

CNN LARRY KING LIVE

Debate Over Existence of UFOs

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LARRY KING, HOST: Tonight, have UFOs shut down our government's defense systems? There is evidence that something caused missiles to malfunction during test launches. Former Air Force officers tell their incredible story about the film that was confiscated by the CIA and what was on it and why don't officials want us to see it.

Find out right now on LARRY KING LIVE.

Good evening.

We begin with allegations that UFOs have interfered with missiles at U.S. Air Force bases and aliens are monitoring nuclear warheads and bombs.

Our first guests claim UFOs have activated missile systems at five Air Force Bases in five different states. They also claim a cover-up, that the United States government is keeping the information secret.

Former Air Force officers and an investigator are here with their stories.

Here in Los Angeles is Robert Hastings. He's author of "UFOs and Nukes." I have the book right here. The book is available at ufohastings.com. He has been investigating sightings at weapon sites for years.

Bob Salas is a former captain U.S. Air Force base -- of the United States Air Force. He was at Malstrom Air Force Base in 1967, where there were claims that a UFO caused missiles to malfunction. He's co-author of "Faded Giant."

Bob Jamison is with us, a former U.S. Air Force officer. He was at Malstrom, as well, in 1967 and he says his superiors told him UFOs caused the malfunctions.

And in Peoria, Illinois is Dr. Bob Jacobs, former lieutenant, U.S. Air Force, former U.S. Air Force photographic instrumentation officer. A UFO showed up on film that he shot in 1954 at Vandenberg Air Force Base and that was later confiscated by CIA agents.

All of our guests are named Bob, so I'm going to call them by their last names.

We'll start with Robert Hastings. How did you get -- what's your explanation for UFOs at nuclear weapon sites?

ROBERT HASTINGS, AUTHOR, "UFOS AND NUKES," RESEARCHES SIGHTINGS AT NUCLEAR WEAPONS SITES: I can simply say, after 35 years of research, that these incidents have taken place. There are hundreds of declassified documents which indicate that UFOs have demonstrated a distinct and ongoing interest in our nuclear weapons sites. I've also interviewed nearly a hundred gentlemen who were involved in these incidents at various Air Force bases. This is very widespread. What you're seeing here this evening is the tip of the iceberg.

KING: How do they cause a malfunction?

What do they do to cause something to not work?

HASTINGS: I think that's probably still an unknown. I know that Boeing engineers attempted to duplicate some of the malfunctions. They did succeed in doing that, but they still can't call - - determine what initially caused them. Bob Salas can address that.

KING: Bob, what happened at Malstrom in 1967?

BOB SALAS, FORMER USAF OFFICER, WORKED AT BASE WHERE MISSILES MALFUNCTIONED: In 1967, I was on duty as a missile launch officers. I got calls from my guards upstairs. First, I get one call saying that they're seeing strange lights flying in the sky. And I didn't pay too much attention to that. About five minutes later, the main security guard - - the flight security controller calls down and says he's looking at a glowing red object, very large, hovering over the front gate. And he wants to know what to do.

I tell him to secure the facility. We hang up. I go to tell my commander. So within seconds of that call, my missiles start shutting down. I recall losing all 10 of them.

KING: You didn't see the object?

SALAS: I didn't see the object because I was obliged to stay underground in the capsule.

KING: By shutting down we mean what?

SALAS: By shutting down what I mean is they were not launchable. They were in no go condition, disabled.

KING: How long to restart them?

SALAS: How long to restart?

Well, I'm sure it took over a day and maybe (INAUDIBLE).

KING: Now, Bob Jamison you were there too, right?

BOB JAMISON, FORMER USAF OFFICER, SUPERIORS TOLD HIM UFOS CAUSE MISSILE MALFUNCTIONS: Yes, sir. KING: And you were in the Air Force?

JAMISON: Yes, I was in the Air Force. I was...

KING: And where were you when this was happening?

JAMISON: Yes, I was a tightening -- I was a tightening officer, a missile targeting officer. I was at home relaxing and I got from job control to come in. A missile had gone down. My job as a target officer was to bring them back up. And so I went in to...

KING: But you didn't see the incident, you just went to the missile?

JAMISON: No, I went to the incident. I went to the site.

KING: Where is Malstrom?

JAMISON: It's Great Falls, Montana, just outside of Great Falls, Montana.

KING: What did you make of the story?

JAMISON: Well, I know that it's The Skeptic Society. I went into job control after I got to the hangar. I was called in. I went to the hangar. I went to the job control. And I noticed they have a map of the whole complex, the green lights where the missiles are good. But there's one small area with 10 red lights. It means those missiles were out.

KING: Is it possible they just malfunctioned?

JAMISON: That doesn't happen. Very rarely does a missile malfunction. And I don't think any -- much more rare would be two at the same time. But never 10.

KING: Now, Bob Jacobs, where were you?

What were you filming and where were you?

DR. BOB JACOBS, USAF (RET.), FORMER USAF PHOTOGRAPHIC INSTRUMENTATION OFFICER, FILMED UFOS, FILM LATER CONFISCATED BY TWO CIA AGENTS: I was in charge of optical instrumentation at Vandenberg Air Force Base in from 1963 to '66. Our job was to photograph...

