

THE BERKELEY GROUP
"ENCOUNTERS"/AREA 51
INTERVIEW WITH: GLENN CAMPBELL
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Q
What is your profession?

GC
I'm an advocate for greater government openness here at the Secret Groom Lake Base. Area 51 researcher.

Q
For the lay person, could you give me a little synopsis on Area 51? Maybe tell us how it's set up, how it came to be called Area 51?

GC
Area 51 is a- is a secret base about ninety miles due north of Las Vegas, where the government has-has historically conducted its, uh, top secret research on, uh, the latest generation of aircraft.

Q
When it did it start becoming notorious? And what events made it notorious?

GC
It's always been a s- a-a base that doesn't exist. It-it was born for the U2 program back in the fifties, and that was a plane that didn't exist until Francis Gary Powers was shot down in one. it's always been a very mysterious place.

Q
And what is its status today?

GC
It's- it still remains just as heavily shrouded in-in secrecy as it was during the Cold War. And we still don't know what's out there, and the government still doesn't acknowledge that it's there.

Q
Why?

GC
That's a good question. Uh, we-we don't know why the government won't acknowledge it. There's-there's many theories. People say there's alien craft there. People say- uh, very sane-minded people say that we shouldn't be sharing our secrets, our military secrets, with the world, and that, uh, by revealing this base somehow national security would be compromised.

Q
And what do you say to them?

GC
Oh, I-I think secrecy, uh, is something that doesn't mix very well with democracy. Secrecy certainly is required in military affairs, uh, but it-it- there's also a loss of control by the taxpayer when that happens. Secrecy has to be continually justified. And just because this space has always been secret doesn't mean it necessarily should remain so.

Q
What about the money? What kind of money do you think- what kind of taxpayer's money do you think is going into this?

GC
A lot. I-I-I just can't- I-I have no estimate really. There's a lot of money being spent out there, but I, like everyone else, don't know how much. That's-that's the question...
(Misc.)
I don't know how much is being spent out there. That's the problem. There's no controls. We have no idea how much

money is being spent there, although it's certainly a lot. It's a large facility.

Q
So that money that's being spent there doesn't show up on defense department expense...?

GC
Uh, this money shows up under black budget categories. Uh, it is-it is lumped under certain categories like Special Operations or-or Special Projects, and we don't know how the money is broken down within that.

Q
Are black budget projects a big percentage of our...?

GC
Eh- uh, approximately ten to fifteen percent is-is the general estimate of how much it is. And that's a lot, cause we have a huge defense budget. Uh, that's money that isn't being accounted for in-in any way. The taxpayer has no knowledge of what that money is being spent for.

Q
What is it specifically that you are doing here?

GC
I'm an advocate for greater government openness. I am pushing for greater openness at the base. I'm not necessarily pushing for total openness. I rea-realize that the military does have to keep some secrets. But right now, after the Cold War, after we've lost our principle technological enemy, we don't have the same needs for total secrecy that we had. Things have to change. I am pushing in a certain direction; the military pushes in the other direction. Sooner or later, we'll-we'll reach a new balance.

Q
What are some of the things that are going on there that we do know?

GC
Well, we definitely know that the B-2 is a regular visitor there. They-they, uh, conduct what is called radio-radi-... They conduct what is called radar cross-sectional testing of the B-2, and possibly other stealth aircraft. Uh, most of those projects that are out there at ar-Area 51 are probably quite mundane. If you knew what was out there, you probably wouldn't be excited.

Q
What are some of the things that people are saying are out there?

GC
Because this base does not exist, a lot of stories have grown up around it. Some of them very wild. And you can't say that they're true or false. Uh, this is- this place is a sort of raw shack test. People see what they want to see, and you can't disprove it. I can't disprove it.

Q
What are people saying the base is?

GC
Well, there have been longstanding rumors of alien craft out here. And there have been, uh, uh- there- sort of a social movement of people coming out here to look for alien craft. People see alien craft, or believe that they see alien craft. Uh, most of these sightings, I believe, are just routine military activity that people are mistaking.

Q
What are some of the things that people are saying are going on there?

GC
Because this is a base that doesn't exist and we don't know what's out there, there have been a steady stream of stories, some of them quite wild, about what might be going out there. We have stories of alien craft. We have stories of hypersonic

aircraft. Uh, we have stories of every conceivable conspiracy that you can think of. They- all these stories can't possibly be true. If some of these stories are true, certainly they're not all true. And because we don't know what's there, we don't know which one is which. Certainly, all of these stories can't be true. Maybe some of them are. We don't know.

