

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:16,260

It is the nation's most secure, most clandestine military installation.

2

00:00:16,260 --> 00:00:22,560

UFO experts claim it is also home to captured flying saucers and alien corpses.

3

00:00:22,560 --> 00:00:27,320

Tremendous things have happened out there that will probably never be told.

4

00:00:27,320 --> 00:00:35,040

The site has long been the subject of bizarre rumors about extraterrestrial life and extraterrestrial death.

5

00:00:35,040 --> 00:00:47,000

Some day what happened at Area 51 will be made public and the public will be shocked about what was done in their name.

6

00:00:47,000 --> 00:00:57,280

Driving along Highway 375 in central Nevada, the desert landscape of basin and range stretches out in all directions as far as the eye can see.

7

00:00:57,280 --> 00:01:06,840

It is the archetypal American West, wide open spaces and harsh conditions where only the most rugged of individuals have settled and survived.

8

00:01:06,840 --> 00:01:12,840

There are no cities here. Towns, if you can call them that, are few and far between.

9

00:01:12,840 --> 00:01:19,840

And the only sounds that disturb this pristine wilderness are rattlesnakes, coyotes and jet aircraft.

10

00:01:19,840 --> 00:01:28,120

Highway 375 is on the eastern flank of the Southwest Test and Training Range complex.

11

00:01:28,120 --> 00:01:37,440

At its center is Nellis Air Force Base, 5,000 square miles of earth and sky that's known as the military's private playground.

12

00:01:37,440 --> 00:01:42,200

Here, the Air Force's version of top gun exercises take place.

13

00:01:42,200 --> 00:01:47,120

Nellis Air Force Base is probably the high, holy place of the fighter pilot.

14

00:01:47,920 --> 00:01:54,000

For fighter pilots training at Nellis, the sky's the limit with one unqualified exception.

15

00:01:54,000 --> 00:02:05,200

No one, no matter what their level of security clearance, is allowed to fly at any time or at any altitude in the airspace designated R4808.

16

00:02:05,200 --> 00:02:15,000

You do not fly into that area. Even if it means breaking off a combat or diverting, it is simply not done.

17

00:02:15,080 --> 00:02:25,200

In Air Force Parilton's airspace R4808 is called Dreamland, so named by a pilot who was inspired by a poem of the same name by Edgar Allen Poe.

18

00:02:25,200 --> 00:02:31,800

Dreamland encloses 60 square miles of the most secure, most secret land in the United States.

19

00:02:31,800 --> 00:02:37,280

And inside lies the mysterious place known as Area 51.

20

00:02:37,280 --> 00:02:48,640

Just the idea of a secret base out in the middle of Nevada where the possibilities are endless because we don't know what's going on there for the most part is powerful and potent and alluring.

21

00:02:48,640 --> 00:02:54,200

For nearly a half century, Area 51 has been the military's best kept secret.

22

00:02:54,200 --> 00:03:00,480

So secret, in fact, that until very recently the US government denied it even existed.

23

00:03:00,480 --> 00:03:06,720

Everybody knows that the place is there, everybody knows it's working, but the government is the secret.

24

00:03:06,720 --> 00:03:13,840

However, for a place that is supposedly non-existent, Area 51 has an inordinate amount of security.

25

00:03:13,840 --> 00:03:23,920

Just a few miles down this road lies a bastion, a sanctuary of some of the most classified and high technology programs that exist in the world.

26

00:03:23,920 --> 00:03:37,960

Along nameless dirt roads off Highway 375, signs warn the curious that it is illegal to enter, photograph, sketch or even look at anything beyond this point.

27

00:03:37,960 --> 00:03:45,080

Motion sensors in the road and along the perimeter alert a private security force to approaching trespassers.

28

00:03:45,080 --> 00:03:52,960

As far as we know, nobody's ever been able to penetrate the base and somebody would be, you'd have to be extra stupid to try.

29

00:03:53,200 --> 00:04:00,280

Everything is highly monitored, it is impenetrable and even if you've got close, you still have a dry lake bed across to get to the base.

30

00:04:00,280 --> 00:04:05,720

It is situated in such a place that makes security quite easy to maintain.

31

00:04:06,320 --> 00:04:13,680

Exactly what is the government hiding at Area 51? What projects could possibly require such intense security?

32

00:04:13,680 --> 00:04:17,600

The answer remains one of America's biggest mysteries.

33

00:04:18,400 --> 00:04:24,400

The absence of information is the most intriguing and titillating thing possible in the information age.

34

00:04:24,400 --> 00:04:30,000

Speculation about the secret work being conducted there has become a cottage industry.

35

00:04:30,000 --> 00:04:35,800

Now you've got the conspiracy nuts out there who say that it's the headquarters for the new world order.

36

00:04:35,800 --> 00:04:45,880

You've got the hopelessly gullible saucer nuts who say that there are underground bases and huge vats where our military is cooperating with aliens to build these hybrids.

37

00:04:46,000 --> 00:04:51,960

You've got some of these folks who say this is where the milk carton kids are all taken away for horrible medical experiments.

38

00:04:51,960 --> 00:04:56,720

All sorts of people have all put their own veneer on Area 51.

39

00:04:56,720 --> 00:05:05,600

The government's continuous refusal to acknowledge the existence of a research facility at Groom Lake naturally intensifies public interest.

40

00:05:05,600 --> 00:05:11,160

If they had said, yeah, we've got a base out here, yeah, it's called Area 51. We've got some secret programs.

