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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:09,460

Tonight, a shocking event sends the city of Phoenix into a panic.

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00:00:09,460 --> 00:00:12,760

More than 100 witnesses called the UFO hotline.

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00:00:12,760 --> 00:00:17,240

Some believe it's one of the largest scale UFO sightings in history.

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00:00:17,240 --> 00:00:19,680

They're about 3,000 feet high, out approximately.

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00:00:19,680 --> 00:00:23,360

They looked as though they were kind of hovering.

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00:00:23,360 --> 00:00:28,280

But the question is, what the heck is it?

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00:00:28,280 --> 00:00:32,760

Now we reveal the top theories behind this phenomenon.

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00:00:32,760 --> 00:00:35,720

What we find out is this isn't an isolated incident.

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00:00:35,720 --> 00:00:38,240

These phenomena happen all the time.

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00:00:38,240 --> 00:00:40,840

Is the government covering something up?

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00:00:40,840 --> 00:00:45,240

Is Phoenix in the crosshairs of an possible interstellar war?

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00:00:45,240 --> 00:00:49,560

Are we being targeted for some reason?

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00:00:49,560 --> 00:00:52,320

What could possibly account for?

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00:00:52,320 --> 00:00:55,320

The Mysterious Phoenix Lights.

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00:01:22,320 --> 00:01:25,320

Also known as UFOs.

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00:01:25,320 --> 00:01:28,320

The New York Times publishes a bombshell report

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00:01:28,320 --> 00:01:33,320

that details the work of the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program.

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00:01:33,320 --> 00:01:38,320

A shadowy government group that has spent 10 years investigating military encounters

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00:01:38,320 --> 00:01:41,320

with strange unknown objects in the sky.

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00:01:41,320 --> 00:01:44,320

Here is another UFO bulletin.

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00:01:44,320 --> 00:01:47,320

For years, people have reported encounters with UFOs.

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00:01:47,320 --> 00:01:50,320

Roswell, Lubbock, Belgium, the list goes on and on,

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00:01:50,320 --> 00:01:53,320

and stretches as far back as antiquity.

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00:01:53,320 --> 00:01:56,320

Acknowledging this program's existence is huge

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00:01:56,320 --> 00:02:01,320

because up to this point, the government's position has been denied, denied, denied.

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00:02:01,320 --> 00:02:05,320

And now they're not only admitting that these lights in the sky really are something,

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00:02:05,320 --> 00:02:09,320

but that they are in fact unidentified.

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00:02:09,320 --> 00:02:14,320

Within months, the government declassifies videos of some of these encounters.

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00:02:18,320 --> 00:02:25,320

Including one captured by the Navy in 2004, known as the Tic Tac video.

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00:02:25,320 --> 00:02:27,320

My gosh!

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00:02:27,320 --> 00:02:31,320

100 miles off the coast of San Diego, radar tracks the object

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00:02:31,320 --> 00:02:37,320

descending from 15 miles high down to 50 feet in about one second.

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00:02:37,320 --> 00:02:40,320

Oh my god!

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00:02:40,320 --> 00:02:44,320

No known object can fly that fast.

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00:02:44,320 --> 00:02:46,320

Oh my gosh, dude!

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00:02:46,320 --> 00:02:48,320

Wow!

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00:02:48,320 --> 00:02:56,320

When jets intercept it, the cylindrical craft drops down below the water,

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00:02:56,320 --> 00:03:01,320

then flies up into the air, and then disappears.

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00:03:01,320 --> 00:03:05,320

When radar detects the object, it's already 60 miles away.

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00:03:05,320 --> 00:03:08,320

The video causes a sensation when it's released.

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00:03:08,320 --> 00:03:13,320

It's not only massive international news, it's also vindication.

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00:03:13,320 --> 00:03:21,320

Vindication for people who have seen these craft and have spent years swearing that they exist.

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00:03:21,320 --> 00:03:30,320

Perhaps none feel more vindicated than the citizens who witnessed a strange event on March 13, 1997.

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00:03:30,320 --> 00:03:40,320

On the night of March 13, reports come in from Phoenix as well as California, Nevada and New Mexico.

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00:03:40,320 --> 00:03:49,320

People are describing a huge V-shaped craft moving southeast along the region.

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00:03:49,320 --> 00:04:01,320

Around sunset, a man in Henderson, Nevada observed and reported a triangular shaped aircraft with lights underneath it hovering over the desert.

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00:04:01,320 --> 00:04:06,320

He moves in closer to get a better look, and the object starts to move.

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00:04:06,320 --> 00:04:12,320

Now, he doesn't know what he's looking at, but he does know this is not an airplane.

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00:04:12,320 --> 00:04:17,320

The sighting of the unidentified craft is quickly confirmed by others.

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00:04:17,320 --> 00:04:28,320

Twenty minutes later, a retired police officer calls to report that he's seeing the same object 200 miles south of Henderson.

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00:04:28,320 --> 00:04:35,320

He follows it with his car, and he's never closer to it than about a mile, and yet even from there he can tell it's gigantic.

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00:04:35,320 --> 00:04:42,320

Reports continue to flood in at 820 Pruscott Valley, 20 minutes later downtown Phoenix.

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00:04:42,320 --> 00:04:50,320

I was kind of surprised to see it on the news, but at the same time I was excited because I thought I would get some answers to explain the strange thing that I just seen.

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00:04:50,320 --> 00:04:59,320

These were incredibly bright lights. They were completely motionless, made no sound, and these lights just hung there directly over me.

