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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:11,000

Over eastern Alaska, a Japanese cargo plane has a terrifying mid-air encounter with unidentified craft.

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00:00:11,000 --> 00:00:20,000

The incident sparks a federal investigation and secret involvement by the CIA.

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00:00:20,000 --> 00:00:27,000

He says this event never happened and we were never here.

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00:00:28,000 --> 00:00:36,000

In Melbourne, Australia, an extraordinary event shatters the lives of a quiet suburban community.

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00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:40,000

I would say that what I'd seen was an extraterrestrial craft.

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00:00:40,000 --> 00:00:47,000

The mass sighting ignites panic and accusations of a government cover-up.

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00:00:47,000 --> 00:00:53,000

And a string of inexplicable sightings in a remote Peruvian town are captured on camera.

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00:00:53,000 --> 00:01:02,000

The rare video evidence shows mysterious lights that mesmerize locals.

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00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:09,000

The incident sparks off a groundbreaking government-backed investigation.

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00:01:09,000 --> 00:01:12,000

Does anyone know what these phenomena are?

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00:01:12,000 --> 00:01:17,000

And do the governments of the world know more than they ever reveal to us?

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00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:23,000

The answers may lie in the fascinating stories of UFO conspiracies.

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00:01:30,000 --> 00:01:33,000

November 17th, 1986.

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00:01:33,000 --> 00:01:37,000

35,000 feet over eastern Alaska.

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00:01:37,000 --> 00:01:46,000

Japan Airlines Flight 1628 is being flown by Captain Kenji Terauchi and co-pilot Takenori Temufuji.

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00:01:48,000 --> 00:01:55,000

The two men are approaching the final leg of a journey that will end here.

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00:01:55,000 --> 00:02:03,000

In the late 1980s, Tokyo's Narita Airport is one of the main gateways for imports into Japan,

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00:02:03,000 --> 00:02:10,000

helping to feed the country's growing demand for luxury foreign goods.

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00:02:11,000 --> 00:02:20,000

Flight 1628 is among them, carrying a consignment of expensive French wines from Paris.

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00:02:20,000 --> 00:02:26,000

For Terauchi, a veteran pilot of almost 30 years, it's a routine trip.

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00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:35,000

So the two men are relaxed as they make their way towards their fuel stop in Anchorage.

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00:02:35,000 --> 00:02:45,000

Then, just after 5 p.m., the pilots become aware of two lights in the darkness ahead.

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00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:53,000

Fearing that they are on a collision course, Temufuji calls air-trapped control in nearby Anchorage.

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00:02:53,000 --> 00:03:01,000

The following audio is recorded live as the dramatic events unfold.

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00:03:06,000 --> 00:03:17,000

The craft aren't being picked up by ground radar. According to air-trapped control, the JAL crew is up there alone.

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00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:24,000

The controller tries to get more detail from the pilots about what they see.

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00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:35,000

Anchorage calls nearby Elmendorf Air Force Base to ask if they have any military craft in the area.

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00:03:35,000 --> 00:03:43,000

The answer comes back as negative.

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00:03:43,000 --> 00:03:49,000

And things are about to get even stranger for the crew.

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00:03:49,000 --> 00:04:00,000

After 12 minutes, the two craft suddenly move off to the left, drawing the captain's attention to something on his port side.

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00:04:00,000 --> 00:04:08,000

He sees a faint strip of white light illuminating an object at least 10 times the size of the 747.

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00:04:08,000 --> 00:04:12,000

It's unlike any conventional aircraft.

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00:04:12,000 --> 00:04:18,000

But remarkably, moments later, the sighting is backed up by news from the ground.

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00:04:19,000 --> 00:04:27,000

Anchorage's attention to the aircraft is back to normal.

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00:04:27,000 --> 00:04:35,000

As the situation in the air becomes increasingly tense, Anchorage advises the crew to take evasive action.

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00:04:35,000 --> 00:04:44,000

They start a full 360-degree turn and momentarily lose track of the lights.

37

00:04:44,000 --> 00:04:50,000

But then, part of the way through the maneuver, the captain is shocked by what he finds.

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00:04:50,000 --> 00:05:00,000

In the words of Captain Terra Uchi, there it was, as if it was waiting for me.

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00:05:00,000 --> 00:05:08,000

Still being tailed and low on fuel, Terra Uchi requests a direct flight path to Anchorage to land.

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00:05:08,000 --> 00:05:14,000

A nearby passenger jet is rerouted by air traffic control to see if it can confirm the crew's visuals.

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00:05:14,000 --> 00:05:22,000

But it sees nothing in the skies around the JAL flight.

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00:05:22,000 --> 00:05:32,000

25 minutes later, the plane touches down, ending the crew's terrifying ordeal.

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00:05:32,000 --> 00:05:43,000

Whatever was up there made a prohibited incursion into the Japan Airlines airspace that night, breaking international aviation rules.

44

00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:54,000

And since the object remains unidentified, the pilots are taken off to be interviewed by an official from the Federal Aviation Administration.

45

00:05:54,000 --> 00:06:01,000

The captain sketches a striking picture of what he saw.

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00:06:01,000 --> 00:06:08,000

A vast walnut-shaped craft which dwarfs the Boeing 747.

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00:06:08,000 --> 00:06:17,000

Despite the accounts of the pilots and the radar readings that seem to show a second object in the air, the case is dropped.

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00:06:17,000 --> 00:06:23,000

The FAA doesn't pursue it any further at this stage.

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00:06:23,000 --> 00:06:27,000

Back in the pilot's home country, it's a different story.

