to locate the tin labelled April 6th, 1966. His excitement quickly turned to dismay as the container revealed that at some point in the thirty-four years since, someone has seen fit to remove the contents.

Today, as far as the official government narratives go, there was no Westall Incident on April 6th, 1966. Despite the military, air force, police and government presence involved, apparently no government agency has retained any record of an event ever having happened on that day. As yet, Australian government agencies have not even found a way to say, "Yes, there was an incident. We just don't know what it was." Just nothing. Silence.

What was it in 1966 that compelled the government to this policy of silence? And what makes the incident so sensitive that it still cannot be acknowledged, more than fifty years later? You have to wonder precisely what cat would be out of the bag if the Westall Incident were to be acknowledged at an official level?

But while our government policy has not shifted, it seems to me our culture

slowly has. The children of Westall, silenced and threatened in 1966, are now allowed to speak openly – and even go on national television to testify to the biggest UFO mass-sighting in Australian history – and to do so without consequence.

The Westall Incident powerfully illustrates why the mythologies and indigenous narratives of the world are so valuable. It is in these unofficial stories, in our folk memory, that our cultures carry the memory of moments and events unacknowledged by our political authorities.

Seeing and hearing the witnesses of Westall speaking freely in the twenty-first century encourages me to believe that our culture may finally be a degree more ready to listen than it was in a previous generation. Yet, even with more people more willing to listen, the fear of ridicule remains a powerful lid on our sharing of memory to this day.

Some of those who have contacted me with their own stories of strange encounters have taken more than fifty years to reach out to anyone other than their spouse to tell of their experience. A great many have been kept silent by the fear of ridicule. Of all the experiencers I have spoken with, among those most powerfully affected was an Argentinian gaucho – a farmer whose life was changed at the age of twelve by a phenomenon he could not explain.

Acevedo, Pergamino, Argentina 1978

Juan Perez is out on his horse, checking on the herd. For Juan, this is a familiar part of his duties on the farm. But today he will encounter something unknown. The encounter will change his life. He is twelve years old.

The field stretches ahead of him towards the horizon which today, as never before, is hidden behind a dense cloud, which slowly advances towards him. As Juan enters the fog, the contours of something unfamiliar begin to take shape. What is it? Is it some kind of vehicle? Some kind of workers' hut? Unafraid, Juan examines the unfamiliar structure. He tethers his horse to it and quietly, inquisitively, he climbs up a kind of ladder to peer inside an open