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00:04:59,320 --> 00:05:12,320

And I was awestruck. I observed these lights for a period of about 30 minutes, went inside, came back out later, and 45 minutes later, this string of lights is still in the sky.

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00:05:12,320 --> 00:05:16,320

Among the eyewitnesses, Dr. Lynn Keetai.

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00:05:16,320 --> 00:05:26,320

On March 13, 1997, the Halobov comet was in clear view on a beautiful spring night in the northwest sky.

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00:05:26,320 --> 00:05:30,320

Thousands of people went outside to catch a glimpse of it.

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00:05:30,320 --> 00:05:35,320

And I go outside, and suddenly I noticed three amber orbs.

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00:05:35,320 --> 00:05:42,320

Every other light out there glared. These did not. So light did not extend outside the edge. It was self-contained.

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00:05:42,320 --> 00:05:45,320

They were very soothing, very mesmerizing.

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00:05:45,320 --> 00:05:56,320

And then the top orb started to shrink very, very slowly until it was pea-sized and then disappeared. But it felt like it was still there.

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00:05:56,320 --> 00:06:03,320

As Dr. Keetai watches the sky, calls pour into local police and news stations.

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00:06:03,320 --> 00:06:07,320

It starts tonight with those strange dots of light that were the top of the town.

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00:06:07,320 --> 00:06:11,320

More than 100 witnesses called the UFO hotline.

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00:06:11,320 --> 00:06:18,320

For answers, authorities immediately reach out to Luke Air Force Base.

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00:06:18,320 --> 00:06:26,320

Luke Air Force Base is a base right in the heart of Phoenix, and they fly a lot of advanced aircraft.

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00:06:26,320 --> 00:06:33,320

So obviously, if anybody knows what's going on, they would be someone you would call to find out what the heck this is.

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00:06:33,320 --> 00:06:39,320

So police, reporters, and even the governor are calling the base to find out what's going on.

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00:06:39,320 --> 00:06:46,320

Luke Air Force Base indicated that they had no planes up in there at the time and they didn't know

anything about it.

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00:06:46,320 --> 00:06:50,320

It was basically nothing to see here move along.

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00:06:50,320 --> 00:06:55,320

But four months later, the base offers an explanation.

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00:06:55,320 --> 00:07:08,320

They indicated that a team of A-10 Warthogs from the Maryland National Guard had deployed flares over the Astrea Mountains at that time.

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00:07:08,320 --> 00:07:13,320

Footage from that night seems to support this theory at first.

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00:07:13,320 --> 00:07:17,320

It's getting closer and closer, we're seeing, you know, that thing's coming right at us.

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00:07:17,320 --> 00:07:26,320

When you look at the witness video, I guess it's possible they do kind of look like flares, and military activity is pretty prevalent in the area.

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00:07:26,320 --> 00:07:35,320

In addition to Luke, there's Davis-Montham Base also in Arizona, and then there's Kirtland and the Holloman bases not too far away in New Mexico.

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00:07:35,320 --> 00:07:38,320

But eyewitnesses quickly raised doubts.

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00:07:38,320 --> 00:07:42,320

So the Phoenix Light event really had two phases.

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00:07:42,320 --> 00:07:50,320

One was the large V-shaped craft flying across the state, and the other was the lights over the Astrea Mountains.

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00:07:50,320 --> 00:08:00,320

However, when you look at the flare theory, the flares might explain the lights over the mountains, but it doesn't explain the V-shaped aircraft witnessed by thousands of people.

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00:08:00,320 --> 00:08:05,320

It was so awesome and so mind-boggling.

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00:08:05,320 --> 00:08:11,320

Massive, massive craft right over people's heads, it was silent.

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00:08:11,320 --> 00:08:14,320

It took off at blink speed without even dispersing the air.

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00:08:14,320 --> 00:08:27,320

Did you're trying to tell me that flares that are dropped from an aircraft on a parachute, that drop haphazardly with the wind, have huge smoke trails that are illuminated by the flare itself,

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00:08:27,320 --> 00:08:29,320

and illuminate the area around it.

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00:08:29,320 --> 00:08:35,320

There are heat seeking for missiles that are coming towards aircraft, and not one person described any of that.

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00:08:35,320 --> 00:08:38,320

And there are other red flags.

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00:08:38,320 --> 00:08:50,320

The Air Force claims that the A-10 Warthogs deployed the flares over the Astrea Mountains around 10 p.m., which is not typically standard operating procedure.

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00:08:50,320 --> 00:09:07,320

In addition to that, those flares, the L-U-U-2-B-B flare, falls at a rate of about 8 feet per second, and from the time the first flare was dropped to the last flare, those flares would have dropped some 1500 feet.

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00:09:07,320 --> 00:09:12,320

Yet the video shows those lights in a stationary position for about 30 minutes.

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00:09:13,320 --> 00:09:23,320

These amazing amber orbs were just mind boggling, so different than anything you've ever seen, different from any other light out there.

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00:09:23,320 --> 00:09:25,320

It definitely wasn't flares.

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00:09:25,320 --> 00:09:29,320

The massive craft also leaves no trace on radar.

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00:09:29,320 --> 00:09:38,320

Air traffic controllers at Sky Harbor International Airport checked their call logs and their radar and found no indication of these aircraft.

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00:09:38,320 --> 00:09:42,320

And if that's not the definition of a UFO, I don't know what is.

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00:09:42,320 --> 00:09:49,320

To silence the skeptics, the Air Force decides to conduct a flare drop demonstration for the public.