KING: That's California?

JACOBS: That's California. That's right there on the coast. And our job was to photograph, with high speed instrumentation, every missile launch from Vandenberg going down the test range. They wanted to find out if we could figure out a place to put a telescope where we could get a side view of the missile, so that we could see all three stages of powered flight.

So I went up to Big Sur, California, up on an air -- on the U.S. Forest Service road on Anderson Peak and installed a telescopic site up there. And the Air Force flew in a huge cataractic telescope from the Cape. It was built by Dr. Walter Manning at the Boston University.

They put this telescope up there. And with that thing, which had a focal length of 2,500 inches, we photographed an Atlas missile raising up out of the fog cover and flying downrange. We got all three stages of powered flight. And as the dummy warhead and the package flew on down the range, we were all celebrating the fact that we had seen the thing and accomplished the mission.

When I got back to the base with the film, the next day I was called into the office of Major Florenze J. Mansmann. And there were three people in gray suits standing in there. There was a .16 millimeter camera and a screen set up.

Major Mansmann said lieutenant, sit down and watch this. And he turned down the lights, turned on the camera -- on the projector and the film came on. And I recognized it as the film that we had shot at Big Sur the previous day.

Toward the end of the flight, I was looking at Major Mansmann saying pretty good stuff, huh sir?

And suddenly he said just watch this.

And as I watched, the warhead -- the dummy warhead, the chaff that was put out in front of it as the decoy to deflect the Russian anti-missile missile tracking radar -- everything was flying along and suddenly, in the same direction this stuff was flying, at about 8,000 miles an hour, an object came into the frame, shot a beam of light at the warhead, flew up to the top, shot another beam of light at the warhead, flew around the direction it was flying, shot another beam of light at the warhead, flew down to shoot another beam of light at the warhead and then flew out the same way it came in.

KING: Well, I don't understand.

JACOBS: And that's (INAUDIBLE)...

KING: Why didn't you see this when you were shooting it?

JACOBS: Well, it was 600 or 800 miles away from us.

KING: Oh, I got you.

JACOBS: All of this...

KING: And they confiscated...

JACOBS: We only could see this...

KING: They confiscated...

JACOBS: Well, first of all, Major Mansmann said to me, what was that?

Were you guys screwing around up there? I said, no, sir. And he said then tell me what that was. And I said we got a UFO. And he said, lieutenant, you are never to speak of this again. As far as you're concerned, this didn't happen.

KING: Hold on, guys.

JACOBS: And for...

KING: We've got to take a break. OK. That's weird.

Do you think there's an actual defense plan for aliens?

It sounds crazy. We'll ask about that next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm not alone in witnessing something extraordinary. That's the bottom line.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Powerful beaming spotlights.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Triangular in shape, sitting on three legs.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: No type of aircraft that I've ever seen before.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Rapidly maneuvered and quickly disappeared.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Accelerating to very high speeds.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We were just trying our cars...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And what we were seeing, it don't resemble anything known to us.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Bob Jamison, we'll make this clear, you were asked to say nothing?

JAMISON: I was not asked to say nothing. In fact, no one admonished me and I did not sign

an oath saying that I can't say anything.

KING: So, what -- there was no cover-up as far as you were concerned?

JAMISON: That's correct.

KING: You just...

JAMISON: I can tell. I can speak about it.

KING: You can tell what you saw. Do you think there's a plan for invasion by aliens?

JAMISON: I wouldn't presume to know that. I simply know that the U.S. government does not obviously appreciate people, such as myself and these gentlemen, speaking out about this. What we're describing, on an ongoing basis, decade after decade, at multiple Air Force bases, is just disruption of our nuclear missiles.

KING: We have an e-mail from Kyle in Plainville, Massachusetts: "Why would UFOs only disable U.S. defense systems and not another country? Is there a lesson to be learned in all of this?"

Or do you think maybe -- Bob Salas -- they have disabled other countries?

SALAS: They have. I know that there have been events in the Soviet Union where they have interfered there. They've been seen in just any country you could name. You know, I do disable communications that's (INAUDIBLE).

KING: We have an e-mail from Eric in Atlanta, Georgia: "What can be done, if anything, to force the U.S. government and/or military to declassify and release all it knows about UFOs?"

Dr. Jacobs, when do you think that would happen?

Do you think that would happen?

JACOBS: It would take a revolution in public opinion. The problem with this field is that it's surrounded by so many crackpots and weirdoes who make a joke about it, that those of us who take it seriously and think that something definitely is going on and it needs to be scientifically investigated, are laughed at. The technician here in the studio where I am, I said were talking about UFOs tonight and her face lit up and she got that kind of hmmm look, which is typical of what happens to us.

I think that we need to a real scientific committee to be put together to look into these things. I think Rob (INAUDIBLE) too.

KING: I agree.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Absolutely.

KING: Bob Salas, do you agree?

SALAS: Yes. I would like to make a comment real quick. The Air Force has perpetrated a fraud, especially in our case. They claim in their statement about UFOs that nothing has -- no UFO incident has ever affected national security.

And we lost 20 missiles during the cold war. They also stonewalled the Condon Committee at that time. The Condon Committee had heard about our incident and were told to go away. They said they were told that no UFOs were involved.

