

# Claims Department



So, I got fired.

It happens, and I'm terrified as it ain't exactly easy to find a job these days. I've hit the ground running, as I usually do, but who knows. I am not exactly the kind of guy that companies are looking for, and at the same time, I'm great at interviews. Getting the interview, that's the hard part. I'm working on it, but I'm still gonna be doing these crazy zines!

Because this is the year of the weird.

I'm starting with Bigfoot, or Yeti, of the Abominable Snowman, or Sasquatch, of the Skunk Ape, or the Yeren, or on and on and on. There are so many different names, and so many different places. Like all things, I'm on the fence. I think there are things that are being seen, that there are weirder things than we understand, but really, I'm not sure if the things we think we are seeing are the things we're seeing, and what they mean is another thing altogether.

I love Bigfoot. Of all the cryptids, it's my fave. I mean, I've written about Mokele Mbembe, and that's one that I really believe is 100% legit, but there's nothing like the Sasquatch. The rest of the series will be Ghosts (in May/June), Water Monsters (August/Sept), UFOs (Oct) and finally the Mothman. It's gonna be a weird year. It's already been a weird year, so go figure.

There's a lot of stuff here that I've wanted to write for ages, and I'm happier to have a few of my favorite people along with me!

That cover from Vanessa is my new fave. She's so good!

Also, it's great to say that I'm a Hugo nominee again! *Journey Planet* is up again and we're psyched! There's so much that I am happy that we're going to be doing, though seriously bummed that *Outworlds* didn't make it on the ballot. It's an absolute masterpiece, and if you haven't read it, get thee to eFanzines!



# Cover by Vanessa Applegate

Page 4

The Practice of Bigfootery

by Derek McCaw

Page 10 - Art by Brad W. Foster

Page 11

The Patterson-Gimlin Film

by Chris Garcia

Page 13 Art by Bob Hole

Page 14

Batsquatch

by Steven H Silver

Page 15

Bigfoot Hunting Season

by Chris Garcia

Page 16 Art by Espana Sheriff

Page 17

The Sasquan Art of Brad W. Foster!

Page 22

The Myakka Skunk Ape photos

by Chris Garcia

Page 24

Bionic Bigfoot: His Legend & Legacy

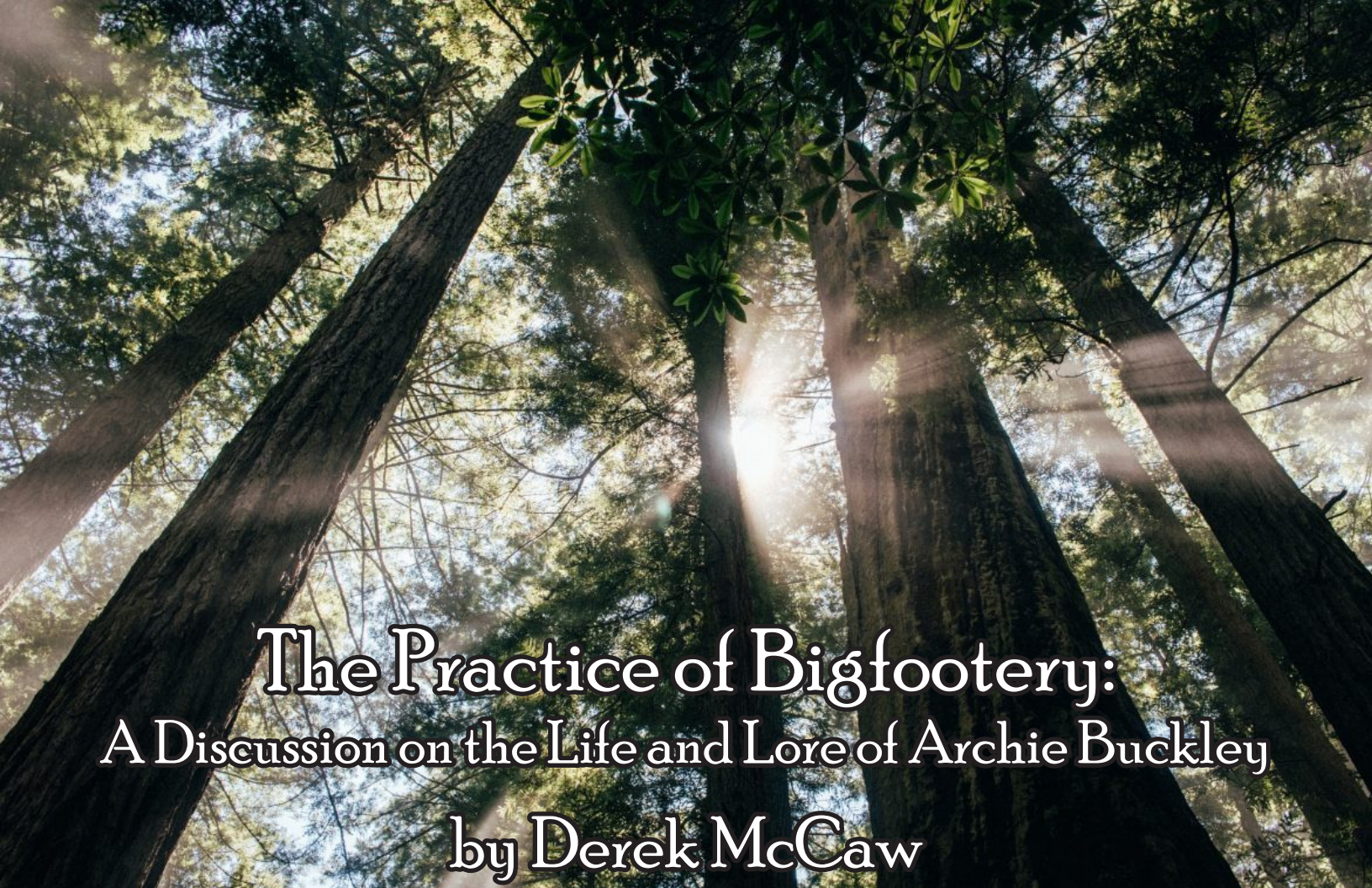
by Chuck Serface

Page 27

Review: Hunting Bigfoot

By Chris Garcia





# The Practice of Bigfootery: A Discussion on the Life and Lore of Archie Buckley

by Derek McCaw

The conversation should have happened while hiking through the woods, or at least around a firepit in somebody's backyard. But it's early 2021, and though Pacific Northwest resident and poet Chris Buckley is definitely in tune with nature, he agreed to talk about Bigfoot through Streamyard, not his back yard. The reason? This soft-spoken co-worker of mine let slip one day that his great-uncle Archie was one of the first major figures in Bigfoot studies, a founding member of what was called "the Bay Area group."

That's not the sort of thing you let pass by; we had to have a follow up, and that was *before* the opportunity came up to write this article. At the end of March, Buckley met up with me virtually, and we dug into this intriguing piece of his family history. I was there to talk about Bigfoot hunting and had given the meeting that title, but he corrected me.

"...In fact, (Archie Buckley) would be the first to point out, I don't like your title, we're not hunting Bigfoot. And he was a very big advocate... For him, it's protecting," the younger Buckley said.

"Archie Buckley was my great uncle, he was my dad's uncle, my younger brother of my grandfather. So, he was part of all our family occasions. Growing up, he lived in the Bay Area where we did and so, he was just part of our family. And that meant that our family lore got deeply wrapped up in his lifelong passion of being in the outdoors and specifically looking for and gathering evidence around this mythical hominid that lived in the Pacific Northwest and Northern California, Bigfoot, Sasquatch."

It was my turn to push back. "Mythical?"