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00:09:49,320 --> 00:09:58,320

We get a very public announcement that three Air National Guards were coming into town to show everyone the Phoenix lights, and we were ready.

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00:09:58,320 --> 00:10:06,320

And a lot of people felt that exercise didn't look similar to what they had seen on March 13th.

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00:10:06,320 --> 00:10:08,320

Talk about a joke.

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00:10:08,320 --> 00:10:12,320

They tried to make a triangle that was upside down and fell apart immediately.

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00:10:12,320 --> 00:10:16,320

One of them just fizzled out as huge smoke trails.

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00:10:16,320 --> 00:10:21,320

Just what flares do, really put the nail in the coffin.

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00:10:21,320 --> 00:10:22,320

They had their shot.

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00:10:22,320 --> 00:10:29,320

To date, the Phoenix lights have never been recreated or explained.

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00:10:29,320 --> 00:10:32,320

It's almost comical that this is what they expect us to believe.

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00:10:32,320 --> 00:10:39,320

Unfortunately, I and many others in Phoenix who saw the Phoenix lights that night weren't about to take the Air Force's word at face value.

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00:10:39,320 --> 00:10:42,320

We were ready to dig in and get answers.

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00:10:48,320 --> 00:10:57,320

After thousands witnessed unexplained lights in the sky above Phoenix, Arizona in 1997, the city is desperate for answers.

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00:10:57,320 --> 00:11:06,320

The March 13, 1997 Phoenix lights incident was probably the largest UFO mass sighting in UFO history.

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00:11:06,320 --> 00:11:10,320

But the question is, what the heck is it?

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00:11:10,320 --> 00:11:15,320

The military says it's flares, but almost nobody in Phoenix believes it.

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00:11:15,320 --> 00:11:16,320

They know what they saw.

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00:11:16,320 --> 00:11:20,320

They know what flares look like, and these weren't flares.

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00:11:20,320 --> 00:11:28,320

One of the things that I think bothers people the most is the behavior of our military.

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00:11:28,320 --> 00:11:37,320

Initially, the Air Force denies having any involvement with the event, but four months later, they come out with this flair story.

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00:11:37,320 --> 00:11:39,320

Why is that?

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00:11:39,320 --> 00:11:48,320

Even Governor Fife Simington himself, a former Air Force pilot, tried to make inquiries to the military as to the identification of this object.

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00:11:48,320 --> 00:11:52,320

And he himself got the run around, and he's the governor of the state of Arizona.

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00:11:52,320 --> 00:11:56,320

Simington was also skeptical of the flair explanation.

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00:11:56,320 --> 00:12:00,320

He claimed that flares don't fly in formation.

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00:12:00,320 --> 00:12:04,320

Is it possible the military has something to hide?

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00:12:04,320 --> 00:12:09,320

So many people feel that Luke Air Force Base is not letting on everything they know.

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00:12:09,320 --> 00:12:15,320

And the reason they could be doing that is because they're protecting some secret military technology.

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00:12:18,320 --> 00:12:28,320

Located 20 miles northwest of downtown Phoenix, Luke Air Force Base is home to the most advanced aircraft in the U.S.

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00:12:28,320 --> 00:12:33,320

Luke Air Force Base is affectionately called the home of the fighter pilot.

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00:12:33,320 --> 00:12:36,320

It's where the 56th Fighter Wing is based.

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00:12:36,320 --> 00:12:41,320

And this is the Air Force's version of what the Navy famously calls Top Gun.

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00:12:41,320 --> 00:12:46,320

Back in the 97, it was the F-15, the F-16s were coming out.

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00:12:46,320 --> 00:12:54,320

There were a whole bunch of other kinds of aircraft that could potentially be seen being flown out of Luke Air Force Base.

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00:12:54,320 --> 00:12:59,320

Basically, any fixed wing aircraft in the U.S. arsenal has flown at Luke.

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00:12:59,320 --> 00:13:03,320

Plus a few that we don't know about because they're top secret.

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00:13:03,320 --> 00:13:09,320

We know for certain that the U.S. military has tested top secret weapons and aircraft in this area for decades.

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00:13:09,320 --> 00:13:17,320

Among the state-of-the-art aircraft initially flown here, the X-1, the X-15, and the Blackbird,

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00:13:17,320 --> 00:13:21,320

each test is classified and top secret.

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00:13:21,320 --> 00:13:24,320

And for some, that's a clue.

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00:13:24,320 --> 00:13:30,320

These are all aircraft that were developed and tested in total secrecy up over the deserts here.

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00:13:30,320 --> 00:13:34,320

If you had asked the military about any of these back when they were still being developed,

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00:13:34,320 --> 00:13:40,320

you would have heard the same kind of subterfuge and denial that we heard with the Phoenix Lights incident.

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00:13:40,320 --> 00:13:47,320

There's a high presence of the military in the state of Arizona, and perhaps they were testing some secret technology.

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00:13:47,320 --> 00:13:54,320

So it makes sense that people might have mistaken what they saw on the night of March 13th, 97, for a UFO.

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00:13:54,320 --> 00:13:58,320

It wouldn't be the first time that's happened.

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00:13:58,320 --> 00:14:03,320

In the 1980s, there were many UFO reports in the state of Arizona.

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00:14:03,320 --> 00:14:13,320

However, those reports ended up being identified as the F-1-17A and the B-2 bomber that were in development at the time.

