

INTERNATIONAL ROSWELL INITIATIVE
A Quest for the Truth

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Bulletin #2 -- SUBJECT:

THE PURPORTED 1947 ROSWELL FILM

By Kent Jeffrey

The last 18 months have been quite eventful with respect to Roswell. In January of last year, Congressman Steven Schiff of Albuquerque, New Mexico, announced to the press that he was requesting the General Accounting Office (GAO) to look into the Roswell case. Nine months later, the Air Force, possibly in an attempt to upstage the GAO, and in what "Newsweek" magazine called a "preemptive strike," released its own report on the Roswell incident. The Air Force report was the first official word on the Roswell matter in 47 years and basically supported (although without offering any proof) the original 1947 "cover story" that the officers of the 509th Atomic Bomb Group were fooled by the remains of a downed balloon and ML-307 radar reflector.

Now, a new factor has entered the picture. A film has surfaced in England that is supposedly top-secret documentary footage taken at Roswell in 1947 by a U.S. military photographer. The existence of the film was first announced last January; however, the film was allegedly purchased in the United States almost two years ago. Needless to say, the film has generated much interest and controversy, along with a variety of opinions from UFO researchers and members of the media as to its authenticity.

As author of the Roswell Declaration and coordinator of the International Roswell Initiative, I have attempted when possible to maintain neutrality on controversial issues within the UFO research community and to avoid the infighting that, unfortunately, has so often characterized this field. I have felt that maintaining a neutral stance was important and appropriate, especially in view of the fact that the Roswell Declaration and the grassroots effort behind it has had the unified support of the three largest and most respected UFO organizations in the United States, the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS), and the Fund for UFO Research (FUFOR). Furthermore, over 17,000 people, from varying backgrounds, including hundreds of scientists and engineers, have signed and submitted copies of the Roswell Declaration.

While I have primarily concentrated my efforts on achieving the objective of the Roswell Declaration -- an Executive Order to declassify any existing U.S. government-held information concerning UFOs or extraterrestrial intelligence -- I have also become involved with researching the Roswell case. In the past two years, I have made five trips to Roswell, visited the debris site at the Foster (Brazel) ranch, and interviewed many of the surviving Roswell witnesses. I believe such experience gives me a definite advantage in evaluating any alleged Roswell film footage.

The film in question is presently in the possession of a company in London, Merlin Productions, owned by a Mr. Ray Santilli. On Friday, May 5, 1995, there was a special showing at the Museum of London. There were approximately one hundred people present: members of the media (including the BBC), potential buyers of the film, and UFO researchers from the United Kingdom and other countries. Despite the fact that the film is totally unauthenticated, it has received extensive publicity in Europe. For example, the film has been featured in full-length feature articles in London's "Sunday People" and Berlin's "Morgen Post."

Because of the dubious nature of the film and the questionable way in which it is being handled by those in possession of it, there is a tremendous potential for damage to the entire Roswell effort. Because I was the only Roswell researcher at the May 5th showing, I feel a responsibility to put neutrality aside and speak out.

Before going into specific details about the viewing, I would like to state up front and unequivocally that there is no (zero!!!) doubt in my mind that this film is a fraud. I might add, however, that if, against all odds, what I consider the impossible did occur, and this film actually turned out to be genuine, I would be one of the first to celebrate, as researchers would finally have in their possession the Holy Grail of evidence necessary to break the Roswell case wide open.

The actual showing of the film took place just after 1:00 p.m. in a small auditorium that is part of the Museum of London complex. A handout was distributed at the sign-in table consisting of a copy of the alleged MJ-12 briefing papers and a

yellow cover sheet referencing the 1947 Roswell crash and the 509th Bomb Group (at Roswell Army Air Field). Merlin Productions was apparently very concerned about pictures being taken because everyone was physically searched (frisked) for cameras upon entering the auditorium. There was no speaker or announcement to formally welcome those present or to introduce the film. This seemed somewhat bizarre and discourteous, as people had come from all over the world for this showing. Also conspicuously absent was a person on stage afterward to publicly answer questions pertaining to the film. After having viewed what was presented, however, it was not hard to understand why this was the case.

Prior to the showing, anticipation was high. In the previous three months, Ray Santilli had put out the word through those in close contact with him that the film consisted of 15 10-minute reels (in their original canisters) of 16-millimeter black-and-white film, for a total of 150 minutes. He reported that it was dated as 1947 vintage film stock and that it had been acquired from a former army photographer, Jack Barnett, who claims to have shot the footage and then, incredibly, to have stolen 15 canisters of film, without the theft having been detected. Word was also put out that there was 45 minutes of footage taken at the actual recovery site showing a number of soldiers in uniform and a large crane lifting the crashed craft onto a truck. Additionally, Santilli claimed that one of the scenes showed President Truman behind a glass partition with such clarity that someone capable of lip reading would be able to determine his words when he spoke. At the showing, we would see none of this -- no debris site, no soldiers, no crane, no crashed saucer, no President Truman. Instead, we saw just 20 to 25 minutes of one single scene -- an autopsy of a supposed alien body in a small white room.

