

**Weird Travel:**  
**UFOs & Alien Encounters**  
The Travel Channel (USA), Sunday  
26<sup>th</sup> March, 2006



Of all the places to expect to see a serious documentary about the UFO subject, the American 'Travel Channel', albeit part of the Discovery network, is not one of them. Yet, what was broadcast on Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 was one of the better programs on the subject in recent times.

Admittedly, it was made with the general audience in mind, therefore covered material that was well-known to UFO researchers, but it also covered phenomena that are not so widely known, such as the Mexican 'flying humanoid' sightings.

Straight off, sceptic, Dr Michael Shermer told us, paraphrasing the late, great Carl Sagan, by informing us that "we no longer live in the demon-haunted world of the Middle Ages". By this he meant we were a sophisticated people living in a technological age of computers and space exploration, a world in which superstition plays no part.

To counter this, the narrator said that a recent CNN poll had discovered that one in seven Americans had "seen or knew someone who had seen a sign of alien activity". He also remarked that eighty percent of US citizens believe that the government is hiding the true facts about UFOs.

Our first stop was, of course, Roswell, New Mexico. Stanton Friedman told us that a UFO crashed there, while Shermer reappeared and advised that Roswell was an example of nothing more than myth-making. We all know the story, but to surmise, something crashed at a ranch outside of Roswell in July of 1947. A press release from the Roswell Army Air Field (RAAF) informed the world that a 'flying disc' had been captured. This was hastily recanted and an experimental balloon with radar reflectors was blamed for the confusion.



Roswell investigator, Tom Carey, suggested that saying that the intelligence officer, Major Jesse Marcel, of the 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, at the time, the only atomic bomb group in the world, could not identify earthly materials from a balloon (tin foil and

rubber) was not only ludicrous, but insulting.

A visit to modern Roswell showed how the UFO culture has descended on this out-of-the-way town, with almost every store having some sort of ET item to sell to the many tourists that visit each year. The Crash Site Café even boasts an alien chef! The main attraction in the town, though, is the International UFO Museum. This facility acts not only as a museum, depicting the Roswell Incident and other UFO topics, but also as a research centre, with an extensive reference library.



Despite the official version of events, which put the incident down to a Project Mogul balloon, researchers are still claiming that an extraterrestrial craft came down in 1947. Dennis Balthasar and Stanton Friedman maintain that the authorities' actions during that time prove that it was nothing like a balloon that crashed. These actions included the threatening of witnesses.

The infamous alien autopsy was covered next (very timely, given the soon-to-be-released Ant & Dec

movie) and Friedman made it clear that he thought it was a hoax, while Balthasar suggested it was an example of government misinformation.

Our next port of call was Area 51 in Nevada.



Connie West of the famous Little A'le'Inn diner explained how they have had visits from government officials and that, for some reason, the public has a need to know what goes on beyond the mountain range in the distance.

Friedman divulged that he believed that Area 51 held tests of such projects as Aurora, the hypersonic aircraft, and experiments with Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), some of which are designed for combat scenarios. The base, which was only recently acknowledged to exist, is exempt from federal and state laws and to this day, the government will make no comment about what goes on there.

The difficulty in accessing the base was noted, with explanations about the high fences, motion and other sensors and the many patrols that

roam the desert, both on the ground and in the air. Stray into its airspace and fighters will be dispatched to escort your plane to safety...

Of course, Area 51's most famous secret is the claims that alien technology was back-engineered there. Bob Lazar is the most notorious whistle-blower and maintains that he was employed to work out how extraterrestrial craft operated.



Stanton Friedman believes that Lazar is a phoney and that his educational and work background is suspect. Lazar is adamant that he worked there and that the government went to great pains to erase his history.

In the small town of Snowflake, Arizona, an event in 1975 put it on the world map and produced one of ufology's most famous stories.

A group of loggers were returning home one night in November when they saw a light in the forest. On investigating, they saw a UFO and, against the wishes of his friends, Travis Walton got out of the pickup truck and headed towards the craft.

He was struck by a beam and sent flying. His friends panicked and drove away, but Walton bore no malice and said he would have done the same. When they returned, Travis and the UFO were gone.

They reported what had happened to the local sheriff, but their tale was greeted with scepticism. They were even suspected of murdering their friend.

