

CLAIMS DEPARTMENT



Claims Department

June 2021

I have no idea.

I mean, I should, right? I should know whether I believe in aliens, or if I don't, but I honestly do not. There are certainly other planets with life, but are they coming here? I dunno. DO I think people are lying about their experiences of seeing them? Nope. I mean, probably some who have a reason to lie, be it for wealth, clout, or whatever, but I really think that most folks are telling the truth as they can.

Memory, of course, is a malleable thing.

I believe that UFOs might be real complicated, the M&M, mental and material, but they could also just be living entities. I believe people have been abducted, but I'm not sure by what. I believe that there are things we don't understand about our universe, our galaxy, our solar system, about the fundamental structure of reality. UFOs, and whatever is behind them, live in that series of blindspots. I doubt some things, I trust in others, and I've never met a theory I wouldn't go back and forth on a million times.

So it goes.

I'm a fan of UFOs as a phenomena, but more importantly, as a impactor. It's not about the reality of the situation; it's about the impact it has on those that see things, that feel things, and the rest of us. Pop Culture has adopted aliens as a thing, and maybe there's more to it, but the fact is, even if there are no aliens, they exist as the product of our adoption of their imagery, concepts.

This is getting a little Jacques Vallee up in here.

This year, since I lost my job, hasn't been too bad. The good parts, back home, cooking more, writing and art, getting to go to museums again, have really kept me going. I'm working on my stuff that ain't work, and that's fun. What I really need to do is get a job, and that looks like it's coming soon. I've been applying to hundreds of jobs, and this time I applied to a bunch of museums for curator stuff, some director stuff, and a lot of communications type stuff. It's not like I've got a lot of skills people want, but the ones I have tend not to be well paid. It'll happen, but I'm already itchin' due to not having an income.

I'll be working on all sorts of issues of stuff, and my podcasts, and most importantly, on art. The next few months should be good stuff. I just hope we don't get more fires, and aren't nearly as hot as it was last year, though Kevin and Andy gave us an air conditioner that will help!

THE NEXT ISSUE? Water Monsters! Sea Serpents, lake monsters, wet cryptids, you name it! Deadline is end of July-ish.

Letters of comment? Send 'em! johnnyeponymous@gmail.com!!!



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Letter Of Comment

Sent to JohnnyEponymous@gmail.com

by my Gentle Readers

Dear Chris:

Many thanks for Claims Department 31, and I have scraped together a few comments...let's see if they make any sense. I wrote a few notes down during a picnic, so there might be an ant or two here or there...

How on earth did you get fired? Were you laid off, or clear out your desk fired? I have had a few good Zoom interviews the last while, but I have had no full-time work for three years now. Life would be much tougher without the help of federal benefits, but I know they won't last forever. So, the resumes keep going out, and fingers are eternally crossed. Good luck on getting another silver rocket!

It is beginning to look like the summer of 2021 will look just like the summer of 2020...most major summer events in the Toronto area have been cancelled, but anything after Labour Day is looking good. The fall might get really busy...

Great Sasquan/sasquatch artwork, but then it's Brad Foster's, so natch! Bigfoot sightings are more than just in the US Pacific Northwest; there are many in British Columbia, going as far north as Yukon, and out to Alberta, and as far as Manitoba. I looked for more, how about a few in the Atlantic provinces? Google up Canadian cryptids, and you will find Ogoopogo, the Thetis Lake Monster, and so many more.

[Canada's Cryptids and Creatures | anomalicat \(wordpress.com\)](http://anomalicat.wordpress.com)

I suspect Bigfoot is real, but is also a very good prank. I recall a community somewhere in the US admitting that they were leaving monster footprints all over a forest, using concrete "feet". I think Bigfoot is that kind of orchestrated prank. Ah, Mount St. Helen's...I was living on nearby Vancouver Island at the time. We all learned how to safely remove volcanic ash from our cars without ruining the paint job. Also, thanks to the ash, all crops had even better yields the next year.

Bigfoot hunting season? In Oklahoma? Doesn't say much about Oklahoma, does it? A law like this one is not only another good reason for gun control, but also for mandatory IQ tests if you are running for public office.

I cannot offer any advice to you as to finding a job; I obviously suck at it. I added all my editorial work to my resume since October 2018, so it looks pretty good, but I know that anywhere from 200 to 600 people could be applying for any given job at any given time. Just keep looking, polish up the resume so they have no idea how old you are, and take it to a local employment centre (here, they are connected to universities and community colleges) so they can tweak it to what employers and HR departments seem to want. Good luck, there must be something for you. Take it easy, and keep sending the zines.

Yours, Lloyd Penney.

Well, it was deemed "poor cultural fit" which is true, because I just don't belong in the corporate world. Luckily, as of today, I have a new job! I'm actually an Archivist!





“The study of UFOlogy has gone to hell since Dr. Hynek died.”

Chris Garcia

The fact is there will likely never be another Dr. J. Allen Hynek.

He was important on several levels. He was a legitimate scientist, an astrophysicist, and probably the most important figure in the history of UFOlogy up until the time he came about. In his other life, he was one of the most important figures in stereoscopic binary stars, and was really important in satellite work in the 1960s. He ended up as the head of the astronomy department at Northwestern University, but this was all after he had begun to really shape the study of UFOs.

He first got involved in the serious study of UFO reports was through Project Sign. That was the first real investigation of UFOs by the military, but really, it was more of a sign-off. They wanted a scientist who would say it weren't nothin'. And Hynek kinda did. He basically studied the sightings they put in front of him and figured that most of them were either misidentifications of regular stuff, or just unreliable viewers. He rather enjoyed acting as a debunker, but he also said that he thought that's exactly why the Air Force brought him in.

After that, the military of the United States made Hynek their guy. He participated in the Robinson panel, which declared that UFOs weren't anything anomalous, and that it wasn't a great idea to let the idea stay out there. They were gonna launch a PR campaign to quell the fad, which is what nearly every researcher was saying it was.

The thing is, it always kinda got to him.