"Well, mythical, I'm going to say, in the sense of not everybody knew about it, believed in it, thought of it as anything other than folklore. And I'm also taking myth in much more of a Joseph Campbell sense, in the sense that, by that I will say, archetypal. Because whether you believe in it or not, it is a primal force in people's psychology, people experience it. Whether you think there is an 'it' there, you never argue with the actual experience when somebody conveys it to you.

And unless that sounded like I'm one of those bigfoot deniers, I'm not. I completely, absolutely, believe that we have missed an undiscovered primate. But like Archie, I also believe it is probably a very threatened species and one that is being severely encroached upon through habitat destruction. Because that was really his driving force in his practice of Bigfootery, for lack of a better term."

I chuckled. That was a term that would stick in my head. We both agreed it was the first time we'd ever heard anybody reference it that way.

"Archie was a really interesting guy. He worked his life as a rehabilitation officer. He was, essentially, a physical therapist with the VA, for many, many years. And so, when he began acting as an adult, searching for this creature that he was introduced to through family lore as a child, what set him apart and what gave him a footing, as it were in the field, was that he was one of the first people to approach it to something other than, hey, there's big footprints in the woods.

He was looking at it as, okay. I do physical therapy and I specialize in ambulation and helping amputees regain full range of mobility. He was one of the first people to take a look at footprint evidence and try to apply kinesiology and anatomy to it and to try to understand. He was one of the first people who analyzed track patterns from an anatomical point of view. And, in fact, he even wrote papers on it and was published in that area between fanzine realm and what is now, the bottom edge of pseudoscience."

I'll assume the fanzine realm has closed the gap.

"And he was forerunning. He was there with some of the original people, like Grover Krantz, who was a physical anthropologist, who put together theories about evolutionary possibilities and how a creature like this could exist. Archie would come in with counter theories about, no, that's the wrong lineage and your footprint evidence is wrong and here's why.

What gave him his edge is, he approached it, in many ways, the same way that he approached his patients. He wanted to establish a rapport..."

We discussed how Archie and his work had received some media attention – somewhat for laughs in the Animal Planet series *Finding Bigfoot*, but Leonard Nimoy's *In Search Of...* had interviewed Archie and his fellow protectors with respect.

"They recreate his Bigfoot encounter there. And he's acting out the way that he would try to build rapport with a creature using soft voice, using nonsense vocalizations. He would lay trails to his campground, scenting it with fish and do what he could, to just establish a presence, let an animal know he was on the edge of his territory and then just wait and do what he could to draw something in."

"And he would always say that, he had spent decades of his life working a particular territory in Northern California, where he knew, because he had seen family groups of these creatures living, migrating seasonally, inhabiting the space, multi-generationally, he felt like he had a strong sense of their seasonality, how the migration patterns work and he would return time and again. And in this way that I could only describe as being, someone trying to pattern themselves after a Jane Goodall or a Diane Fosse, who's trying to co-exist and draw in and establish a rapport with a creature like that."

At that point in the conversation, I had to back up. Chris had implied that Archie had been inspired by family folklore. Did that mean Great-uncle Archie *wasn't* the first Buckley to see Bigfoot?

"I don't know if he was the first to have seen it," Chris said after a pause. "I know that in his tales, his introduction to the subject came from his dad, Thomas Buckley, who went to the Yukon territories in the 1898 rush. And during that time, at least, what was passed on to Archie and was passed onto me was that he had then spent time with Athabaskan peoples in Alaska and Yukon, in the Yukon territory. And it was there that he had been introduced to the cultural traditions about what we call, down here, Sasquatch. I'm not sure what the Athabaskan phrase would be. But the idea of a big man of the wilderness or a wild man of the forest, that was where he first got introduced to that. And that became something that he brought back and shared out of his



tales of the Yukon.”

“When Archie was a young boy, about age 6, he and my grandfather, his older brother and their older brother and their dad, went and made a really important trip for them. They piled into the 1912 Buick and took the four-day drive, the four of them, up to the Tahoe Basin and camped in desolation wilderness. They would spend the summer there and that was Archie’s first introduction to being out in the wild and it made a huge impression for him.”

“In the following year, they recreated the experience but they went up to Yosemite and up to Tuolumne Meadows. Now, this is in the early 1920s, so this is right in that premier time of the national park system, where all of the lore is coming out of it.”

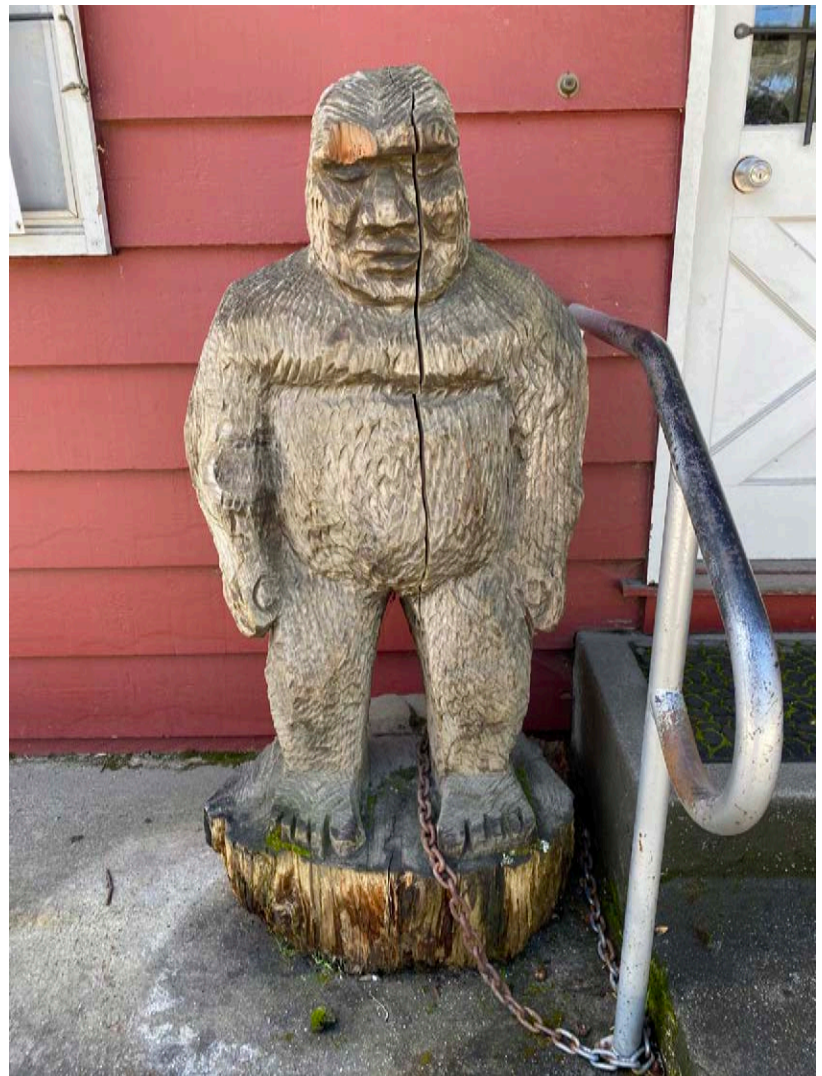
“Archie and my grandfather would spend every summer up there, with their dad, with their older brother. And specifically, he said, that at that time they would just go up and ...set up a base camp and stay there for months. And if they ever got too many people in the valley floor, they would just move higher and higher up. He said that he would actually, at that point, there was still, the Ahwahnee Band of Milwaukee Indians was still living in the valley floor. And as kids, they shared a campground and stayed there. He told stories about playing with kids in the village.”

“And apparently, he and my grandfather, they made extra money running tripods and supplies for Ansel Adams, as he was working Glacier Point, they would go running up and down. They, as kids, would help set up the bonfires for the fire falls. In fact, there’s a story that he would tell about setting up their own competing fire falls, if you know that about the Yosemite lore, they set up their own competing fire falls once off the face of Halfdome, and at the same time that everybody was watching the main fire falls and created a bit of a stir. And it was a lot of fun.”

