

UFO FILES
UFOs and the White House
The History Channel, Sunday 29th
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The third episode of The History Channel's UFO-based series was entitled *UFOs and the White House*. It sought to explore the relationship between the subject of UFOs and 'the highest office in the land', that of the President of the United States. In fact, every US president has had some involvement with the subject of UFOs, in one form or another since World War II.



Franklin D Roosevelt

Beginning in 1942, with Franklin Delano Roosevelt incumbent in the Oval Office, a radar blip in Los Angeles, California, instigated what has become known in UFO lore as

The Battle of Los Angeles. American forces scrambled and thousands of anti-aircraft rounds were fired into the night sky. Yet to this day, nobody is certain as to what they were firing at. In fact, the only damage caused that night was from the AA shells that landed on Los Angeles.

Roosevelt immediately set General George C Marshall the task of explaining just what had happened. Marshall's report was vague, suggesting that up to fifteen aircraft may have been involved, ranging in speeds from 'very slow' to two hundred miles per hour and varying in altitude from nine thousand to eighteen thousand feet. No bombs were dropped and no aircraft were shot down.



'The Battle of Los Angeles'

The only evidence of anything in the sky that night appeared in the form of a photograph of searchlights illuminated a bright, disc-shaped object. The mystery remained, as more pressing matters for the president, the newly-joined war, came to the fore.

President Harry S Truman succeeded Roosevelt in 1945 and saw the Second World War end in

victory for the Allies. Almost immediately, though, a new threat emerged – that of the communist east and particularly, the Soviet Union under Stalin.



Harry S Truman

In 1947, Truman was informed of the so-called Roswell Incident in New Mexico. Official histories and biographies of the Truman presidency make no mention of UFOs, but the man who briefed the president, General Robert Landry, *does* reference unidentified flying objects being mentioned in the White House at the time. Landry, who worked closely with the CIA, was tasked to brief Truman orally every three months about the UFO subject. These meetings, perhaps as many as eighteen of them, were not notated, there were to be no records of their ever taking place.

Then, in 1952, UFOs became big news as Washington DC became the centre of a major flap. Objects were seen entering the restricted airspace over the capital, both visually and on radar. Fighter jets were scrambled, but as soon as they approached the invading craft, they vanished, only to reappear when the jets returned to base. To allay public fears, the UFOs

were dismissed as temperature inversions and that there was no threat to public safety. Truman appeared on television and genially said that flying saucers ‘were always going on’, but it was no big deal, it seemed.

In 1953, Dwight David Eisenhower began the first of two terms in the White House. While, officially, Truman never had any first-hand knowledge of UFOs, it is said that Eisenhower had a ten minute sighting for himself, while aboard a ship off the British coast in 1952, of a bluish-coloured object. Ike was said to have declared that he would look into the matter further, but nothing of the incident was ever heard again.



Dwight D Eisenhower

The Fifties saw flying saucers enter the popular culture in fabulous movies of alien invasion, but it was this era that saw the real secrecy begin to really enshroud the UFO subject.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s term was cut short, but his legacy was a lasting one. The US space program owed much to the aspirations of JFK and his famous speech vowing that a man would be set upon the Moon

and returned safely to the Earth is still inspirational to this day. In 1963, the year he died, Kennedy was sailing on his boat off his Cape Cod home when he and his companions saw a sixty-foot, metallic object. Kennedy decided that nobody should speak of it, so it is something of an unsubstantiated tale.



John & Jackie Kennedy

While JFK appeared to have little interest in UFOs (he had more pressing matters, such as Soviet missiles in Cuba to attend to), his brother, Robert Kennedy is known to have been keenly interested in the subject. He exchanged several letters about unidentified flying objects with researchers and then-Congressman Gerald Ford. It is thought, though, that John F Kennedy was the first president to be kept in the dark by the security and intelligence services about the reality of the UFO subject.

After JFK's assassination, his vice-president, Lyndon Baines Johnson, became president. As vice-president, he had answered a letter from a member of the public concerning UFOs and suggested that they contact the executive secretary of NASA, Dr E.C. Welsh. This was a

puzzling suggestion, as it was generally the US Air Force that dealt with UFO data.

It was during LBJ's term that the Kecksberg crash occurred in 1965. Officially explained away as a meteorite impact, it was curious to note that, while the president was at his ranch in Austin, Texas, he was joined the day after the crash by the head of NASA, the governor of Pennsylvania and all of the joint chiefs-of-staff. The meeting concerned the Vietnam War – officially – but the fact that they all arrived to speak with LBJ the day after the Kecksberg incident is interesting. What would the governor of Pennsylvania, in which Kecksberg sits, and the head of NASA have to add to a meeting concerning Vietnam?



Lyndon B Johnson meets his team

It is said that President Richard Milhous Nixon possessed a huge collection of books about UFOs. Rumours abound that he wanted to make the truth about UFOs public and that he engineered meetings to promote this agenda.

One step in this program of disclosure was the production of the

TV show, *UFOs: Past, Present and Future*, by Robert Emenegger. This was later re-released as *UFOs: It Has Begun*, a review of which can be found in the first issue of the UFOData Report. Emenegger was specifically asked by the Republican Party to produce this documentary using only official government people.