He kept looking into things, and started to come around. The Air Force wanted every sighting to be responded to with an explanation. Hynek later developed the 'swamp gas' idea, where pockets of gasses put off by swamps would ignite. This has been observed like, twice, but as possibility. It's an excellent example of his technique for looking into these cases. He kept studying, and found a lot of the reports from pilots and the like as being highly credible. He started to come around, and was starting to see that there was something else happening. He said -

“As a scientist I must be mindful of the lessons of the past; all too often it has happened that matters of great value to science were overlooked because the new phenomenon did not fit the accepted scientific outlook of the time.”

He joined in on Project Grudge, the replacement of Project Sign, and that morphed into Project Blue Book. They always wanted him as a debunker, but he was starting to gain doubts. He brought the Swamp Gas hypothesis, and that was incredibly important. The first head of Blue Book, Edward Ruppelt said of Dr. Hynek, “Dr. Hynek was one of the most impressive scientists I met while working on the UFO project, and I met a good many.

He didn't do two things that some of them did: give you the answer before he knew the question; or immediately begin to expound on his accomplishments in the field of science."

He was the most prominent figure on the project when it came to scientists, and he gained the trust of many inside and outside the Air Force. This led to him becoming the guy to go to when you wanted something looked into, whether through Bluebook or not. Hynek loved Ruppelt, but when he was replaced, Hynek thought things went quickly to hell. He remained on-board through the end, but he was mostly just there to be the one screaming to try the scientific approach.

His change in heart was thorough, and while he kept it under wraps while on Bluebook, after it wrapped up, he was more public. And that was OK with everyone involved. And just OK. He was seen with some suspicion by UFOlogists, since it could be seen as him acting as a shill while pretending to actually be on their side (and he still applied the scientific method and research techniques that often disproved things UFOlogists were hyped about) and the Air Force really didn't want a researcher going 'I'm not sayin' it was aliens...' when what they wanted was straight denials of anything weird goin' on. Still, they actually trusted him, and walked that line between the two camps. The other major names in the field, like James McDonald, were hard on Hynek for his thinking. It's important to remember that Hynek wasn't the only one doing investigations, as Major Donald Keyhoe was out there and actually making interesting observation, but it was Hynek who brought a more open-minded and scientific investigation technique into things.

He was also hugely important in that he brought new voices into the field, and one of them was Jacques Vallee, who would truly revolutionize the field. They authored work together. There were several others who certainly came into the field through Dr. Hynek, and if you wanted to be taken seriously, you at least consulted with him on your project.

The cases he was associated with are some of the most legendary. The Zamora sighting in New Mexico and the Portage County Chase are two of the most important, but also the famed Hudson Valley sightings, the Andreasson encounter, and the 1966 Dexter, Michigan, mass sightings. That Dexter sighting was the first where he publicly published the idea of Swamp Gas as something that could be mistaken for a UFO. In 1973, he founded CUFO, the Center for UFO Studies, a name which bugged the Air Force, apparently, because it contained 'UFO' which was by then firmly established as synonymous with 'extraterrestrial' and therefore bad.

He had given a speech at the Mutual UFO Network symposium in 1973, called The Embarrassment of Riches, that is widely cited to this day, and raised many of the key questions that have changed the field from one of crackpot theory to more detailed investigation. In 1975, he spoke at the Joint Symposium of the American Institute of Aeronautics & Astronautics, which was just another example of how widely he was respected. He was arguably the most important speaker at the first International UFO Congress in 1977. In 1978, he, Vallee and the impressive Claude Poher, all authored a paper and talk presented to the UN that truly established UFOs as an international policy talking point.

It's something of a shame that Dr. Hynek is often only remembered as the scientific advisor for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. He did an amazing job, and he has been credited for the authenticity, as well as the reasonableness of the story. He was interviewed endless numbers of times, and wrote a number of books. He was a major figure in the public eye from the 60s until his death.

His impact is gigantic. He was one of the first to propose the hybrid physical-social-emotional model, and as well as the extradimensional hypothesis. He gave us Swamp Gas, as well as the Close Encounter scale for alien contact. The quickly becoming dominant M&M (material & mental) ideology was based on his work. These are important aspects of the UFO conversation today. Perhaps most importantly, he worked WITH the Government, and while he questioned their tactics, he never flat accused them of being the cause of the phenomena. And perhaps that's his greatest gift to the field. He recognized it as a phenomena, and not a massive sets of misunderstandings and lies. That's important, and no one since has managed to break into the field on both sides of the divide like Dr. Hynek.



Cowboys and Aliens: A review by Baron Law Bill Howard

Cowboys and Aliens is a blatant cash grab, using Harrison Ford and Daniel Craig's movie reputations and wrapping them in cowboy nostalgia with a side order of SciFi CGI.

The concept was sound, I can hear the elevator pitch now.

"Hey, what about a movie where Aliens visit Earth but it's in the Old West!"

"Great idea, let's get some name brand stars to carry the concept!"

"Harrison Ford does all those SciFi movies, but in a twist let's make him a bitter Civil War veteran, one of those evil cattle baron types!"

"How about the new James Bond as the hero of the piece, Daniel Craig!"

But sadly they just threw a pile of cliches and tropes into a shooting schedule and called it a movie.

Trope Number 1. The hero has no name. This is a classic Western trope popularized by Clint Eastwood in the Spaghetti Westerns. The surprisingly well skilled stranger comes to town and disrupts the power dynamic.

Trope Number 2. Rich man villain. The town is run by the richest man in the County. In this case retired Army Colonel Harrison Ford, his character has a name, but honestly he is just playing Harrison Ford in this movie.

Trope number 3. Daddy's Boy. The richest man in town has an amazingly worthless son who terrorizes everyone using his daddy's name and money to avoid consequences.

Trope Number 4. Corrupt Sheriff. The richest man in town has the Sheriff in his pocket. A surprisingly honest sheriff except for that one blind spot, the rich man's son whom he dare not arrest.

Trope Number 5. Mysterious girl with a gun. The most feminine of the characters shown so far, except she has a gun belt strapped to her waif like waist.

Trope Number 6. Irresistible force meets immovable object. Daddy's boy asks the new stranger in town "Do you know who I am?" Stranger does not care and embarrasses Daddy's boy in front of the whole town.