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00:06:27,000 --> 00:06:33,000

Tales of encounters with unidentified craft go back hundreds of years in Japan.

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00:06:33,000 --> 00:06:43,000

This drawing depicts a folk story from as far back as 1803, in which a mysterious hollow craft was said to have washed ashore in eastern Japan.

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00:06:43,000 --> 00:06:49,000

Inside the craft were strange symbols and a woman who was unable to communicate with locals.

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00:06:49,000 --> 00:06:55,000

Since then, many more unexplained sightings have been recorded in Japan.

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00:06:55,000 --> 00:07:01,000

So when Japanese journalists hear of the JAL encounter, they run with the story.

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00:07:01,000 --> 00:07:05,000

Before long, it's picked up by American newspapers too.

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00:07:05,000 --> 00:07:15,000

And soon, Alaska's branch of the FAA is inundated with questions.

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00:07:15,000 --> 00:07:23,000

In the FAA's Washington, D.C. headquarters, John Callahan heads up the Accidents, Evaluations and Investigations Division.

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00:07:23,000 --> 00:07:28,000

In January 1987, he receives an urgent call from Anchorage.

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00:07:28,000 --> 00:07:31,000

They said they had a problem. They didn't know how to handle it.

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00:07:31,000 --> 00:07:38,000

That there was media running all over the hall. So he wanted me to tell them what to do about it.

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00:07:38,000 --> 00:07:44,000

Callahan requests that the evidence is sent to him immediately.

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00:07:44,000 --> 00:07:51,000

The recordings allow him to see and hear exactly what happened that night at Anchorage's Air Traffic Control Center.

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00:07:51,000 --> 00:07:58,000

The official tapes no longer exist, but this video that Callahan filmed of their playback does.

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00:07:58,000 --> 00:08:08,000

The footage clearly identifies JAL Flight 1628 on the radar screen, and over five miles away, a distinct second object.

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00:08:08,000 --> 00:08:13,000

Convinced the evidence shows a real target in close proximity to the Japanese airplane,

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00:08:13,000 --> 00:08:16,000

Callahan alerts his boss.

67

00:08:16,000 --> 00:08:22,000

The Admiral calls me and says, alright, I set up a meeting tomorrow morning in the round room.

68

00:08:22,000 --> 00:08:29,000

You're going to have the CIA and the FBI, and he says there will be three scientists from Reagan's scientific study team.

69

00:08:29,000 --> 00:08:36,000

Together they watch the video, and when they're done, a CIA agent demands that he hands over the evidence.

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00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:48,000

He says alright, this, he's pointing to the screen. This event never happened, and we were never here.

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00:08:48,000 --> 00:08:57,000

But that doesn't kill the story. Over the coming months, reputations will be called into question and accusations of a whitewash ensue.

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00:08:58,000 --> 00:09:01,000

The Japanese Air Force

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00:09:03,000 --> 00:09:09,000

1986, a Japanese airline sees strange craft in the sky over Alaska.

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00:09:09,000 --> 00:09:16,000

Now the FAA steps in to investigate. They interview Captain Teruuchi a second time.

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00:09:16,000 --> 00:09:23,000

He remains adamant that what he saw was an alien craft.

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00:09:23,000 --> 00:09:29,000

One theory suggests he may have been confused by an airborne natural phenomenon.

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00:09:29,000 --> 00:09:36,000

One plausible explanation that has been suggested for the Japanese airline sighting might involve ice crystals.

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00:09:36,000 --> 00:09:43,000

Ice crystals are found in the upper parts of our atmosphere in the area say above 20,000 feet.

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00:09:43,000 --> 00:09:50,000

This high up, it's too cold for water to exist in its liquid form, so clouds of ice crystals form instead.

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00:09:50,000 --> 00:09:53,000

These clouds can cause strange optical effects.

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00:09:53,000 --> 00:10:08,000

Depending on the orientation of these billions of tiny little hexagonal ice crystals, as light is passing through that, they can create a strange optical image that could be mistaken for something else.

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00:10:08,000 --> 00:10:15,000

And on that night, in the skies over Alaska, conditions are perfect for ice crystal formation.

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00:10:16,000 --> 00:10:23,000

It was in November in which you would have cold enough temperatures so that the upper part of the atmosphere would definitely be ice crystals.

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00:10:25,000 --> 00:10:31,000

Leslie Kane is an investigative reporter who has written extensively about pilot sightings of UFOs.

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00:10:31,000 --> 00:10:36,000

She disputes the view that the JAL pilots were confused by natural phenomena.

86

00:10:37,000 --> 00:10:49,000

Pilots know how to differentiate from all the things that could be mistaken for a UFO in the sky such as a weather balloon, a blimp, some kind of lightning or natural phenomenon.

87

00:10:49,000 --> 00:10:53,000

And when they see something very unusual, you can trust what they're saying.

88

00:10:55,000 --> 00:11:03,000

But even if ice crystals could explain the sighting, that still leaves unresolved the mystery of the second object picked up by ground-based radar.

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00:11:04,000 --> 00:11:11,000

In the wake of the CIA's involvement, the FAA releases the results of its investigation in March 1987.

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00:11:13,000 --> 00:11:22,000

The report concludes that the whole incident was caused by nothing more than a technical glitch, born from the two different operating systems used by air traffic controllers.

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00:11:25,000 --> 00:11:31,000

The first, primary radar, works by bouncing pulses of radio waves off objects, creating an echo.