41

00:05:11,160 --> 00:05:14,720

We need the secrecy for purposes of national security.

42

00:05:14,720 --> 00:05:19,440

They wouldn't have half the level of interest from the public and all these crazies that they have now.

43

00:05:19,440 --> 00:05:24,320

Instead, they've denied that the base existed. They deny that it has that name.

44

00:05:24,320 --> 00:05:29,240

They've denied what programs are out there. They wouldn't even say what agency controls the base.

45

00:05:29,240 --> 00:05:31,840

And that has all fed the myth machine.

46

00:05:32,960 --> 00:05:37,560

At Area 51, separating myth from reality is extremely difficult.

47

00:05:37,640 --> 00:05:44,080

What we do know comes from former employees, declassified government documents, and tenacious researchers.

48

00:05:47,000 --> 00:05:53,040

Central Nevada may not be fit for man nor beast, but it's just right for testing nuclear warheads.

49

00:05:53,040 --> 00:06:01,640

And on February 2nd, 1951, the Atomic Energy Commission detonates an atom bomb 30 miles southwest of Groom Lake.

50

00:06:01,640 --> 00:06:07,480

Now, the newly established 200 square mile area called the Nevada Test Site.

51

00:06:08,280 --> 00:06:13,120

When the Nevada Test Site was set up, it was divided into areas.

52

00:06:13,120 --> 00:06:18,920

And there's no apparent logic to the deployment of the numbers on the map with these different areas.

53

00:06:18,920 --> 00:06:27,040

But Area 51 was the number given to the one at the upper northwest corner that included the Groom dry lake.

54

00:06:27,040 --> 00:06:36,360

Between 1951 and 1954, Area 51 is just another uninhabited patch of desert on the grid of the Nevada Test Site.

55

00:06:36,440 --> 00:06:44,440

To understand how it comes to be the site of the world's most secret military base requires a sign trip to Burbank, California.

56

00:06:46,840 --> 00:06:55,280

In the 1950s, the hangars and test facilities around the Burbank Airport belong to Lockheed, the nation's largest aircraft contractor.

57

00:06:55,280 --> 00:07:03,640

What the average American citizen doesn't know is that deep within Lockheed is a secret testing facility known as Skunk Works.

58

00:07:03,640 --> 00:07:07,840

It is under the direction of aviation pioneer Kelly Johnson.

59

00:07:09,120 --> 00:07:14,480

Kelly Johnson is probably the most brilliant aerodynamic engineer in the history of the United States.

60

00:07:15,720 --> 00:07:24,760

Johnson and his Skunk Works team have a reputation for not only building state-of-the-art aircraft, but for doing it quickly, cheaply and quietly.

61

00:07:24,760 --> 00:07:32,680

This is why the government comes to Johnson first in the summer of 1954. The Cold War needs a hot secret weapon.

62

00:07:33,880 --> 00:07:50,880

The CIA came with this dramatic and immediate brief. We need an airplane that can fly over the Soviet Union, see what they're doing in the way of bombers and missiles and nuclear weapons, because they were not yet spy satellites, of course.

63

00:07:51,720 --> 00:08:00,280

Kelly Johnson's answer is to design the U-2, a long-range jet aircraft that can fly at 70,000 feet above the reach of radar.

64

00:08:00,840 --> 00:08:08,480

Work begins in the winter of 1954 on the new plane. Eight months later, Johnson's U-2 is ready for a test flight.

65

00:08:09,480 --> 00:08:21,640

Up until that time, he had tested all the aircraft up at Edwards, and it was clear that if this thing was going to be as secret as it had to be to work, they were going to have to find somewhere even more hidden away to test it.

66

00:08:22,200 --> 00:08:38,200

Kelly Johnson, along with test pilot Tony LeVier, heads east to search for a new site. Flying over Groom Mountain, the men spot a large, dry lakebed reminiscent of their Edwards test site. The fact that it has been bathed in atomic bomb fallout for more than four years is only seen as a plus.

67

00:08:39,400 --> 00:08:49,400

The idea was that they needed somewhere far from prying eyes to test this spy plane. Where better but the Nevada nuclear test site, where no one in their right mind would venture.

68

00:08:50,360 --> 00:08:58,360

When we continue, cover stories and a pattern of denial becomes standard operating procedure at Area 51.

69

00:08:58,360 --> 00:09:08,360

Area 51, Groom Lake, Dreamland. The government's super secret testing facility in the Nevada desert will go by many names.

70

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

The names this place had were almost like religious terms. Ben Rich, who was the head of the Lockheed Skunk Works, told me that he legally could not say the words Groom Lake or Area 51.

71

00:09:23,320 --> 00:09:31,320

On July 14, 1955, the first U-2 prototype is shipped from Burbank to Area 51.

72

00:09:32,280 --> 00:09:38,280

The U-2 spy plane was at first disguised as a weather plane.

73

00:09:38,280 --> 00:09:52,280

Three weeks later, it's ready to fly and the government has its cover story in place. A phony press release is issued. As far as the government is concerned, Area 51 does not exist and neither do its employees.

74

00:09:53,240 --> 00:10:09,240

One man who had worked out at Groom Lake described to me the whole secrecy experience as being like a lead overcoat. It was a constant weight and it was a weight of not being able to tell your family what you did.

75

00:10:10,200 --> 00:10:24,200

Two weeks after the first U-2 test flight, on August 19, 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signs Executive Order 10633, restricting for the first time the airspace over Groom Lake.

