

UFOs: THE SECRET EVIDENCE

9pm - Channel 4 (UK)
Thursday 13th October 2005

In *UFOs: The Secret Evidence*, defence journalist, Nick Cook, embarked upon a globetrotting quest to find answers to an enigma that has puzzled humankind for over sixty years.

Whether one agrees with his conclusions or not, this two-hour documentary, afforded a prime-time airing and pulling in 2.8 million viewers, clearly demonstrates that the UFO subject is far from dead.

From the outset, it became clear that Cook was on a mission to try and prove that the last sixty-odd years of UFO sightings were nothing more than observations of advanced and secret *human* technologies. He began in the war-torn skies of Europe and sightings of what were to become known as 'foo fighters'. We were treated to some dazzling visual effects of World War II bombers being 'buzzed' by zipping, orange lights.



We were taken to a top secret, Nazi laboratory where, according to Cook, experiments in anti-gravity had taken place. Wartime aerial photographs of the facility were shown, with a structure known as 'the flytrap'. Cook

showed us this enigmatic, ring-shaped construction up close, as well as conduits from where it was said to have drawn power. It was claimed that this was where anti-gravity tests had taken place.



After the war, Operation Paperclip hoovered up many of the scientists from this lab in the Wenceslas Mines of Poland, among others, such as Werner Von Braun from the V-weapon facilities at Peenemünde on the German Baltic coast, and thus began the American technological march into space and its domination of the skies of the world.

No film concerning UFOs would be complete without a mention of Roswell and this one was no exception. Cook interviewed Duke Gildenberg, who had come to the conclusion that the Roswell crash of 1947 was nothing more than a balloon from a project in which he was involved called Skyhook, in which high-altitude balloons with advanced surveillance platforms were sent aloft to check out what the Soviets were up to. Cook was not convinced, however, and his search for evidence continued.

The Washington DC 'flap' of 1952 made the headlines of that year, when unexplained lights were seen over the US capital and jet fighters were even scrambled in vain

attempts to intercept them. Government and military officials fell over themselves to assuage the fears of the American public by explaining that UFOs were of no defence significance and that there was nothing to worry about.

We were then taken on a whirlwind tour of America's development of supersonic reconnaissance aircraft, starting with the U2, famously shot down over the USSR with Gary Powers at the controls in 1960, and progressing to the A-12 and its offspring, the SR-71 Blackbird. Cook went to great pains to explain that to the untrained eye, these fast-moving, high-altitude aircraft could quite easily be mistaken for extra-terrestrial spacecraft.

Following the Washington flap, the Air Force instigated Project Blue Book in an attempt to, publicly at least, get to the bottom of the UFO enigma. Cook failed to point out that Blue Book was simply an extension of the earlier Projects Sign and Grudge. Mention was made of J. Allen Hynek's involvement with Blue Book and clips were shown of him trying to explain away a UFO sighting as meteors, much to the lady-in-question's amusement.

On April 24th 1964, New Mexico patrolman, Lonnie Zamora, was in pursuit of a speeding vehicle near Socorro when his attention was caught by a bright flash in the sky. Fearing a nearby dynamite shack had exploded, he ceased his pursuit and pulled off the highway.



An impressive CGI sequence showed us what Mr Zamora had seen. Unfortunately, the 'flying saucer' they had so expertly recreated bore little to no resemblance to the elongated egg-shaped craft described by the local policeman. The only similarity was the depiction of a pair of white-suited figures beside the landed craft.

Duke Gildenberg, the man who had debunked the Roswell crash as a top secret balloon package popped up and said that what Zamora had seen was in fact a test of a NASA Surveyor space probe set down by helicopter. He told us how the depressions found in the area were the same as those left by the probe's landing pads. He also explained that the technicians for the Surveyor project wore white tunics. Well, that's that mystery solved! Not!

Nick Cook hopped on a plane and jetted across the world to Moscow next, to interview a pair of former high-ranking Soviet military officers about the 'Petrozavodsk Incident' of 1977. At that time, a Red Army unit described an encounter with a bright object in the sky that flashed beams of light down to the ground and had the appearance of a huge jellyfish. The object then sped away at high speed.



The incident created such a stir in the USSR that KGB chief (and later Soviet premier), Yuri Andropov, ordered all military units to watch the skies and report all UFO activity over the Soviet Union.

Cook's Moscow contacts, Colonel Boris Sokolov and Dr Yuliy Platov, declared that what those soldiers had seen that night was nothing more mundane than a missile test and the light was the rocket's fiery exhaust. Sokolov explained that Soviet scientists at the time had been engaged in a great deal of technical research that could account for some of the things seen. Again, Cook tantalised us with the notion that it was American stealth technology behind the Soviet UFO sightings.

Things took a turn towards the macabre next, when Cook briefly examined cattle mutilations. He interviewed Edmund Gomez, who had lost many of his herd over the years and believed that it was not aliens abducting and mutilating his cows, but some secret, human agency using helicopters, disguised as UFOs with banks of lights, lifting the animals to some unknown locations, removing organs and then returning them by literally dropping them out of the sky. Of course, Cook failed to mention that not only cows

are mutilated and I'd like to know how a helicopter using straps and chains would lift a field mouse, fox or rabbit, not to mention why!?



A face-to-face interview with Travis Walton followed and we learned about his abduction and subsequent reappearance after several days. After giving Walton a good chunk of the program to recount his experience, Cook waved it aside by comparing it with contactee reports from the 'paranoid' 1950s and explaining abductions as some sort of quasi-religious 'need' for people to have something to believe in!



Cook rounded off the program by highlighting documents from the McDonnell Douglas Corporation which seemed to indicate that those high-profile defence contractors believe that some UFOs *are* actually alien craft and that we should attempt to learn how they work.

This led nicely to Tim Ventura's work with 'lifters'. These are bizarre, triangular constructions that use

high-voltages channelled through wires in the airframe to lift it from the ground. The intent of Cook was clear – that the propulsion experiments of the Nazis in World War II have come full circle and we are on the verge of a great breakthrough in propulsion. The implication, as I read it, was that top secret projects could have utilised such methods of propulsion, even as far back as the 1940s.



Cook left us with Project Aurora and an intriguing satellite image of a contrail leaving Area 51 and heading out over the continental USA and out over the Atlantic, indicating a speed in excess of eight-thousand miles per hour. With this, Cook finally affirmed his belief that most UFO sightings are *very* terrestrial and not the products of advanced *extra-terrestrial* civilisations. He had to admit, though, that some UFO cases defied explanation and that, after all, we may not be alone in the universe.



UFOs: The Secret Evidence was a fascinating programme and Channel

4's decision to allow airtime to a two-hour documentary about what is really a fringe subject proves that the opposite is quite clear. UFOs are *not* the sole purview of the alternative media. Serious programmes UFOs *can* draw good audiences. The UFO phenomenon is far from dead.

© Steve Johnson - 2005

All images are copyright of Channel 4 and Oxford Film & Television Productions and are used here solely for review purposes.