At about 1:05 p.m., the lights dimmed and the film started rolling. Before the actual picture began, a few short statements scrolled by on the screen with reference to the film having been "acquired from the cameraman who originally shot the footage" and to the copyright being "exclusively owned by Merlin Communications." Interestingly, one would think that if the film were genuine, the copyright would be "exclusively owned" by the United States government.

Also, contrary to what had been said previously about "10-minute reels," there was now a statement on the screen that the film was recorded on "three-minute" reels. I recently learned from a good friend in the film industry that 1947 vintage 16-millimeter film came on reels of 100 feet, which at 16 frames per second would be about three minutes each. Perhaps this information was also "recently learned" by Merlin Productions and that is why we are now seeing references to "three-minute" reels instead of the originally reported "10-minute" reels.

The film opened abruptly with its single scene of a small operating or autopsy room with plain white walls and a table in the middle containing an unclad body lying face up. Two individuals in white anti-contamination suits, complete with hoods and narrow, rectangular glass faceplates, were the only figures visible in the room. A third person, dressed in white hospital-type garb, was visible through a large glass partition, or window. Although he was outside the sealed room standing behind solid glass, he was wearing a surgical mask that covered his entire face. Perhaps there was concern that he might later be recognized?

The features of the body lying on the autopsy table in this film do not even come close to what was described by the 1947 Roswell witnesses. **What was visible on the screen was apparently a slightly doctored human corpse. While in theory it could have been an elaborate dummy, the chances of that are remote. I, along with others with whom I've spoken who were also at the viewing, have little doubt that the body was a doctored human corpse. If such is the case, it would make this one of the most despicable and deplorable hoaxes ever perpetrated. It would mean that those who put this atrocity together butchered the body of a once-living human being (a woman in this case) solely out of greed. If this is determined to be the case, a criminal investigation might well be in order, as using a human body for such unscrupulous purposes is not only highly unethical, but also illegal in most places.**

Although the exact height of the body was difficult to determine, it was definitely shorter than normal, probably somewhere around four and a half to five feet. The head was somewhat large relative to the torso, but not extraordinarily so. The body was also barrel chested and apparently bowlegged, and had an overall stocky appearance.

Other anomalous features included no visible body hair, small and somewhat odd-shaped ears, a small (slightly abnormal-shaped) nose, slightly large eyes covered by black membranes (which were later removed), a distended or bloated abdomen (ascites), six digits on the feet (polydactylism), apparently six digits on the hands, and legs so badly swollen that the definition of the knee was hardly recognizable. According to medical people with whom I spoke, none of these features would have been too difficult to produce artificially. The black membranes covering the eyes, for example, could have been placed over the eyeballs with the same apparent ease with which they were removed during the alleged autopsy. The sixth digit could have been added using the techniques of plastic surgery, although polydactylism itself is not that uncommon a condition. It was also pointed out that some of the abnormalities of the body could have been attributable to a genetic defect or even a physical ailment prior to death. For example, congestive heart failure could explain the swelling (edema) of the legs and the bloated appearance of the abdomen (ascites).

Despite the above-noted anomalies, the body essentially had the appearance of a human being. It had what was basically a human head, a human torso, human skin, human legs, human arms, human shoulders, human hands, and human feet -- all in basically the right proportions. The ratio of the length of the upper arms to the lower arms, as well as the ratio of the upper

legs to the lower legs, was exactly what would be expected for a human being. The musculature of the arms and legs appeared the same as the musculature of human arms and legs. The relative positions of the forehead, eyes, nose, ears, mouth, and chin were very close to what would be expected on a human head. Although the eyeballs appeared larger than normal, the size of the eye sockets did not appear that abnormal.

Other distinctly human features included the mouth, lips, teeth (the front-lower teeth were momentarily visible in one shot), jowls, noticeable protrusions of underlying bones in just the right places, including the jaw, shin, and clavicle, a brief glimpse of what appeared to resemble a flattened nipple area (although no protrusion of the breast), female genitalia, fingers, a thumb, toes, and even a brief glimpse of a toenail (a human vestigial remain!).

During the supposed autopsy procedure, the body cavity was cut open lengthwise from the throat to the groin and various internal organs were removed and placed in metal pans. The focus, or resolution, was so poor, however, that whatever was removed appeared simply as dark blobs, with detail being almost impossible to discern. There did appear at times to be a small amount of dark fluid oozing from the body cavity.

Basically, the body shown in this film appeared to be that of a short, adult, human, Caucasian female, with the age being difficult to determine. The swollen legs and other minor "modifications," such as an extra digit on the hands and feet, and the "doctoring up" of the eyes and ears, resulted in an overall slightly freakish appearance.