76

00:10:24,200 --> 00:10:38,200

And to further protect the Skunk Works operations, a public land order is signed on June 20, 1958, making the 60 square miles around Groom Lake officially non-existent.

77

00:10:39,160 --> 00:10:49,160

It is not very effective, however, in keeping the U-2 a secret from the Soviet Union, who have spies at the Turkish military installation where the U-2 is based.

78

00:10:49,160 --> 00:11:03,160

The Russians very quickly became aware that the aircraft were up there, but it became a question of cat and mouse. The operation was deniable until the Russians could shoot down a U-2. And that's what eventually happened.

79

00:11:04,120 --> 00:11:11,120

On May 1, 1960, pilot Francis Gary Powers U-2 is shot down over the Soviet Union.

80

00:11:11,120 --> 00:11:25,120

President Eisenhower first denied that it was a spy plane, but as the facts of the matter emerged, it was clear that this was something the American people had been kept in the dark about for years.

81

00:11:26,080 --> 00:11:41,080

And it was not only important in the history of the Cold War because it scuttled an important summit conference that was about to begin, but it was one of the first episodes where the American people knew they had been lied to by their government.

82

00:11:41,080 --> 00:11:53,080

The government's response to revelations about the U-2 is not to come clean, but to make the testing facility at Groom Lake even more secure, even more secret.

83

00:11:53,080 --> 00:12:00,080

What it doesn't want anyone to find out is that Area 51 is already building its next top-secret aircraft.

84

00:12:00,080 --> 00:12:14,080

The CIA launched a program for a replacement that would not only be very high-flying, but would also be very fast, and the extent that was possible would be hard to detect on radar.

85

00:12:14,080 --> 00:12:27,080

On January 15, 1962, the Air Force requests that the restricted airspace over Groom Lake be quadrupled. Three months later, the top-secret A-12 makes its first test flight.

86

00:12:28,080 --> 00:12:44,080

This is one of the most astonishing technological feats in history. It's still a plane that looks like it comes out of the next century, even though it first flew in the early 60s.

87

00:12:45,080 --> 00:12:57,080

But like the U-2, the A-12 doesn't stay secret for very long. In the election year of 1964, President Lyndon Johnson reveals the existence of the Blackbird to the American public.

88

00:12:57,080 --> 00:13:05,080

He said the aircraft were being tested at Edwards, which of course there was no A-12 at Edwards and there never had been.

89

00:13:06,080 --> 00:13:15,080

When the press is invited to Edwards for the A-12s unveiling, the secret machine inside Area 51 has to do some fancy footwork.

90

00:13:15,080 --> 00:13:25,080

Two A-12s were very hastily flown to Edwards. They came across at Mawt Tree. When they landed, they were still hot from aerodynamic heating.

91

00:13:26,080 --> 00:13:37,080

But in order to keep them out of sight, they were ushered very quickly into a hangar, whereupon the sprinkler system went off and drenched all the guests waiting for the airplanes to arrive.

92

00:13:37,080 --> 00:13:47,080

While the nation gawks at the A-12, designers at Area 51 are already busy planning its successor, the SR-71 Blackbird.

93

00:13:47,080 --> 00:13:55,080

As the SRs came along, the base was greatly expanded, new hangars were built, new fuel tanks were installed.

94

00:13:55,080 --> 00:14:01,080

With newer, larger facilities come many significant changes in the history of Area 51.

95

00:14:01,080 --> 00:14:10,080

Any designation of Area 51 per se or of test facility at Groom Dry Lake were left off all the government maps.

96

00:14:10,080 --> 00:14:17,080

It was also left out of the government satellite imagery databases that were on the internet.

97

00:14:17,080 --> 00:14:22,080

So that means that someone who had the highest clearance in the government couldn't even look at Groom Lake. It was so secret.

98

00:14:22,080 --> 00:14:30,080

In 1967, the government policy of creating cover stories changes to one of absolute denial.

99

00:14:30,080 --> 00:14:38,080

1967 is also the year the Air Force captures its first Soviet MiG-17 and ships it to Area 51.

100

00:14:38,080 --> 00:14:43,080

In the following years, more MiGs and other enemy aircraft will follow.

101

00:14:43,080 --> 00:14:49,080

Activities at Groom Lake now begin to descend out of historical fact and into speculation.

102

00:14:50,080 --> 00:14:55,080

In 1968, Area 51 is wrapped up in its ultimate security blanket.

103

00:14:55,080 --> 00:15:02,080

Everything on, in and over the base gets a special designation, Black Project.

104

00:15:02,080 --> 00:15:05,080

Some of these programs are what are called unacknowledged.

105

00:15:05,080 --> 00:15:12,080

And what that means is that the existence of the program and its purpose are secret.

106

00:15:12,080 --> 00:15:16,080

And that's what makes them black. They don't officially exist.

107

00:15:17,080 --> 00:15:23,080

Even the people working inside Area 51 are kept in the dark about exactly what their facility is

doing.

108

00:15:23,080 --> 00:15:28,080

For instance, there would be simultaneous projects going on inside Area 51.

109

00:15:28,080 --> 00:15:33,080

When one plane produced by one project was rolled out for testing,

110

00:15:33,080 --> 00:15:38,080

the guys working on the project in the hangar next door would all have to go inside.

111

00:15:38,080 --> 00:15:44,080

Funding for the Black Project in Area 51 comes out of a secret pool of taxpayer dollars

112

00:15:44,080 --> 00:15:46,080

known as the Black Budget.