And then the Air Force turns around and uses the Condon Committee as a reason not to further investigate UFOs.

KING: Robert Hastings, in doing all these shows, what confounds me is, if all of this is The Skeptic Society, what are they afraid of?

What's the government afraid of?

HASTINGS: Victor Marchetti is a former high level CIA official. He wrote the book "CIA and The Cult of Intelligence" in 1975, a best- seller. The CIA tried to prohibit that being printed.

He, Victor Marchetti, in 1979, wrote an article regarding what the CIA thought about UFOs. He alluded to rumors at the agency of crashed UFOs and the recovery of bodies of aliens. More to the point, Victor Marchetti said that, in his view, as an intelligence analyst, he thinks that the power structures, the elite, the status quo, people in every country on earth who are in on the secret, are really trying to maintain their own power and status and don't want to rock the boat.

KING: An e-mail from Christian, Brighton, Colorado: "When is the Air Force going to stop lying to the people and finally tell them the truth about alien visitation? The American people are paying their salaries and they are supposed to defend and respect the Constitution of the United States of America."

Bob Jamison, do you ever think we'll ever see it?

Do you think we'll ever see an Air Force official, the secretary of the Air Force come on and say here's the story?

JAMISON: Perhaps through more programs, such as this we can get the public tuned to the fact that there were -- are UFOs. They're not going to hurt you, I don't think. And they haven't hurt anybody that I know of. And I think that, perhaps, through more programs such as yours and such as these people are bringing out...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And a government investigation immediately.

JAMISON: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: An open investigation.

KING: There's never been one, right?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Right.

SALAS: Not really, no. I mean in 1968 was the last Congressional hearing on UFOs -- 1968.

KING: Forty years.

SALAS: Forty years. We need another one. We need a strong one. Hopefully, the next administration will do that.

HASTINGS: There's been a lot of behind-the-scenes manipulation of Congress by the military lesson personnel. KING: Because of what -- fear of what?

HASTINGS: Well, again, Larry, these gentlemen are talking about nuclear missiles being dropped offline. The Pentagon does not want the Russians or, previously, the Soviets to know that. It's going on in the Soviet Union, as Bob Salas has said. But I have interviewed persons who were involved with the Minutemen missile bases in the '60s, '70s, '80s and '90s. And they say this is continuing to occur.

I've actually interviewed a gentleman a year ago who said that his missiles were activated by UFO. And I describe that in detail in my book. I asked him to come on this program and he declined, I think because he's uneasy about talking publicly.

KING: There are skeptics, not a surprise. Bill Nye, the science guy, is here when LARRY KING LIVE returns.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It does not contain any pattern of purpose or of consistency.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And it's not a weather balloon nor an aircraft nor a missile. It is something else.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I don't know what they saw in '47, but I'm quite sure it probably was Project Mobile.

CWO JOHN HAU (RET.), U.S. NAVY: Nothing we had at the time, could fit the description, size and shape.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Go to CNN.com/larryking right now and take our quick vote.

Is the United States government hiding knowledge of UFOs?

Let us know what you think.

Joining our panel is Bill Nye, the science guy. He's a scientist, engineer, best-selling author and Emmy winning television personality. He's, by the way, a member of The Skeptic Society

and a fellow with the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry.

Now, Bill, assuming that these distinguished gentlemen are not lying, we have three former members of the Air Force and Robert Hastings who's looked into this for a long time, what's your thought?

BILL NYE, "THE SCIENCE GUY": Well, in the skeptical world, in science, we look at claims. We look at individual claims. So I noticed that in the intro to your show and stuff that you -- there are several UFO incidents all mixed in together.

But let's talk about the one in 1967, right? This is your problem at Malstrom Air Force Base in Montana.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Malstrom.

NYE: So the nuclear missiles went down right?

So if you go look at the documents that these guys have offered, if I understand it, as evidence, you look at some of them -- and you don't have to look read it, but you see there's something blacked out, OK, redacted. That's a guy's home address. They don't want you to publish your home address.

Here's one with a whole bunch of people's office phone numbers and stuff. And it looks spooky and scary.

KING: But what's your point?

NYE: Well, it looks spooky and scary, but it turns out that that day, or the day before, the power had gone out in some of the chiller units, the air conditioning, OK?

And Boeing was called out -- Boeing makes the Minuteman missile -- because all these things went down and they wanted to know what had happened.

KING: So the man who called him and said he saw something outside, he didn't see something?

NYE: Well, let me just say, when you see something, a lot of people see something. And a lot of people see things that are really -- they can't identify. But that doesn't mean they were -- it's quite a leap...

KING: So you're saying it's a coincidence.

NYE: Yes.

KING: This guy thought he saw something and the missiles go out?

NYE: And then you talk to people who were there...

KING: All right. Bob Salas, how do you respond?

NYE: ...and it's very compelling. And these documents

KING: Hold up.

NYE: I just want to address this.

KING: OK. Let him respond.

NYE: When you respond, address that one of the officers suspected that somebody had been drinking, OK?

SALAS: I never heard that.

NYE: OK?

(CROSSTALK)

SALAS: I never heard that explained that anybody was drinking.