Q
There are some interesting accounts of lights and objects doing very amazing things and things seem to be beyond what we know...

GC
Certainly. Crowds and crowds of people are coming here and seeing amazing lights in the sky. They-they think they're seeing UFO's. Most of the tales that I've heard, most of the sighting reports, I-I think are just routine military activity. People don't understand that this is a war zone. Essentially, the area around Area 51 is a major exercise area, and you have a lot of exotic maneuvers, uh, dogfights, flares, other things that could be mistaken as UFO's if you're in that frame of mind.

Q
Tell me about Freedom Ridge and what's happening with the land?

GC
Uh, last October, October of-of '93, the air force applied to the Bureau of Land Management to withdraw four thousand acres of public land for exclusive military use. Uh, the land that they're-they're taking just so happens to coincide with Freedom Ridge and Whitesides Mountain, two hills where you can look down on the secret base. The problem is the air force isn't acknowledging the real reason that they're taking this land. Obviously, they want to keep people off this land so they don't see what's going on down at Area 51.

Q
Tell me about Freedom Ridge as a vantage point, of course there's other vantage points that you cannot get to. Is that a stand-out place to watch from?

GC
In-in 1984, the air force seized eighty-nine thousand acres of public land. Uh, the entire Groom mountain range, in fact, because it overlooked the secret base at Groom Lake. Obviously, they were trying to keep people off this mountain range, so they would not look down on the base. Unfortunately, they screwed up. They, uh, they failed to take two small, obscure viewpoints, which we now call Whitesides and Freedom Ridge. Uh, recently, they-they've applied to take this land. They've- they're applying to take these small viewpoints, uh, to keep people- further keep people off this land.

Q
Tell me what the terrain is like getting to Freedom Ridge. If you're describing to someone what they can expect getting from here to Freedom Ridge. How would you describe it?

GC
This is a very open terrain. This part of Nevada is vast, open valleys without a tree in sight. It's the northern boundary of the... This part of-of Nevada is vast, open valleys without a tree in sight. Uh, at the- at the base of each va-valley is usually a dry lake bed. Groom Lake is one of these dry lakes. Uh, to get to Freedom Ridge, we cro-cross another valley, the Tikabu(sp?) Valley. And, uh, we wind up through a, uh, narrow canyon, and eventually get to a high point, which just happens to be right adjacent to the existing military border. We're on public land, we have a right to be here.

Q
Who oversees security in that area?

GC
This whole area of the military border and adjoining public lands are patrolled by anonymous patrols, anonymous security personnel, in camouflage fatigues, without insignia, driving unmarked government vehicles. The best intelligence we have say-says that they're private contractors employed by EG&G, a-

a large government contractor.

Q
And what are their instructions?

GC
Evidently, they-they are responsible for keeping track of visitors who approach the border. Uh, we're upset about this because we ha-... Uh, these-these pa- these patrols are charged with securing their border, keeping-keeping people out of-of this restricted military area. Unfortunately, they also patrol a-a large area of public lands, up to ten miles from the border. Any-any civilians who happen to approach this border, even if you stay on public land, you will be followed by these patrols, and-and they will keep track of you.

Q
What means do they use to keep track of you?

GC
We have- they... The security patrols have a sensor network, a very elaborate sensor network on public land, uh, up to- up to five miles from the border. Using the sensor network, they can detect vehicles that are-are approaching the border and so that they can send out a patrol to-to watch over them. Once they see you, they'll keep track of you, and they won't lose sight of you until you leave the area.

Q
And what are these sensors?

GC
These sensors are relatively simple magnetic, uh, sensors that detect a big hunk of metal going by. When you drive by one of these sensors, it will give out a transmission that tells the-the central control that-that you're approaching, someone is approaching, on this particular road.

Q
If you're in there at night, do they have additional means of tracking?

GC
Well, there's a lot of security patrols out in this area approaching Freedom Ridge. It's very hard to sneak in undetected simply because there's so many eyes out there. They have night vision capabilities, uh, so they can sneak around where-where they're expecting people to be. Uh, very few people have been able to sneak in to-to Freedom Ridge with-without being detected.

Q
What can you get away with there? If we were going up there to film, what can we get away with?

GC
Regarding filming?

Q
Yeah. Or anything.