113

00:15:46,080 --> 00:15:51,080

It's uncontrolled money. At this point we figure it's about \$30 billion a year.

114

00:15:51,080 --> 00:15:56,080

It's a lot easier for people to get away with a lot larger spending, more wasteful spending,

115

00:15:56,080 --> 00:16:02,080

perhaps without the same sort of scrutiny that goes on around the rest of the government.

116

00:16:02,080 --> 00:16:08,080

And no matter what the cost, it is believed that only a third of the money in the Black Budget

117

00:16:08,080 --> 00:16:11,080

goes into the actual projects themselves.

118

00:16:11,080 --> 00:16:15,080

The rest is spent on keeping the secrets secret.

119

00:16:15,080 --> 00:16:21,080

There's no easy rule of thumb on how much keeping a program in the black, as they say, adds to it,

120

00:16:21,080 --> 00:16:25,080

but it is a factor of several times.

121

00:16:25,080 --> 00:16:29,080

There's the tremendous cost of security background checks.

122

00:16:29,080 --> 00:16:35,080

There are the geographical transport costs of getting things out into the middle of nowhere.

123

00:16:35,080 --> 00:16:42,080

And then there are the costs of patrolling not only the physical edges of these facilities,

124

00:16:42,080 --> 00:16:45,080

but patrolling the lives of those who work there.

125

00:16:45,080 --> 00:16:53,080

Because of its black designation, after 1968 we know nothing for certain about what is being developed at Groom Lake.

126

00:16:53,080 --> 00:16:59,080

We know there are programs out there. It's a question of assigning an identity to them.

127

00:16:59,080 --> 00:17:02,080

And that's where the sheer size of the black budget makes it difficult.

128

00:17:02,080 --> 00:17:05,080

There's all sorts of things that could have been done out there.

129

00:17:05,080 --> 00:17:13,080

When we continue, a former government employee reveals the contents of alleged Area 51 briefing papers.

130

00:17:13,080 --> 00:17:16,080

Basically I looked at the pictures of them.

131

00:17:16,080 --> 00:17:18,080

To save time. There were pictures of what?

132

00:17:18,080 --> 00:17:20,080

The dead aliens.

133

00:17:20,080 --> 00:17:28,080

In the 1970s and 1980s, the secret test facility at Groom Lake operates in total obscurity.

134

00:17:28,080 --> 00:17:35,080

Its activities known only to the people inside Area 51, and they are sworn to secrecy.

135

00:17:35,080 --> 00:17:39,080

The test pilots were doing something that was at the top of their profession.

136

00:17:39,080 --> 00:17:44,080

They were setting new speed altitude records almost daily.

137

00:17:44,080 --> 00:17:47,080

And yet they couldn't tell anyone. They couldn't tell their wives.

138

00:17:47,080 --> 00:17:52,080

They couldn't tell the Guinness Book of World Records.

139

00:17:52,080 --> 00:17:56,080

Even now we know very little about the black projects developing there,

140

00:17:56,080 --> 00:18:00,080

and the few facts we do know come out in strange ways.

141

00:18:00,080 --> 00:18:07,080

For instance, there was an airplane called Tasset Blue, which flew around the same time as the early stealth prototypes.

142

00:18:07,080 --> 00:18:13,080

The military denied the existence of this craft for years and years.

143

00:18:13,080 --> 00:18:19,080

Then all of a sudden they announced it was going to be brought to the Air Force Museum.

144

00:18:19,080 --> 00:18:29,080

In hindsight, we also know that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Area 51 tests and perfects the technology known as stealth.

145

00:18:29,080 --> 00:18:36,080

The Air Force, quite rightly, didn't even want to give anybody a clue of how far they were going in

terms of stealth.

146

00:18:36,080 --> 00:18:41,080

Because that would have allowed people to make some preparations to detect these aircraft.

147

00:18:41,080 --> 00:18:45,080

The few aware of Area 51 fall into two groups.

148

00:18:45,080 --> 00:18:50,080

Aviation buffs, who speculate about the outer limits of aircraft technology,

149

00:18:50,080 --> 00:18:57,080

and a handful of UFO enthusiasts who believe that Area 51 is the successor to Hangar 18,

150

00:18:57,080 --> 00:19:06,080

the infamous location where the supposed debris from the Roswell saucer crash of July 1947 is being stored.

151

00:19:07,080 --> 00:19:15,080

Stories started bubbling up about UFOs in Area 51 back in the 70s and really started going in the mid-80s with a man named John Lear

152

00:19:15,080 --> 00:19:19,080

who started putting out some very outlandish tales.

153

00:19:19,080 --> 00:19:25,080

He's a guy who's really credible in a lot of ways, Air Force pilot, son of the Learjet developer, a sharp guy.

154

00:19:25,080 --> 00:19:29,080

So that made people kind of prick up their ears.

155

00:19:29,080 --> 00:19:36,080

But Lear's tales of flying saucers at Groom Lake remain on the fringes of Area 51 lore.

156

00:19:36,080 --> 00:19:48,080

Then, in May 1989, a television station in Las Vegas broadcasts a series of interviews that changes the imaginary landscape of Area 51 forever.

157

00:19:48,080 --> 00:19:53,080

Well, for better or for worse, I think a lot of the blame or credit goes to myself and KLAS-TV

158

00:19:53,080 --> 00:19:58,080

because although there had been stories here and there about Area 51 before we did our series,

159

00:19:58,080 --> 00:20:04,080

after that it went everywhere and it became a household name all over the world.