Trope Number 7. Arrest me?! Daddy's boy does not deal well with public humiliation, does something the sheriff can no longer ignore. For the first time in his life he is arrested, his loyal henchmen for the first time ever do not intervene. But ride off to tell Daddy.

Trope number 8. He's a right bastard isn't he? We are shown graphic proof of the iron fist our villain uses to punish those who oppose him. Forcing the audience to ask "Why does anyone keep working for this guy?"

Okay those are just some of the Western tropes that are abused and used in place of an actual plot.
How about the SciFi tropes?

Trope Number 1. Humans are clever. Aliens are super advanced in technology, but somehow the humans can make it work for them.

Trope number 2. Rare resource? Apparently these aliens are on Earth to steal the gold. Because gold is just as rare in the universe as it is on Earth.

Trope Number 3. Collecting Samples. Instead of just setting up in a big empty desert and mining out gold using their superior technologies and avoiding humans. These aliens need human samples. So they fly over the only town for 100 miles and "lasso" their victims with flying machines. Just like cowboys rope cattle, see how clever we are?

Trope number 4. Pissing off the locals. In addition to collecting townsfolk, they raid the native Americans too. Setting up the classic trope of....

Trope Number 5. Shared enemies make friends. Human tribes fight each other at first, but now that there are actual aliens to fight, let's work together.

Trope number 6. Tactics! Somehow no matter how much more advanced the alien tech is over current human levels, Human tactics and strategy can somehow level the playing field and even give them an advantage.

Trope number 7. Help from space friends. Yes, but did you expect that a different alien race was also on the planet and trying to defeat the nasty aliens? Did you know they could look just like us and that the hero would accidentally fall in love with the alien? Did you guess it was the mysterious girl with a gun?

Trope number 8. Scouting. These are just the scouts, we can't let them report back to the Mothership or Earth is doomed! Apparently aliens don't use radios or other means of communication, they actually have to fly back and report in person. Plus the fact that Scout Ship XZ35 never reported back apparently wouldn't be investigated.

I can hear Mrs. Alien now "My husband died scouting a small planet for gold? Did you send another scout ship to look? I want answers, what are you covering up?!" Eventually she forms the lobbying group "Widows of Gold Harvesting alien planets" a million members strong, they march on the capitol demanding answers!

Let me flip the script here.

Cowboys and Aliens is a loving homage to the traditional Western movie and to the SciFi matinee movies of the 50s and 60s. Mixing two popular genres and adding the star power of Harrison Ford and Daniel Craig to create a new genre. The seamless mixing of Western movie traditions and modern SciFi movie making will entertain the whole family. It's an action adventure romp that will keep you on the edge of your seat until the exciting conclusion.

So why not both?

Cowboys and Aliens is like a comfy blanket and a well worn pair of slippers. I've seen the John Wayne western *El Dorado* about 50 times or more. I've seen *Star Wars: A New Hope* about the same number of times. Just because something is predictable does not mean it isn't entertaining. John Wayne rides off into the sunset, Luke blows up the Death Star. If you want to see cowboys defeat the alien invaders, turn off your brain and enjoy the ride.



Why I Always Wear a Watch

by Bradley Cozzens

This is a hard one for me to talk about 40+ years later.

Summer 1979 Snow Mountain Camp above Nevada City. It's about midnight and myself and 5 other boys are sharing a cabin in a gulch telling ghost stories when we decide to call it a night. I take my flashlight and put it down facing up because the on/off switch has a habit of turning on and killing the batteries if placed the other way. Several minutes pass as we continue talking about normal kid stuff, what girl we think is cute, what our goals in life are. When the cabin is enveloped in what I can only describe as white noise. It's ear shattering loud and we're all screaming. I'm seeing mathematical equations, another kid sees musical notes, and another sees hieroglyphs. Those are the one's that stuck in my memory as for years I've tried to block out that night.

This lasts for between 45 seconds and a minute. The noise stops and the cabin is filled with one of the most vile things I've ever smelled: a mixture of rotten eggs, burnt hair, and ozone. We're all still screaming when we notice the noise has stopped, and there's my flashlight, lit up like a Christmas tree in the center of the room.

Needless to say we don't want to stay there and think that a counselor needs to come check things out. The camp was laid out over several hills with the kitchen and counselors' area on the other side of a substantial hill from where we were. And most of the camp was off on overnight trips that about 8 of us couldn't go on because we had been sick for a few days before. So we head up the hill and down to where the counselors are. At first the counselors don't believe us and are telling us to go back to our cabin, but we're like 'hell no, not until you come check things out'. This goes on for a while until one of the counselors takes my pulse which causes the other one to check another of the boys' pulse. They were still racing long after they should have returned to normal.

Up the hill we trudge to investigate.

We arrive at the cabin and there's still a trace of the odor and there's my flashlight still on facing the ceiling. We tell the counselors that there's no way we're staying in the cabin. So we change cabins and stay up for the rest of the night talking about what happened.

Morning comes and we head to the kitchen/cafeteria and meet up with the 3 girls who had been on the crest of the hill above where our cabin was when they ask us if we saw it. We're like 'saw what?' And they describe the object that they saw hovering above our cabin for close to an hour. The description that has always stuck in my mind is it looked like a man's hat from 1940's movies, not quite triangular, but similar.

So, I honestly don't know what happened that night. Was I abducted, I think so, what was the message they were trying to give us? I don't know and I'm not sure I want to know.

My theory is that UFOs are interdenominational time travelers capable of bending time but not that good at precise placement. This is why I wear a watch pretty much 24/7.

Brad

"CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE FUNNIEST KIND."

—PEOPLE

**C H R I S T O P H E R
B U C K L E Y**



A Review by Bob Hole

**L I T T L E
G R E E N
M E N**

A N O V E L

Little Green Men by Christopher Brinkley, 1999.

Published by Random House.

Random House, the publisher of this book calls it “a millennial comedy of manners about aliens and pundits...and how much they have in common.” Okay.