GC
Freedom Ridge is public land. You have a right to be there. You have a right to camp there any-any time you want. Uh, we-we object to the-the security patrols following you on Freedom Ridge, because essentially this is public land open to everyone. Uh, it-it's supposedly illegal to photograph the secret base. There are signs as you approach this area, uh, that photography is prohibited. But it's a very difficult, uh, regulation to enforce. We don't know where the base begins and ends. We don't know specifically what the area is we're not supposed to photograph, because of course the base doesn't exist. Uh, but...if you approach this area with a camera and you wave your camera around and say, "I'm photographing this base," you're likely to have an encounter with-with the local authorities. Uh, they- the, uh, camo dudes, as we call them, will not, uh, contact, uh, civilians on their own. They're under-under orders not to maintain- they're under orders to maintain their distance, uh, from civilians. If-if they feel that you have photographed the base, they will call the county sheriff and

you could have an encounter with him.

Q
What would the sheriff do?

GC
Uh...the sheriff is-is simply looking for violations of law. Uh, he has a contract, the sheriff's department in Lincoln County has a contract with the air force to investigate possible infractions of law. So essentially, the camo dudes report you, say, by saying "they have photographed the secret base in violation of a law." The-the sheriff comes to investigate this. He has the power, if need be, to serve a search warrant and arrest you. Sear-search warrants have been served, but no one has been arrested.

Q
What were the cases for the search warrants? Were they TV crews?

GC
ABC, yeah.

Q
What happened?

GC
What was the month? March. Uh, in March of '94, this year, uh, ABC News was up on Freedom Ridge conducting some interviews with, uh, with myself and another person. We were not shooting the secret base, but evidently the-the camo dudes thought that we- they were- we were. Uh, in March of-of this year, uh, I went up to Freedom Ridge with a crew, news crew from ABC News, and-and a friend of mine. ABC News, uh, conducted an interview myself a-and, uh, my friend Peter Merlin. Uh, they did not photograph the secret base, but evidently the-the camo dudes, the security dudes, felt that we were. Uh, they reported us to the sheriff. Uh, the sheriff investigated it-eh- investigated... The sheriff investigated the case. Uh, evidently, someone... The sheriff investigated the case. And, uh, we told him we weren't shooting the base. And, uh, evidently, we weren't believed because they served a search warrant on us and seized all of ABC's camera equipment. It was re-returned a few days later and the air force was very embarrassed.

Q
What's your feeling on that incident and that kind of incident? Should that have happened? Did they have the right to seize that?

GC
The one thing you don't do is you don't take away the cameras of a major news organization. That's the best way to assure that your story is going to be on page one. And it was. It-it received play on the ABC Evening News.

Q
What does that say to you about this base? Don't they say it doesn't exist?

GC
This-this tells me that whatever the air force is, they-they're not very bright. They don't have a sense for public relations. They don't realize that the best way to publicize their secret base is to pretend it isn't there. Obviously they're attracting attention to this area just by denying the base exists.

Q
I just want to get back to the base a little bit. How many people do you think come in and out of there every day? How many people do you think work there?

GC
We're not sure how many people work there. The only solid figure we have is there are about ten to twelve roundtrips every day of, uh, seven-thirty-seven passenger jets. These are what bring the bulk of workers in from Las Vegas. Uh, a seven-thirty-seven holds about a hundred and ten to a hundred and thirty people. That implies there are about, uh, fifteen hundred seats going in each direction. Uh, that-that would suggest that a-a workforce of anywhere from five

hundred to two thousand people.

Q

Do you have any thoughts on whether there might be something rather extensive underground as well?

GC

There have been longstanding rumors of underground facilities at Groom Lake. I really don't have any solid data on that. Uh, it would be reasonable to have an underground facility. That protects it from- protects whatever you're-you're working on from satellite overflights. It protects the... (Misc.) There have been longstanding rumors of underground facilities at Groom Lake. I don't have any data to support or refute that. It would seem reasonable that a facility like this would be largely underground, because it-it would protect whatever we were working on from satellite overflights and, uh, other data collection. Uh, there's certainly extensive, uh, technology for tunnelling at the adjoining Nevada test site. Uh, I-I would not discount this possibility. However, I don't think that they're-these are extremely extensive underground facilities; simply basements.

Q

What do you think's going to happen in the future? Do you think they're gonna eventually open up? Or do you think it's going to remain ...

GC

The air force is-is in a very difficult position. It-it's put itself in its own- its-... The air force is in a very difficult position. It's trying to defend the non-existence of a base that everyone knows is there. Sooner or later, they're gonna have to open to some extent. They're going to have to at least acknowledge what we know already, which is that there is a base. Uh...

Q

Could you give me an idea of where this base ranks in terms of secrecy in the United States?