160

00:20:04,080 --> 00:20:06,080

You get off the bus, what do you see?

161

00:20:06,080 --> 00:20:13,080

It's a very interesting building. It's got a slope of probably about 30 degrees.

162

00:20:13,080 --> 00:20:22,080

The man being interviewed is Bob Lazar, and what he is describing is a secret testing facility near Area 51 called S4.

163

00:20:22,080 --> 00:20:26,080

Lazar knows this place, he claims, because he worked there.

164

00:20:26,080 --> 00:20:34,080

Little reports in blue covers that were stacked up on a table, I sat down in a room and I just glanced through all of them.

165

00:20:34,080 --> 00:20:38,080

They said they only gave me 20 some odd minutes just to thumb through these things.

166

00:20:38,080 --> 00:20:44,080

I think they just stuck me in the room to keep me busy for a minute, but there were some really shocking things in the reports.

167

00:20:44,080 --> 00:20:54,080

There were reports of chode alien cadavers like I spoke about before, any matter reactors technology that doesn't exist.

168

00:20:54,080 --> 00:20:58,080

Let's take them on a report on alien cadavers.

169

00:20:58,080 --> 00:21:04,080

There were autopsy reports. I mean, I didn't look completely read them because I didn't have time,

170

00:21:04,080 --> 00:21:10,080

and as soon as I got into some interesting things, I wanted to get through these really quickly because I knew I didn't have much time.

171

00:21:10,080 --> 00:21:14,080

Basically, I looked at the pictures and I'm just saved.

172

00:21:14,080 --> 00:21:16,080

I know the pictures of what?

173

00:21:16,080 --> 00:21:18,080

The dead aliens.

174

00:21:18,080 --> 00:21:25,080

Lazar not only has an incredible story to tell, he also appears to have the credentials to back up his claims.

175

00:21:25,080 --> 00:21:33,080

Lazar also has proof that he once worked at another top secret testing facility in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

176

00:21:33,080 --> 00:21:37,080

We took him to a couple of polygraph examiners. The first one was inconclusive.

177

00:21:37,080 --> 00:21:41,080

The second one said there was no question that he was telling the truth. How did he pass that?

178

00:21:41,080 --> 00:21:48,080

He knows about the inner workings of the base because I was a guy I know who worked out there, who put him through his paces,

179

00:21:48,080 --> 00:21:53,080

asked him a bunch of questions, not where do they store the flying saucers, but things like, where's the cafeteria?

180

00:21:53,080 --> 00:22:00,080

How do you pay for your meals? What color is it inside? That sort of thing, and he passed. How did he know?

181

00:22:00,080 --> 00:22:07,080

It's enough to convince a lot of people that Lazar is telling the truth, and the more he is interviewed, the more he tells.

182

00:22:07,080 --> 00:22:13,080

Believe it or not, that was not the most shocking thing to me. I said, great, okay, now and you know, next.

183

00:22:13,080 --> 00:22:15,080

And I began to dig through.

184

00:22:15,080 --> 00:22:16,080

What was next?

185

00:22:16,080 --> 00:22:24,080

Well, the technology part. The drive on the flying saucers, the flying discs, how they operated, the power source forum.

186

00:22:24,080 --> 00:22:29,080

I really dived into that most deeply and spent most of my time on that.

187

00:22:29,080 --> 00:22:31,080

What could say?

188

00:22:31,080 --> 00:22:39,080

The power source is an antimatter reactor. They run gravity amplifiers.

189

00:22:39,080 --> 00:22:49,080

But perhaps the most compelling part of Bob Lazar's remarkable story is that he says he knows exactly when and where these extraterrestrial craft can be seen.

190

00:22:49,080 --> 00:23:00,080

For one month in 1989, Lazar leads expeditions out to a black mailbox just off Highway 375 near the tiny town of Rachel, Nevada.

191

00:23:00,080 --> 00:23:07,080

As if on cue, strange discs begin hovering in the distance inside Dreamland.

192

00:23:07,080 --> 00:23:13,080

We've got video tape of things that look very much like flying saucers. We've got the witnesses who say they've seen them.

193

00:23:13,080 --> 00:23:19,080

If this is a secret government program and it's been developed since the 50s, where the hell is it?

194

00:23:19,080 --> 00:23:27,080

The Lazar sightings put Area 51 in the town of Rachel on the map. It is the right story at the right time.

195

00:23:27,080 --> 00:23:31,080

As a country, we didn't believe what our government told us.

196

00:23:31,080 --> 00:23:39,080

There was a poll that said more people believed in UFOs and believed they would get their money out of the social security system, which I thought was indicative.

197

00:23:39,080 --> 00:23:49,080

A struggling bar and grill in Rachel is renamed the Little Ailey Inn and becomes the de facto gathering place for newborn UFO enthusiasts from around the world.

198

00:23:49,080 --> 00:23:57,080

Lazar could have been ordered up by the Nevada Tourist Board. He brought so many people into the area.

199

00:23:57,080 --> 00:24:07,080

In fact, the governor of the state of Nevada drove up to Rachel, Nevada on Highway 375 and in tandem with the producers of the film, Independence Day,

200

00:24:07,080 --> 00:24:11,080

officially dedicated that highway as the extraterrestrial highway.

