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UFO UpDates Mailing List

Re: Fox TV Special

From: **Greg Sandow** <gsandow@prodigy.net>
Date: Tue, 12 Jan 1999 04:29:47 -0500
Fwd Date: Tue, 12 Jan 1999 11:06:33 -0500
Subject: Re: Fox TV Special

>Date: Sun, 10 Jan 1999 12:56:39 -0600
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <updates@globalserve.net>
>From: Michael Christol <mchristo@mindspring.com>
>Subject: Re: UFO UpDate: Re: Fox TV Special

>Do you have a copy of the video 'Contact?' It is the
>investigation of the Billy Meier case by Wendelle Stevens, Lee
>and Britt Elders, and Tom Welch...

>This video has the sounds on it...It has a short blurb of the
>sounds early on as the explain where the recordings were taken
>by Poppi and Billy.

>Later in the video, is where they actually analyze the sounds.
>One must remember that this analysis of the Meier case occurred
>over a five year case, and the video itself was copyrighted in
>1986.

<snips>

>The sounds were taken to Electronics Consultant Nils Rognerud
>and Sound Engineer Steve Amborse for examination, according to
>the 'CONTACT' Video...

>However, the book, 'UFO Contact From The Pleiades, A Prleiminary
>Investigation', By Wendelle Stevens, says the following:

>"At Excaliber Studios on Ventura Boulevard in Studio City,
>California, Nils rognerud and Steve Singer, sound engineer and
>electronics system designer, working together with a
>Hewlett-Packard model 3580 Frequency Spectrum Analyzer, with
>amemory unit, a Two-channel Oscilloscope, a Multi-track Mixer
>and Amplitude Readout and Full Frequency Sound Control Board,
>studied and analyzed a 3-minute segment of the later spacecraft
>sounds that were recorede in front of 15 witnesses."

Just so we don't get wowed by this long list of equipment...only
the spectrum analyzer and the oscilloscope are needed for the
analysis. The terminology may sound formidable, but in truth
it's needlessly so. A multi-track mixer is, for instance, a
redundant term -- all mixers are multi-track, since mixing many
tracks together is what they're for. And in any case a mixer is
nothing special or exotic, just a piece of standard studio gear,
used in any professional recording.

>Continuing from the Stevens Investigative Report:

>"Mr. Nils Rognerud of the Rognerud Research and Development

>Company of Los Angeles, advised me in his letter Dated 12
>December, 1981, 'Regarding the taped UFO sounds from the Swiss
>case, I found a very complex and changing sound pattern.

<snips>

>The
>sound pattern is very dynamic and changing, and the only thing
>that seemed to have a repeatable pattern was an
>amplitude-modulation (a signal in which the volume is varied at
>a low periodic rate). For the three UFO recordings, this
>frequency worked out to be 4.9 cycles per second, 4.6 cycles per
>second, and 5.0 cycles per second. It is worthwhile revealing
>that Nicola Tesla discovered a natural electro-magnetic
>resonance of Earth at 6.6 chcles per second. A second gentleman
>named Schulman also discovered a second resonance at 7.8 cycles
>per second. Now you mention that your tape was running a bit
>slow. This could explain why the vibrations are a little bit
>slower than expected.'"

So the "signal" in the sound (more on that below) turns out
not to match the alleged electromagnetic resonance of the
earth! Many, many years ago, my mother told me that beer causes
cancer. (I'm not making this up.) I asked her why she thought
that, and she pulled out a New York Times article, which said
that beer did not cause cancer. "But what do they know?" she
asked, triumphantly.

Michael, I'm afraid that your evidence for the sound of Meier's
UFOs matching the resonance of the earth makes no more sense
than my mother's evidence for beer causing cancer. The document
you're quoting from clearly states that there is no match.

Ah, but what about the tapes running slow? That would, indeed,
slow the "signal" on the tape down. So maybe if the tapes ran at
the proper speed, the sound really would match the resonance of
the earth after all.

Or, on the other hand, maybe it wouldn't. We aren't told -- and
the analytical gentlemen apparently didn't think to ask --
exactly how slowly the tape was running. That's crucial data.
Depending on the exact speed of the tape, the frequency of the
"signal" might turn out to be 5.3 cycles per second, 5.7 cycles
per second, 6.6 cycles per second, 8.9 cycles per second, 16.12
cycles per second, or any other number larger than what was
measured. Unless we know the exact speed of the tape, we can't
know if there was a match -- and the odds are that there wasn't.

And now about that "signal." That's a nice strong word, one that
implies there's some meaning, some communication in the
information being analyzed. Of course, these careless analysts
(I have to call them that, after their failure to ask the
important question about the speed of the tape) may only have
said "signal" to separate the recurring amplitude modulation
from the random "noise" created by other aspects of the sound. I
don't know.

But let me reveal a little technical secret. No, wait -- the
analysts revealed it themselves. A repeatable pattern of
amplitude modulation sounds very impressive, especially since
"amplitude modulation" is such a fearsome term, but all it
means, as the analysts themselves let us know, is that "the
volume is varied at a low periodic rate."

Or in other words the sound gets louder and softer in regular
pulses. Many sounds do that. The sound of water coming out of
the faucet in my kitchen sink is doing that right now, as I
explained to the superintendent of my building this morning;
evidently there's some problem. The sound of my dishwasher also
shows a "repeatable pattern of amplitude modulation," and so do
all sorts of sounds on my synthesizers. Amplitude modulation, in
fact, is a well known synthesizer effect, something modern
synthesizers allow you to control. There's nothing necessarily
remarkable about it.