GC

Well, this is- this is the most secret secret base that we know about. But of course it were more secret, maybe you wouldn't know... This is the most secret secret base that we know about, but other secret bases maybe we don't know about. This is the most secret secret base that we know about. But I guess if a base were really secret, we wouldn't know about it, would we?

Q

Can you set up for me how remote this is? I mean, would you call this one of the more remote areas in the country?

GC

When this base was first built, first started, in the fifties, this was one of the remote- most remote places in the country. Uh, unfortunately, Las Vegas has boomed recently, and suddenly this place isn't quite so remote anymore. Being ninety miles from Las Vegas is not the middle of nowhere anymore. The- the world is creeping up on-on Groom Lake.

Q

It's still pretty remote, though.

GC

This still remains a-a highly secure facility. It's-it's miles from any major population center. The only thi- place- the only thing that makes it not so secret anymore is all the attention that's being drawn to this area. Essentially, this has become a tourist mecca.

Q

And what are the tourists coming for?

GC

Everybody loves a secret base. No one can resist it. The fact that the government denies it exists is a magnet. It-it draws people here. Everyone wants to see the secret base.

Q

Do you have a personal opinion of what's going on?

GC

I have no idea what's going on at that base. I've heard all the stories, and the longer I'm here the more mystified I get. What I've learned is that I just don't make judgments about things like that unless I have the solid evidence. What's certain to me is the secrecy is excessive here. And someone's gotta fight for greater openness.

Q

You seem to me like a very skeptical person, yet you don't seem to have a problem talking to all the different people who are real sure about what they think it is.

GC

I try to-to walk a nice middle line here. Uh, I don't dismiss all the UFO to- stories... I try-try to walk a nice middle line here. I don't dismiss all the UFO stories. Some of them sound very interesting. But I don't have enough data at this point to really make a judgment.

Q

The question is, you're very skeptical, yet you're very open-minded.

GC

I-I see the mysteries of Groom Lake a-as an intellectual challenge. Uh, it-it's an exercise on how to- how to be disciplined, how-how to process evidence a-and do it accurately. This is the sort of-of mystery that Sherlock Holmes would be interested in. It's, um-Holmes wasn't interested so much in the outcome; he was interested in the process of the mystery; how do you go about solving something? What this has boiled down to, for me, uh, is an issue of-of government secrecy. Everybody can agree that the-the secret-secrecy is a little bit too heavy here. I think by attacking government secrecy, you eventually get to what's ever out there. If there are UFO's there, by shaking the secrecy tree, they might fall out.

Q

Once again, why is it Ok to be there and exposing this? Why aren't we endangering our country's security?

GC

I recognize the importance of a strong military. We still have enemies out here. We have the Sadams of the world, the North Koreans, that will continue to pose a threat to our way of life and our national security. Secrecy is an important element of that defense. Obviously, we cannot tell our potential enemies what our capabilities are. At the same time, secrecy is a threat. Secrecy and democracy don't mix, because democracy is basically an open system. Uh, it's an open system that is- that is under the control of the people. If the people aren't allowed to see what their money is being- is paying for, then there's a risk that the, uh, the bureaucracy will-will go out of control. I recognize the importance of a strong military. America still has enemies out there. We have the Sadams of the world, and- and the North Koreans. We will continue to have these enemies that could be a risk to our national security. Secrecy is an important element in our military defense, because obviously we do not want to tell our potential enemies what our capabilities are. At the same time, secrecy can be a threat. Uh, secrecy and democracy don't mix, because democracy is basically an open system. It's a-a system of checks and balances. And when the-the bosses, who are the people, can't see, uh, what their money is pay- being- is paying for, uh, there's a risk that, uh, democracy will be lost.

Q

To get back to just a sense of this area. In your normal military base around the country, the money from that just sort of flows out into the outlying communities ... What happens in this area to all of that money? Does it flow out into the neighboring communities?

GC

Lincoln County, where the-the secret base is located, is one of the poorest counties in the nation. With other military bases in other parts of the country, some of the economic benefit of having the base flows out into the community. That's not true

here. Uh, Lincoln County gets very little of the benefit of having a secret base within its borders.

Q

What kind of support does the sheriff get for having to do all the backup for the security people?

GC

The-the sh- Lincoln County Sheriff's Department has a small contract with the air force. It amounts to about fifty thousand dollars a year. And what the air- what the sheriff is required to do for that money is simply respond to complaints made by the security patrols that a law may have been violated. Their job then is to investigate the alleged violation.

END OF TAPE