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00:14:13,320 --> 00:14:20,320

When you look at these aircraft, what do you see? You see V-shaped aircraft that look similar with what they reported in the Phoenix Lights,

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00:14:20,320 --> 00:14:22,320

albeit smaller.

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00:14:22,320 --> 00:14:32,320

More recently, we've had some UFO sightings that actually turned out to be advanced spy drones, like the Air Force's RQ-170 and RQ-180.

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00:14:32,320 --> 00:14:41,320

Engineers contracted by the government are currently at work on a new stealth bomber, the B-21, which is scheduled to be operational in the mid-2020s.

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00:14:41,320 --> 00:14:49,320

That project wasn't greenlit until 2015, so it's not responsible for the Phoenix Lights, but it just goes to show they're always working on something.

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00:14:49,320 --> 00:14:57,320

If anything else, we know that the Southwest is a hotbed for innovation for aerospace in the public and private sector.

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00:14:57,320 --> 00:15:06,320

Even so, some doubt the military has the advanced technology witnesses say they observed in Phoenix in 1997.

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00:15:06,320 --> 00:15:16,320

Witnesses describe something out of a sci-fi movie. They see this giant V-shaped craft, which was hundreds and hundreds of yards across.

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00:15:16,320 --> 00:15:26,320

By comparison, known aircrafts such as the B-2 bomber, the wingspan is only 172 feet, or the largest plane known to be flown, the Stratolange,

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00:15:26,320 --> 00:15:30,320

only had a wingspan of 385 feet.

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00:15:30,320 --> 00:15:34,320

Our government has never flown anything this big.

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00:15:34,320 --> 00:15:41,320

The Phoenix Lights craft also moved slowly. Estimates place it at about 15 to 30 miles an hour,

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00:15:41,320 --> 00:15:46,320

and it was maybe one to 200 feet off the ground at times.

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00:15:46,320 --> 00:15:53,320

He thinks that he said if he had a tennis ball, he could have hit it. He could have thrown a tennis ball at it. It was that close.

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00:15:53,320 --> 00:15:55,320

It was very close. He just kind of nailed it.

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00:15:55,320 --> 00:16:00,320

Others report seeing the object come to a stop and hover in place.

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00:16:00,320 --> 00:16:06,320

Airplanes can't do that. There's not enough airflow to produce loft with their wings.

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00:16:06,320 --> 00:16:11,320

Helicopters can, but the Phoenix Lights craft moved silently.

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00:16:11,320 --> 00:16:16,320

The flight characteristics that they describe are unlike any other machine we have in the air today.

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00:16:16,320 --> 00:16:26,320

And keep in mind, this is back in 1997. So 25 years ago, they had something this incredible, and it still hasn't ever seen the light of day.

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00:16:26,320 --> 00:16:35,320

But John Powell, a private defense contractor for JP Aerospace, believes this capability exists and will soon be made public.

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00:16:35,320 --> 00:16:45,320

Powell and JP Aerospace were awarded a grant in 2014 to develop slow-moving, top-secret, classified, triangular aircraft.

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00:16:45,320 --> 00:16:50,320

So Powell believes that perhaps what they saw during the Phoenix Lights was something similar to what he's been developing.

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00:16:50,320 --> 00:16:57,320

The specs of these are highly classified, but JP Aerospace was able to get a prototype of this thing going.

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00:16:57,320 --> 00:17:03,320

Meanwhile, Arizona lawmakers continue to press the military for more answers.

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00:17:03,320 --> 00:17:08,320

So Frances Emma Barwood was a city of Phoenix Council person.

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00:17:08,320 --> 00:17:14,320

She launched an investigation into the Phoenix Lights because no one else would.

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00:17:14,320 --> 00:17:23,320

She interviewed over 700 witnesses. She offered to let the military talk to those witnesses, and they chose not to interview a single person.

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00:17:23,320 --> 00:17:29,320

Then Senator John McCain put in a formal request for more information, but that request was denied.

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00:17:29,320 --> 00:17:42,320

If it's military, show me. We have not seen anything technologically, even close to what thousands saw on March 13, 1997, right above their heads.

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00:17:42,320 --> 00:17:50,320

The technology has never been seen. If it was military, experimental, aircraft, show me.

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00:17:50,320 --> 00:18:01,320

Until really the government comes out and says this was them and it is some sort of classified project, people just still aren't going to know what to believe in, and it'll remain a mystery.

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00:18:01,320 --> 00:18:16,320

Phoenix, Arizona, April 21, 2008. Nearly 11 years after an entire city witnesses a strange UFO event, it happens again.

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00:18:16,320 --> 00:18:27,320

So on Monday at about 8.05 p.m., again, you know, the police, the Air Force, authorities are being inundated with reports that there's another set of lights hovering over the city.

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00:18:27,320 --> 00:18:33,320

It's unbelievable, or maybe it's totally believable. If it happened once, why couldn't it happen again?

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00:18:33,320 --> 00:18:40,320

Live in late breaking right now, they're back. Did you see them tonight? Many people called our newsroom about lights in the sky.

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00:18:40,320 --> 00:18:53,320

People reported that there was a series of four or five orange-red lights over the North Valley. It's like a repeat of the 1997 incident. People come running out and they see a V-shaped formation of lights.

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00:18:53,320 --> 00:19:02,320

Initially, there was four lights. They're about 3,000 feet high, approximately. They looked as though they were kind of hovering or floating.

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00:19:02,320 --> 00:19:08,320

But as it progresses, this event plays out differently from the 1997 sighting.

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00:19:08,320 --> 00:19:17,320

As this 2008 formation hovers, the shape changes from a triangle into a square. The previous lights just remained uniform in their V-shape.