“Anyways, it was that experience that got him really steeped in being outdoors, being in the woods but specifically giving credence to me and I’m sensitive, as I grew up on Yokut land, I live in Duwamish land now, I’m very sensitive to the issue of cultural appropriation. I’m not trying to claim some special privileged knowledge about native traditions here. I am just saying these are stories that my uncle was told.”

“I think he gave credence to this because of the trusted experience he had with the native peoples that he had met. When he was in college, in Chico State, it never really became anything more than that until when he was in college in Chico State. A friend of his there, a veterinarian by the name of Bill Hampton, the two of them, I guess, used to go hiking up there and he introduced him to the Trinity Range. And that was Archie’s first experience with a different mountain set than the Sierras.”

“It was there that he first saw a set of large footprints. And when he talked to his friend Bill about it, Bill explained about, oh yes, my people know about the big man of the forest.



And that's what got Archie really curious. So much so that, it percolated for many years, it became an interest when he was out in the woods but it didn't really hit a creative fusion until the 1967 Patterson-Gimlin film came out."

I placed Archie Buckley's Chico days as being in the 1930s, questioning whether anybody would have been contributing to Bigfoot hoaxes way back then, long before the famous film footage, and before it had become a great American myth. Chris pushed back gently.

"Well, there has been a solid tradition, all throughout Northern California and the Pacific Northwest, going back through the 1890s, up in the 1920s, up through the 1950s, I think it was 1958 when the term Bigfoot was first applied."

"Typically, when these would appear outside of indigenous settings, this story would be in the form of a logger or a miner coming back and telling some sort of horrific account, like the famous ape Canyon attack and that sort of thing or there's a famous abduction narrative. Even Teddy Roosevelt has a secondhand account in his autobiography. And so, it appears in this vein and there were certainly hoaxers then, who would try to go and stamp footprints out there."

"But the point is, there was an existing tradition in the press, the 19th century sensationalistic newspaper. It sold papers whenever you could get someone who would poke around the woods and tell the story. But in the 50s, there was a famous one, I think it was out of the Trinity area, I'm just blanking on the man's name, but it was a famous experience in the modern era. I believe it was connected with a logging camp and when the newspaper reported on it, they talked about it as Big Foot. And that's how the name Bigfoot got applied to it and that was really the first time that people started looking at it as, oh, there might be an animal that we don't know about, that lives out there. And because now we're in the 1950s and we're taking this silver age scientific re-invention of the original mystical tradition that existed during the golden age."

I gave Chris points for using comic book terminology. And now you know why he and I are friends. He was even patient when I asked when Barry Allen first investigated this. So I had to ask, as a kid definitely steeped in what we'll call nerd culture, what was it like having a relative appear on a national television show to talk about this cryptid?

"It was a big deal to me personally because Leonard Nimoy was attached to it, so it was automatically credible. The very fact that Uncle Archie suddenly was walking in the same circles as Mr. Spock, that was huge to me, as a small Trekkie child. Now, what was interesting is, in terms of inside the family... It was the fact that he was on TV, not the fact that he was on TV talking about Bigfoot. Why? Because Grandpa and Archie talked Bigfoot all the time, this was the sort of thing that happened. And I remember being at some parties at Archie's place, birthday parties and stuff, where some of the circle of that first generation of Bigfooters would be there and they would be talking notes and that sort of thing. So, it wasn't that big of a deal."

"I'm trying to remember if I could, how much of an impact it made around me. Did I get teased about it at school or anything? I don't think so. I don't think anybody knew and to be honest, I don't know if I, to the extent that I shared it... The point is, at that time, it wouldn't have been mainstream. The fact that *In Search Of* was on, that would have appealed to geeks like me but other people would not necessarily have known about it. It wasn't like you had an entire cable network dedicated to this. I like to mark America's tolerance for the paranormal as, there's before *X-Files* and there's after *X-Files*. And everything before *X-Files* that was that weird esoteric stuff that, maybe you had a *Reader's Digest* volume floating around the house."

I suggested the Scholastic Book Club often had books on the subject. Chris laughed.

"And there was you and that one other kid in class who got it and you were really into it and you loved hearing that. And then, there was everybody else. And then, after *X-Files*, then it was just cool to believe that there might be more truth out there than what you had brought up."

"Well, the point is, by the time *The X-Files* came along, I knew there was more truth out there and we just

didn't quite have the vocabulary for it yet. So, I think it gave credibility. And, to me, what is ultimately valuable about the *In Search Of* piece is that it is a rare piece of docutainment that does capture an era, in this bit of American folklore, that is, during a period where we stamped down on that, where it was kept from the mainstream. Where, through socialization, social pressure, that was not the sort of thing that you talked about as a serious person."

"Certainly not a serious scientist, that's why people like Grover Krantz, then Dr. Grover Krantz and now, Dr. Jeff Meldrum, who are actual disciplined, practicing academics in the scientific fields, who were looking at this as, yeah, it's cryptozoology, not in the sense of imaginary creatures, in the sense of undiscovered creatures."



I admitted I didn't think I'd even heard the word "cryptozoology" before the '90s, and I would have been looking for it. But then I asked if Archie thought all the attention had really helped his cause.

"I went back and relistened to an old interview I did with him, back in the late '90s, where I just wanted to get him talking on tape. And from his point of view, he wanted to build a rapport with ... researchers like him, it was his goal. After his experiences, his direct experience seeing one in 1970. June 18th, 1970. And I know that (date) because amazingly he died on the exact same day in 2007, (the anniversary of) when he actually saw one."

I got chills at the strange perfection of that.

"It is astounding to me. I couldn't believe it when we got the news that Archie died and I was like, June 18th. Oh man."

"And by the time that he saw one, he had spent several years, from 1967 on, going up into the Trinity National Forest and specifically around the Yolla-Bolly

wilderness area. And it was there that he set up a camp, did his usual shtick of establishing a presence, scent, attracting something with salmon and fish that was hung around the camp. Of course, that could bring bears too. So, I wasn't quite sure the thinking, but he went with it."

"And his efforts, over many years of that, were rewarded. Until that point, he had always said that he would always get evidence around the camp, of footprint evidence the next day. And that within 24 hours after setting up, he could always get footprint evidence."

"Then this trip, he actually had one come into the camp. It came into the camp, was retrieving the fish. He was sleeping in his vehicle and it actually came right up and was looking in the window at him. And he just used this very soft vocalization that he practices and that we all laugh about on the *In Search Of* piece and uses that to try to be calming and not challenge an alpha presence. Once that happened, he went into full Scooby gang mode and he and other people in the Bay Area, that came from different backgrounds and different skillsets, put together, what I call, the original first-gen Scooby gang of Bigfoot researchers. Which went by the rather inauspicious name of The Bay Area Group."

"And these included people like George Haas, former partial owner of the Oakland A's, I believe. A photographer out of a (local) school district named Warren Thompson, who passed away a few years ago. There was a journalist from Sacramento, occasionally a zoologist, a veterinarian, named Steve Sanders. Jim MacLaren. They put together a team of multifunctional volunteers, whose calling was to go and do expeditions of their own up into Northern California, the woods up in the Trinity Area and try to gather physical evidence. And they



never did get a photograph. Poor Warren Thompson never got that photograph but they got a lot of footprint cast evidence and a lot of second, what do we call? Second order encounters. Auditory, audio and several visual sightings as well.”

“And it’s interesting. From a citizen science point of view, it’s lacking in a certain degree because (Archie) was very clear he did not want to disclose where they were because he was afraid that, the more that he actually drew attention to precisely the habitat, given that they were migratory, he was afraid it would draw so much attention, it would just threaten them into extinction. And his point of view was protecting Bigfoot and he was just dead set against being out there with guns. He did not want anybody shooting at them.”