Let me say, first of all, the missile shutdowns had nothing to do with power failure. There is triple redundancy on power. We've got Montana Power. We've got a backup generator. We've got batteries, OK?

The power...

KING: You've never seen missiles go down due to a power failure?

SALAS: Not really, because of all that backup on power. So this had nothing to do with power. The second point. The flight security guard that reported this was about less than 100 feet away from this object. He was looking at it through his window. It was right outside the front gate, right above the gate. It was a glowing red object, pulsing.

NYE: OK.

Did you see it?

SALAS: No. I couldn't see it.

KING: No, he delegate 2006 election it.

SALAS: I couldn't see it. I couldn't leave the capsule. But within seconds after that report, the missiles shut down.

Now, was that a coincidence?

NYE: Well, it's hearsay, as we say in the courtroom.

SALAS: It's not hearsay.

NYE: Well, you're saying that this guy told you.

SALAS: It was testimony.

KING: Well, you're not saying -- I'm not asking you -- you don't think he's lying?

NYE: No.

KING: All right.

So the guy did tell him?

NYE: He did tell him and he saw something. And, coincidentally, the missile shut down.

KING: All right. OK. The guy saw something.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Coincidentally is called... (CROSSTALK)

KING: Wasn't that a weird coincidence?

NYE: Yes. I mean I've -- many times I've flipped a light switch and you hear a siren.

SALAS: What if the same thing happened a week earlier, only this time 10 missiles go down, a lot of security guards see the UFOs right above the what are five other missile bases...

NYE: OK. So why don't we...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: ...on repeated occasions.

(CROSSTALK)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Is that a coincidence, too?

I mean you can buy the two -- are those two coincidences?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: ...the 1950s, '60s, '70s and '80s.

KING: One at a time. One at there are time.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, but here's the thing. It's not...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: There's over a hundred people, they'll...

NYE: Well, in science it's not evidence.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I wish -- I wish Edgar Mitchell were here. But in any case...

KING: It may not be evidence, let's say, but it is certainly a source of...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, a hundred people are telling the same story at different Air Force bases over a four week period.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: (INAUDIBLE).

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: These guys were entrusted...

KING: One at a time.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: ...with weapons of destruction by the U.S. government.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: And there's a hundred now who are coming forward and saying UFOs shut down their nuclear weapons.

(CROSSTALK)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So we have a mass psychosis...

KING: All right. In the interests of time...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: ...among our nuclear missile forces?

KING: Hold it. In the interests of time, Dr. Jacobs, he takes pictures, he comes back, they call him in. They show him the pictures of this strange thing.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I saw it. I'm an eyewitness.

KING: He saw it. They confiscate.

(CROSSTALK)

KING: And they confiscate it?

NYE: Yes.

KING: Why?

Why?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm not talking about people who reported...

(CROSSTALK)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I wouldn't be surprised...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Hello?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Go ahead.

KING: Yes, go ahead.

JACOBS: Do you mind if I speak, Mr. Comedian?

KING: Go ahead.

JACOBS: I was there. I was there. I saw the film with my own eyes.

I'm not lying.

Why would I?

I'm a university professor with a Ph.D. and a lot of years of good respectful research. So the (INAUDIBLE) officer may not have seen the UFO, but they saw the results of it. I saw the damn thing on film with my own eyes, so don't call me a liar and you weren't there, I was.

NYE: I didn't -- with all due respect, I'm not calling you a liar. It's just quite a step to say there was a film with remarkable images on it that the CIA confiscated, which I saw and which...

JACOBS: It's quite a step they did.

NYE: Yes. Which is quite a step from there to say it was definitely a spacecraft from another civilization. That's the leap that the skeptical community is reluctant to take.

JACOBS: Listen, I didn't -- hey, pal, listen to me. I didn't say it was a space ship from another civilization. I said it was something in the air that we couldn't identify. Therefore, it was an unidentified flying object. It was shaped like two saucers put together with a golf ball on top. And it fired a beam that we assumed was a plasma beam at a dummy warhead and knocked it out of space. Tell me what happened. Tell me who did that. Tell me in 1964 who had that technology, pal. Not us and not the Russians and nobody I know of.

So come on Mr. Skeptic, what about it?

NYE: So what's your conclusion?

So what's your conclusion?

JACOBS: What's your conclusion?

NYE: What are you saying?

Well, my conclusion is that something happened that you don't know what it was. And I wouldn't be surprised if it had something to do with another aspect of military testing in the sky that night. And it's a much more reasonable explanation...

(CROSSTALK)

JACOBS: We had nothing -- there was nothing in our inventory that could do possibly do that.

NYE: So let's do -- let's do this other little thought experiment, everybody. OK, let's say this

has been going on since 1967, routinely, right?

There's an old joke in broadcasting...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Are you going to do this with baking soda and vinegar, Bill?

KING: Hold on. We're running out of time.

(LAUGHTER)

NYE: It's an old joke in broadcasting...

KING: What is it?

NYE: Well, it's like trying to photograph a car wreck. At one time, considered an impossible thing to do. If you sent out a news crew, OK, let's go shoot a car wreck, that was a joke. Well, now, routinely on the nightly news we see car wrecks. We see car wrecks on the freeway, we see car wrecks behind us. KING: Why was it a joke that your...