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00:11:33,000 --> 00:11:43,000

Secondary radar relies on the use of a device known as a transponder, which when triggered by a radar signal, relays information back to the ground about a plane's identity and location.

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00:11:45,000 --> 00:11:49,000

On the night in question, the controllers were using both types of radar.

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00:11:50,000 --> 00:11:55,000

JAL 1628 is identifiable from the data sent back by its transponder.

95

00:11:56,000 --> 00:12:01,000

The second target, with no data, would suggest that it's a craft with no transponder.

96

00:12:02,000 --> 00:12:06,000

And coupled with the pilot sightings, that's what the controllers believed that night.

97

00:12:07,000 --> 00:12:12,000

But the FAA report concludes instead that it's actually what's known as a split radar image.

98

00:12:13,000 --> 00:12:18,000

This is caused when a faulty transponder sends back a delayed response, which is mistaken for a second plane.

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00:12:21,000 --> 00:12:26,000

Former FAA division manager John Callahan doesn't think the findings of his old organization stand up.

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00:12:27,000 --> 00:12:34,000

It wasn't a ghost target because mainly the pilot cannot see ghosts.

101

00:12:35,000 --> 00:12:39,000

And when he looked out the window, he told you what he was looking at.

102

00:12:40,000 --> 00:12:45,000

There's a big round ball with white lights running around it, and there's the size of two or three aircraft carriers.

103

00:12:46,000 --> 00:12:50,000

Leslie Kane agrees that the investigation ignores crucial evidence.

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00:12:51,000 --> 00:12:56,000

It was very disappointing. They basically dismissed the radar as being some kind of defect.

105

00:12:57,000 --> 00:12:59,000

So that was sort of the end of the FAA's work.

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00:13:00,000 --> 00:13:07,000

It's claimed that not long after the incident, Captain Terah Uchi was transferred to a desk job and has never spoken about it since.

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00:13:08,000 --> 00:13:13,000

The FAA has refused to reopen the case, despite repeated requests to do so by UFO investigators.

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00:13:14,000 --> 00:13:18,000

And the CIA's involvement, described by John Callahan, has never been publicly revealed.

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00:13:19,000 --> 00:13:29,000

Whether it was a question of pilot error, technical irregularities, or something else entirely, the story of JAL Flight 1628 continues to mystify to this day.

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00:13:38,000 --> 00:13:41,000

Melbourne, Australia, 1966

111

00:13:42,000 --> 00:13:49,000

On April 6th, it's a bright autumn morning in the city's southern suburb of Westall.

112

00:13:51,000 --> 00:13:55,000

At Westall High School, many pupils are outside enjoying a break from their studies.

113

00:13:57,000 --> 00:14:00,000

Among them, 13-year-old Jackie Argent.

114

00:14:00,000 --> 00:14:04,000

All of a sudden, play is disrupted when a strange object emerges over the school.

115

00:14:08,000 --> 00:14:12,000

Over 50 years on, Jackie, now a retired government advisor, returns to the school to relive the events of that extraordinary day.

116

00:14:13,000 --> 00:14:19,000

The object was a disk, a, would appear to me to be a large, silvery disk in the sky.

117

00:14:19,000 --> 00:14:24,000

And we saw the disk come over, and everybody in the school, everybody that was out on the oval, actually was pointing out to the sky, looking at the disk.

118

00:14:40,000 --> 00:14:44,000

Writer and teacher Shane Ryan has been investigating this story since 2005.

119

00:14:45,000 --> 00:14:49,000

He's pieced together the events that follow from the testimony of over 50 eyewitnesses.

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00:14:50,000 --> 00:14:57,000

It was morning recess, and so the word rushed around the school very quickly, like a bushfire, that something was happening.

121

00:14:59,000 --> 00:15:03,000

Before long, a crowd is gathered, utterly transfixed by what they're seeing.

122

00:15:04,000 --> 00:15:12,000

We watched the way it moved, which was amazing. It was capable of standing still and moving very, very fast.

123

00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:23,000

Many students still speak of the incident, but there's only a small handful of teachers from Westall High who are willing to go on record to discuss what happened that day.

124

00:15:24,000 --> 00:15:26,000

One of those is Claude Miller.

125

00:15:28,000 --> 00:15:33,000

It was recess, and I was a bit late going out to do my eye duty, and when I went outside, bingo.

126

00:15:34,000 --> 00:15:38,000

A colleague, science teacher Andrew Greenwood, comes tearing down the hall.

127

00:15:39,000 --> 00:15:45,000

I met Andrew coming in, and his first words were, did you see it? Did I see what?

128

00:15:46,000 --> 00:15:53,000

And he told me what he saw, or what he thought he saw, but he said it was up there, moving at incredible speeds.

129

00:15:54,000 --> 00:15:56,000

And now, it's not the only thing up there.

130

00:15:57,000 --> 00:16:02,000

Several light aircraft are engaging with it in what appears to be a frantic game of cat and mouse.

131

00:16:02,000 --> 00:16:08,000

They were flying around it at some distance away, but it would just leave them for dead.

132

00:16:09,000 --> 00:16:11,000

It would just suddenly whoosh and take off.

133

00:16:12,000 --> 00:16:18,000

Then, after moving over to an area of pine trees known as the Grange, it descends, seemingly to land.

134

00:16:21,000 --> 00:16:27,000

By now, it's not only at Westall High that the strange object is seen, but also in other parts of Westall.

135

00:16:28,000 --> 00:16:36,000

After a few minutes, astounded onlookers see the UFO rise again, before it turns onto its side and disappears as fast as it arrived.