The story revolves around John Oliver Banion is a recognizable conservative media pundit who is abducted by aliens, the tall Nordic type, rather than the short grays. His conversion from total skeptic to U.F.O. circle superstar is rapid, as is his predictable fall from the A-List of Washington officialdom. On his journey he meets barely disguised characters from the U.F.O. world, a from the Washington D.C. of around 2000.

Written now over 20 years ago, it tries very hard to make outrageous statements in outrageous situations involving the U.S. Federal government. Sadly, the last few years have shown that nothing the book says seems all that outrageous anymore.

The book has turned into a mild exposé of government cover-ups and other high jinks that seem more than plausible today. It was a pleasant read, and a quick one. It just wasn't laugh out loud, or even laugh quietly to myself funny.

It does hit all the right notes for someone familiar with the social worlds it covers, introducing all the familiar characters on both sides. It manages to explain Roswell, Area 51, the different races of aliens, and just about everything else in the investigation of U.F.O.s. The explanations are fun, and roughly plausible in today's environment.

I can recommend the book as mildly light entertainment, but it has not stood the test of time well. Or maybe the government hasn't.





Black Triangle UFOs

by Chris Garcia

The world of UFOs has several different forms. For decades, the form that was seen in the skies around the world was saucer-shaped. This came largely from the famed Kenneth Arnold sighting where he described the craft he saw as a 'flying saucer' and the media ran with it. This was the primary form, though egg-shaped UFOs were not unknown, and diamond-shaped UFOs were there as well.

Until 1989, in a country called Belgium.

Now, there is a tradition of UFOs over mainland Europe. The most famous flaps, The Ghost Rockets in 1946 and the Fiorentina stadium sightings, are incredibly fascinating and well-recorded, but never referenced as frequently as US flaps like the Washington DC flap or Gulf Breeze. The Belgians had not had many UFO reports prior, though there are some thoughts that images in Belgian paintings of the 16th and 17th century might be referencing what we'd consider UFOs today. On the night of November 29th, more than thirty folks saw huge black triangles in the sky. There were three distinct groups of people who had sightings, including a couple of groups of cops. The sighting began in Liege, but it moved across the country, and was reported on the news. The Triangles were huge, flying low, with lights on the underside. These were a big deal, and eventually the ships moved on to the Netherlands, and there's less evidence from those Dutch slackers.

That was not the end of it. Over the next two years, there were many more sightings, most notably on the night between March 30th and 31st, 1990. The object was sighted on radar, and jets were scrambled, but found nothing. Many people saw it, and there were several photos taken.

Several photos were proved to be faked, and there was supposed to be some video footage. The air control of the Belgians had tracked a few of them, but not overly conclusively. The fact is The Belgians took this very seriously, and that means that people will start to try and take advantage of that, explaining the faked photos. Convincing fakes, but fakes none the less.

There were a few other single sightings of triangular craft, but it wasn't until 1997 and The Phoenix Lights.

At about 655pm, March 17th, 1997, reports started to roll in about a weird ship in the sky. It was variously described as a boomerang or a triangle, depending on who you asked. A lot of folks thought it

looks like a carpenter's square or a flying v. They were first seen on the other side of the Nevada border in Henderson, and then it made its way, slowly across to Arizona. A cop in Paulden, Arizona, was the next to pick up the ship, and he saw the orange lights underneath about 8:15pm. He followed it with binoculars as it moved towards Prescott. They started to get reports about 8:17pm from Prescott and Prescott Valley. There was where we got the most detailed report sent to the National UFO Reporting Center - "We observed five yellow-white lights in a "V" formation moving slowly from the northwest, across the sky to the northeast, then turn almost due south and continue until out of sight. The point of the "V" was in the direction of movement. The first three lights were in a fairly tight "V" while two of the lights were further back along the lines of the "V"'s legs. During the NW-NE transit one of the trailing lights moved up and joined the three and then dropped back to the trailing position. I estimated the three light "V" to cover about 0.5 degrees of sky and the whole group of five lights to cover about 1 degree of sky."

The lights then moved over Phoenix. Phoenix, Arizona, one of the largest cities in the country. Thousands of people saw the lights, and there was a fair bit of video footage from all over town. The Governor of Arizona saw it, called it 'otherworldly' and had no answers. There was a footage, though almost all of it was from Phoenix, and little of it was from high-quality sources. I think there is a cameraman who got the most famous footage. One set of images, from Prescott, shows the definite outline of a v-shaped craft. The official explanation was given for only the Phoenix sightings, which was that flares had been dropped from a warhog helicopter which many had seen earlier in the day. The thing with that is exactly how still they remain, and more importantly, that the wind doesn't quite match that idea. The initial sightings were attributed by some officials to airplanes, but it's weird how similar these sightings were, and there was certainly a structure that the lights were attached to in the early sightings.

There were others, including more in both Phoenix and Belgium. Illinois had several sightings between 2000 and 2006. Some of these, the Tinley Park Lights, were videotaped and have a lot of similarities to the Phoenix Lights. Australia had a similar flap not too long ago.

There were some in Southern California, and as they were near Riverside, that's the heart of Military research and a massive Air Force base. There have been many sightings, but most importantly, some of the things that are reported seem to indicate Earth-born research drones and perhaps not UFOs. At least one sighting in the 1990s seems to have been describing a drone type that was widely used in Iraq.

So, what are they? Who knows, but the big thing to me is that they all have so many characteristics in common.







Let's Go to Witch Mountain!

by Chuck Serface

The 1960s and 1970s were great times for Disney live-action films.

Before Kurt Russell became Snake Plissken and Jack Burton, he was Dexter Riley, the computer who wore tennis shoes and then later the world's strongest man. Hayley Mills won our hearts as Pollyanna and then again as twins setting a diabolical parent trap. Jodie Foster switched bodies with Barbara Harris for the freakiest Friday ever, and then she cracked the mystery of Candleshoe. Shaggy Dogs, Flubber, all of these getting my generation off the streets and into movie theaters for laughs and light-weight science fiction and fantasy. Now our children can witness this phenomenon on Disney+.