NYE: Because there's -- because there didn't used to be a camera everywhere. There are millions and millions of cameras. There are billions of digital pictures taken every week.

KING: So you're saying he -- they -- you're not saying there are no UFOs, you're saying they haven't been proven?

NYE: I'm saying that it's quite a step to see something you don't know what it is in the sky to say that there are alien spacecraft...

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: But you've got to understand Dr. Jacobs...

NYE: ...that are monitoring our nuclear weapons.

KING: He has seen this, Dr. Jacobs.

NYE: Well, I understand that.

KING: Now, so you're -- if you're questioning what he's seen...

NYE: No. Well, I'm questioning his -- the conclusion that the technology did not exist in 1964 to produce images on film that the CIA would want to confiscate.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: If I may?

JACOBS: Well, in 1964 you were trying to figure out what...

NYE: That's quite a step.

JACOBS: In 1964, you were trying to figure out what girls were. I was in the service as a senior scientist (INAUDIBLE) capacity.

NYE: Sir, you can attack me...

JACOBS: So get off your skeptic high horse, pal.

NYE: But that doesn't -- well, it just doesn't...

JACOBS: You're attacking us.

NYE: It's quite a step...

JACOBS: You're the one who's making ad hominem attacks and saying that's quite a step.

You bet it's quite a step.

HASTINGS: If I may?

If I may?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, please.

KING: All right. One at a time, please. We've got two minutes left.

HASTINGS: The other person, the other former Air Force officer, retired Air Force officer involved in it was charged with photo analysis of this film. Florenze Mansmann, who's now deceased.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Florenze J. Mansmann.

HASTINGS: I've spoken to his widow. I have correspondence -- private correspondence between Dr. Jacobs and Dr. Mansmann, actually. And 20 years later, they are marveling over what they saw. Mansmann's professional assessment at Vandenberg in 1964 was that this was an extraterrestrial craft.

NYE: OK. So he made that conclusion.

HASTINGS: That's correct.

NYE: OK. All right.

HASTINGS: And I can send you -- I will give CNN -- I'm trying to get the national media involved in this as much as possible. I will send anyone any correspondence for any newspaper, any radio station, TV station, any scientist, any member of your group, all of the original documentation...

KING: All right, we...

HASTINGS: ...where these gentlemen are discussing the subject 20 years later.

KING: All right, we're going to have -- we're going to do a lot more on this, because we do a lot on UFOs.

We thank you all for coming. And we thank Dr. Jacobs.

But when we come back, we're going to really get into it -- a double debate. We're going to have a physicist, a lecturer, a researcher and a documentary filmmaker go up against Bill Nye and Dr. Seth Shostek into a two versus two on this whole subject.

Don't go away.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Do you think it was possible it was from another world?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: My Air Force training says I can't think that way, OK?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I know what I saw. And I get very upset. And I was wondering why they won't find out what it was?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Until somebody actually sees it, they have no idea. No idea.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: A story this big, there's no way it could be kept secret. What do you say to something like that, who says that?

COL. GORDON COOPER (RET), ASTRONAUT: Well, somebody's kept it pretty secret for quite a while, haven't they.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Four distinguished gentlemen will now debate that reasonably. They are here in Los Angeles, Stanton Friedman, a physicist, lecturer and a UFO researcher and author of "Flying Saucers and Science." James Fox is a documentary film maker and UFO researcher, the executive producer of "Out of The Blue," and finishing up a new film, the working title "Beyond The Blue." Bill Nye, our science guy, remains. And in Boston is Dr. Seth Shostak, the senior astronomer for the SETI Institute. That stands for the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence. He's the host of the weekly radio program, "Are We Alone."

All right, Stanton, it is Bill's contention that, yes, people have sighted things. Yes, there are reports. But we don't know there are unidentified flying objects from other planets.

STANTON FRIEDMAN, PHYSICIST: Well, you know, I admire Bill's courage. I can't imagine a well-trained scientist who's an expert at communicating science to the general masses of people, who has courage enough to go on a national, international television program, to talk about something which he hasn't researched, something which he knows nothing about and pretend he's being a scientist about it. Frankly, I'm sick and tired of the debunkers making their research be proclamations.

Bill showed a document with, you know, names redacted. How about this is a CIA document, it took me five years to get, about UFOs. Not just names redacted.

KING: Are you saying, Stanton, as a physicist, that there are unidentified flying objects that have come from other places?

FRIEDMAN: Yes. I'm going beyond that. That's why the book is flying saucers and UFOs.

KING: They would be unidentified.

FRIEDMAN: Yes, I'm saying some UFOs are intelligently controlled extraterrestrial spacecraft. We're dealing with a cosmic Watergate, meaning a cover-up by the government. And there are no good arguments against those two. And we're dealing with the biggest story of the millennium.

KING: Before I have Bill respond, let's have Dr. Shostak respond. Doctor, what do you know or not know?

SETH SHOSTAK, SR ASTRONOMER, SETI INSTITUTE: Stanton likes to say, those of us who are not doing the UFO research shouldn't opine about them. And I find that not such a convincing argument, because frankly, I don't do black hole research. I'm an astronomer. I don't do black hole research. But I can read a paper about black holes and decide whether it sounds credible or not. Is the guy who did it credible? Was the paper reviewed? Are other scientists convinced? Can I repeat the experiment?