>Continuing...after the introduction of the Excaliber Studios
>part of the book....

>"As before, they found them to be truly unique in at least the
>following aspects:

>1. There were many, at least 30 or more, discrete frequencies in
>a random and constantly shifting mix in ranges from 4 to 2170
>Hz, but averaging 470 to 1452 Hz.

Um, unique because they had at least 30 frequencies in a
constantly shifting mix? Nearly any sound would have that.
Nearly any sound would have many more frequencies shifting
around, apparently at random. (The numbers here don't have
anything to do with the supposed uniqueness of the sound. They
just tell us what the highest, lowest, and average frequencies
were in the mix.)

>2. The amplitude of these frequencies also constantly changed
>whereas one would be dominant for a moment and then dominance
>would shift to another.

Again, you'd find that in many sounds.

>3. The wave form also changed constantly, and would come into and
>go out of synchronization in a random periodic rhythm that
>produced a characteristic
>beat.

Once again, something that's reasonably common.

>"Two other sound engineers and a sound synthesizer specialist
>joined the analysis team and the sounds were re-examined with a
>view to possible duplication. These specialists all agreed that
>the sounds were unique in character, and that any synthesis, if
>at all possible, could only reproduce parts of the whole
>soundtrack we were examining; and that duplication of any part
>of the whole sound, even in short linear segment may be
>impossible. The number of discrete frequencies, constantly
>shifting, and the migrating and constantly changing amplitudes,
>shifting in relative dominance, presented problems in
>duplication beyond the capability of present state-of-the-art
>equipment.

I'm not an expert on 1986 sound synthesis, so I can't comment
with any authority. But I do think that our friendly analysts
(friendly to Wendelle Stevens, certainly, because without any
solid data they were happy to agree that the sound probably
matched the resonance of the earth) could have given us a little
more information. What, exactly, about the sound would be so
hard to duplicate? The fact that it had many shifting
frequencies? I'm at a loss to know exactly what these people are
trying to say. In the early '70s, I made some very complicated
sounds with an early-model synthesizer. That, of course, doesn't
mean that I could have duplicated the sound on the Meier tapes,
but the extremely vague, somewhat muddled description I've just
quoted doesn't prove to me that I couldn't have done that.

Besides, the opinion quoted here is just an opinion. Remember
all the conflicting opinions on whether the alien autopsy film
could have been duplicated by special effects experts. I'd want
to see other opinions, preferably from people who ask harder
questions, and state their conclusions more professionally.

>"Sometimes the multiple waveform characteristics were so alike
>that they fell right on top of each other making one heavy wave
>trace of many fine lines. Sometimes the wave form was perfectly
>symmetrical, and sometimes it was totally asymmetrical. Then the
>waves would go out of synchronization again and there was no
>pattern at all.

So?

>"An overall beat was noticed at about 4 to 6 Hz, which just
>happens to be the natural resonance of Earth.

Except, as we've seen, the numbers don't actually match. (Talk
about shoddy thinking! Earlier we learned that the sound had
beats between 4.6 and 5 cycles per second, while the earth
resonates at 6.6. Those numbers are different. But now the
differences are concealed by lumping all the numbers into a
range of "about 4 to 6 Hz." I suggest we all try the same trick
next time we're at the supermarket. "So my groceries add up to
\$23.71?" we'll say to the checkout person. "I have about \$19 to
\$23 in my wallet. I'll just give you that, and we'll call it
even, OK?"

>"After some 4 hous of testing these sound it was generally
>agreed that they were truly unique and that they were not
>produced by any mundane source."

Sure.

>More could be written on this, Greg, but this is enough for now.
>I would suggest that if you are really interested in proving or
>disproving the reality of these sound recordings, that you do
>your own research and not just reply to one message on this
>list

I'm not remotely qualified to do that. As I said, I don't know enough about 1986 sound synthesis. Besides, the sound wouldn't have to be synthesized. Maybe it's a slowed-down tape of a 1986 Swiss hair dryer. (Or something like that.)

And, Michael, despite the mantra from these sloppy analysts about the sound not being produced by any "mundane source," I'm not aware that there's any developed science of sound analysis that could prove that. If we had a substance that, allegedly, came from a UFO, it could be analyzed chemically. The chemical analysis could tell us whether it was anything known. Chemists, after all, do studies like that all the time. If someone's arrested for cocaine possession, the police labs have to prove that the substance they wre carrying really is cocaine.

But nobody, to my knowlege, is in the business of analyzing sounds to discover what they are. Maybe the police need to do that sometimes, if a tape somehow turns up as evidence in a criminal case. But I don't think analyzing sounds to discover their origin is a common practice, simply because there's not much need for it.

If I'm right about that, then any opinion these analysts have is suspect, because there isn't any body of knowledge they can draw on to support it. Even in 1986, it was (I'm pretty sure) easy to create unusual sounds simply by manipulating recordings of nature, machinery, electronic devices, animal noises, you name it. Play something backwards, and it's often unrecognizable. Slow it down, filter out some of the frequencies, layer other sounds over it (or, for a much more subtle kind of complexity, layer it with other manipulated versions of itself), and even a familiar sound will turn into something new and strange.

With so many possibilities, could we ever know that we weren't hearing a 1986 Swiss hair dryer?

Greg Sandow

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