“There’s still, even today, this vital debate over whether or not is it responsible? Do we need to kill one in order to show? And what’s interesting is that, his take on a gun, again, coming from that rapport, from the place of a clinician, this perspective of creating a rapport with another person, was it led him to very different conclusions than a lot of what is now accepted as the baseline understanding of this as a hypothetical different species.”

“Today, the lore is ‘10-foot hairy giants out in the woods.’ Possibly a parallel hominid evolution to the human tree. Something that has a different way of ambulation with a different kind of gait, as you see modeled very strangely in the Patterson-Gimlin film. It doesn’t walk the way a human does and it led people to believe that it’s got a different kind of foot structure. Grover Krantz suggested that this is something that doesn’t have an arch but that has a midtarsal flexion in a way that is different than human feet.”

“Archie said, ‘no, no, no, no, no, no, no. None of this is true. He says, from my experience, the biggest ones, the males, are maybe about seven feet tall, the females are about six feet tall. The reason that we inflate them in our minds is because of the footprint evidence. And the footprint evidence is being misinterpreted because it’s being interpreted by anthropologists, rather than people with a kinesiology background like me.’”

“His perspective was that, what you are seeing as these giant footprints are things that are often being exaggerated by soil conditions. And once you know how a foot flexes and how it pushes off, he says, these are not creatures without an arch; these are creatures with an arch. Yes, they have large feet, they are superb walkers, they walk much better than humans do because they’re adapted to go up and down mountains, terrains, to go in and out of high and low elevation seasonally. They’re the mountain goat equivalent of a hominid.”

“And he said, if you ever saw one down the sight of a rifle, you would drop your rifle because you would see a human being, this is not an animal. When you make eye contact with it, it’s a person and that’s why it’s frightening and that’s why you come away with an awe and a respect for it.”

“He reported vocalizations, he reported vocabulary. He reported hearing them converse vocally with one another in the family groups. According to his stories in 1972, he and his son, in fact, were on one of their summertime expeditions going back up to this same area. And I think it was in... Oh, I want to say, it was in the Yalla-Bolly Forest, in the Trinity National Forest, with his son, they were crossing a place ...on the North face. And as they were approaching the ridge line and were cresting the ridge, there was a stand of fir trees. And they said they were a little ways out from their base camp. And they came across ...a family grouping of these animals that were nesting down in that first stand during daylight hours.”

“As soon as they were spotted, the entire band of them immediately took off, started moving up hill, away and over the ridge line and were tossing small rocks and doing intimidation displays at them to get them to go down. Now, I think his son was disturbed enough by this that he doesn’t like talking about it but for Archie, it was very interesting because he said, they went back, after they had cleared out, they went and investigated the bedding area. And he says, there, we saw that the branches were cleared off these fir trees to a height of about 11 feet, that they had been pulled down, inverted, woven into bedding. Some of them had back rests up against trees and that there was dung and spore around the edge, that was scent marking the area.”

“What’s telling to me about this is that’s the sort of encounter when I heard that, I was like, really? Groups? This is not just, yeah. I was out hiking and then I saw this thing off in the woods. This is group primate behavior. And it is consistent with what we see other primates do.”

“And what’s really exciting to me is, it was because of this story that when the findings started coming, the last couple of years, out of the Olympic National Rainforest, up here over on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington, there’s a research group called, The Olympic Project.” And they are in the enviable position of having been contacted by Weyerhaeuser, the logging company, which opens vast tracts of lands and has logging rights within national forests and that sort of thing.”

“There is an undisclosed site in Weyerhaeuser property that they found some very unusual structures in. Large, I believe, willow, nests that look essentially like giant woven bird nests, that are eight to 10 feet across. And that are these big structures that need fingers to weave them, that are broken off cleanly and stripped of leaves, out in the middle of the forest where nobody but a logging crew was going to find them. And Weyerhaeuser has very responsibly said, okay, you know what? We’re just going to go hands off this site for five years, Bigfooters, come on in, you’re the research group, you take a look at this.”

“ Now, as they’re gathering evidence, looking for hair samples, trying to do genetic testing, trying to just gather all the data that they can about this, in case it turns out to be something. What’s interesting to me is that it’s very consistent with what Archie said he saw in California in the 1970s. A large family group that’s nocturnal, nesting together, that moves up into higher elevations and down at seasonal, for their safety and for sustenance, as the seasons change. And that too is consistent with many of the different native lores about such creatures, which always place them as being the people of the mountains that come down or the people that raid our clam beds, that come in and dig up our clams from the clam beds. Very often, many native lores talk about them in a bit of a boogeyman since, these are the things that take children that wander too far from camp. Now, how much of that that’s just what parents do to scare kids?”

We laughed.

“You’ve just got to do that. So, from his perspective, yes, he had done what he had set out to do but from a citizen science point of view, it’s very frustrating because you’re like, well, capture the maps. Show where. Where is the territory? How do we gather that? And he was dead set against that because he just knew, the more interest, this was the species on the brink anyway. And you have to look no further than mountain gorillas, to see what he means by that.”

I could only agree, and hope that others do, too, so that Bigfoot can be protected if and when it’s proven.







# The Patterson-Gimlin Film

## by Chris Garcia

### What is it?

That's the question that's been asked so often, both by believers and skeptics. What exactly is the creature? Did they fake? How?

I think we can all figure out the why.

Patterson is a complicated figure. Gimlin, slightly less so, and there's the thought that he was along so that Patterson could hoax him. Maybe, but there's a lot to think about in this one.

Let's start where we should, with the film itself.

The Patterson-Gimlin film isn't just the portion that we know and love. It's about a minute, though there's a lot more footage, some of which is lost. The major, and most famous portion, shows a creature walking through what appears to be a dry creek bed. After a bit, it seems to take notice that it's being filmed and keeps on walking.

There's a still from it, frame 352, that has come to define Bigfoot, and influenced research and popular culture for the five+ decades since it was filmed. Here, the full detail of the creature is seen. It's apparently a female (as there are almost certainly breasts visible, and the arm-swing is pronounced. The face can't really be made out, but it's obvious that it's there. The leg is most interesting, as there's a definite musculature that can be discerned, and an impressively strong calf definition .

The frame that fascinates me comes later, as it's walking away, where we see the bottom of its foot. It reacts as a foot would, not a show, and that's the most interesting thing to me. This is either an incredible fake, or the real deal, and there's nothing in the film that leads you either way.

So, off into the backstory.

Bluff Creek, and really that entire portion of Northern California, was known for Bigfoot sightings. A book called *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life* by Ivan T. Sanderson mentioned it, and Patterson, who had been a fan of Sanderson's work ever since he read an article by him in *True* magazine, decided to go and check out a place Sanderson had mentioned. In 1962, Yukipa-based Patterson headed up to Bluff Creek and interviewed folks who believe. He came back in 1964 and found his first set of fresh tracks, which I believe he

cast (and them, or copies of them, are currently in the Bigfoot Museum in Felton, CA!) and then founded the Northwest Research Foundation, the first significant Bigfoot research group. He self-published a book in 1966 which is kinda a masterpiece of what you can do if you really don't want to have to write a book but you still want to publish a book.

Now, it's fair to say that Patterson was a hustler. I'm not saying he was a con-man, but he was always trying to get something going. He went down to LA a few times, meeting with folks, at times trying to sell him hoop-based invention (you know, for kids...) and at other times trying to get a movie off the ground. He met with a few folks, but mostly, they were low-level talks. He eventually went to Bluff Creek and started filming.

But what did they film?