136

00:16:39,000 --> 00:16:46,000

The whole school was in turmoil, but it was the turmoil of kids excited that they'd seen something and it broke the monotony.

137

00:16:47,000 --> 00:16:51,000

After the craft is left, the number of people claiming to have seen it rises quickly.

138

00:16:52,000 --> 00:16:55,000

Eventually, the number reaches into the hundreds.

139

00:16:56,000 --> 00:17:03,000

It is one of the largest mass witness daylight UFO sightings in the world.

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00:17:04,000 --> 00:17:06,000

We're talking about around 400 people.

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00:17:07,000 --> 00:17:12,000

For Shane Ryan, the large number of witnesses is clear evidence that something strange really was seen in the sky that day.

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00:17:14,000 --> 00:17:20,000

But for psychologist Dr. Susan Clancy, it's more likely to be a symptom of a phenomenon known as the bandwagon effect.

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00:17:20,000 --> 00:17:33,000

A great example of what some people call the bandwagon effect or group panic, etc. took place in

New York City in 1938.

144

00:17:34,000 --> 00:17:43,000

H.G. Wells wrote a book called War of the Worlds, in which aliens crash landed in a cylinder and they were all reptilian and they were drooling and scary.

145

00:17:43,000 --> 00:17:51,000

But it was adapted for a radio show in 1938 and played in the New York area and it incited widespread panic.

146

00:17:51,000 --> 00:17:54,000

I can see the things body now, it's large, it's large as a bear.

147

00:17:55,000 --> 00:17:57,000

It's just like wet leather, but it's a face.

148

00:17:58,000 --> 00:18:01,000

Ladies and gentlemen, it's indescribable, I can hardly force myself to keep looking at it.

149

00:18:02,000 --> 00:18:05,000

People thought it was real. They tuned in late, they didn't understand it was a radio adaptation.

150

00:18:06,000 --> 00:18:14,000

And then what happened is the police department became flooded with calls of people saying that they saw the cylinder outside or they saw strange creatures.

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00:18:15,000 --> 00:18:19,000

People believe that it's real and then they start seeing what they think they expect to see.

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00:18:20,000 --> 00:18:27,000

So, can the Westlhwag UFO incident be explained as a case of mass delusion? Not so, according to Shane Ryan.

153

00:18:27,000 --> 00:18:39,000

It's really hard to imagine that something like mass hysteria could have been responsible for an incident like this when not only did we have an object in the sky that looked real, looked metallic,

154

00:18:40,000 --> 00:18:46,000

but when people went down to the Grange where the object was seen to descend, there was physical evidence to be found.

155

00:18:49,000 --> 00:18:53,000

The evidence is discovered when curious locals go to take a look for themselves.

156

00:18:54,000 --> 00:18:58,000

One of the first on the scene is engineering student Kevin Hurley.

157

00:18:59,000 --> 00:19:08,000

My uncle rang me up about four o'clock to say, hey, guess what? The kids have seen a UFO at the school and I go, wow!

158

00:19:09,000 --> 00:19:15,000

And then he told me that the UFO landed. So I thought, jeez, I better get down there and have a look at this.

159

00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:20,000

After hearing the news, he head straight to the Grange to see what he can find.

160

00:19:21,000 --> 00:19:26,000

Almost 50 years later, he returns to the site that had such a profound effect on him as a young man.

161

00:19:27,000 --> 00:19:34,000

The area we walked through was knee-high grass. It wasn't the scrubby stuff like this. And it was quite thick.

162

00:19:35,000 --> 00:19:41,000

The grass was flattened around, flattened down like this. Right?

163

00:19:42,000 --> 00:19:52,000

And it was flattened down in a circular area as if something had gone down and twisted on the ground a little bit to flatten the grass around in this circular fashion.

164

00:19:53,000 --> 00:20:00,000

And as news of the sighting spreads beyond Westl, a new compelling piece of evidence emerges, adding a fresh layer of intrigue to the story.

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00:20:04,000 --> 00:20:11,000

On April 12th, a newspaper publishes a photo taken in another Melbourne suburb just four days before the Westl sighting.

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00:20:13,000 --> 00:20:17,000

The picture seems to show a strange object hovering low in the sky.

167

00:20:18,000 --> 00:20:24,000

Much like the Westl UFO, it appears to be a disk-like craft made from silvery metallic material.

168

00:20:26,000 --> 00:20:28,000

Could the two sightings be linked?

169

00:20:29,000 --> 00:20:37,000

Back in Westl, Kevin Hurley's curiosity grows. He returns to the Grange for another look.

170

00:20:44,000 --> 00:20:52,000

Upon arrival, he quickly realizes he's not the only one who's interested in the site. The area is now guarded by men in military uniform.

171

00:20:53,000 --> 00:21:00,000

This very aggressive chap appeared. He was either Army or Air Force, I'm not sure what, and said,

172

00:21:00,000 --> 00:21:04,000

Go away! Don't come here! He was extremely aggressive.

173

00:21:05,000 --> 00:21:10,000

Before he retreats, Kevin Hurley manages to catch a glimpse of what's happening beyond the guards.

174

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:21,000

There were a number of men also in these Army or Air Force uniforms going around the paddock,

175

00:21:21,000 --> 00:21:25,000

analyzing the ground with what looked like some sort of a Geigerkirch device.

176

00:21:27,000 --> 00:21:32,000

Since the UFO sighting, Westl seems a world away from the ordinary suburb it once was.