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00:19:17,320 --> 00:19:27,320

Lights in the sky. Did you see them tonight? Many people were calling our newsroom, and if you missed it, take a look. One man in North Phoenix caught the lights on home video 15 minutes worth.

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00:19:27,320 --> 00:19:38,320

Whatever you believe happened back in 1997, people are convinced that it's happening again. This time, they won't have to wait long for answers.

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00:19:38,320 --> 00:19:53,320

Unlike the Phoenix lights, the mystery to this event only lasted about 12 hours because the next day, April 22nd, a man called Dan, admitting that he was responsible, it was all a hoax.

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00:19:53,320 --> 00:20:00,320

The whole thing was staged. The man tied flares to helium balloons and then let them go one minute apart.

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00:20:00,320 --> 00:20:15,320

Is this a relief? Is it disappointing? Does it make people angry? It's hard to know how to feel. But one thing it does is it makes people look back at the real Phoenix lights event 11 years prior and think, wait, what if that was a hoax too?

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00:20:15,320 --> 00:20:22,320

Back in 1997, while they're looking for answers and people are going to the government, there are a lot of people that think the whole thing was just a gag.

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00:20:22,320 --> 00:20:30,320

On 1997 press conference, held by Arizona's then governor, Pfeit Simeington, seems to bolster that

theory.

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00:20:30,320 --> 00:20:37,320

We're initially excited and think we're finally going to get a real investigation and Pfeif Simeington saw it and he's one of us.

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00:20:37,320 --> 00:20:44,320

And now I'll ask Officer Stein and his colleagues to escort the accused into the room so that we may all look upon the guilty party.

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00:20:44,320 --> 00:20:50,320

Don't get him too close to me, please.

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00:20:50,320 --> 00:21:02,320

In walks, Governor Simeington's Chief of Staff, Jay Heiler, dressed in an alien suit and handcuffs.

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00:21:02,320 --> 00:21:07,320

It's met with laughter and applause and really does the whole thing a huge disservice.

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00:21:07,320 --> 00:21:15,320

The problem with the press conference was it made getting answers so much harder. If you ask any

questions about it, you were labeled a crackpot.

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00:21:15,320 --> 00:21:23,320

Those kinds of things are not helpful and for people who are really interested and they want to find out what's going on.

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00:21:23,320 --> 00:21:27,320

Thank you.

200

00:21:27,320 --> 00:21:32,320

You can't get to the bottom of anything because no one is taking it seriously.

201

00:21:32,320 --> 00:21:41,320

After that news conference, the national media picked up on that, that it's a joke and not a serious event. And that became the story.

202

00:21:41,320 --> 00:21:44,320

It's a story some refuse to accept.

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00:21:44,320 --> 00:21:48,320

Most people who thought it was a hoax and laughed at it didn't actually see it happen.

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00:21:48,320 --> 00:21:55,320

But unfortunately, I think that laughter and skepticism was loud enough that it kept many of us from finding more answers.

205

00:21:55,320 --> 00:22:14,320

It's unlikely that the Phoenix lights could be explained as a hoax because you would need someone to convince people along a 400-mile length of desert that they're seeing an object as large as a cruise ship with lights on it, as large as swimming pools.

206

00:22:14,320 --> 00:22:27,320

Then you would have to pull a second stunt and convince a population of 2.5 million people that this large V-shaped group of lights flew over the city. That would be awfully difficult to hoax.

207

00:22:27,320 --> 00:22:38,320

25 years later, if it was a hoax, I would think that someone would have come forward now that it's become world-renowned that has not happened to date.

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00:22:38,320 --> 00:22:43,320

The individual responsible for the 2008 prank can't even hold his tongue for 24 hours.

209

00:22:43,320 --> 00:22:51,320

Saying it's a hoax is really saying that all of the witnesses didn't understand what they were seeing. It's saying that they were gullible ruse.

210

00:22:51,320 --> 00:23:01,320

Then, 10 years after the 1997 sighting, Governor Simington changes his story and challenges the hoax theory.

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00:23:01,320 --> 00:23:12,320

So in 2007, Governor Simington came out to indicate that not only was the Phoenix lights not a hoax, but that he in fact saw the craft himself.

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00:23:12,320 --> 00:23:23,320

Well, I saw a huge craft just come right over a squirrel peak that was just breathtaking.

213

00:23:23,320 --> 00:23:38,320

At the time, people in the city of Phoenix reported a UFO sighting. Simington was under such political pressure as Governor of the state. He did not want to add to those political woes by claiming to have seen a UFO himself.

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00:23:38,320 --> 00:23:48,320

Thanks to him, for about a decade, the Phoenix lights is really largely viewed as a hoax. But his abrupt about face creates renewed interest in the case.

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00:23:48,320 --> 00:23:57,320

It returns to the news cycle and it comes at a time when people are more willing to believe. It's no longer a joke or a source of embarrassment. It's a genuine mystery.

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00:24:19,320 --> 00:24:36,320

Congress talks to dozens of defense and intelligence officials and collects thousands and thousands of documents. All of that research is compiled into a House committee report about UFO encounters like the one that happened in Phoenix.

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00:24:36,320 --> 00:24:47,320

And while we know that people have seen UFOs from time to time, what we didn't know is that the military themselves have had hundreds of their own UFO encounters, which they've been keeping quiet until now.

218

00:24:47,320 --> 00:24:56,320

UAPs are unexplained. It's true. But they are real. They need to be investigated and many threats they pose need to be mitigated.