Professor Jared Diamond of the UCLA Medical School, in his book "The Third Chimpanzee," states that there is a "98.4 percent" similarity in the genes of humans and chimpanzees (our closest primate relative). The resemblance between a chimpanzee and a human being is slight compared with the resemblance between the body in this film and a normal human being. The body in the film was extremely human, albeit somewhat abnormal in appearance. It does not take a scientific mind or much imagination to realize that it would require a genetic similarity far greater than the 98.4 percent between man and chimp to produce a being as close in appearance to a normal human as was the body on the autopsy table in this film.

It is common knowledge that the human organism, like all other life forms on earth, is the product of approximately three billion years of evolution, involving untold numbers of mutations and trillions of chance combinations of genes. Exobiologists tell us that the chances of billions of years of evolution on another planet resulting in "the fine structural details" of a human being are all but zero. While differences would be vast, there would, however, likely be some basic similarities between us and any other species that became technologically advanced. Such features as two legs (bipedal), two arms, a high level of dexterity, two eyes (binocular vision for depth perception), and a large brain would almost surely be required for any species to evolve as a tool user and maker.

I recently discussed this matter with an acquaintance who is a science professor at a Midwestern university and who has a background in biochemistry, human biology, human genetics, and exobiology. He agreed that parallel evolutionary development in another world over billions of years leading to an advanced organism so nearly identical to a human being would never happen. The laws of probability rule it out. It can therefore be stated definitively that the body in this film is not of extraterrestrial origin. The film is a fraud.

In addition to the "fatal flaw" of anthropomorphism -- probably the result of scientific illiteracy as well as sheer ignorance on the part of its producers -- the film has other problems, most of which are of a more circumstantial nature. For example, the photography did not seem consistent with what one would expect for the documentation of an historic medical event. There was excessive panning and poor focus with the majority of closeups. Also, most of the closeup shots were too fleeting, allowing no time for serious study or observation. The gestures of the two "physicians" seemed exaggerated and even staged at times. Although it is purely speculative, one would think that for such a monumental event, there would have been a large team of specialists directly participating, along with a number of additional specialists observing from behind the glass partition.

Establishing this film as a hoax is much easier than determining the source of the hoax. It is possible that Ray Santilli and Merlin Productions are themselves victims of a scam. However, it must be said that their actions in the last few months do not seem consistent with those of an organization confident that it is in possession of the "genuine article." Among other things, Mr. Santilli has mentioned a secret viewing for church officials, a private viewing for the counter-intelligence wing of the FBI, verification of the film by Kodak as 1947 vintage, and, most recently, an offer from an undisclosed client represented by a Washington, DC, law firm for \$1.8 million to purchase the film "as is." None of these claims has been verified. Furthermore, no one has seen any of the alleged footage of the debris site or that showing President Truman.

Even more significantly, no one has been able to verify the existence of the photographer, Jack Barnett. If this film were genuine and such a photographer actually existed, the government would undoubtedly know his identity. Since he reportedly stole and subsequently sold 15 canisters of top-secret U.S. government film, he would be in serious trouble. His best protection would be to go public immediately. The government would then be in a catch-22 situation because if they so much as raised a finger against him, they would be instantly validating the entire Roswell event.

On January 19, 1995, I wrote a letter that was passed on to Mr. Santilli in which I mentioned the prestigious Washington, DC, law firm I retained two years ago for the purpose of providing legal counsel for Roswell witnesses. I pointed out the importance of the photographer in validating the film and offered the services of the law firm to represent the photographer. That offer was never accepted. After having viewed the May 5, 1995, showing of the film, I now know why. Either the supposed photographer is one of those behind this hoax, or else he does not exist.

Over the last years, the three major nonprofit UFO research organizations in the United States, along with a number of private individuals operating on their own time and at their own expense, have put a lot of resources and effort into the admirable cause of getting to the truth of what could well be the "story of the millennium." Although it is still very much an uphill struggle, much progress has been made in bringing to the Roswell case serious and credible attention on the part of the media, the public, and a number of politicians. It is unfortunate that there are now those who would unscrupulously exploit the Roswell Event for their own financial gain.

It is important that the UFO community make every effort to get to the bottom of this matter as soon as possible, including calling for a criminal investigation if it is determined appropriate. Standing by and doing nothing could be a serious mistake. Unfortunately, although they may be in the minority, there are journalists and television producers out there who are far more interested in the possible sensationalistic appeal of this kind of film, than in bringing people the truth. As the hype and publicity surrounding this film continue, there is a real danger that people will start to connect the reality of the Roswell event with the authenticity of this film. Then, once the film is publicly exposed as a hoax, which it inevitably will be, there is a real danger that people will tend to assume that the whole Roswell event is a hoax.

Fortunately, however, as experts obtain more information about the true nature of this purported Roswell footage, the entire matter of this film should be nipped at the bud and put to rest. Attention and resources can again be concentrated on the actual Roswell event, the best documented case in the history of the UFO phenomenon.