177

00:21:33,000 --> 00:21:37,000

And the next chain of events is about to rock its residents to the core.

178

00:21:41,000 --> 00:21:44,380

The

179

00:21:46,000 --> 00:21:54,000

1966, a school in the suburbs of Melbourne, Australia, has become the focus of a mass UFO sighting.

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00:21:57,000 --> 00:22:01,000

The reported landing site is said to be crawling with military personnel,

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00:22:03,000 --> 00:22:08,000

but pupils and staff at Westl High remain in the dark about what's going on.

182

00:22:10,000 --> 00:22:15,000

One of those left frustrated by the lack of answers is Claude Miller.

183

00:22:15,000 --> 00:22:20,000

I think we were expecting in the school that someone would come in, there would be explanations.

184

00:22:20,000 --> 00:22:26,000

And as the days went by, there were no explanations.

185

00:22:26,000 --> 00:22:28,000

Absolutely none.

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00:22:30,000 --> 00:22:35,000

Unknown men in dark suits are seen visiting parts of Westall in the days that follow.

187

00:22:35,000 --> 00:22:39,000

But they don't seem to be there to provide answers.

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00:22:40,000 --> 00:22:46,000

One afternoon, Jackie Argens is pulled out of class and interrogated by two men.

189

00:22:49,000 --> 00:22:53,000

It's an unsettling experience that's lived with her to this day.

190

00:22:54,000 --> 00:22:57,000

They ran through the whole event.

191

00:22:57,000 --> 00:23:00,000

It was like, where were you? Who were you with?

192

00:23:00,000 --> 00:23:04,000

What did you see? Just fired questions at me constantly.

193

00:23:04,000 --> 00:23:08,000

It was a boom, boom, boom questioning and my responses had to be instant.

194

00:23:08,000 --> 00:23:13,000

And then at the end, he just said to me, and I suppose you saw little green men.

195

00:23:13,000 --> 00:23:20,000

And that's when I just lost it and said, stuff you ran out, outside, burst into tears and went home.

196

00:23:21,000 --> 00:23:28,000

Jackie Argens doesn't know the identity of the men, but she has a strong suspicion of who they were working for.

197

00:23:28,000 --> 00:23:34,000

I came to the conclusion that they were Australian Secret Service Investigation Organization.

198

00:23:35,000 --> 00:23:40,000

As people try to make sense of what's happened, various theories begin to emerge.

199

00:23:41,000 --> 00:23:45,000

Some suggest the unexplained craft was nothing more than a weather balloon.

200

00:23:46,000 --> 00:23:51,000

For weather expert Professor Randy Servenny, these devices are nothing unusual.

201

00:23:52,000 --> 00:23:57,000

So the National Weather Services around the world launch weather balloons twice a day,

202

00:23:57,000 --> 00:24:03,000

and these balloons are meant to measure the weather at different levels of our atmosphere.

203

00:24:04,000 --> 00:24:09,000

But to most people, the unfamiliar shape of these large helium balloons can be surprising.

204

00:24:09,000 --> 00:24:14,000

And so they've become one of the most common causes of mistaken UFO identification.

205

00:24:14,000 --> 00:24:18,000

In April 1966, the Bureau of Meteorology releases a statement.

206

00:24:19,000 --> 00:24:25,000

A weather balloon was released from nearby Leverton Air Force Base at 8.30 a.m. on the morning of the sighting.

207

00:24:27,000 --> 00:24:35,000

But for meteorologist Dr. Karen Casiba, who's seen her fair share of weather balloons being deployed, the theory just doesn't add up.

208

00:24:35,000 --> 00:24:41,000

Usually when people are launching weather balloons, really they're trying to get it to go up through the atmosphere and not go sideways through the atmosphere.

209

00:24:41,000 --> 00:24:47,000

It's possible things could go wrong or they had some sort of different objective, but mostly weather balloons go up.

210

00:24:49,000 --> 00:24:54,000

The weather balloon theory also fails to explain why light aircraft would have been buzzing the object.

211

00:24:55,000 --> 00:25:00,000

The aircraft are one of the most mysterious elements of the Westall UFO story.

212

00:25:01,000 --> 00:25:08,000

After the sighting, the Department of Civil Aviation states there have been no reports of strange aerial encounters in the area.

213

00:25:10,000 --> 00:25:16,000

If the planes weren't commercial, then that leaves an intriguing alternative. They were military.

214

00:25:17,000 --> 00:25:22,000

Peter Merlin is an aerospace historian who specializes in military aviation.

215

00:25:22,000 --> 00:25:26,000

He thinks the UFO may have been what's known as a target drogue.

216

00:25:30,000 --> 00:25:35,000

Target drogue is a lightweight aerial target that's towed behind an airplane.

217

00:25:38,000 --> 00:25:45,000

The drogue is dragged at a safe distance from the towing plane on a long cable and used for target practice by pursuing aircraft.

218

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:57,000

It's possible that if there was a training operation, you might have several aircraft flying along near it and it would look like they were pursuing this unusual object.

219

00:25:57,000 --> 00:26:00,000

So it might look pretty strange in the sky to a witness.

220

00:26:01,000 --> 00:26:05,000

If so, then what of the reported landing behind the Grange?

221

00:26:05,000 --> 00:26:08,000

And why would the military wish to keep the public away?

222

00:26:09,000 --> 00:26:13,000

Many questions remain unanswered for the residents of Westall.

223

00:26:13,000 --> 00:26:17,000

And as the days go by, more unknown figures appear in the town.