201

00:24:11,080 --> 00:24:23,080

The black mailbox becomes so much of an attraction that the owner of the box, rancher Steve Medlin, has to paint it white and padlock it to keep people from stealing his mail.

202

00:24:23,080 --> 00:24:38,080

It's not like a stone hinge or anything like that, but some people revere this thing to the point that to come here and to be with the mailbox and to sign the mailbox basically completes the whole reason for their trips.

203

00:24:38,080 --> 00:24:45,080

But even in the midst of the UFO boom, not all the UFO believers are convinced that Bob Lazar is telling the truth.

204

00:24:45,080 --> 00:25:03,080

He had enough information that he made many people believe he might be a disinformation agent, a plant to throw attention away from the real secret projects that were going on.

205

00:25:03,080 --> 00:25:11,080

If it was a setup of some sort to divert attention away from something else going on out there as many people have claimed, it was a miserable failure.

206

00:25:11,080 --> 00:25:21,080

Because the result has been that tens of thousands of people from all over the world have trekked out there to see whatever it is that's flying around in the sky.

207

00:25:21,080 --> 00:25:29,080

When we continue, intense public interest marks the beginning of the end for many of the secrets within Area 51.

208

00:25:29,080 --> 00:25:36,080

It is going to be a lot more difficult for security managers to keep what's going on at home like a secret.

209

00:25:37,080 --> 00:25:50,080

In the early 1990s with the Area 51 boom in full swing, the piece of public land with the best view of the secret facility is a place called Freedom Ridge, 12 miles east of the Groom Lake complex.

210

00:25:50,080 --> 00:26:01,080

From Freedom Ridge, patient sky watchers camping out for days on end are treated to a tantalizing show of strange shapes and lights in the sky.

211

00:26:01,080 --> 00:26:12,080

I've seen a double delta aircraft that is unidentifiable. I've seen a large diamond shaped aircraft. I've seen a small batmobile shaped thing. It looks like a baby B2. I've seen some drones.

212

00:26:12,080 --> 00:26:24,080

I don't believe it is just airplanes. There's too many people that have seen and heard things. I think alien beings have been with us forever.

213

00:26:24,080 --> 00:26:28,080

And I think they're working side by side with our government on this test site.

214

00:26:28,080 --> 00:26:44,080

It was interesting how tech lore and folklore graded into one another and how there seemed and even the nerdiest techno geek to be a desire for some kind of exciting, almost spiritual experience out there.

215

00:26:44,080 --> 00:26:54,080

Eventually, Bob Lazar tires of what he perceives to be near hysteria surrounding Area 51 and stops talking about the subject altogether.

216

00:26:54,080 --> 00:27:07,080

In reaction to the outlandish theories of UFO believers, aviation and technology buffs including Mark Farmer and Bill Sweetman form an organization called the Interceptors.

217

00:27:07,080 --> 00:27:20,080

The Interceptors exchanged information, had camp outs and tried to go the Air Force a little bit. I refer to them at times as the Decentral Intelligence Agency.

218

00:27:20,080 --> 00:27:36,080

If we have an icon as Interceptors, it's the lawn chair. It's men in lawn chairs out here in the desert sitting for days for really no good reason that has caused the government to basically change the rules of engagement out here.

219

00:27:36,080 --> 00:27:42,080

They were able to find an amazing amount of information, looking at budget documents, going to places and taking pictures.

220

00:27:42,080 --> 00:27:56,080

All these small bits and pieces of information by themselves are not classified, but the mosaic we've been able to produce as Interceptors is highly classified and the government doesn't like that and I'll blame them a bit.

221

00:27:56,080 --> 00:28:11,080

On October 18th, 1993, the Air Force demonstrates its disapproval by closing off an additional 3,972 acres around Groom Lake from public use. The new secured area includes Freedom Ridge.

222

00:28:11,080 --> 00:28:22,080

Although closing off Freedom Ridge makes it easier to keep prying eyes away from Area 51, it ultimately fans the flames of suspicion.

223

00:28:22,080 --> 00:28:39,080

I think it's no coincidence that it did happen in a period when people were suspicious of the government, when the Cold War had just ended. And yet there was continuing secrecy. What could the Air Force be being so secret about?

224

00:28:40,080 --> 00:28:52,080

The cause for truth at Area 51 is given a tremendous boost in 1996 when the respected Federation of American Scientists initiates a program called Public Eye.

225

00:28:52,080 --> 00:29:06,080

For the most part, the American public never gets an appreciation of what they're paying for or what they're doing. And what we're trying to do is sort of keep the government policy community and the intelligence community honest.

226

00:29:06,080 --> 00:29:16,080

And one of the ways the Federation achieves its goal is by hiring a private satellite, Space Imaging's Iconos satellite, to snap their own pictures of Area 51.

227

00:29:17,080 --> 00:29:26,080

Our intention for ordering the image of Area 51 was really to see whether we would get the image in the first place and to shed more light on what the government is doing there.

228

00:29:26,080 --> 00:29:35,080

We can point cameras at even the most sensitive U.S. government facilities with impunity, which means that we can point our cameras anywhere else in the world.

229

00:29:36,080 --> 00:29:45,080

The images don't display alien bodies or flying saucers as some hope, but they do provide the public with the most detailed images ever taken of Area 51.

230

00:29:46,080 --> 00:29:56,080

Now, with the proliferation of more high-resolution satellites, it is going to be a lot more difficult for security managers to keep what's going on at Green Lake a secret.