There's definitely musculature beneath the fur. That's obvious. That doesn't mean that it's an actual ape, though. It does mean that they would have had to create a suit with that sort of concept built-in. For example, if you made a suit that was considerably larger than the actor wearing it, and then attached a series of molded pads to the inside of the suit, that could do it, as it would flex along with the movements of the person wearing it. That would require a lot of time, effort, cooperation, as you couldn't make a suit like that one-size-fits-all, and you'd also have to pay a LOT of money. There were people in Hollywood who could have done it, but honestly, the list of people would be fairly short, and most of them have been asked and denied it. Some have dismissed it publicly, though the specifics of their denials of reality are often of the 'you can just tell' variety.

The arm span and arm swing to gait speed and distance has been endlessly debated. Gait analysis is a fairly developed science, and this messes with it in a lot of ways. The arms of that weight, you shouldn't be able to swing them as freely as the creature without upsetting the balance UNLESS it's musculature is evenly distributed, which would mean not an internal core of human meat covered with a tight-fitting padded suit. The natural walking movement is also a subject of debate, as it would likely mean that the distribution of the weird would be lower than a human in a suit would possess.

But.

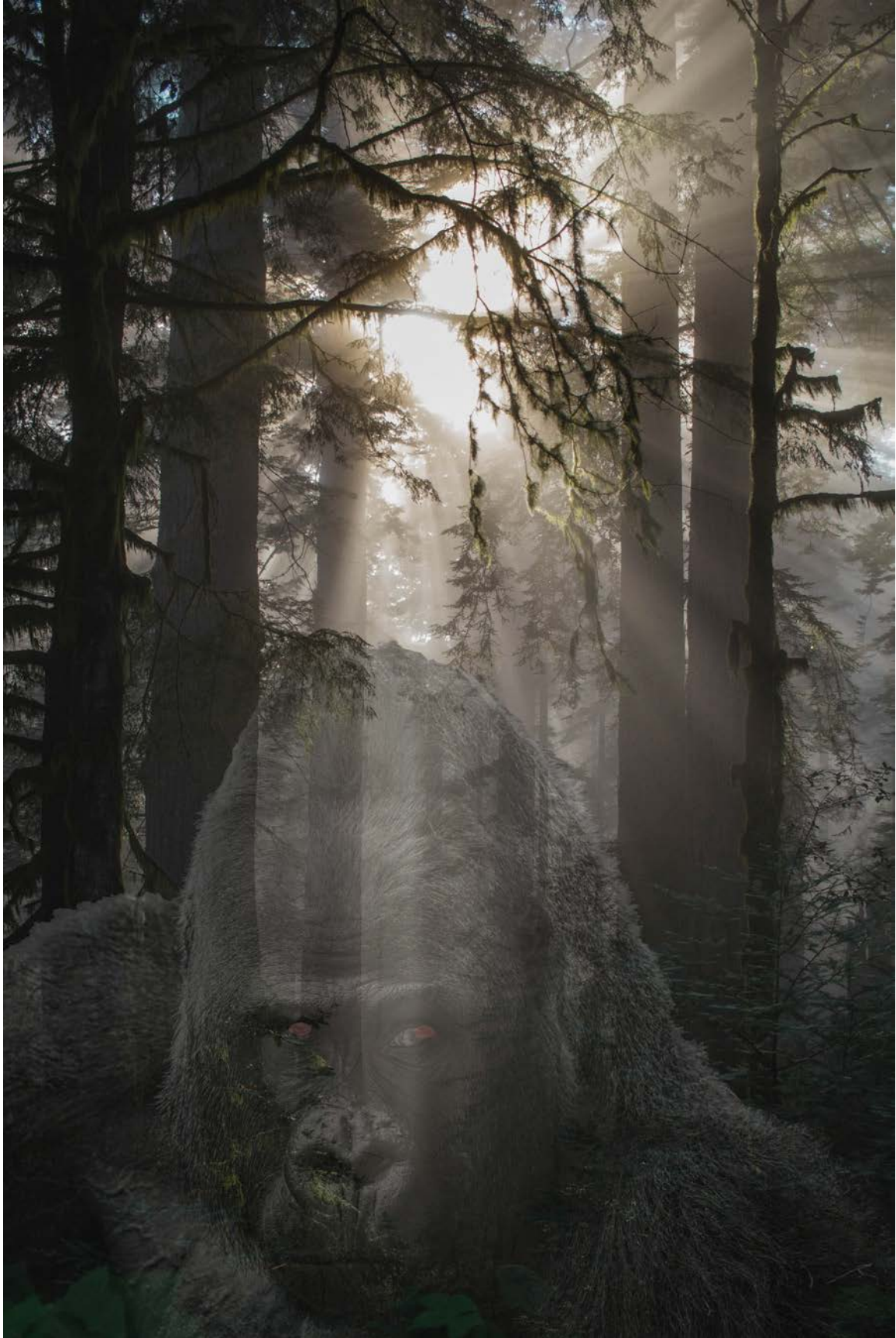
Then there's the potential that to make this look more unusual, Patterson could have filmed at a different shutter speed. Instead of the expected (and most natural looking) speed of 16 frames a second, they could have shot at several other speeds, including 18 frames a second, and even 12. At 18, the movements look much less natural, and perhaps even a bit jerky. At 12, they're certainly stranger, and even less human. There have been several groups that have created stabilized and 4K enhanced version. These actually lend themselves towards a man-in-a-suit hypothesis, particularly because in that definition, you can tell that the buttocks don't really move much. It also shows that there's a lot of weight, which would have been very difficult to move the way they did, unless it was a guy in a very well weighted suit. The hair is short, and not matted, nor particularly dusty-looking. It was a dry time of year, and that would be something I would expect.

For every point, there is a counter-point. For every piece that screams one theory, there is a form statement in contradiction. It's not a clear matter, and all the years of study have not brought clarity.

So what do I think?

I think it's real. A Bigfoot? I dunno. A guy in a suit? I dunno. I do know the impact. Bigfoot, because of this footage, is the King of North American Cryptids, and the image of the look back is iconic. It's the image that people pull up in their minds when you say bigfoot, and it's that look that really says what we need it to say: there's something here. It may be trying to say "There's a large, bi-pedal primate in the mountains of Northern California!" or it might be saying "Look at the large bi-pedal primate we've convinced you lives in the mountains of Northern California" and in a way, they're both true. Is it fake? I dunno. It's more real than any CGI, than any other image we have of a bigfoot, as far as I'm concerned. The fact that it has changed the way we look at the world, the way people believe the world is, makes it an incredibly important film.







# Batsquatch

by

## Steven H Silver

On October 23, 2005, I visited Mount Saint Helen's, the volcano that most famously erupted on May 18, 1980. At the time of my visit, the volcano had only recently come out of a period of dormancy that lasted from February 1991 until October 11, 2004 when magma once again breached the surface, creating a new lava dome on the side of the mountain opposite the one I faced from the overlook. A plume of steam and ash had escaped the mountain earlier in 2005, but it was calm on the day I visited and wouldn't come to life again until the following year.

Looking out at the desolate countryside around the volcano, I joked that we should photoshop a couple of Hobbits into our pictures, which, sure enough, looked like the landscape of Mordor.

Although Mount Saint Helen's is best known for the 1980 eruption, following that time, it became known in the region for another reason. According to local folklore, the eruption freed a cryptid who stalked the area around the mountain in the aftermath of the eruption.

According to those legends, if you were out at night in that part of Washington state, you had to beware of a nine-foot tall creature that was as massive as two grizzly bears. The creature was said to be covered in a blue-tinged fur, sported the muzzle of a wolf with razor-sharp teeth below jaundiced eyes and a muscle-bound torso that sprouted batlike wings that had span up to fifty feet. The creature was called the batsquatch. Although the name of the creature is a portmanteau of bat and sasquatch, the cryptid it is most often compared to is the Javanese ahoole.