224

00:26:20,000 --> 00:26:28,000

A week later, Andrew Greenwood, the only teacher at Westall High to report having seen the UFO, is paid a visit at his home by two men.

225

00:26:31,000 --> 00:26:36,000

He thought they were coming around to take down more details about what he had seen.

226

00:26:36,000 --> 00:26:41,000

But in fact they were coming around to say, Andrew, we don't want you talking about this anymore.

227

00:26:42,000 --> 00:26:48,000

There are no such things as flying saucers and we don't want you saying that you've seen something like this.

228

00:26:49,000 --> 00:26:53,000

No government agency has ever admitted to trying to silence Andrew Greenwood.

229

00:26:53,000 --> 00:27:00,000

But the idea that there may have been an active attempt to hide the truth received some support from a separate incident involving Kevin Hurley.

230

00:27:02,000 --> 00:27:07,000

A few days after he was forced away from the suspected landing site, he returns to the Grange for another look.

231

00:27:07,000 --> 00:27:12,000

When he gets there, the military men have left and the site has altered dramatically.

232

00:27:13,000 --> 00:27:18,000

Though I walked through to where the circles were, that whole area was burnt.

233

00:27:21,000 --> 00:27:27,000

Whatever evidence there was of whatever had happened, it had clearly been destroyed.

234

00:27:27,000 --> 00:27:42,000

If the rumors are true and the military was sent in to cover up evidence of what happened on April 6th, what were they trying to hide?

235

00:27:43,000 --> 00:27:46,000

One theory is that it was some kind of experimental aircraft.

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00:27:48,000 --> 00:27:53,000

Military organizations across the world have long experimented with revolutionary designs.

237

00:27:54,000 --> 00:28:01,000

These forward-thinking craft often look nothing like conventional aircraft and would therefore go unrecognized by casual observers.

238

00:28:03,000 --> 00:28:12,000

I myself have observed numerous different types of military and experimental aircraft and even I've seen things that I didn't recognize in the sky immediately.

239

00:28:13,000 --> 00:28:16,000

It's a theory that West will witness Jackie Argent was once open to.

240

00:28:17,000 --> 00:28:24,000

If you'd have asked me up until about 25 years ago, I would have said that it was an experimental craft.

241

00:28:25,000 --> 00:28:27,000

But over time, her opinion has changed.

242

00:28:28,000 --> 00:28:34,000

If you asked me today what it was that I'd seen all those years ago, I would say to you that what I'd seen was an extraterrestrial craft.

243

00:28:35,000 --> 00:28:38,000

We still don't have anything today that can move the same way that that one did.

244

00:28:39,000 --> 00:28:45,000

Despite such certainty from those who were there, psychologist Dr. Susan Clancy is still unconvinced.

245

00:28:48,000 --> 00:28:52,000

There's some culturally available script that exists.

246

00:28:53,000 --> 00:29:00,000

We've been reading about it, we've been seeing it in newspapers, even small children know what flying saucers and aliens supposedly look like.

247

00:29:01,000 --> 00:29:05,000

We don't necessarily believe it, but we think it's possible and then we see something in the sky.

248

00:29:05,000 --> 00:29:13,000

In unidentified flying object, it doesn't mean it's extraterrestrial and the explanations we often fall to are these culturally available scripts.

249

00:29:14,000 --> 00:29:17,000

The truth of what was seen that day might never be known.

250

00:29:18,000 --> 00:29:24,000

The Australian government has never admitted to carrying out any kind of investigation in the wake of the West's siding.

251

00:29:25,000 --> 00:29:32,000

In terms of finding official government documentation about this incident, even after all these years of looking,

252

00:29:33,000 --> 00:29:35,000

we've still drawn a blank.

253

00:29:36,000 --> 00:29:41,000

As long as they remain silent, the West's mystery is likely to remain just that.

254

00:29:52,000 --> 00:29:54,000

Chilucanus Peru, 2001.

255

00:29:55,000 --> 00:29:59,000

This remote town nestles in the foothills of the Andes.

256

00:30:00,000 --> 00:30:04,000

Its inhabitants, like so many in this region of South America, are deeply religious, with strong links to the spiritual world.

257

00:30:05,000 --> 00:30:11,000

On October 13, 2001, Chilucanus is filled with the sights and sounds of a festival being held in honor of a local patron saint.

258

00:30:12,000 --> 00:30:17,000

At around 9 p.m., the procession is working its way through the town.

259

00:30:18,000 --> 00:30:21,000

Among the onlookers is local photographer Yvonne Eza.

260

00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:27,000

It is the last day of the festival in Chilucanus, the city of Peruvian history.

261

00:30:28,000 --> 00:30:32,000

The festival is held in honor of a local patron saint.

262

00:30:32,000 --> 00:30:35,000

The procession is working its way through the town.

263

00:30:36,000 --> 00:30:40,000

Among the almookers is local photographer Ivan Iza.

264

00:30:46,000 --> 00:30:51,000

All of a sudden, progress halts as strange lights appear in the sky beyond the edge of town.

265

00:30:55,000 --> 00:31:00,000

Ivan turns his camera away from the festivities and up towards the floating lights.

266

00:31:01,000 --> 00:31:04,000

The camera's settings make the lights appear white,

267

00:31:04,000 --> 00:31:09,000

but they are described by those who see them as intense orange-red spheres.

268

00:31:10,000 --> 00:31:15,000

They hover silently above nearby Cerro Pelan, a hill that overlooks the town.

269

00:31:17,000 --> 00:31:23,000

Some witnesses claim that the lights actually approached the town, causing panic among the almookers.