Among this group are two films featuring alien siblings, Tia (Kim Richards) and Tony (Ike Eisenmann), who each possess strange psychic powers but lack any memories about their backgrounds. *Escape from Witch Mountain* (1975) is the first of these two films. We meet the twins after their adoptive parents, the Malones, have died and they are brought to an orphanage. Tia has visions about crashing in an ocean. Later, we learn that the crash involved the space ship that brought their people to Earth.

After Tia uses her powers of prophecy to save an attorney named Deranian (Donald Pleasence) from a car wreck, she and Tony come under the attention of Aristotle Bolt (Ray Milland), Deranian's boss who is obsessed with obtaining wealth. Indeed, when we meet him, Bolt's consulting with his astrologer, his psychic, and his guru about the stock market. He's got to have those sibs! And he gets them!



Tia has a map hidden in a star case that leads to Witch Mountain, so she and Tony escape not knowing why the place is so important. The chase ensues! The kids meet Jack O'Day (Eddie Albert), a sour gentleman traveling the USA in his Winnebago. We, of course, reach the inevitable happy Disney ending, the kids meet their Uncle Bene (Denver Pyle), and so much for Aristotle Bolt and his dreams of McDuck level wads of lucre. Tia and Tony fly off in Bene's flying saucer to wherever their people have set up an Earth colony.

Escape from Witch Mountain touches on several themes popular during the 1970s – UFOs, psychic powers, and alien visitations. I was ten-years old upon seeing it for the first time, and I remember just loving the easy-to-follow adventure and the antics Tia and Tony pulled off with their abilities. As an adult rewatching it to write this article, I focused on the cast, how Ike Eisenmann and Kim Richards did not achieve later success like Kurt Russell or Jodie Foster. Eisenmann decided to keep it lowkey by running a voice-acting agency before retiring into a writer's life, while Richards now is Paris Hilton's aunt and as a *Housewife of Beverly Hills*. Disney always had a way of including legends from Hollywood too, like, well, Donald Pleasence. And how far had Ray Milland come from playing Don Birnham in *The Lost Weekend* (1945), Tony Wendice in *Dial M for Murder* (1954), or Stanford White in *The Girl on the Red Velvet Swing* (1955)? All the way to Aristotle Bolt, it seems.



That “film greats playing Disney villains” trend continues with the sequel, *Return from Witch Mountain* (1978) where the tweens from space tangle with wicked scientist Victor Gannon (Christopher Lee) and greedy broke socialite Letha Wedge. Bette Davis! And that name: Letha Wedge! Aristotle Bolt and now Letha Wedge! Maybe not quite over-the-top cool like Cruella de Vil or Maleficent, but I adore these names nonetheless. If someone were to comment about Ms. Davis's apparent downward trajectory by taking such a role, I can only answer with my best Bette Davis imitation, waving a cigarette emphatically: “At least I’m not Joan Crawford in fucking Trog!”



Return from Witch Mountain begins with Tia and Tony returning to spend time among city folks. Alien rumspringa, perhaps? Uncle Bene drops them off inside the Rose Bowl, so Pasadena or at least Los Angeles is where the action occurs. Immediately, of course, our heroes run into trouble when Tony employs his telekinetic powers to save Sickie (Anthony James), Letha Wedge's nephew and a guinea pig for Victor Gannon who has invented a device that takes over people's minds. The villains see Tony stop Sickie from hitting the ground after he had fallen from a building. Both the baddies then get ideas very similar to the ones Aristotle Bolt had concocted before. Psychic tweens mean money and power! Wedge and Gannon kidnap Tony and subjugate his mind while Tina roams the city with a young street gang with, given their wimpy natures, the ironic nicknames

"Dazzler," "Rocky," "Crusher," and "Muscles." The plot includes a foiled gold-bullion robbery, rival youth gangs, and eventually the usual happy ending with Wedge and Gannon left despairing when Uncle Bene picks up Tony and Tia, and off they go into the sky saucer-style once again.



I could discuss the made-for-television remakes, but let's skip ahead to 2009 when Disney released *Race to Witch Mountain*, a quite different and updated retelling starring Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson who plays Jack Bruno, a down-and-out Las Vegas cab driver who once drove for a local organized crime boss. The brother and sister are now Seth (Alexander Ludwig) and Sarah (AnnaSophia Robb), here to find the solution their parents devised to save their ecologically doomed world. Their planet's leaders want to invade Earth, but the majority want the ecological solution instead. Disgraced astrophysicist Alex Friedman (Carla Gugino) joins to help the pair reach Witch Mountain where a shady government organization led by Agent Burke (Ciarán Hinds) had taken their ship after Seth and Sarah had crashed it. Finally, Garry Marshall plays a leading ufologist. How can you go wrong with that?



Alien assassins, government conspiracies, even more intense powers for Seth and Sarah -- Seth can control his density, for example – and a UFO convention complete with Whitley Strieber making a cameo add panache to the story. Not surprising, then, to learn that Andy Fickman, the director, was born in Roswell, New Mexico. When interviewed by Martin A. Grove for The Hollywood Reporter, Fickman offered the following:

Asked about his connection to the material thanks to his Roswell roots, Fickman laughed: “It finally pays off! Finally! I should thank my parents for that. I was born in Roswell and, certainly, it’s one of those classic questions your whole life. If someone asks where you were born and you say, ‘Roswell, New Mexico,’ it immediately is met with, sort of, ‘Oh, you’re an alien.’ I had just got back from China where Dwayne and I were doing press (for ‘Race’) and every journalist there from all over Asia knew what Roswell was. I found it so interesting that globally it’s probably one of few cities that you could just say (the name) and immediately everybody has an image in their mind of UFOs and crashes and aliens. So it’s definitely been a part of me for a long time.”

Did it help him in handling this material? “Well, I think to a certain degree it helped in that I’ve had a lifelong fascination with UFOs,” he replied, “and because of that I think I probably came into the movie very much a fan and already (had) my own decades worth of research leading up to it. I (didn’t need) to immerse myself in the world of UFOs. It was kind of the opposite, which was, ‘I’m so immersed in the world of UFOs I think I now need to make sure I immerse our producers and our cast and our executives and our crew to catch them up to where my head space is.’