There's no reason Bill Nye, nor I, can't offer a serious opinion on this subject. So I regret that he said that.

Secondly, you're not offering --

(CROSS TALK)

KING: Don't interrupt. Let's bring in James Fox. Do you know that -- do you know -- you're not a scientist, but a filmmaker -- do you know that objects have come from other places, not the Earth?

JAMES FOX, DOCUMENTARY FILM MAKER: Here's my theory.

KING: Theory.

FOX: Two possibilities, the observed phenomena -- By the way, I've got a little document here that was released from the Air Material Command, General Nathan Twining (ph), admitting on the 23rd of September, 1947 that the phenomenon is real and not visionary or fictitious.

KING: What do you know?

FOX: Basically, there's an observed technology for at least 60 years that one can easily establish, the ability to hover without making sound, without disturbing the air and accelerate from the standpoint to out of sight in the blink of an eye. Either there's an agency within some government in the world that is in possession of that technology and has kept it under wraps for 60 years. I can definitively say that.

KING: The government could be ours.

FOX: And it's terrestrial explanation. There's a terrestrial explanation for that technology, or there isn't.

KING: Or the government could be ours, too.

FOX: Or the government could be ours, which would explain that they've kept this technology under wraps for 60 years or more.

KING: Could you unequivocally, Bill, say there are no objects coming from outer space? Can you say that?

NYE: Of course not. There are definitely objects coming from outer space. There's 100,000 tons of --

KING: I mean manned alien.

NYE: -- dust that lands of day. Put a sheet out every night. You will find dust.

KING: Aliens.

NYE: I'm very skeptical. As we say in science, the simplest explanation is generally the best one. So here's our problem, I think: people are confident that the United States government has covered things up.

KING: Right.

NYE: And indeed, if you read recent publications, stuff declassified last year, and I didn't read the book, but if you read something like "Legacy of Ashes" about the CIA, the CIA has covered up a lot of things. A couple times, they got their own forces shooting at themselves because one part of the organization didn't tell the other part of the organization.

KING: What's your point?

NYE: My point being that the U.S. government could have accidentally led people to believe that there was a lot more going on than there really was. And so this ability of the U.S. government to create these rumors, generally inadvertently, may I say, has led people to have confidence that when they can't explain something by traditional means, it must be some amazing, never-before experienced --

KING: Let me get a break in. We'll come right back. Where are these so-called space aliens coming from? What do they want from us? We'll ask after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: There's still time to participate in our quick vote; is the United States government hiding knowledge of UFOs? Head to CNN.com/LarryKing right now and weigh in. Yes, by the way, right now, is in the lead. Before we continue, let's take a look at a clip from James

fox's new movie. It involves a Japanese airliner. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Ahead on the radar, approximately five miles in front of your 6:00 position. Do you concur?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We cannot identify the type. It's quite big.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The CIA said, to all the people there, this event never happened. Who are you going to believe? Your lying eyes or the government?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: Why is the government covering up, Stanton?

FRIEDMAN: In my book, I have a whole chapter on six reasons for it. You want to figure out how they work. You worry about the other guy figuring out how they work before you do, because they make wonderful weapons delivery and defense systems. You don't want them to know you know they know kind of thing. If a big announcement were to be made, there would be -- what, church attendance would go up, mental hospital admissions would go up, the stock market would go down, but there would be a big push for earthling orientation. No government wants that.

And fourth, some of the religious extremists --

KING: Do you, Dr. Shostak, believe there would be a panic?

SHOSTAK: No, absolutely not, Larry. Polls have shown since the 1960s that something like 50 percent, 60 percent Americans believe we're being visited by saucer sailing aliens that occasionally abduct you for experiments that are inappropriate on a first date. And nobody's rioting in the streets about that. "New York Times" announced it tomorrow, I think people would say, I knew it all along.

KING: Our latest Associated Press poll shows 14 percent of Americans claim they've seen a UFO and 34 percent say they believe in UFOs. James, you had eyewitnesses you spoke to in Arizona, right, who told you they saw. They saw what?

FOX: There was a craft. It's a the boomerang shaped craft. It's up to a mile across. It's flew extremely slowly.

KING: A mile across.

FOX: A mile across. It flew extremely slowly. People had to fly directly over. We're not talking about an ambiguous light off in the distance. Directly over their house, so low they could have hit it with a rock.

KING: How many people told you they saw it?

FOX: There's been over 1,000 people who have come forward. I talked to at least 150 from all

over the state of Arizona, including the governor of Arizona, who did launch an investigation with the Pentagon, local Air Force base, Luke Air Force Base.

KING: What happened in the investigation?

FOX: They shrugged their shoulders and said, we don't know what that thing was.

KING: How do you respond? They're not lying, Bill. What do you think?

NYE: My recollection was the Air Force said they had a flight of F-16's that dropped flares that night. It's a big V.

KING: These people are not --

FRIEDMAN: That was at 10:00, not 8:30.

FOX: The real thing happened at 8:30. It started in the north and headed all the way down.

