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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [Area 51](#) -> [List](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Sep](#) -> **Lazar Theory #1: Fraud for Bigelow Funding**

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## Lazar Theory #1: Fraud for Bigelow Funding

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Date: Thu, 18 Sep 1997 13:30:09 -0800

As a "librarian" for the UFO field (through the Ufomind website), it is not my job to make conclusions. Instead I simply collect the relevant documents and let others draw conclusions from them. I can, however, propose theories and draw attention to specific earthly facts that are beyond doubt.

UFO claims, by their nature, are usually impossible to prove or disprove, but you can check the peripheral facts and make some conclusions about a witness's personality. In the end, all we have to decide is whether the story is worth further research compared to other things we could be doing with our time.

I have always approached the Lazar story the same way. Did he work with alien craft at "Area S-4" in Nevada? I can't say. What I can say is that he has lied about so many other things, like his educational credentials, that his story isn't worth my own time to further investigate. The core claim that he worked with alien craft somewhere could be true, but you would have to come up with a very complicated theory to explain it all, including a rationale for his deceptions, and no such theory has yet emerged that adequately fits the facts.

What is the simplest theory? Below is one proposal. To say that Lazar is a fraud is nothing new. What hasn't been proposed until now is Lazar's possible motivation.

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Lazar Theory #1  
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Lazar made up the story on his own based on his own significant technical knowledge, his peripheral work with a contractor on the Nellis Range and the prior Area 51 alien claims of John Lear (aliens eating humans in a vast underground base), which Lazar "cleaned up" and made more plausible.

According to this theory, Area "S-4" is a corruption of "Site 4", a real Top Secret radar installation northwest of Area 51 (not south at Papoose Lake). It was a place that no one could talk about in 1989 because purloined Soviet radar were tested there. Lazar has probably

never been to Site 4, but he could have heard the name.

What was Lazar's motivation? Money. Under Theory #1, Lazar cooked up the story to obtain funding from Las Vegas philanthropist Robert Bigelow, who was known to sponsor far-out projects. (Bigelow is still investing millions in parapsychology and UFO research but is intensely secretive about his activities.)

In fact, Bigelow did set up a Nevada corporation for Lazar, the Zeta Reticuli 2 Corp., shortly after Lazar went public. It was apparently created to fund Lazar's research into "Element 115," which Lazar initially claimed he had samples of. (The government has since "taken them back.")

While the existence of the corporation is a matter of public record, we do not know how much Bigelow spent. We do know that the project did not last long, and that Bigelow felt somehow burned by Lazar (according to sources who have known Bigelow).

Meanwhile, the story took on a much bigger life than originally intended. UFO buffs swarmed to the story in a way that Lazar could have never anticipated, and he became the UFO equivalent of Princess Diana, always chased by those who wanted to hear him, revile him or be touched. He has been trying to keep a low profile ever since. Lazar has said that he wished his story had never come to light, and those are probably his real sentiments.

Under this theory, Lear, Gene Huff, George Knapp and other supporters were patsies, not co-conspirators. They were tools used by Lazar in pursuit of Bigelow, and later they were his defenders and his protection against having to answer too many questions.

The government itself was taken by surprise by Lazar's claims. It may have indeed conducted its own investigation to see if any classified information was release (since Lazar did have a security clearance). Real FBI agents like "Mike Thigpin" could have visited Lazar. Recall that in 1989, the Cold War was not yet over, and secrecy at Area 51 was still extreme.

Lazar, however, has never been to Area 51. I can say this with confidence after talking to people who have. While no one can say whether Lazar has ever been to Papoose Lake, which is still a closed area, the claim that he had flew to Area 51 enroute to Papoose should have been easily provable. Lazar should be able to describe innocuous details of the place, like what the cafeteria or plane arrival area looked like. Lazar has never done this, even though he supposedly revealed much bigger secrets. Some former Area 51 workers have seen so little of their workplace that they cannot completely dismiss the Lazar claims, but they do know the cafeteria. One former Area 51 worker who has queried Lazar on these questions regards him as evasive. There is no doubt in his mind that Lazar is a fraud.

The "Element 115" claim could have come from contemporary articles on exotic elements, such as one in Scientific American in May 1989. Like Papoose Lake, Lazar's claims about Element 115 can not be disproven because no one has been there.

According to this Theory #1, Lazar's "S-4" flying saucer claims are completely phony, a con for cash, but he is a smart guy with some advanced skills who came up with a good story. Whether or not he made enough money to justify the effort is debatable, but he is still guilty of fraud. You don't have to be successful at robbing a bank to be found guilty of it.

I don't mean "fraud" in any negative sense, however. Even if false, the Lazar story has had real effects, not all of them bad. For one thing he made Area 51 the most popular secret base in the world. Lazar has also gotten people thinking about the many philosophical issues his story has raised, like the implications of exotic physics, the dangers of excessive government secrecy, possible scenarios for alien contact and the nature of consciousness and those "containers" we live in. In a sense, Lazar's story is a lot deeper than he is.

Those who were taken, were taken by themselves. Fraud thrives in conditions of secrecy, like that found at Area 51 or in the Bigelow organization. It also thrives where people want to believe something really badly. Clever con men are opportunists who exploit self-deceptions that already exist. They exploit existing beliefs and real circumstances to serve their own needs, and they tell the believers exactly what they want to hear.

(I should note, however, that my own interest in the Lazar story brought me to Nevada in 1992 and lead me to my current career as a "UFO webmaster." Lazar inspired me with his stick-to-the-facts demeanor in interviews, which I still find impressive and have tried to emulate. As an unofficial spokesman for Area 51, I have probably done things that have given Lazar more credibility than he deserves, like not dismissing on camera, but I have no regrets about leaving the door open. True or false, I feel the Lazar story has enriched my life in many interesting ways.)

I am not saying that anyone can "prove" Theory #1. There will always be ways for believers to believe. But of the theories currently available, this is the one that best fits the facts.

This theory raises logical questions that any journalist could ask Lazar, like: "When you got off the plane at Area 51, what did you see?" But no unbiased journalist has gotten close to Lazar in years. TV crews from paranormal shows have interviewed him, but they need UFOs or they have no story, so they have never asked him the hard questions. The Lazar who appears on television radiates sincerity, and it is hard for the average viewer not to believe him.

All knowledge is relative. Maybe somewhere, in some universe, the Lazar story is true. Maybe there is some rational theory we cannot now envision that ties it all together and makes the story pursuable again. For the time being, though, we have to work with the knowledge we have. Lazar and his story may still have a lot to teach us about the UFO field, but it isn't the lesson Lazar intended.

Glenn Campbell

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Index: [Bob Lazar](#)  
Index: [Robert Bigelow](#)  
Index: [Essays & Articles by Glenn Campbell](#)

[Mothership](#) -> [Area 51](#) -> [List](#) -> [1997](#) -> [Sep](#) -> [Here](#)

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