219

00:24:56,320 --> 00:25:02,320

This is huge. This is the U.S. government going on record to say these things are real.

220

00:25:02,320 --> 00:25:12,320

They've collected 144 incidents about these UAPs, 80 of those they have data on, infrared, sensory, and of course video.

221

00:25:12,320 --> 00:25:17,320

We'll describe what we have seen in that. What are we observing?

222

00:25:17,320 --> 00:25:28,320

What you see here is aircraft that is operating in a U.S. Navy training range that has observed spherical object in that area and as they fly by it, they take a video.

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00:25:32,320 --> 00:25:39,320

Several declassified government videos are released, all seeming proof that extraterrestrial encounters exist.

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00:25:39,320 --> 00:25:44,320

And suddenly we have all the evidence we need about what happened in Phoenix.

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00:25:47,320 --> 00:25:53,320

Thanks to the hearings, we find out that these encounters aren't isolated incidents. They happen all the time.

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00:25:53,320 --> 00:26:06,320

I mean, how else can you reconcile the facts? A silently floating hovering craft the size of several football fields invisible to radar, there's nothing on Earth that fits that description.

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00:26:07,320 --> 00:26:18,320

Believers like Michael Carter cite a 1997 call made to AM Radio Show coast to coast as further evidence of an alien encounter over Phoenix.

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00:26:18,320 --> 00:26:23,320

The call is from a corpsman, someone who actually works at Luke Air Force Base.

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00:26:23,320 --> 00:26:32,320

He has an incredible story about what happened on the base when this object appeared over the sky of Northern Arizona.

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00:26:32,320 --> 00:26:41,320

The corpsman said the base gets a call about 8.15 about a large object moving out of the sky in the Northwest.

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00:26:41,320 --> 00:26:45,320

Soon afterwards an alarm goes off and all hell breaks loose.

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00:26:45,320 --> 00:26:58,320

Luke Air Force Base keeps two F-15s on standby for emergency use and on the evening of March 13, 1997, allegedly they scrambled those two F-15s to intercept the object.

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00:26:58,320 --> 00:27:03,320

The radio caller doesn't know what it is and to be frank, I don't think the pilots do either.

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00:27:03,320 --> 00:27:11,320

The caller claims that the event had scared the hell out of the pilots but they had gotten some gun camera footage of the object.

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00:27:11,320 --> 00:27:17,320

If the caller is telling the truth, the Air Force may have actually recorded the Phoenix Lights UFO.

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00:27:17,320 --> 00:27:26,320

Which means possibly locked away in some secret vault somewhere, we may actually have footage.

237

00:27:26,320 --> 00:27:32,320

We may have proof of what these pilots actually saw.

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00:27:32,320 --> 00:27:40,320

Unfortunately, if the video exists, it's never released and the anonymous caller has no additional information.

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00:27:40,320 --> 00:27:46,320

He isn't one of the pilots sent out, he's just on the base when he hears all the commotion and the base goes into lockdown.

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00:27:46,320 --> 00:27:51,320

So he can't say exactly what the potential spacecraft was doing in the area.

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00:27:51,320 --> 00:27:56,320

Some theorists believe it's not there by coincidence.

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00:27:56,320 --> 00:28:03,320

Within a 500 mile radius of the city of Phoenix, there are several secret military bases.

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00:28:03,320 --> 00:28:12,320

Area 51 to the north, Edwards Air Force base to the west and White Sands missile base to the east.

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00:28:12,320 --> 00:28:17,320

If aliens were scouting Earth and its defenses, this would be a perfect place to go.

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00:28:17,320 --> 00:28:21,320

Arizona is also home to several nuclear sites.

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00:28:21,320 --> 00:28:26,320

Areas that recent evidence suggests may attract unidentified aircraft.

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00:28:26,320 --> 00:28:31,320

We're having more and more sightings now and within those sightings there are certain patterns.

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00:28:31,320 --> 00:28:39,320

And what we're seeing is that there are more events where these UFOs are hovering over our nuclear military installations.

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00:28:39,320 --> 00:28:43,320

The phenomena isn't limited to the United States.

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00:28:43,320 --> 00:28:47,320

There are sightings in Mexico, Italy and even Iran.

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00:28:47,320 --> 00:28:55,320

There's a series of UFO related events that happened in Iran in 2004 and 2005 over one of their secret nuclear sites.

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00:28:55,320 --> 00:29:09,320

The first time during that two year period, pilots near the Boucher nuclear facility have encounters with large luminous cylinders that look and sound similar to the quote unquote Tic Tac UFO that US Navy pilots saw in San Diego.

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00:29:09,320 --> 00:29:14,320

And in one of those encounters, an Iranian pilot actually engaged with the object.

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00:29:26,320 --> 00:29:33,320

Arizona's vast desert has been home to humans for many thousands of years.

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00:29:33,320 --> 00:29:42,320

And according to some, there are signs in the archaeological record that suggests the Phoenix lights incident is far from unique.

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00:29:42,320 --> 00:29:52,320

When you look back into the history of this region, it dawns on you that before we even had the technology where we could take pictures of this and videos and what have you,

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00:29:52,320 --> 00:29:57,320

this part of the country was always having these kinds of sightings.

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00:29:57,320 --> 00:30:09,320

The Native Americans who live in this part of the Southwestern United States have a very complex mythology in which we see numerous references and stories about the so-called star people.

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00:30:09,320 --> 00:30:14,320

These are powerful yet benevolent beings arriving from other worlds.