Even Kim Richards and Ike Eisenmann received small parts, hopefully sparking nostalgia for many members of my generation, not just me. Disney+ has all three movies available. What a fun triple-header – a little popcorn, cocktails or soda, and you are good to go. Tiger Joe Marsh, an actor and wrestler active during the mid-twentieth century, plays Lorko Bolt's gate guard in *Escape from Witch Mountain*. Dwayne Johnson, a famous actor/wrestler active now, tops the *Race to Witch Mountain* cast list. A wrestling connection? Kim Richards and Ike Eisenmann mysteriously reappear . . . and Whitley Strieber? Coincidence, or do you think it's all a coincidence? They are out there, my friends. Wheels within wheels. Are you paying attention?





The Extraterrestrial Highway Adventure of 2008
Photos by Bob Hole



The Little A'Le'Inn

in Beautiful Rachel, Nevada





International UFO Museum
in Roswell, New Mexico







REMEMBERING 30 Years

This "alien" was created as a prop for the 1994 Showtime Movie "ROSWELL".
Exec. Producer, Paul Davids, donated it to the International UFO Museum & Research Center.





Last Podcast on the Left The UFO Episodes by Chris Garcia

I have, often, sang the praises of Last Podcast on the Left.

The three men of noble valor, Henry and Ben and Marcus, are fascinated not only by true crime, but also the paranormal, and Henry is especially fascinated by Unexplained Ariel Phenomena. He's a MUFON field researcher, for whatever that's worth. They all have at least some deep interest in UFOs, and the way they've covered it has been super-solid.

The first 30 or so episodes are no longer available, and I'm not sure why, but the first one I encountered was [episode 40 – The Alien Agenda](#). This one was really indicative of the early episodes. It was far looser, with the three of them flowing back-and-forth a bit less cleanly, but throwing so much fun stuff. They bring up some really weird theories, including Esoteric Hitlerism, which I had never heard of. Things are very much of the time, with a fair bit of material that is definitely not appropriate for today. They talk it out and are confusing even to themselves. They pitch the Nazis worked with the Pliedians, leaving the Greys to work with the US. The Nazis had the Vrill energy, but the US got the bomb and that won us the war. They then pitch that Eisenhower worked with the Greys, signed the treaty in 1954, and that led to the Greys abducting people. This gets weird, and it's the perfect thing for these guys to talk out, and when Henry goes into the theories, he's obviously fighting against the desire to just lay it all out fast and dirty! They often get dark, and they're even darker in their early years than they are now.

[Episode 58, Cobra, Light Aliens & You](#) is another similar episode, and it's super-fun. It opens with Henry saying that Shakespeare was Sir Francis Bacon, which is obviously true. They cover the fight between the Pliedians and the Reptilians, and the technologies they use. The books and website they referenced were all on my shelf/bookmarks back in those days. They talk a bit about Edward Cayce, too! The story of Cobra, more or less the spokesman for all the aliens on Coast-to-Coast AM. It devolves into a running gag that Cobra, the codename of

a supposed UFO-Governmental cover-up whistleblower, is Cobra Commander from GI Joe.

Episode 72 is the most fun of them thus far. [Alien Implants and Abductions](#). It opens with the story of Whitley Stieber, the author and famous abductee who wrote about his experiences in *Communion*. It's a great story, about getting abducted nearly every night, probed, and implanted, and the way they talk about it is really outre and funny and awesome. They go into several other stories, including a deep dive into AlienScalpel.com, where there's a lot of posts about abductees. They read several in the irreverent, and slightly disrespectful, ways. They then turn to discussing <https://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/> which is a site that's crazy. I mean CRAZY!!!

Episode 80 is all about [Disclosure](#), which in this case was all about The Citizen's Hearing on Disclosure. There was a big deal, where a Canadian defense minister, Paul Hillyer, spoke about the government working with aliens, and noted there were at least three separate species - The Nordics, the Reptillians, and the Pleiadians. They go into the hearing where the minister talked about it, making it the highest profile speech by an official. There was also the story of a dogfight between a UFO and a Canadian jet, and it was one of those "I know I hit it!" where it didn't see to have hit it. They talk about why these creatures are coming, and present the Atomic Attractor theory, which I tend to be a fan of. They go into Rendleshem Forest just a touch, one of the most famous UK sightings, and they get into it, but it's obvious they're gonna go into it more later.

In number 90, they do a more general episode on [Pleiadians](#) and how they're working to help humanity, which is OK, but doesn't really get deep enough, and then in [episode 104](#) they take on Planet Serpo and a step into Roswell! The Serpo story is crazy, and goes back to the Nazis and their attempt to working on anti-gravity discs, and somehow also included the Green Dragons, and ancient masters and absolute craziness. Basically, it comes down to World War II was Nazis working with aliens, and the US needing to get involved with flying saucers, and that leads to Roswell, and that got us our saucers. That, of course, led to the exchange program that has brought us all the internets and stuff we have today. The US sent people to Serpo, with a group going with less rations that would have been needed. The team that visited experienced some fun stuff, but mostly, it was just typical science fiction stuff, only with this over-lay of weird conspiracy theory stuff.

They proclaim their next one to be the most straight-ahead of their Alien episodes thus far, and they're right. It's [episode 134 and it's Alien Hybrids](#). This is an interesting episode, and all of the ones they had covered to this point all seem to bleed into each other, and none so much as this one. It's very coherent, and it covers many of the famous hybrid claims, including the woman with the all-green eyes and vertical black slits. This is the most coherent episode, but it's also still a lot of fun.

They make a big turn here, going into a single case instead of a big concept. In [episode 154, we get the Hotel de Coronado Group abduction](#). That was the one where folks at a UFO convention, almost all of which had been previous abductees, and many of them, more than a dozen, reported various forms of abduction. They also focus on Bill Clinton, who was at the hotel, and who used UFOs in a lot of his speeches. This is a neat anecdote, and I knew he had spoken on Jimmy Kimmel about asking for UFO info from the Pentagon, but being told there was nothing to see. The Coronado incident, which features hypnosis quite thoroughly, is one of the most interesting to study, either as an evidence point in the world of abductions, or as a beautiful example of group psychosis.