NYE: One explanation is --

FRIEDMAN: People couldn't tell time.

NYE: One explanation is people -- something happened in the evening and we have confused the time. Another explanation is there's an alien spacecraft.

KING: OK. Are you open to that possibility?

NYE: Not in the case of the one in Phoenix. In this case -- I don't have the documents in front of me, in all fairness.

FRIEDMAN: You haven't studied the evidence is what it boils down to, Bill.

NYE: That's where I really disagree with you, Stan. I've studied the evidence pretty well.

FOX: When this craft took off -- and I talked to people across the state of Arizona. They said, had I blinked I would have missed it. It didn't make any sound. It didn't disturb the air. It didn't make a sonic boom. And it was at least a mile across, including the governor of Arizona saw this thing.

FRIEDMAN: And he's a pilot

FOX: And he's a pilot and former captain in the Air Force.

NYE: On CNN we had footage of that.

(CROSS TALK)

FOX: No footage of that. I'm about to uncover footage that --

KING: Let me get a break. Why do we presume that aliens, if they are out there, are so much

smarter than we? Interesting question. We'll try for an answer. Phone calls, too, after the break.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: I don't know what it is. We're back. OK, calm down. Stanton, a good point from an avid listener. We've lived through many administrations of this. We've lived through Johnson, Nixon, all right, a whole bunch. We've had Republicans, Democrats, scientists. All of them are covering up? Nobody, nobody -- no official has ever said, I want to look into this?

FRIEDMAN: As they say --

FOX: Jimmy Carter on camera -- I was the first person to get Jimmy Carter on camera saying that he tried to launch an investigation and he got nowhere. I got Gerald Ford in a phone interview, he did the same thing. KING: How could a president get nowhere?

FOX: He got nowhere. Bill Clinton tried to launch an investigation.

KING: The CIA is hiding all this from presidents?

FOX: We don't know it's the CIA. It's some sort of quasi- government, quasi-military --

NYE: Here's the thing, the CIA hides stuff from the president, but that doesn't mean they are extraterrestrial.

KING: Why, Stanton, on this topic would there be a giant cover- up?

FRIEDMAN: Because it affects everything we think about ourselves. As I said, if we make a declaration that indeed aliens are visiting, people are going to want to push for an earthling orientation. We have 300 million people --

FOX: What orientation?

FRIEDMAN: A new identity. Instead of as Americans, Chinese, Greeks, Peruvian --

KING: OK.

FRIEDMAN: Who speaks for the planet. We're going to hold an election, right? But the Chinese have 1.3 billion. India has one billion. We have 300 million. We're not going to give up that -- they have a common goal to stay in power. That's what government is all about, Larry. You know that.

FOX: Look at it on a smaller scale, like with Fife Symington. Fife Symington made a joke out of that sighting that happened in 1977. He had one of his aides dressed up in an alien suit. This massive craft flies over the state of Arizona. The governor said there was mounting pressure from his constituents to get to the bottom of it, growing hysteria. He holds a press conference. He has his aide dress up in an alien suit and makes a joke out of the whole thing.

The reason why he did that -- he told us ten years later -- is because they didn't know what it was. People were freaking out.

KING: An e-mail from Anne in Duncan, Oklahoma: "UFO conspiracy theorists say the U.S. government is conspiring to keep extraterrestrial contacts a secret. Why wouldn't aliens themselves make their presence known to the world? If they can travel light years to get here, they don't need government permission for anything." Don't you think they would do that, Seth?

SHOSTAK: Of course they would. Look, you just have to look at the historical analogs, Larry; 1492, Columbus lands in America. Ten years later, Spain is sending 25 ships filled with colonists to the Americas. If you had asked the North American natives ten years after Columbus, do you think we're being invaded? It doesn't matter what their military wanted to do, what the chiefs wanted to do. They knew they were being invaded. It's been more than 60 years since Roswell. As far as I can tell, my flights still take off on time from the local airport. No aliens whatsoever.

KING: Why don't they come, James?

FOX: Here's the thing.

FRIEDMAN: I don't talk to the squirrels in my backyard, Larry.

FOX: I asked this exact question to Edgar Mitchell, Apollo 14 astronaut, sixth man on the moon; I said why won't they just land? He said -- he really looked at me and said, well think about it, James. Don't you think if you went to a distant world, don't you think you would want to sit back and observe a little bit?

KING: Why do they observe Wyoming and not Washington?

(CROSS TALK)

FOX: Washington was buzzed in 1962. It was captured on radar, photographed, caught on photograph.

NYE: That's your claim. What do I do?

FOX: It's a fact.

NYE: What do I do as a civilian when the U.S. Air Force says, well, that was some flight testing we were doing and we covered it up. What do you do when they declassify the --

FOX: Are they hiding this technology for 60 years? Maybe they are. But if they're hiding this technology, they shouldn't be, because somebody's in possession of technology that could really be beneficial to all of humanity.

(CROSS TALK)

FOX: I don't know. Maybe they're not. Maybe it is alien visitation. I don't know. I can't prove that. But I can tell you --

KING: Do you think aliens have visited here?

FRIEDMAN: No question about it. The evidence is so powerful. And I wish that Seth, who when he attended my lecture admitted he hadn't read any of the --

KING: What do they want, the aliens, do you think?