Walton described what happened when he came to. He was held down by a group of short aliens and something was placed over his face. Then he blacked out again.

He awoke, naked, by the side of a road, with the UFO hovering above him. As he watched, the craft zipped away. He was in the town of Heber, thirty miles from where he had been abducted. Finding a payphone, he called his friends and it was only then that he learned that he had been missing for five days!



Despite the efforts of sceptics to accuse Walton of drug-taking or flat-out hoaxing his experience, he maintains to this day that he was abducted, against his will, by

extraterrestrials. In fact, he says that he wished that this thing had never happened to him.

Mexico is one of the world's premier tourist destinations, both for its history and its beautiful beach resorts, but recently it has become more famous for one thing – UFO sightings. More reports come from Mexico than any other country, and more often than not, the sightings are backed-up by video evidence.

It all began during the total solar eclipse of 1991, when millions of Mexicans watched the spectacular event in the skies above them. Camcorders were trained upwards, but they not only caught the eclipse, they also caught something else – fleets of UFOs, metallic, disc-shaped objects that defied explanation.

So many sightings have occurred that even the Mexican military acknowledges that something is going on that they cannot explain.



In 2004, a young police officer from Guadalupe claimed he was attacked by a flying humanoid. He was in his patrol car, when the being dropped down out of the trees and repeatedly

rammed into his windscreen. He described it as a hooded figure, like a witch, but without a broom (!). As he frantically reversed away, he said that the creature tried to grab him through the broken glass. He called for backup, but eventually lost control of the car and smashed into a wall and losing consciousness. Later medical tests proved he was fit and well and had no drugs or alcohol in his system, but that he was in a deep state of shock. It was also revealed that he has never been prone to hallucinations or any other psychological disorders.

Many video recordings of these flying humanoids have surfaced, with one showing two figures. One large figure expelled a smaller object, which flew away, then returned and was reabsorbed by the first.



Stanton Friedman is not impressed with the reports, but researcher, Ed Sherwood, believes that the appearance of the beings is a sign that something unprecedented is going to happen soon.

In 1997, something flew over Phoenix, Arizona and was seen by thousands of people and captured

on videotape. The tale of the Phoenix Lights became the biggest UFO story since Roswell.



Explained away as nothing more than flares from military aircraft, the residents of Phoenix do not believe this theory and city official, Frances Barwood, was told to drop her inquiries when she brought it up at a meeting. She persisted, but says that the government has stonewalled her constantly.

Jeff Willes photographed the lights three hours before the main sighting and is certain that they were not military flares.



The most famous footage was shot by a local physician, Lynne Kitei.

She remained anonymous for almost seven years, but still wanting answers to what she had seen, not only on that night, but on several occasions previously.

She first saw the lights two years previously, in 1995, close to her home. She described them as amber orbs that hovered in the air, but appeared to be intelligently-controlled. There were three of the orbs in a triangular formation. Then in January, 1997, two months before the famous event, she saw them again. She took photographs that showed strange, amber objects.

Lynne's famous footage of the Phoenix Lights was sent to Village Labs, run by Dr Jim Dilettoso. His team scoured the footage and were able to triangulate a path for the objects. Military officials and Michael Shermer still maintain that what was seen were flares.



Dilettoso's analysis of the footage, when compared with footage of known military flares, led him to the conclusion that what was seen over Phoenix was not what the authorities claimed it to be. He collected accounts from eyewitnesses over the

three hour period that the lights were seen and said that a huge, V-shaped craft had glided over the city, reversed its course and glided back. What was seen, he said, was unknown.



As sightings and videotapes continue to flood in, people like Dilettoso believe that the best is yet to come, but, the narrator explained, UFO sightings are not a solely modern phenomenon.

Historical artworks depict what appear to be saucer-shaped craft in the skies and many, many ancient cave paintings and petroglyphs show what we today would call UFOs. Have aliens been observing us for thousands of years?



Stanton Friedman rounded things off by saying that he believes that extraterrestrials are observing us to ensure that we do not become a danger to the other, more advanced civilisations out there. As we take our first steps into space, the danger is that we will take our weapons and aggression with us. It would be prudent to keep an eye on 'us primitives'.

This was a great show that was extremely enjoyable and no doubt brought the UFO subject to a whole, new audience. Hopefully, one day it will be broadcast over here in the UK.

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