In episodes [169](#) and [170](#), they follow that up with the single most famous early abduction story – Betty and Barney Hill. I was lucky enough to hear Betty Hill talk a couple of times (including at the most formative event I barely remember, the UFO conference where I got to meet J. Allen Hynek!) and she was a bit out there, but her story is so thorough. They were abducted, the watches they wore never worked again, and they had massive PTSD afterwards. The couple, an interracial couple in the early 1960s, were hypnotized and all of those sessions were recorded. This has been covered many times, both in documentary and fictional re-tellings, and along with Whitley Stieber's ordeal, it is easily the best-known. They do spend a long time on Barney Hill's groin and the warts that grew in a circle there. The two-parter makes good use of the space, and they play a few clips from the regression therapy sessions that the Hills went under. I've heard and seen a lot of coverage of the Hills, and this was one of the better looks.

Then, starting in [episodes 187](#) and [188](#), it's the Dolce episodes. Those not in the know will be unfamiliar with Dulce base, the giant underground base where humans and aliens of various types work side-by-side. The episodes are really good, though they do not shy away from the fact that they don't believe a single word of the

story they're telling. I don't either, though I am 100% certain we have incredible drilling machines that aren't largely known. Also, this was one of the earliest references of Operation Paperclip.

Now... Roswell. Two-parter, episodes [216](#) and [217](#), which takes it super-seriously, and looks at things in two different ways, sort of. The first was it was a UFO crash, and the second time it was all about how it wasn't. It's a smart way to look at it. I think there was something beyond our scientific knowledge, but I'm not sure it was extra-terrestrial. There were many witnesses to the material from the crash, but how many of them are credible? There's also a great segment about the aliens bringing with them a plague of some sort that was pretty significant looking back at it in 2021. The discussion deals largely with the play-off of all the details and information flow from the authorities., and how it died and then came back 30 years later. The way that Henry plays with his characters is actually downplayed here, compared to some of his characters, including his portrayal of serial killer Charles Ng. They go into the theories that I love – there were no aliens, it was all just in the mind of Mac Breazel, and that it weren't no weather balloon... IT WAS THE RUSSIANS! That last one makes a lot of sense, since if the Russians were able to get into New Mexico, that's a big incursion. They also mention Vannevar Bush, how he co-founded Raytheon, which I wasn't aware of, though I could talk a lot about his influence on computing. There was the classic question about why, if we had zero-point energy, we don't have free energy and the answer, of course, is the energy industry. Go figure.

The next up, about 20 episodes later, number 233, is all about the [Secret Space Programs](#). This one isn't great, it was funny as always, but it wasn't as full of fun thought stuff. That's the thing; I don't really believe this stuff, but when Marcus and Henry go into them, it's fascinating as a set of thought experiments. They start with the Thule Society, which deals with Operating Paperclip, where we brought former Nazi scientists to work on our science *cough*WernerVonBrauhn*cough* and somehow there's a connection to the Dragonians. The majority of the episode is about Valiant Thor, the alien who lived in the US in a locked-room in the Pentagon. He apparently went to a UFO con in the 50s and let folks know all about his work. He was apparently the Vannevar Bush of Aliens, as he supposedly helped set-up Area 51, was a part of Majestic 12, and worked with OSI. So much stuff, so even though he was kept bound up (though he could teleport if'n he wanted to) he got a lot of work done for the security sector. They also cover Gary McKinnon. If you're not familiar with him, he's one of the hackers who supposedly uncovered



UFO and Free Energy. They also cover a manifesto that is somehow anti-semetic and pro-globalist with a reading that is more performance art than anything. This is a really fun episode.

[Episode 239](#) is about Billy Meier. They describe Billy Meier as a “one-armed, Swiss UFO Collaborator” which is a neat form of demarcation. He's sort of seen as a bad guy by all sorts of UFOians, and has had a ton of communication with Pleiars (who everyone else calls Pleadians) and is also a major source of consternation, because people think he's just making money off the idea. There's a lot of random stuff that Billy did, but it was a story I knew little about and I was happy to hear more. He also made a lot of prophesy, including five times calling that World War III was about to happen. I did know the photos Billy took, and they are incredible fakes if they are fakes.

Episodes [252](#) and [253](#) are about Gulf Breeze. It's been debunked, largely, and the photos are amazingly beautiful for UFO pics, though they lack the homesy artistry or the Billy Meier pics. There's nothing that

compares with the Wedding Cake UFO pics. Ed Walters took them, and he had a series of interactions with UFOs and tons of pics. Later, a UFO model was found in his attic that looked almost exactly like the UFOs in his pictures. The story that Walters told is pretty cool, though. He claims the model was planted there, and really if you made your name on faking UFO pictures, why would you leave it behind when you moved? There were also a lot of folks who saw UFOs in the Gulf Breeze area while Walters was seeing them.

There's a long gap between [Gulf Breeze](#) and the next UFO episode, [Travis Walton, in episode 284](#). His abduction was the source of *Fire in the Sky* and perhaps the most famous of the abductions after Stieber's. This is also the episode where Henry reveals that he is a MUFON investigator and is awaiting his lanyard. This was the one where there are a bunch of lumberjacks, one of them is taken, loses 4 days, and was legit terrifying if you listen to the details. They did a bunch of hypnotherapy to get the story of the abduction, but the way they approach it is probably the most concise of all of them, even with the joking and Henry's funny voices. The big thing they go into is the idea that he was literally abducted, and they talk about what that actually means. They really rail against Phil Klass, one of the biggest wet blankets in the history of UFOlogy, and who would have hated being called a UFOlogist. He basically worked really hard to discredit the people, noble loggers one and all, who had witnessed and experienced the Walton abduction. He did make a couple of valid points, but really, the biggest reason anyone has given for why they think it's a hoax is that Mike Rogers wanted to get out of a logging contract. That just doesn't make sense. This is the best of all the single episodes, and an excellent starter pack for the entire series.