The most famous sighting of a batsquatch occurred in 1994, when high school student Brian Canfield's truck broke down in rural Pierce County, several miles north of Mount Saint Helen's (Pierce County includes Tacoma and Mt. Rainier). According to Canfield, when he was examining his engine, a large creature landed on the hood of his truck. Canfield claims to have crawled under his truck and lay there in fear through the night as the creature attacked his truck, trying to get at him. When Canfield showed up the next day, his truck was all scratched up, his shirt torn, and his back bloodied.

There have been other sightings of the batsquatch over the years, often from a distance, and the creature may have an affinity for snatching pets that are left outside alone. The Washington Trails Association suggests that hikers and riders on the Blue Horse Trail in the South Cascades keep an eye out for the creature.





Bigfoot Hunting Season  
Fuck You, Discovery Channel!  
by Chris Garcia

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

HOUSE BILL 1648 By: Humphrey

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to game and fish; directing the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission to establish a big foot hunting season; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 5-603 of Title 29, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

The Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission shall promulgate rules establishing a big foot hunting season. The Commission shall set annual season dates and create any necessary specific hunting licenses and fees.

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2021.

Read that again. I'll wait.

There is SO much here you need to unpack, but the biggest thing is this: some politician in Oklahoma believes that there should be a season to hunt Sasquatch, is willing to issue licenses, and was either serious enough about making it happen to put the bill forth, or was completely wired to get the attention he knew that he would get it by bringing it up.

There are a bunch of bad things here. Lots of 'em.

The first is if Bigfoot is a real creature (and I lean towards yes) then hunting it is likely akin to hunting an endangered species. If there are a few of them, killing even one of them will have a tragic set of circumstances that might lead to an extinction event. That is a real possibility, and that would be tragic.

More importantly, it normalizes the hunting of a biped.

Let's be honest, most of the idiots who will be taking up these licenses aren't going to be the brightest of bulbs. It has nothing to do with it being Oklahoma, but with the fact that they're hunters who are willing to kill a bipedal creature specifically to get a little money.

In my eyes, the real bastards in this area are the Bigfoot Hunter TV shows. Chasing Bigfoot, Finding Bigfoot, Expedition: Bigfoot, They've made Bigfoot exploration hip, and at the same time, several of these shows show some of the worst behavior of the investigators, and that's not a good model if they're opening up a season. These shows are really damaging to the serious investigators who are doing valuable work. Yes, they are truly dedicated to finding Sasquatch, but they are also doing it in a damaging way, and when that gets picked up and ran with by a numbskull politician, it's terrible.

I hope no one takes them up on this, or if they do, it's no one with a public enough platform to make it into a trend. It's a bad example, and one that could potentially get someone killed





# The Sasquan Art of Brad W. Foster

Come meet old friends & new at

# sasquan



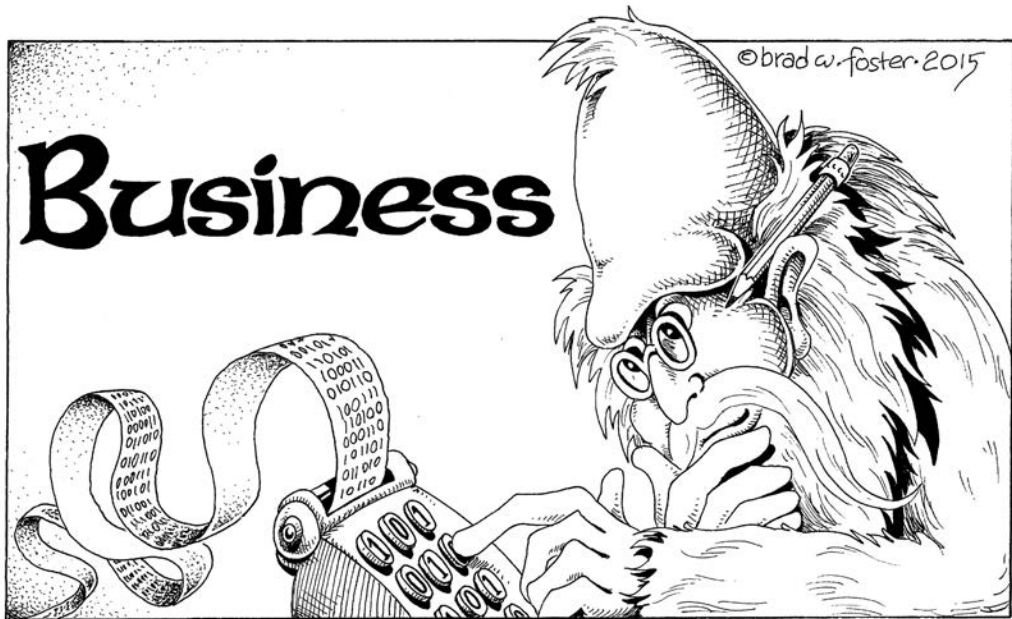
The 73rd World Science Fiction Convention

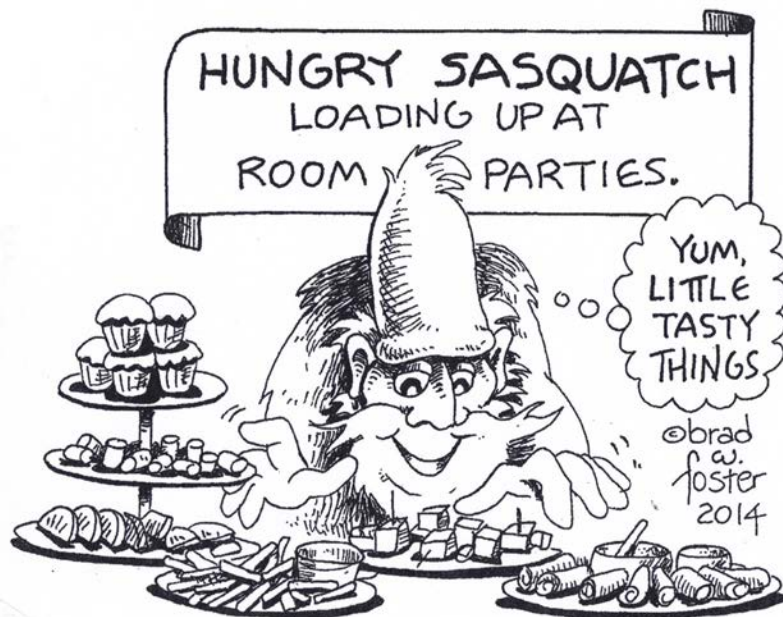


When I announced I was doing this issue, Guy Lillian wrote in and said that he had a bunch of art from the 2015 WorldCon, Sasquan, which features Sasquatch. It was done by multi-Hugo winner and good ol' human being Brad W. Foster. Looking over them, I fell in love with his take on the beast, and he was gracious enough to allow me to run this art feature!

