

"HOT COPY" (WAL RAG)

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UFOlogist Bob Shortz: Beyond

HOT COPY: How did you first get interested in all this?

SHORTZ: When I was eleven years old, I took a book out of the Hoyt Library in Kingston called "Flying Saucers Have Landed" (one of the earliest popular books on UFOs by the late George Adamski of California) and I just couldn't put it down.

HOT COPY: Over the years since then, so much has been published, and so many claims have been made about UFOs. An entire industry has developed. What do you say to skeptics who think it's all baloney?

SHORTZ: I think you have to understand that we tend to define things in terms of the reality that we are used to in our normal everyday reality. Very often the UFO material defies what we would ordinarily consider normal reality. So, I can't condemn anyone who has doubts. But I think the evidence has started to become overwhelming that we are having visits from extra-terrestrials.

HOT COPY: How do you separate the bunk from evidence which deserves a closer look?

SHORTZ: Generally, real events have some sort of legitimate basis. I consider witnesses—if a number of people see something—legitimate evidence. Sometimes scorch marks where something has landed, or high radiation counts, or some other thing that would

give a tangible signature of the event, indicates that something has happened. You have to keep an open mind. Things which may at first sound totally bogus sometimes turn out to be true. I'm reminded of some of the film that Madelyn Rodifer took of the supposed Venusian craft that George Adamski had still photographs of in his book. In the 50's, these pictures were condemned as outrageous hoaxes, and they seemed to be ludicrous. Then, with the advent of computer analysis of pictures and with pixel analysis and such, some of what was filmed has turned out to have some credibility. So, you can't always tell what's real and what's a hoax. The best you can do is apply the best scientific standards of analysis to what you have at the time. Anything else, you just put on the shelf, and see what happens as time passes.

HOT COPY: You're convinced that we've had visitors from outer space?

SHORTZ: Oh, yes. I think that it is definitely true.

HOT COPY: Why is this happening?

SHORTZ: The people who've experienced contact with aliens say they feel that we are coming to a very precarious time. The earth's population is closing in on six billion. Whether we are going to survive as a species with all the pollution, global warming, ozone holes and nuclear tests, it's very much up in the air. The alien

presence seems to be sort of an attempt to provoke our awareness to a higher level than what's traditionally been the case.

HOT COPY: Why would the government be holding back this information?

SHORTZ: I think there are a number of reasons. When Kenneth Arnold saw UFOs right after World War II, the country was still very much in a military state of mind. Anything that was suspicious was thought of perhaps as something the enemy had. People were still paranoid from the war, so there was a lot of secrecy. Also, the Roswell crash in 1947 caused concern because that was the only nuclear base in the country at the time. So, because of national security concerns at the time, anything that had to do with UFOs was classified right away. That sort of began the whole process of keeping things hidden. And what has happened since I believe is that because the secrets have been kept for so long, it is now an awkward situation for anyone in the government to admit to 50 years of keeping a secret.

HOT COPY: Don't you think there would be some panic created if the government suddenly announced that UFOs are real?

SHORTZ: There was a study done that showed that about 50 percent of the population believes that UFOs are real. There was a research report allegedly commissioned by the government which



Bob Shortz of Kingston has made study of UFOs a life work. He says public consciousness is rising, as scientific studies lend increasing credibility to what was once dismissed as nonsense.

asked. What if they had to announce that UFOs are real? There was a feeling that they would have to wait until enough people believe that UFOs are real, because otherwise the government would seem to have gone off the deep end and have no credibility.

HOT COPY: But wouldn't such an announcement create panic because some people would assume that aliens are here to harm us, and wouldn't such an announcement fuel all sorts of rumors and false reports of landings, and incidents with aliens that would terrify the population?

SHORTZ: People think of the *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast by Orsen Wells in the 1930s on Halloween. That did create panic. But the reality is that by now we are all pretty much accustomed to the concept of UFOs. We have television shows like *Third Rock from the Sun*. Sightings, and we've had *My Favorite Martian*. So, I think people are use to the idea that they've been around, and they haven't invade yet, so they're not going to. I don't think such an announcement would create widespread

be relieved to find that we're not the only people around, and we might actually hold our leaders to a higher standard of behavior.

HOT COPY: Putting aside the case for UFOs, why does it seem probable to an increasing number of people that we are not the only life in the universe?

SHORTZ: It would seem that if there is life on this planet, we couldn't possibly be the only ones. What are the chances that we could be the only inhabited planet in the entire, vast universe? That would seem preposterous.

HOT COPY: What of the UFO sighting at a pit mine in Carbondale in 1974 which authorities say was nothing more than a railroad lantern?

SHORTZ: Three children said they saw a light go into a pond. The word got out, and four or five thousand people showed up to see it. I think what happened was that authorities realized there was something there, but before they could do anything, they had to get rid of the crowd. To satisfy the spectators' curiosity, someone

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UFOs, Strange Sightings in Northeastern Pennsylvania

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planted the lantern in there, and said, see, this is no big deal. I think after everyone left, they pulled out what was actually in there.

HOT COPY: What actually was in there?

SHORTZ: It's my understanding that it was a cylindrical object about twenty feet long and ten feet in diameter that had apparently been some sort of space craft.

HOT COPY: You're convinced the official story was not the real story?

SHORTZ: Right. There were tests done by an officer who went out in a boat and conducted tests with a Geiger counter and with magnetic detectors and so forth, and it was determined that there was something there—something that could not be explained by a railroad lantern. And of course I wince when I hear the story that the first officer who went to investigate and went out there and saw the light pulled out his revolver and fired six times, to see what would happen. I guess that's how we greet extra-terrestrials.

HOT COPY: What of the reported incidents in Newton-Ransom?

SHORTZ: In 1991 there was quite a bit of reported activity in that area. People were seeing Christmas tree shaped objects, little balls of light flying all over the place. The activity seemed to center on a pond that was there.

HOT COPY: You talk about a UFO corridor running through this area.

SHORTZ: Yes. It almost seems that UFO's have regular routes around the county, and they are often spotted in the same places. For example, there's a little town in New York state called Pinebush, where UFO's are routinely sighted. And many people are familiar with the town of Gulf Breeze, Florida, where there is similar activity. There are certain places where UFO's are seen over and over. There seems to be certain routes. One UFO information sighting network has put together a map showing a route that goes up the Mississippi River, up the Ohio River Valley, then sort of arcs across Pennsylvania. It goes above Pittsburgh,

then levels out around Williamsport, and crosses above the North Scranton area and then goes into New York. That seems to be sort of a regular route when there is activity.

HOT COPY: Why do you feel it is so important for people to know more about UFOs?

SHORTZ: I think we're going to be involved with them. I think many people already are and perhaps are not aware of it. Many of the people who say they have been abducted initially had no recollection of their encounters and then under hypnosis were able to recall that they had these experiences all their lives. Other people who did have recall of being abducted report that the aliens have told them that when the time is right, they'll remember everything—whatever that means.

HOT COPY: Do you have any misgivings about letting people know of your beliefs?

SHORTZ: In the past, people who have talked about UFOs have been considered nutty. There's a little more respectability these days. It seems to be gaining a

gradual credibility, and is attracting the attention of some serious scientific types. I think we'll see more of that. Already more people are less reluctant to come forward and talk about what they've seen. I think what we have already learned is that the subject bears a much closer look than what was once thought.

Intrigued? If you are, you'll hear more about UFOs, and details of reports of local sightings, next week. That's when Bob Shortz begins his new column, *Aliens, Angels, and Earth Changes*.



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