Richard M Nixon

Emenegger was a friend of Nixon's chief-of-staff and so was accepted as a trusted confidante. He was told by another party that a UFO had landed at Holloman Air Force Base and the entire incident had been recorded on film. He travelled to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio and entered a deep bunker, where Colonel George Weinbrenner, the commander of foreign technology, had an office. He asked Weinbrenner about the Holloman landing and instead of laughing, the colonel handed Emenegger a book on UFOs signed by Dr Allan J Hynek. Perplexed, he asked his friend at the White House about the Holloman event, but was told that something might have happened, but he was unsure if the president knew anything about it. Emenegger never received the Holloman footage for

his documentary, but it has emerged that at least two former presidents *had* seen the footage. Was Nixon one of these?

Gerald Rudolph Ford had entered the UFO fray while acting as a congressman in 1966. He helped orchestrate public congressional hearings into the subject in April of that year.



Gerald R Ford

As president, he had people advising him that are still around today – Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and George HW Bush, the current president's father. After leaving office in 1976, Ford replied in a letter to George Filer that during his political career, he had made many enquiries to the Air Force concerning UFOs, but they had always denied any UFO allegations (whatever those allegations might be!).



Jimmy Carter

James Earl Carter's presidency was described by UFO researchers as a golden age for the subject. In 1969, as governor of Georgia, he filled out a UFO sighting report. To this day, he insists that he saw something that he could not explain, even though the official explanation was that he saw the planet Venus.

Carter had promised to make public everything he could about the UFO subject, but failed to do so. He was said to have contacted the then head of the CIA, George HW Bush, and asked for all the files on UFOs. Bush replied to him that such information was on a 'need to know' basis and that the president did not need to know, no matter how curious he was. Despite this stonewalling, however, more than half of all UFO documents released under the Freedom of Information Act over the past thirty years came to light during Carter's term.

Ronald Wilson Reagan is said to have had at least two UFO encounters in his life before reaching the Oval Office. The first came to light in the biography of actress Lucille Ball, in which she described

how Ronald and his wife, Nancy, had arrived late to a Hollywood party. They explained that they had seen a UFO on the drive over there and were very excited about their sighting.

The second incident occurred when he was governor of California. He was flying in an aircraft with his entourage when they spotted a light zigzagging alongside the aircraft. He ordered his pilot to follow the UFO and they did so for several minutes before it shot away at high speed.

Several times during his presidency, Reagan referred to UFOs and aliens in his speeches, most notably in his address to the United Nations in 1987. Presidential speeches are heavily vetted, with dozens of people scrutinizing every word. So for such 'far out' subjects to be used on several occasions is an important point to reflect upon. In fact, Reagan's speechwriter at the time of the UN address took out the 'alien invasion' section, but was ordered to put it back in by Reagan himself.



Ronald Reagan

It should be noted that while Reagan was making these speeches that referred to UFOs and aliens, his

vice-president was George HW Bush, the former CIA director that had stonewalled Carter about the same subject.

When George Herbert Walker Bush became president in 1989, he became perhaps the best-informed commander-in-chief on the UFO subject ever. He had served as director of the CIA under Carter and had been Reagan's vice-president. It is likely that he had come into contact with a great deal of UFO-related material over the years.

During his term, though, he only referred to the subject in speeches in a joking manner. Despite this, though, it is thought that he and his staff, especially Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, knew a great deal about the subject and worked to keep the lid tightly shut.



George HW Bush

Despite little being available to link Bush Sr. to UFOs, it is generally thought, that with his political, intelligence and even business connections, he is the one president that knows most about the subject.

William Jefferson Clinton succeeded George HW Bush in 1993 and, like the last Democrat president, Jimmy Carter, he did a great deal to declassify UFO reports and get them out in the open.



Bill Clinton

In November 1995, he gave a speech in Belfast, Northern Ireland, in which he says that as far as he knew there were no alien bodies recovered at Roswell in 1947, but if they did, he wanted to know about it. The Roswell report released in 1994 by the USAF made no mention of any bodies, but the report issued in 1997 tried to explain the bodies away as crash-test dummies dropped from aircraft.

George Walker Bush, son of George HW Bush, promised to release the truth about UFOs while on the campaign trail prior to his election in 2000-2001. Needless to say, he has still to act on this vow.



George W Bush

It is thought that in this administration, the person who is in the know about UFOs is vice-president, Dick Cheney. Indeed, when UFO researcher, Grant Cameron, asked Cheney if he had ever been briefed about UFOs during a radio phone-in show, instead of simply saying: "No." or some other dismissive comment, he said that if he had been briefed about UFOs, that it would be classified and he wouldn't be able to talk about it. An incredible statement that proves that the UFO subject is still so highly regarded by the US government that it would be classified information!



Dick Cheney & Donald Rumsfeld

While presidents come and go, the intelligence agencies remain and they want to keep tight control of official UFO research. Few presidents are really in the loop concerning the subject, but unidentified flying objects are still a cause for concern to this day.

In 2005, an unidentified object was detected over Washington DC. Pandemonium erupted as a terrorist attack akin to 9/11 was feared. People ran for shelter and the president and his staff were whisked to safety. The object was later explained away as a 'radar blip'.

UFO Files continues to be high quality, serious programming (unlike Discovery's *World's Strangest UFO Stories*, which persists in ridiculing the subject) and this episode was extremely interesting. While little was deduced about the involvement of the office of the president in UFO matters, we got a glimpse into the workings of government and their continued interest in the subject. A subject that, according to Dick Cheney, is still classified.

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