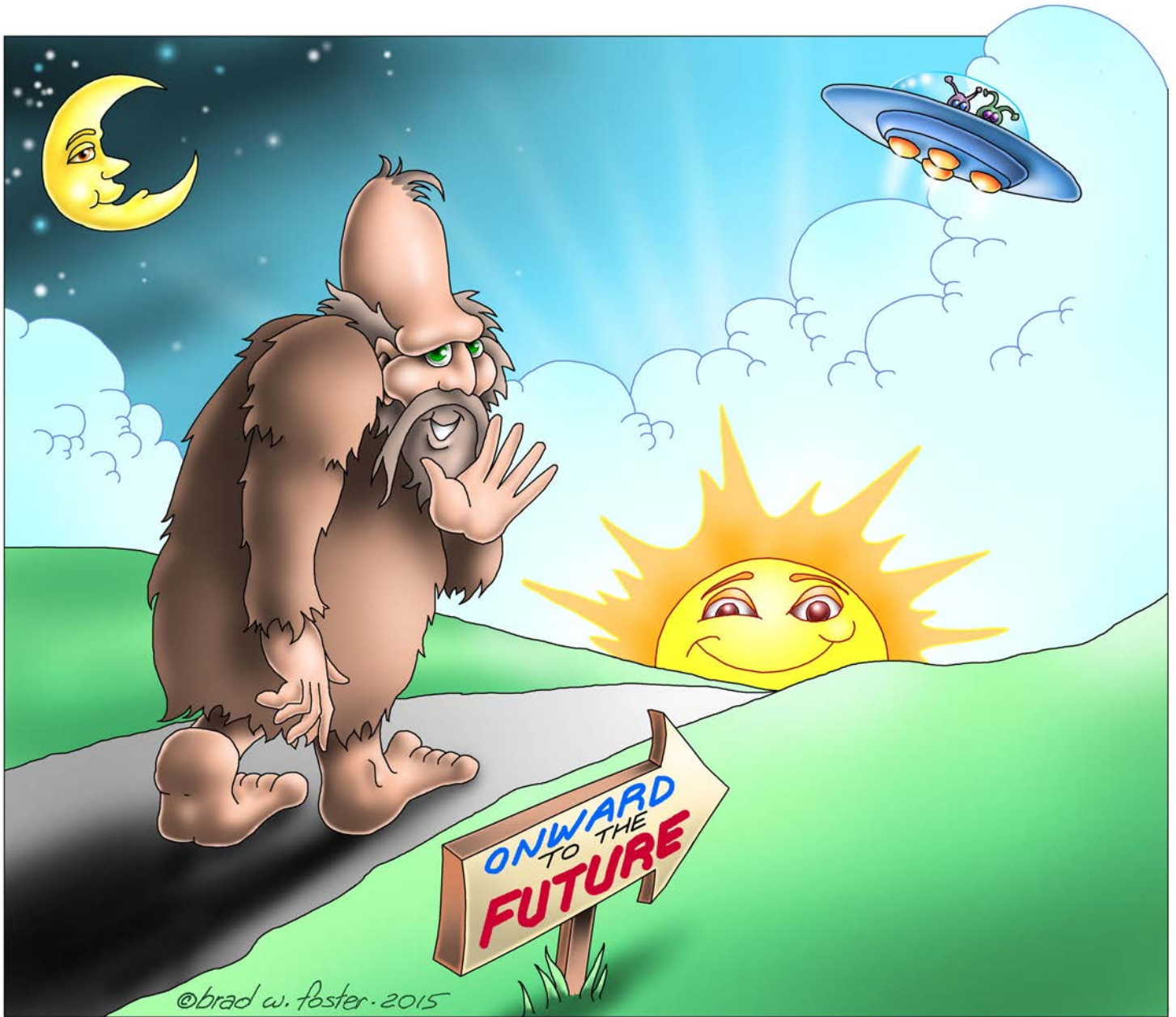
Enjoy!











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# The Myakka Skunk Ape photos

~OY~

Well...

One thing that unifies so many Big Cryptid sightings is a foul smell.

Now, were it me making the sighting, I may be the one making the foul odor, but still. There are a lot of smelly cryptids, notably the Fouke monster and the Honey Island Swamp monster. Swamp Monsters tend towards the stinky, probably because swamps tend towards smelling to high Heaven. The idea that a Swamp Dweller would be fragrant makes sense.

And thus, Skunk Ape.

There have been reports of a Skunk Ape for centuries. Esti Capcaki, of Cannibal Giant, is a Seminole legend, and there were reports from the settler period, with a confirmed sighting in 1818. It's largely seen in Florida, but Georgia and Alabama also have reports, and similar reports come from Mississippi and South Carolina. Many of the Texas Bigfoot sightings are also similar to those of the Bigfoot. There are a few things that they have in common – they're smaller than what we think of as the Pacific Northwest Bigfoot, they're more

Orang-like, and they stink. They tend to come in at moments when they can get things like food and slink away. There are a couple of different forms, one of which sounds more like a really big gibbon, and another more like an Orangutan. These are both common, though the single more impressive happened to be of the Orang variety in the Florida city of Myakka.

A woman had been leaving apples out on her back porch, and they'd been going away without a trace. She snapped a couple of pictures and sent them to the sheriff's office without identifying herself. The pictures show an Orangutan-looking thing in among some palm fronds. It's standing pretty erect, but not fully. The positioning between the two photos is similar, but not the same. There's a rigidity to the pose, one which I'd actually assign more readily to an animatronic more than an actual animal.

So, what exactly is it?

I could see it being an escaped Orangutan. IF there's anywhere in the world outside of Madagascar that could support a small population of Orangutans, it's probably the Everglades, and the Myakka River shares a lot of the distinct features that makes the Everglades such a great potential site. There's a lot of wildness left, cypress and conifer forests, undeveloped stretches, and marsh and swamp land that is near-pristine. It's wild, and if there was an escaped Orang or two, they'd easily find enough food, enough shelter, and a lack of people to annoy 'em. Then again, there are so many gators, it might make it far less attractive to primates.

So, someone living near to the river might be near a site where you could find something like a legacy of an escaped Orangutan, but are these pictures of one?

The first thing I notice is the fur. It's shaggy, and does not appear matted. That's a sign that leans me towards it not being a legit creature. Long-haired creatures tend to mat in the swamp forest environment, and most creatures like Bigfoot (gorillas, for example) have shorter hair, possibly because they rub the fur off on trees, the ground, and the like. The idea that a creature would have silky fur in that environment would make little sense.

The next thing is the glowing eyes. That's not something we tend to see in other Bigfoot/Sasquatch photos, but it's a massively important detail here. The shining of the light off the eyes of the creature in both photos is interesting because they are in different positions. That should at least produce a different sort of reflection, right?

Right?

The other thing is the teeth. There was a post a few years ago from someone who worked in costuming who recognized it as an ape costume, and she recognized it due to the teeth. It's a distinctive mouth, and she says that it's a popular costume over-seas. That does make a bit of sense, no? No one in their right mind would use a costume that was available in their home country, and it wouldn't be hard in 2000 to source a foreign costume.

The fact is, all the evidence leans towards a fake, though a good one. If it were an escaped Orangutan, and that's the only other idea that makes a lick of sense to me, then it's probably recently escaped, and there were no reports of such a thing. Perhaps the easiest way to fake a Skunk Ape would be to release an Orangutan into the swamp. The other footage and images of a Swamp Ape look little like it, and I've never seen one that looks anything more than a look of a guy in a costume. This is completely different, which either speaks to its authenticity, or its complete falsehood.

Either way, it is an incredibly important set of images





# Bionic Bigfoot: His Legend and Legacy

## By Chuck Serface

The *Six Million Dollar Man* (SMDM), which ran from 1973 to 1978 on ABC, includes episodes that have defined forever my vision of Sasquatch or, as he's known colloquially to the show's fans, Bionic Bigfoot. "The Secret of Bigfoot" first aired February 1, 1976, a two-parter that scored huge ratings, enough to inspire the following season's opener, "The Return of Bigfoot," a crossover with *The Bionic Woman*. Then finally came "Bigfoot V," a single episode appearing early in the fifth and final season. Andre the Giant played Sasquatch first, and later Ted Cassidy donned the fur suit and wig. Viewers across the nation loved Bionic Bigfoot, and his episodes became annual events over SMDM's last three seasons. He and his alien creators evolved into essential elements within the show's mythos. No one from my generation will ever forget Andre or Ted in costume bursting out of the woods, knocking down trees, and bellowing territorial warnings at Colonel Austin who at first just stood there with the most classic what-the-hell look on his face. These were magical moments for 11-year-old me. They remain magical, even if upon re-watching them at 55 I perceive flaws.