FRIEDMAN: I got a whole long list of bottom line, they're here to quarantine us.

KING: Quarantine us?

FRIEDMAN: Hey, we're primitive society whose major activity is tribal warfare. I worked on fusion propulsion systems. Everybody in the neighborhood is going to know about fusion. That's what makes the stars work. Within a short time, we'll be able to take our brand of friendship, which everybody else calls hostility, out there. Remember, this is a planet that killed 50 million of our own kind in World War II.

NYE: You're saying the aliens are afraid that we will take over their technology?

FRIEDMAN: I didn't say that.

FOX: This is all speculation right now. Let's start talking about the facts.

NYE: That's where we disagree, is on the facts.

(CROSS TALK)

FOX: We have government documents basically stating that these things exists.

NYE: Have you been to Wright Patterson Air Force Base?

FOX: Of course I have.

NYE: You've been there, Larry, it's cool.

(CROSS TALK)

KING: They don't show you an alien, do they?

NYE: I had security clearance for a while.

FOX: What would you do if you saw one of these things?

NYE: First of all, I would take a picture of it, a good one.

FOX: Then what?

NYE: Then I would look at the picture carefully.

FOX: And then laugh at yourself because no one would believe you.

KING: Let me get a break. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Is that a cow? We're back -- I'm trying to figure out, is that a cow?

NYE: Cows watching UFOs.

KING: Einstein's theory of relativity, you can't travel faster than light, right? FRIEDMAN: Yes, but as you get close to the speed of light, time slows down. You can go 39 light years in six months pilot time if you're at 99.99 percent speed of the light. We physicists make particles that go --

NYE: They become infinitely massive.

(CROSS TALK)

NYE: Here's what I'm saying, that's a much better explanation that we don't know enough about it. But -- but, Stan, you made a point before break that the U.S. Air Force will not let you see everything. I should hope not. I hope the U.S. Air Force has a few things up their sleeves.

FRIEDMAN: I had 14 years under security.

NYE: But that doesn't mean that the stuff that you can't see at, for example --

KING: Let me get a call in. New Orleans, hello.

CALLER: Hi, Larry, how are you doing?

KING: Hi.

CALLER: I would like to know how often are eye-witnesses given a polygraph to prove that they're telling the truth rather than making up a story just to be on TV?

KING: Are they, James?

FOX: It happens.

KING: Are they given polygraphs?

KING: It has happened. Benny Hill passed one on national television.

(CROSS TALK)

KING: Seth, you are a skeptic? You think we'll ever know the whole story, or will never know the whole story? Seth?

SHOSTAK: Sorry, I didn't hear -- the whole story -- the bottom line is, Larry, this: Stanton has some insight into alien sociology. He knows what they want. He's failed to convince the

scientists of the world. When he does that, you'll have real investigation in this. It will move from the area of fantasy to real science. I'm waiting for that to happen.

FOX: Here's the problem. I just got back from a meeting with the French CNS, the French equivalent of NASA. France has -- I don't know if people know this, but France just released their UFO files, which basically confirms that the UFOs are real.

KING: They say that.

FOX: Yes.

KING: France has announced that UFOs are real?

FOX: The head of CNS just released 50 years of profiles. I went to interview the guy, Jacques Pattinet (ph), just recently, and I said to him, this is an amazing discovery. How are the French reacting to that? He said, no one is jumping out of windows.

KING: Not only is anybody jumping out of windows, it ain't a story. I haven't seen it.

FOX: It did get covered a little bit, not a whole lot, but a little bit.

KING: Why not?

FOX: I don't know.

NYE: There's a lot of things --

FOX: You had a show about it. England followed suit and releasing their documents. I asked him. I said, what would you like to say to the American government? He said, don't be afraid to tell the people the truth.

NYE: Exactly. You see something in the sky that you don't know what it is, it doesn't mean they're aliens.

FOX: Sixty years of technology --

KING: But if France announces that they're there, why doesn't that impress you?

NYE: What does they're there.

FOX: It's 50 years of scientific study.

NYE: You guys --

FOX: It's been soil analysis, photographic analysis.

NYE: When I was young you couldn't make a plane without a vertical tail. Now you can. That doesn't mean that there are aliens.

FOX: I'm not saying there are aliens. I'm saying there are disk shaped craft, physical

phenomena that defy physics as we understand it today.

KING: Do they defy physics?

FRIEDMAN: No, it means we don't know how to duplicate it yet. That doesn't mean it's impossible. I worked on fusion propulsion systems. It's what goes on in the sun, a lot of energy per pound in material, back 40 years ago, Larry. We haven't built a big system because it takes a lot of money and effort.

KING: Guys, we're out of time. Thanks. Another in our series of programs searching for an answer. Go to CNN.com/LarryKing for transcripts, ring tones, photo galleries, and more. Don't forget about tonight's vote: is the United States government hiding knowledge of UFOs? And we've got a UFO commentary from the former Arizona governor. Our latest podcast, Barack Obama, is all ready for downloading. You can also sign up for our news letter or cell phone text alerts. It's all at CNN.com/LarryKing.

Anderson Cooper, "AC 360" starts right now.