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00:30:14,320 --> 00:30:27,320

Both the Hopi and the Zuni trace their ancestry back to beings that they believe arrived from the region of the Pleiades, which is a star cluster about 400 light years away near the constellation of Taurus.

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00:30:28,320 --> 00:30:38,320

We see myths and legends about the star people, a benevolent but powerful people that these tribes have interacted with.

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00:30:38,320 --> 00:30:47,320

These myths and artworks suggest this area has been a hub for extraterrestrial activity and that the Phoenix lights incident is just part of a repeating pattern.

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00:30:47,320 --> 00:30:52,320

That these star people have been coming back time and time again.

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00:30:53,320 --> 00:31:04,320

Some believe the Phoenix lights incident is just one in a series of extraterrestrial encounters that have been going on for a long time but started to increase in 1995.

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00:31:04,320 --> 00:31:12,320

The March of 97 event was certainly seen by the most people, but some believe there were several previous flybys.

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00:31:13,320 --> 00:31:15,320

One of them was witnessed by several people.

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00:31:15,320 --> 00:31:23,320

They stated that on January 21st 1995 they saw a triangular formation of large lights.

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00:31:23,320 --> 00:31:29,320

They weren't bright necessarily, but they were really big. They looked odd.

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00:31:29,320 --> 00:31:34,320

I step out on the balcony and immediately notice an eerie silence.

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00:31:34,320 --> 00:31:47,320

The entire object turned against the wind, elevated slowly and then moved in synchrony behind South Mountain, but it felt like something was watching me.

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00:31:47,320 --> 00:31:58,320

According to the National UFO Reporting Center, the sightings in Arizona grow increasingly frequent in the two years before the 1997 Phoenix event.

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00:31:58,320 --> 00:32:07,320

Researchers have found that coming up to the 1997 event that there was an increase of sightings of triangular craft.

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00:32:07,320 --> 00:32:17,320

In fact, in January and February of 1997, we have multiple reports from multiple locations of the same formation of lights over Arizona.

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00:32:17,320 --> 00:32:27,320

Air traffic controllers at Sky Harbor International Airport observed five equidistance lights that rose about a thousand feet above the deck.

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00:32:27,320 --> 00:32:32,320

They floated back behind South Mountain and dropped out of sight.

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00:32:32,320 --> 00:32:40,320

They had no idea what they saw. It was an on radar and they behaved in a way that was unexplainable.

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00:32:40,320 --> 00:32:47,320

And right before the Phoenix lights, a tiny Arizona town is treated to an encounter of their own.

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00:32:47,320 --> 00:32:56,320

On March 12th 1997, the night before the Phoenix lights incident, a group of people made reports of UFOs in a town called Loop.

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00:32:56,320 --> 00:33:06,320

Loop is 200 miles north of Phoenix, south of the Grand Canyon and the Hopi Indian Reservation, who as we've seen share a rich mythology of alien visitation.

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00:33:06,320 --> 00:33:18,320

A large V-shaped aircraft appeared in their valley with about a dozen other small craft and they began to float and engage each other almost like an extraterrestrial ballet.

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00:33:18,320 --> 00:33:24,320

And these people pulled out their lawn chairs and watched it like they were watching the fireworks on the 4th of July.

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00:33:24,320 --> 00:33:29,320

But why did these possible visits ramp up? And why did they stop?

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00:33:29,320 --> 00:33:35,320

That's the real question. Let's say Arizona has been getting regular alien visitation for millennia.

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00:33:35,320 --> 00:33:39,320

What's so special about the mid 90s, we start to get a flurry of activity.

285

00:33:39,320 --> 00:33:50,320

We go from a few visits per century to a few visits per year to several in the same month, then absolutely nothing. Can anybody explain that?

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00:33:51,320 --> 00:34:00,320

Despite the many thousands of eyewitnesses to the 1997 Phoenix event, the cause of the incident remains a mystery.

287

00:34:00,320 --> 00:34:10,320

It's military flares, it's an experimental aircraft, it's a hoax, it's aliens. Is the government covering something up? Are we being targeted for some reason?

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00:34:10,320 --> 00:34:16,320

Each theory has some arguments for it and some against it and each by itself leaves a lot of unanswered questions.

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00:34:16,320 --> 00:34:21,320

Many theorists say, wait a minute, we've had these answers here the whole time.

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00:34:21,320 --> 00:34:28,320

The events on March 13, 1997 isn't just about just one of these theories. It's about all of them.

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00:34:35,320 --> 00:34:41,320

This is the period when people actually see the spacecraft. The hull of it and the structure of it is visible.

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00:34:41,320 --> 00:34:45,320

The silent movements, the anti-gravity technology it seems to exhibit.

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00:34:45,320 --> 00:34:53,320

Knowing what we now know about the long history of UFO contact in the United States, many are convinced that this is an alien ship.

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00:34:53,320 --> 00:35:00,320

It does a low, slow pass across Nevada and Arizona, sparking hundreds of reports to authorities.

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00:35:00,320 --> 00:35:07,320

As we know from the Luke Air Force Base Radio call, these UFO sightings get the attention of the military.

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00:35:07,320 --> 00:35:14,320

They scramble their jets on the course to intercept. According to that airman, they actually see the craft and perhaps even film it.

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00:35:14,320 --> 00:35:27,320

Now the airman claims that F-15s were sent out to investigate, but simultaneous reports here, here and here show that that may not have been so.