Elements of the Bionic Bigfoot sub-series stem from cultural trends related to cryptozoology and alien visitations. Cryptozoologists study cryptids, creatures from myth and legend, mostly trying to verify their existence in the real world. Interest sparked after the Dinsdale film (1960) which reportedly offers evidence

for the Loch Ness Monster, and the Patterson-Gimlin film (1967), doing the same for Sasquatch, spread publicly. Add to this our longstanding fascination with aliens, not just growing from science fiction but from various UFO sightings and books such as Erich von Däniken's *Chariots of the Gods?* (1968) that tout hypotheses about aliens who traveled here and gave ancient civilizations technologies while being mistaken for gods. Other books -- *Passport to Magonia: From Folklore to Flying Saucers* (1969) by Jacques Vallée, for example -- list hundreds of UFO sightings over a century, spawning yet another field, ufology. These fringe explorations inspired television shows, among them *The Man from Atlantis*, *In Search of . . .*, *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, *Unsolved Mysteries*, and the Bionic Bigfoot subset within *SMDM*. The paranormal was big, and networks knew how to exploit it.

ABC did especially well with Bionic Bigfoot, a "nyosynthetic" construct developed by alien colonists living in a hidden mountain outpost. Nyosynthetics are advanced cybernetics powered with anti-matter energy rather than the nuclear cells behind Austin's bionics, but that's not the only wonder this culture possesses. They even travel rapidly over great distances thanks to devices that affect time flow, although they still tap into a volcanic vent to keep their base running. Geologists studying a nearby earthquake fault come too close to discovering them, running afoul of Bigfoot. Cue our hero, an imminent earthquake threatening the California coastline, and the nuclear device used to stop it. Romance enters the story when Austin and Bigfoot's main creator, Shalon played by Stephanie Powers, exchange curious glances, but no. Austin undergoes a procedure to wipe these happenings from his memory.

"The Secret of Bigfoot" earned superlunar ratings. The formula worked. We have cryptozoology. We have advanced aliens identical to us sporting nifty pastel jumpsuits with gold metallic ascots and seemingly divine science. Viewers loved it, and ABC was more than happy to restore Steve Austin's memory the following season for "The Return of Bigfoot," Ted Cassidy now taking over from Andre the Giant as Sasquatch and Jaime Sommers the Bionic Woman joining the storyline. What's more, TV legend Sandy Duncan co-stars with John Saxon and Severn Darden. Young Chuck didn't appreciate this mind-blowing casting. Adult Chuck appreciates its absurd beauty.

The next installment, "Bigfoot V," ends things, however. The aliens have departed, leaving Sasquatch behind. Thanks to that godlike tech, he's slowly becoming organic thanks to help him better adapt to his new life. This really unbelievable transfer from synthetics to organics gets interrupted, and the pain drives Sasquatch into a rampage. Steve Austin then must restart the process to save his friend's life. We're left to believe that once fully flesh and blood, the no longer bionic Bigfoot will dash into the woods, happily ever after. This being the capstone season of *SMDM*, Steve Austin assuredly will run into the loving arms of nostalgia himself.

When Kenner released their twelve-inch *SMDM* action figures, they included Bionic Bigfoot along with two other villains, the Fembot and Dr. Dolenz's Mr. X. In fact, there's two action figures for Sasquatch, a furry Andre the Giant version and one representing Ted Cassidy, complete with removable chest plate to reveal his nyosynthetics. Now if that doesn't cement Bionic Bigfoot's immortality, I'm not sure what will.





Kevin Smith understands what I mean about immortality. For years, Richard Anderson, the actor who portrayed Oscar Goldman on *SMDM* and *The Bionic Woman*, lobbied to move anyone from Hollywood toward producing a Steve Austin movie. Kevin Smith actually wrote a script, but nothing happened . . . until 2011 when Dynamite Comics transformed that script into a comic series, *The Bionic Man*, with writer Phil Hester and artist Jonathan Lau, who'd worked with Smith on Dynamite's *The Green Hornet*, undertaking the project. The first issue appeared in August 2011, and the series ran for 26. Others had adapted this series to comics before Smith, but he and Hester were the first to update concepts radically. After ten issues, those based on his script, Smith backed off. The second arc beginning with the next issue introduces a modernized, you guessed it, Sasquatch.

Still bionic but not nyosynthetic, Sasquatch now belonged to a Terran species a Russian scientist captures and transforms into cyborg soldiers who would serve his ends. Now we have not just one Bionic Bigfoot, but many, with no aliens and with very earthly roots. Hester's story works well, and his rebooting solves many of the continuity and plot issues of the original television episodes by simply doing away with the troublesome material. Not even Andy Sheffield, the Bionic Boy, would receive as much love as Sasquatch over time. Sheffield only has limited bionics in his legs, of course, and he's far less pretty than Sasquatch. But this comic series clinches it. Where walks Steve Austin so too will walk Bionic Bigfoot. Long live the legacy of Sasquatch.







# Review: Hunting Bigfoot

## By Chris Garcia

John Green is an important figure in Bigfoot hunting.

He is also a strange bird. Watching the film *Bigfoot Hunter*, I quickly became impressed that there was a way to approach a figure like Green without turning him into Werner Herzog in *Heart of Darkness* or Ed Wood in the Burton movie. He's both of those things. He's the mad man driven to extremes in his hunt for an undiscovered North American Primate, and at the same time, he's the somewhat idealistic, and somewhat strange, dreamer who puts it all out there to reach the dream. He's both of those things, and neither at the same time. He's a full-formed complicated human, the type that live in documentaries like *Crumb*. In this case, it's even more complicated.

First, I must say, for a film that is ultimately about a bigfoot hunter, there's surprisingly little about bigfoot. Yes, there's some, but if you're looking for analysis, you ain't gonna find it here. Instead, you find something even more important to the process of hunting for Bigfoot: what it means to be a bigfoot hunter. There is one fascinating, and incredibly well cut, extended passage on an expedition where John and his friend Ben (who is a major focus and at the same time not overly screen-heavy) as they use a tracking device that moves through the craggy rock mountains and ends up in a pile of poop.

That poop, by the way, may well turn out to be the single best evidence of Bigfoot found in the last fifty years.

Most of the film revolves around giving us enough rope to either hang him with or keep hi from running off into some other damn fool adventure. That's the thing; I found myself wanting him to get on the straight and narrow.

WHAT?! I hear you exclaim. Why would you, Chris, the lover of the weird, want that?

The answer is simple: there but for the Grace of God Go I.

There is a bit of John Green in me, and I'm betting in you, too. He's not a hero, though his work may have a heroic impact. He's a difficult creature, who seems to become more and more of what he seeks in his pursuit. He returns to nature, and at the same time, he runs of connection with both nature and humanity. He's not quite a wild man, that would be too much of a definition.

And that's exactly what I took away from *Bigfoot Hunter*, that John Green just wanted to be something undefined, unknown, uncaptured. The way he talks about what he saw, then immediately disregards every other bigfoot hunter's sightings, shows that he's not about the belief, but about his experience. He obviously longs to have some sort of connection, but refuses to give himself the room to have that. There's an impressive moment where he shows incredible tenderness for his lost wife, and at the same time, we see his lack of connection to his own children. He has the feeling of a zealot, and the lifestyle of a monk in nature's abbey, but he also has a classic con man's issues. The filmmaker eventually seems to run out of patience and starts audibly asking if Green is legit or if it's all bullshit.

And that's followed by a malfunctioning memory card that has what he reputed to be his most recent bigfoot sighting.

And that's followed by a determination of the scat he found with the tracker in it being not of a known-hominid type.

So, as is always the case, we're left with a man who may, or may not, have been vindicated, and we get a card at the end saying that the research into the scat is stalled. We solved the 340 cipher in the Zodiac case, but we can't figure out what took a crap. Go figure.

This is a strong doc, and if you like *Crumb*, or *Grizzly Man*, you should give it a shot.