[Episode 305 is the Hudson Valley sightings](#), which were incredibly well-documented, but also kinda simple compared to those in Gulf Breeze or the Hills. This episode runs long, and drags a bit, but it does cover the sightings really well. They also go into J. Allen Hynek, who I'm writing about and had the absolute pleasure of meeting when I was a kid. He was a big part of the story of the Hudson Valley sightings. While there were a lot of sightings, including one two hour sighting, and one where one of the GIANT boomerang-shaped UFOs hovered over a nuclear reactor, it's not a super-exciting series, with the exception of a hobbyist UFOlogist NSA agent, and the general bumbliness of Phil Imbrogno.

[Episode 323 is the start of the Men in Black series](#). The episodes focus theorylight on tulpas, those beings that come into being through belief and/or practice. It's actually deeply tied into Schroedinger's Cat. We are looking for something, in form, and a thing that is represented as a thought-form comes to us in that form, or at least as something that is able to feed off that specific thoughtform. I know, I know, but think of it like this: you want a sandwich, and someone brings you a sandwich you didn't ask for. Did you manifest that sandwich? Coincidence? Sure. The thought of a thing can represent the thing across the zeitgeist. And thus, the idea of the Men in Black made the reality of Men in Black real. Right?

The [second episode](#) goes way deeper into everything, from historic detailing of Men in Black in the 17th and 18th centuries to Alastair Crowley. It's one of the best episodes of the entire series, though it doesn't make sense without the first episode of the pair. It digs, moves perfectly, and just goes into the corners enough to be stretching, but it doesn't break. There esoteric, Occult stuff is great, and Henry is amazing in imparting the information in a way that is insane, but not unintelligible. The third episode is about time cops and the like. It's almost as good as the first, but it's not nearly as good as the second. Still, this is a top-notch series! The third episode also deals with the idea of [Time Crime](#) thoroughly, and they make it a very entertaining segment.

This is followed by the [Andreasson Affair](#), another one that Dr. Hynek was a massive part of. This is also episode 333: halfway to the beast. This abduction, which has strong fundamental Christian elements, is incredibly well-documented, and one of those that Dr. Hynek spent a long time on. The weird thing here isn't that someone from Massachusetts was claiming they had been abducted, but instead that two UFO groups, MUFON and CUFOS, were able to successfully work together! The best line about her encounter has to be "this is like if you dropped my Mom into a J.G. Ballard world!"

This is where the LPOTL guys start to move away from UFO stuff. It's not until episode 366 that we get another, and that series is on [Rendleshem Forest sightings](#). A part of the reason might be that Henry and Ben started Side Stories, which covers current event-y type paranormal and UFO stuff. They also covered Skinwalker Ranch, which has some UFO content. The Rendleshem episodes are a lot of fun. I knew a little about it, how a UFO was seen over Rendleshem base, a US Air Force installation in the UK, and that there were a number of

witnesses who were serious and respected airmen. It's an interesting episode, and at the end of it, you get the feeling that as they're presenting the case, they are 100% unwilling to say that it's a total hoax, but mention and quickly debunk the theories that have been presented over the years. Me? I think something happened, and likely something Soviet, but I agree that the hoax theories are complete hokum!

Episode 392 gives us tales of [Sexual Liaisons with Aliens](#), and it was an interesting matter. They have covered sex with aliens a lot in their other episodes, but here, in the early time of COVID-19, they give three specific cases a lot of air, and it's fascinating. The three cases, two from the 50s, one from the 80s, are all well-known, but they give it their typical dark comedic takes. This is also a really good look at the famed case of Credo Mutwa, who had perhaps the worst alien sexual abduction in history. This is a strong episode because they're not really telling a single narrative, but as giving air to a lot of interesting stories that are more vignettes. This is also the episode where they explain the move to Spotify, with the single most ridiculous claim they've ever made: that Apple is going to start taking things over. Not gonna happen, largely because it reeks of effort.

In episode 415, they follow that one up with an episode on [The Tall Whites](#). This one is really kooky, and it always gets Henry's song about "Never be scared of the tall white man." Song. The Tall Whites aren't the Nordics, but they are literally super-tall white-skinned aliens. Pretty much everything comes from a single guy who worked with them at a base outside Las Vegas. He's presented as the boringest man in the world, and Henry gives him a classic treatment! The Tall Whites are all very fond of gambling in Vegas, which makes them my second favorite of the Alien Races!

[The Dangerous UFOs of Brazil](#), episode 426, is a sort of return to the older style of UFO episode. It's basically a story of a bunch of seriously messed up abductions, sighting, and so much more. The 1970s UFO flap is really fascinating, including the story of a 10 foot ball of light that chased a guy as he walked home from work. They lightly cover UFO encounters in the 1940s through early 70s, but they really give the attention to the flap that peaked in 1977. They are really good at giving descriptions to abduction scenarios. Actually, Marcus does the great descriptions, especially when describing the abduction of a dude named Alfredo. The fact that people were reporting abductions, or coming in to the hospital with radiation sickness or flesh that seemed to have been microwaved. There was an encounter on Crab Island, where three guys had incredible burns, one of whom died. Marcus does a great job with the narration.

Early 2021 gave us episode 447, a look at something I had not heard of – the [Coyame Saucer Crash](#). This was a crash that happened in the part of Mexico that is super-observed, largely because a lot of Narcotraffic has been going through this area for decades. The story is it was seen first over Texas, then in Mexico. Supposedly, Mexican authorities looked into it, but got there after the Americans had already been there and took stuff. There's also the idea that a group of Mexican rescuers were killed by the saucer. It's a fascinating story and one that really seems to have given Roswell a run for its money.

The last one happens to be USO – Unidentified Submerged Objects. THIS ONE IS CURRENT EVENTS!!! They cover a lot of Soviet and Russian USO stuff, and early 1980s stuff. They bring up all the Japanese stories of the early 1800s, which is legendary and far more accepted in Japan than even UFOs are in the US. They talk about the Shag Harbor event, where a UFO became a USO, and unleashed a bunch of yellow foam into the harbor. A lot of military folk saw this event, and that's a big deal. Like Rendleshem, Shag Harbor is a key governmental cover-up. There's been a lot of research into this one.

Fin