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00:35:27,320 --> 00:35:36,320

Many don't believe they sent F-15s next to the alien ship. People didn't see any F-15s, radar

didn't pick up any F-15s, nobody heard any F-15s.

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00:35:36,320 --> 00:35:43,320

These are pretty loud fighter planes. You know when an F-15 is flying overhead.

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00:35:43,320 --> 00:35:47,320

One thing that characterizes this whole event is how quiet the whole thing was.

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00:35:47,320 --> 00:35:56,320

The military actually sends out a top secret experimental craft. People over here are seeing an alien ship, while people over here are seeing a top secret military aircraft.

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00:35:57,320 --> 00:36:12,320

Is it possible that the US scrambled a top secret experimental craft to intercept the alleged alien vessel? One thing is certain. Whatever is in the air doesn't stay around long.

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00:36:12,320 --> 00:36:17,320

Why it leaves, we don't know. Were they spooked by the military intercept?

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00:36:17,320 --> 00:36:21,320

Are they trying to gather intelligence on our defense capabilities?

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00:36:21,320 --> 00:36:23,320

Whatever the reason, they took off.

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00:36:23,320 --> 00:36:33,320

Now if this theory is correct, the military has a problem on its hands. They know a large amount of the population in the Phoenix area has seen this alien spaceship.

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00:36:33,320 --> 00:36:40,320

But in 1997, the government's policy on UFOs is very clear. Deny, deny, deny.

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00:36:40,320 --> 00:36:53,320

Thanks to recent congressional hearings, it's clear the military has a long clandestine history of encounters with UAPs, as well as a history of cover-ups.

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00:36:57,320 --> 00:37:05,320

Perhaps the Phoenix lights is one of them, and Luke Air Force Base is a possible ground zero.

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00:37:05,320 --> 00:37:13,320

So the big wigs at Luke Air Force Base speak to their superiors, and they realize they have precious little time to figure out how to deal with the situation.

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00:37:13,320 --> 00:37:20,320

Within a half hour or so, they come up with a plan, a subterfuge, which is a little hoax of their own.

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00:37:20,320 --> 00:37:29,320

They send up A-10 Warthogs to drop a series of flares right over Phoenix. They choose a very visible place where everyone will see.

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00:37:29,320 --> 00:37:41,320

So if they were going to do a secret, quote unquote, training exercise, why would they drop these flares in front of 2.5 million people knowing they were going to freak out about it?

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00:37:41,320 --> 00:37:48,320

If it was what they say it was, they would have done it in seclusion. They choose to drop the flares in front of the whole city on purpose.

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00:37:48,320 --> 00:37:52,320

Because it's not a training exercise, it's a distraction.

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00:37:53,320 --> 00:37:56,320

Their explanation works, initially.

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00:37:56,320 --> 00:38:03,320

While a thousand people are seeing an alien spaceship, a million plus people are seeing flares in the sky.

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00:38:03,320 --> 00:38:08,320

That's the story the Air Force releases, and they're able to convince people for a while.

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00:38:08,320 --> 00:38:18,320

They at least confuse enough people to create doubt. They even convince the governor to ignore what he saw and call the whole thing a joke on national television.

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00:38:18,320 --> 00:38:24,320

If it is just military flares, and I come out screaming about aliens, I'm going to be a laughingstock.

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00:38:24,320 --> 00:38:28,320

Once you have people thinking in that way, you've won.

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00:38:28,320 --> 00:38:39,320

So there's an alien encounter, then it's the sighting of a top secret military aircraft, then it's flares used to create a hoax and then to cover up the truth.

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00:38:39,320 --> 00:38:46,320

Thanks to new government transparency, believers are optimistic the truth will someday be known.

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00:38:46,320 --> 00:38:54,320

Now that the armed forces are more open about UFO sightings, there's renewed hope that they might come out with more information about what actually happened in Phoenix.

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00:38:54,320 --> 00:38:59,320

What did they encounter in 1997? Did they actually capture it on film?

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00:38:59,320 --> 00:39:04,320

As they continue to declassify these files and videos, maybe we'll find out.

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00:39:04,320 --> 00:39:12,320

As congressmen, senators, and even presidents have said, the focus of their research is to determine if UFOs pose a threat to America.

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00:39:12,320 --> 00:39:17,320

Some people are curious, and then there are some people who are really scared.

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00:39:17,320 --> 00:39:24,320

Is Phoenix in the crosshairs of an possible interstellar war? Well, the public would not get to know that.

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00:39:24,320 --> 00:39:38,320

It's a hard thing to explain, but a lot of people who experienced this event came away feeling something, wondering if they were meant to see it, meant to feel it, meant to experience some sort of connection with what they saw.

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00:39:38,320 --> 00:39:42,320

Some even described feeling calm or even being told to not be afraid.

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00:39:42,320 --> 00:39:52,320

People were in awe and in wonder, curious. So many cars pulled over to watch this amazing extraordinary sight.

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00:39:52,320 --> 00:40:04,320

In real time and in long term, it affected the experiencers very profoundly. Who are you? What are you? Do you know that I'm here? I'd love to meet you.

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00:40:05,320 --> 00:40:21,320

Today, the US government's tracking and studying of UFOs continues. Under the authority of the Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon Task Force, there's even a new branch of the military to assist the

United States Space Force.

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00:40:21,320 --> 00:40:27,320

And perhaps together, they'll gain insight into what really happened in Phoenix.

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00:40:27,320 --> 00:40:33,320

I'm Lawrence Fishburne. Thank you for watching History's Greatest Mysteries.