270

00:31:24,000 --> 00:31:28,000

Today, Ivan recalls the tense scenes of that night.

271

00:31:31,000 --> 00:31:35,000

At that moment, the lights came closer to us, and people who were beside us said,

272

00:31:35,000 --> 00:31:39,000

here they come, here they come, here they come, and some ran away.

273

00:31:41,000 --> 00:31:43,000

But Ivan doesn't run.

274

00:31:44,000 --> 00:31:48,000

For over 20 minutes, he remains at the scene recording this strange phenomenon.

275

00:31:54,000 --> 00:32:01,000

12 days later, Ivan responds again to reports of strange lights over Chulucanus.

276

00:32:03,000 --> 00:32:09,000

From the top of a nearby hill, he films a single, tear-drop-shaped light hovering over the town.

277

00:32:12,000 --> 00:32:15,000

He's joined by a friend who sees it as well.

278

00:32:16,000 --> 00:32:20,000

It's incredible, hard to believe. It's like the thing we saw over Chulucanus.

279

00:32:23,000 --> 00:32:29,000

For about 20 minutes, the two men film the light, which reminds them of those previously seen over the area.

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00:32:33,000 --> 00:32:40,000

Ivan is convinced he's captured something remarkable on video, but he's unable to explain what that is.

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00:32:42,000 --> 00:32:45,000

To help him, he turns to a newly formed government department.

282

00:32:48,000 --> 00:32:51,000

The Office of Investigation of Anomalous Aerial Phenomena.

283

00:32:52,000 --> 00:32:59,000

It's established in 2001 by the Peruvian Air Force to examine reports of UFOs encroaching into the country's airspace.

284

00:33:02,000 --> 00:33:07,000

Ivan's call is answered by head of operations, Commander Julio Chamorro.

285

00:33:09,000 --> 00:33:13,000

I was ready to leave the office, and the phone call came in.

286

00:33:13,000 --> 00:33:20,000

It was somebody who told us they had video of a UFO.

287

00:33:23,000 --> 00:33:27,000

Chamorro dispatches field investigator Dr. Anthony Choi to do some digging.

288

00:33:34,000 --> 00:33:39,000

When Choi arrives in Chulucanus, his first priority is to review the evidence.

289

00:33:43,000 --> 00:33:47,000

Once he locates the rare tapes, he finally gets to see what he's come all this way for.

290

00:33:49,000 --> 00:33:53,000

When I saw these videos for the first time, I thought, wow, what is this?

291

00:33:54,000 --> 00:33:58,000

But my initial surprise had to give way to a more objective point of view.

292

00:34:00,000 --> 00:34:06,000

Over the coming days, Choi interviews many witnesses and visits the sites where the UFOs were seen.

293

00:34:07,000 --> 00:34:14,000

As he does so, he hears strange stories that make him realize the case goes way deeper than he ever imagined.

294

00:34:26,000 --> 00:34:29,000

Dr. Anthony Choi is in Chulucanus, Peru.

295

00:34:30,000 --> 00:34:37,000

As he looks for answers about strange lights in the sky, the story unfolds in deeply unexpected ways.

296

00:34:38,000 --> 00:34:43,000

Once in Chulucanus, when I began the investigation, I found many surprises.

297

00:34:44,000 --> 00:34:48,000

Witnesses said this phenomenon was not new, but very old.

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00:34:49,000 --> 00:34:51,000

In fact, they remember seeing lights when they were kids.

299

00:34:52,000 --> 00:34:56,000

When I dug deeper into the investigation, I understood this phenomenon was even older.

300

00:34:57,000 --> 00:35:04,000

Sightings of unexplained lights here date back decades, and it turns out their roots are even older than that.

301

00:35:05,000 --> 00:35:09,000

To understand, Choi needs to look into the town's distant past.

302

00:35:13,000 --> 00:35:18,000

The indigenous people of Chulucanus descend from ancient pre-Inca and Inca societies,

303

00:35:19,000 --> 00:35:23,000

who fervently believed that gods and spirits inhabited their everyday lives.

304

00:35:26,000 --> 00:35:30,000

Those beliefs have changed over time, but they have not disappeared.

305

00:35:31,000 --> 00:35:38,000

Local writer Carlos Espinosa Leon has spent years gathering the stories handed down by generations of Chulucanus.

306

00:35:42,000 --> 00:35:49,000

They believe in legends, for example, that they used to see fantastical characters and little spirits.

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00:35:50,000 --> 00:35:58,000

Choi discovers that many of their beliefs are rooted in the very hills over which the UFOs were seen.

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00:35:59,000 --> 00:36:05,000

Most intriguing of all is Cerro Pilan, the hill over which the first lights appeared in October.

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00:36:09,000 --> 00:36:13,000

There are a number of stories about the Pilan hill, that it's a haunted hill,

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00:36:14,000 --> 00:36:18,000

and there you can hear the goats bleating, the herders screaming who have been bewitched.

311

00:36:19,000 --> 00:36:24,000

It's a hill that's highly respected. Peasants used to avoid passing it so that they weren't haunted.

312

00:36:25,000 --> 00:36:29,000

The respect held for Cerro Pilan goes beyond a simple fear of what it hides.

313

00:36:30,000 --> 00:36:39,000

It's thought to be one of four guardian mountains, responsible for protecting the town and capable of fighting other nearby hills in order to do so.

314

00:36:39,000 --> 00:36:58,000

Some peasants say that it's like a war of lightning bolts. The hills throw bolts at each other, trying to capture the rain for their own land, for their people, for their own areas.

