

# Where Is Everybody? The Implications of the 2002 Roper Poll Regarding ET Encounters

**By Michael Mannion**

The prevailing attitude of the executives, TV news readers and stenographers of the powerful (formerly known as journalists) in the corporate media is that the whole question of human interaction with nonhuman intelligences from beyond earth is preposterous and a waste of time, except as science fiction or entertainment.

People who claim to have had encounters with other intelligent beings, and those who take their stories seriously, are portrayed as mentally ill or charlatans of one sort or another. The media create the impressions that there are a just few unstable or untrustworthy crackpots and hoaxers making up all the kooky stories about "little green men."

However, the Roper poll prepared for the SciFi Channel in September 2002 gives a very different picture. It contains many fascinating findings, suggesting that "UFO experiences are not foreign to Americans." Sightings and encounters cannot be relegated to a few fringe individuals.

The survey results indicate that one in seven Americans say they or someone they know has had an experience involving a UFO. According to the pollsters, "A total of 14 percent have had or know someone who has had at least one Close Encounter of the First, Second, or Third kind. The largest proportion (12 percent) say they or someone else they know has seen a UFO at close quarters. Much smaller proportions say they or someone they know has seen a UFO cause a physical effect on objects, animals, or humans (3 percent) or has had an encounter with extraterrestrial life (2 percent)."

The pollsters further reported that:

"Among those who believe in abductions, one-third claim to have experienced, or know someone who experienced, a Close Encounter of their own...When it comes to other unusual personal experiences, 1.4 percent, or 2.9 million Americans, say they have experienced at least four of five key events that believers of UFO abductions have identified as being of particular interest in examining whether UFO abductions might actually have taken place."

The polling data suggesting that nearly 3 million Americans may have experienced an encounter with non-human intelligences is, quite simply, astounding if accurate. Other surveys over the last few decades have suggested that reports of UFO sightings; of sightings in which a UFO occupants is seen; and of encounters with entities remain at more or less the same level regardless of what is occurring in society at that time. Approximately 7-11% of Americans report seeing a UFO annually and about 1-2% of Americans report having had

an encounter with a non-human intelligence from beyond earth.

This figures remain stable whether or not Hollywood or cable TV has a blockbuster movie or series about aliens; whether or not NASA lands robots on Mars; whether or not a president lies to the nation to get support for a pre-emptive attack on another state; whether or not a Christian fundamentalist TV evangelist tells his flock that people who believe in UFOs should be stoned to death. For decades, irrespective of the prevailing social situation, the same percentage of Americans have been making the same types of reports in the same numbers.

What are the implications of this? One that seems significant is the cumulative effect of these encounters on the U.S. population. In the 1960s, the population of the United States was approaching 200 million. In 2004, it is about 283 million. If one percent of the population has had an encounter with intelligent life forms from beyond earth annually, then, over the last 40 years, tens of millions of Americans would have had such experiences. Have millions and millions of Americans actually had some form of direct experience with the UFO-ET phenomenon? What impact would this have on our society?

The scientist Enrico Fermi once asked, if there are intelligent alien civilizations throughout the cosmos, "Where is everybody?" This has become known as Fermi's Paradox. (Of course, in asking his question, Fermi ignored the deluge of reliable reports indicating that, although we may not have found them, it seems that they have found us.) The Roper poll results present us with another seeming paradox. If one percent of the American public, annually, truly has had encounters with "aliens" over the past few decades, might not we, too, ask "Where is everybody?"

Unlike Fermi's Paradox, the apparent inconsistency concerning the seeming absence of large numbers of people who have had encounters has an answer. Where are they? They are right here among us, living and working, leading full lives. They are our parents, spouses, lovers, children, friends, relatives, neighbors, teachers, scientists, religious leaders, students, physicians, nurses, healers, politicians, law enforcement officials, judges, lawyers, entertainers, filmmakers, writers, painters, musicians, poets, philosophers, florists, small business people, top executives of multinationals, commercial pilots, truck drivers, call center operators, construction workers, sanitation workers, engineers, philanthropists, diplomats, astronauts and cosmonauts. They are the famous and the familiar.

So the question we need to ask is not "Where is everybody?" but "Why is almost everybody silent?" Many may fear ridicule and derision if they are open about their experiences; others may worry that they will lose their positions of privilege, authority or influence in society if they admit to such encounters. A significant number of "experiencers" feel alone and not understood.

But what would happen if, on one appointed, well-publicized day, millions of people gathered in thousands of locations all across America and "went public" with their encounter experiences? Many possible outcomes to such a day can be envisaged. But one thing would certainly happen to those who gathered together: they would know they were

not alone.

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