231

00:29:57,080 --> 00:30:06,080

As the aviation experts see it, what the government is hiding continues to be what they've always hidden there, the government's most cutting-edge aircraft technology.

232

00:30:07,080 --> 00:30:16,080

I think you'd see, for example, Taylor's aircraft. I'm sure there's some work going on in terms of visual stealth.

233

00:30:17,080 --> 00:30:23,080

Probably the greatest piece of G-Wiz work that's going on out there is that we built a space plane.

234

00:30:24,080 --> 00:30:35,080

It's suborbital and takes off under its own power. And you could figure that once you have a target, once you've figured out where you need to go, this thing could respond and be to where it needs to be.

235

00:30:36,080 --> 00:30:38,080

It could be within an hour, anywhere on the planet.

236

00:30:39,080 --> 00:30:48,080

Back at the little alien in Rachel, there are still those who cling firmly to the belief that government waste and space planes are only the tip of the Area 51 iceberg.

237

00:30:49,080 --> 00:31:00,080

I've had from several different sources have said that anything that is above ground in this facility over here, there's ten times or more than that underground.

238

00:31:00,080 --> 00:31:13,080

I've actually been told that there are six different beings on our test site. The large and the small, no, gray, the humanoid, the orange, the blue and the reptile.

239

00:31:14,080 --> 00:31:20,080

In some ways the government invited the alien obsession at Area 51. It was a helpful distraction.

240

00:31:21,080 --> 00:31:29,080

The irony at Area 51 is that the greatest danger at that facility didn't come from aliens and it didn't come from foreign powers.

241

00:31:30,080 --> 00:31:33,080

The greatest danger to those workers came from the United States government.

242

00:31:35,080 --> 00:31:43,080

To understand the real danger that Area 51 is hiding requires a step back in time, back to, strangely enough, 1989.

243

00:31:43,080 --> 00:31:54,080

While Bob Lazar is capturing national headlines with extraterrestrial tales about Area 51, a man named Robert Frost is suffering from a mysterious illness.

244

00:31:55,080 --> 00:32:01,080

His skin was starting to peel off his entire face and he developed blisters and sores all over his body.

245

00:32:02,080 --> 00:32:05,080

The skin kept peeling off to a point where it was every day.

246

00:32:05,080 --> 00:32:12,080

And he'd have to wash it off with a washcloth about every hour or so. It was just scaly like a fish.

247

00:32:13,080 --> 00:32:18,080

He said his face was on fire and his eyes were burning and he just ran right through the house.

248

00:32:19,080 --> 00:32:24,080

He ran to the bathroom and he started throwing cold water all over his head and he said he couldn't stand the pain.

249

00:32:25,080 --> 00:32:30,080

In 1989, Robert Frost is a sheet metal worker at Area 51.

250

00:32:31,080 --> 00:32:44,080

He is just one of the hundreds of nameless, faceless people who commute daily from their homes to the job site via unmarked 737s that take off from a secure hangar at Las Vegas' McCarran International Airport.

251

00:32:45,080 --> 00:32:53,080

On board the half hour flight are the people who keep the secrets at Area 51 and a lot of them are getting just as sick as Robert Frost.

252

00:32:55,080 --> 00:33:02,080

Many of these guys developed a fish-like scale that could cover much of their body and would crack and bleed.

253

00:33:03,080 --> 00:33:09,080

Robert Frost had this condition more severely than most and his guys tried to help him as much as they could.

254

00:33:10,080 --> 00:33:16,080

And when Robert died, it put a real chill through the base.

255

00:33:17,080 --> 00:33:25,080

When the workers go to their doctors, they are told they have a form of toxic poisoning that can only be treated if the specific poisons are known.

256

00:33:26,080 --> 00:33:34,080

Supervisors at Area 51 refuse to disclose what those poisons are or to release information from Robert Frost's autopsy report.

257

00:33:36,080 --> 00:33:44,080

It's a hell of a thing to lose a friend and have the government say there's not a bloody thing you

can do about it because this place doesn't exist and frankly you don't exist.

258

00:33:44,080 --> 00:33:50,080

Well, they did exist. They're American citizens and so they sued and they proved that they existed.

259

00:33:51,080 --> 00:33:57,080

When we continue, what lawyers found when they went searching for the secret dangers hidden at Area 51?

260

00:33:58,080 --> 00:34:05,080

Private citizens have gone to jail for violations that are a fraction of what occurred at Area 51.

261

00:34:06,080 --> 00:34:15,080

In 1992, lawyer Jonathan Turley is contacted by several Area 51 employees who are suffering from a debilitating illness.

262

00:34:16,080 --> 00:34:23,080

I was the first lawyer that most of them had talked to. These are not the type of people who look to lawyers in the courts to resolve their problems.

263

00:34:24,080 --> 00:34:33,080

These are very patriotic people. They were put at Area 51 for a reason and things had to get very, very bad for them to seek help.

264

00:34:33,080 --> 00:34:41,080

They decided that what was happening at Area 51 was a greater danger to the American people than what they were trying to defend against.

265

00:34:42,080 --> 00:34:43,080

That's a pretty awful point to reach.

266

00:34:44,080 --> 00:34:52,080

The workers aren't seeking money or punitive damages from the government. They just want to know why Robert Frost is dead and if they're going to die too.

267

00:34:53,080 --> 00:35:00,080

They didn't come to the government with these medical problems saying we want big cash settlements. They just wanted to know what they'd been exposed to.