315

00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:08,000

One of the most perplexing aspects of the Chulucana story are the reports that the lights approached the town, frightening onlookers.

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00:37:09,000 --> 00:37:16,000

Psychologist Dr. Susan Clancy thinks the local belief that the hills are actually alive could have influenced that sighting.

317

00:37:17,000 --> 00:37:24,000

In a very religious country, when they're prone to want to see religious phenomena, they're dying to see religious phenomena.

318

00:37:24,000 --> 00:37:30,000

So it's like a lens where they're looking for stuff to happen, and it does.

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00:37:32,000 --> 00:37:42,000

But while religious fervor may explain what the people of Chulucanas think they saw, it doesn't explain what was actually filmed by Ivan Iza on those nights.

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00:37:44,000 --> 00:37:48,000

One theory is that the lights were caused by man-made aircraft.

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00:37:49,000 --> 00:37:57,000

Having analyzed the videos, aeronautics expert David Higgins believes that search helicopters may have been responsible.

322

00:37:58,000 --> 00:38:04,000

I've looked at the footage of this particular sighting, and indeed you can see lights in the sky.

323

00:38:05,000 --> 00:38:12,000

Depending on the role of the helicopter, they may have a very bright search light that might be used in the role of search and rescue, or police, or military.

324

00:38:12,000 --> 00:38:21,000

And these lights are extremely bright, and to the onlooker on the ground who's never seen one before, it would certainly be quite a shock factor if this light suddenly came on.

325

00:38:22,000 --> 00:38:29,000

With no other existing evidence, there's only one way to work out if this theory holds weight, to analyze the videos themselves.

326

00:38:31,000 --> 00:38:35,000

Image forensics expert Michael Hartzhorn runs a series of tests.

327

00:38:36,000 --> 00:38:44,000

This footage showed a cluster of lights apparently in the sky. The first thing I wanted to do was increase the contrast as much as possible.

328

00:38:45,000 --> 00:38:53,000

And once I'd done that, I began to see a dark shape consistent with maybe a range of mountains.

329

00:38:54,000 --> 00:39:00,000

And although it's very, very vague, I definitely get the impression that these lights are on the top of a mountain range.

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00:39:00,000 --> 00:39:07,000

If Michael Hartzhorn is correct, then the lights aren't hovering in the air. They're coming from something on the mountain itself.

331

00:39:08,000 --> 00:39:13,000

He carries out the same contrast enhancement on the second Chulukanas video, with equally revealing results.

332

00:39:14,000 --> 00:39:21,000

After enhancement, you can clearly see that that single mountain has a larger mountain behind it, and a larger mountain behind that.

333

00:39:21,000 --> 00:39:32,000

And it's actually part of a very big mountain range. And so the light that was apparently floating above the first mountain was probably on the fourth mountain behind it.

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00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:40,000

With doubt cast over the sightings, it might seem that the Chulukanas UFO story is a simple case of mistaken identity.

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00:39:41,000 --> 00:39:43,000

But the mystery doesn't end there.

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00:39:44,000 --> 00:39:52,000

On November 15, 2001, 21 days after the second sighting, Yvonne is called to the center of town.

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00:39:53,000 --> 00:39:57,000

There, a crowd of people is transfixed by another glowing object in the night sky.

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00:39:59,000 --> 00:40:02,000

Here we are in Chulukanas, witnessing another UFO.

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00:40:03,000 --> 00:40:07,000

Could this be just another case of a ground-based light being confused for something else?

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00:40:08,000 --> 00:40:11,000

Hartzhorn runs tests to find out.

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00:40:12,000 --> 00:40:20,000

I enhanced the street lamp as much as I could to see if you could see a reflection of the light in the side of that lamp.

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00:40:20,000 --> 00:40:27,000

Because if we could have seen a reflection in there, then it would have proved that it was very close to the viewer, and it would have been a very small item then, rather than a large item in the background.

343

00:40:28,000 --> 00:40:31,000

I wasn't able to find anything in the street lamp.

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00:40:32,000 --> 00:40:37,000

Having assessed that the glowing object is some distance away from the onlookers, Hartzhorn ups the enhancement even further.

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00:40:38,000 --> 00:40:42,000

Once I've made this enhanced feel, I can see that the light is still in the background.

346

00:40:42,000 --> 00:40:48,000

Having assessed that the glowing object is some distance away from the onlookers, Hartzhorn ups the

enhancement even further.

347

00:40:49,000 --> 00:41:04,000

Once I've made this enhanced video, I can see a diamond shape or certainly a shape behind the light, and it moves with the light and is consistent with the light being on an object.

348

00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:15,000

Image forensics alone can't prove what was up there, but the video suggests that whatever Yvonne captured on film was some kind of airborne, light-emitting object.

349

00:41:16,000 --> 00:41:24,000

Anthony Choi is unable to explain what's causing the Chulukhanis lights, so the official report that he eventually files is inconclusive.

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00:41:25,000 --> 00:41:32,000

And when he appears on television afterwards, his Air Force boss, Colonel Rafa Maloche, is forced to admit that they don't know what's behind the sightings.

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00:41:33,000 --> 00:41:43,000

For the moment, we can't venture to say because any explanation that comes from an unfinished investigation might result in false conclusions.

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00:41:46,000 --> 00:41:50,000

More than ten years on, the case remains un-evolved.

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00:41:51,000 --> 00:41:57,000

And for the people of Chulukhanis, the story has become another installment in a rich history of strange happenings.