268

00:35:00,080 --> 00:35:12,080

These workers were coming down with classic symptoms of exposure to hazardous waste. What made it an almost impossible case was where they were exposed.

269

00:35:13,080 --> 00:35:22,080

Fearing severe reprisals from the government that has sworn them to secrecy, Area 51 workers are listed on court documents as John Doe's 1 through 6.

270

00:35:23,080 --> 00:35:27,080

Turley's meetings with the John Doe's are held in secret locations.

271

00:35:27,080 --> 00:35:40,080

And so you would sit in a garage with a man who was dying, who had to get out of his bed so that he wouldn't cause difficulty for his family if the government saw him or found out he was one of the John Doe's.

272

00:35:41,080 --> 00:35:55,080

And you sit there and you think, what's wrong with this picture? And this man was hiding from his government because he had the audacity to bring forth violations, including criminal violations committed in his presence.

273

00:35:55,080 --> 00:36:07,080

What Jonathan Turley learns from the John Doe's is that not only is Area 51 the nation's most secret base, it's also America's most secret toxic waste dumping ground.

274

00:36:08,080 --> 00:36:17,080

Area 51 faced a problem. They couldn't ship out hazardous waste from places that didn't exist. So they started to burn the waste.

275

00:36:17,080 --> 00:36:34,080

And the trenches and pits started to get bigger and bigger. Soon they were digging football field-sized trenches, filling them with 55-gallon drums of waste, dousing them with air fuel, and then setting them alight with a flare.

276

00:36:34,080 --> 00:36:46,080

But there's a reason why burning hazardous waste is a crime. And the reason is that most hazardous waste is more dangerous when you burn it because it's an easier way to enter the human body.

277

00:36:47,080 --> 00:36:58,080

Now in the genius of the military, they dug these trenches on the wind-receiving side of the base. So the wind would blow acutely hazardous waste throughout the base.

278

00:36:58,080 --> 00:37:05,080

That's why the workers called it London Fog. And when they complained, they were told that it's basically our way or the highway.

279

00:37:06,080 --> 00:37:18,080

They were told that Area 51 was a place that was so secret that federal law didn't apply there. And it shouldn't be much of a surprise that when you have a place where most anything can occur, most anything does.

280

00:37:19,080 --> 00:37:33,080

Secrecy is something that we need in government clearly. But it is a very dangerous thing as well. It's very easy to use secrecy, not just to hide from the enemy, but to hide from friends, congress, citizens, whatever.

281

00:37:34,080 --> 00:37:42,080

And the burning of toxic waste was a perfect metaphor for the abuses of secrecy that happened inside Area 51.

282

00:37:43,080 --> 00:37:49,080

It takes three years for the workers at Area 51 to get their first day in court in 1995.

283

00:37:50,080 --> 00:37:59,080

There was something almost feline about the case. I mean, we would stand in court and the government would deny the existence of a base that you could see from public lands.

284

00:38:00,080 --> 00:38:08,080

I could drive the judge to the base and point at the bloody thing. But here we were debating with the United States government whether it would exist or not.

285

00:38:09,080 --> 00:38:19,080

And while Turley debates the existence of a non-existent base, one of his John Doe's dies. It's Wally Kaza, the man who replaced Robert Frost as foreman.

286

00:38:20,080 --> 00:38:30,080

At points there were statements made by the government that left you laughing. And they would be enormously funny if you didn't have two dead clients.

287

00:38:31,080 --> 00:38:36,080

Eventually, Turley does get the government to admit that there is a secret testing facility at Groom Lake.

288

00:38:37,080 --> 00:38:50,080

But to this day, they deny that it is called Area 51. And the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals rules that the workers or their widows are not entitled to learn what hazardous substances exist at the secret facility.

289

00:38:51,080 --> 00:39:06,080

The ruling is based, in part, on Presidential Determination No. 95-45 in which President Clinton exempts the Air Force Operating Location near Groom Lake, Nevada from all federal environmental laws.

290

00:39:07,080 --> 00:39:24,080

For several years, the President has signed a letter saying that it was quote, of the paramount national interest that Area 51 remained secret and that it remained outside the reach of discovery of court suits on behalf of workers.

291

00:39:25,080 --> 00:39:32,080

The government claimed that simply acknowledging that it is hazardous waste would put American lives at risk. Well, obviously, that's facially absurd.

292

00:39:32,080 --> 00:39:40,080

And it wasn't done for national security. It was done for the oldest reason in law. It was to hide misconduct in crimes, crimes that may have killed two people.

293

00:39:41,080 --> 00:39:50,080

Although the John Doe suit does not allow workers at Area 51 to know what they've been exposed to, it does mandate that future workers will not suffer the same fate.

294

00:39:51,080 --> 00:39:57,080

We forced the first inspection of a black facility, the first commitment to future compliance of a black facility.

295

00:39:57,080 --> 00:40:04,080

We forced them to acknowledge the existence of the base. We did a lot of things for the first time in Area 51.

296

00:40:05,080 --> 00:40:10,080

But, you know, it really didn't feel like a point of celebration because there were people that were not around to see it.

297

00:40:11,080 --> 00:40:18,080

And despite everyone's best efforts, in the end, the whole truth about Area 51 is still a mystery.

298

00:40:19,080 --> 00:40:27,080

Tremendous things have happened out there that will probably never be told. And in some respects, it makes me sad.

299

00:40:28,080 --> 00:40:38,080

Some day, what happened at Area 51 will be made public. I truly believe that. And the public will be shocked about what was done in their name.