



**Your On the
Street Reporter**



Uyless Black

The Roswell Man

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April 21, 2009

Hello from Your on the Street Reporter. Earlier this year, I had an opportunity to revisit Roswell, New Mexico, the place made famous by the Roswell Man, a supposed space alien who purportedly crash-landed near this town during July, 1947.

In 2007, I filed a brief report on Roswell and the Roswell Man. I was taken to task for making fun of Roswell and its surrounding geography. The report was short and paraphrased in Sidebar 1.

Sidebar 1. A Previous Visit.

October 27, 2007

Hello from Your on the Street Reporter. During my visits to explore Billy the Kid country, I also traveled into the land of the Roswell Man of Roswell, New Mexico. It is the site dealing with a man from outer space who allegedly landed in an area resembling outer space. Let's revisit the Roswell Man's recounting this part of the universe:

I'm lost. These intergalactic trips are downers. The time zones are killers and I never know one planet from another.

Aha...there's a forbidden looking place. Just like my home. Maybe it is my home. OK, I'll coast down and check out the terrain.

This place is too desolate. Can't be my Forbidden Planet. No trees. No flowers. Too much dirt. Too much blowing wind. (And too late to turn back: Severe electrical storms.)

Thus began the legend of the Roswell Man.

In my Traveling America reports, I usually recommend my readers pay a call on the locales in the reports. The site of the Roswell Man is an exception to this travelogue advisory. In spite of a possible law suit from Roswell's lawyers, I offer: Don't bother. It's not quite the downer of Billy the Kid's grave, but a close second.

You're welcome. In appreciation, 10 percent of your travel savings can be sent to my personal bank account. Just email me for the funds transfer information.

PS: For more information on the Roswell Man, go to weather-balloon.org.

My narrative was a put down, as Roswell is home to the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI), a cross-rival of my hometown that routinely took us to the cleaners in basketball and football contests. Plus, NMMI had one of the best AAU water polo teams in the state. My team never beat them. Consequently, this filing will balance-out matters, as well as assuage the critics and the Roswell Chamber of Commerce attorneys.

Background

In July of 1947, following an intense lightning storm, a man near Roswell (in Corona, NM) came across what appeared to be debris from an aircraft crash on his ranch. He decided to report the wreckage to authorities in Roswell.

Before long, the U.S. military moved into the pasture and cleaned it up. They forbade Roswell officials from making comments about the situation. According to archived documents, some citizens were threatened by the government if they talked about the incident. The government claimed the debris came from a weather balloon.

Several citizens who visited the pasture disagreed. The debris, "...is as thin as newsprint, but incredibly strong. There is foil, when crumpled, unfolds itself without a sign of a wrinkle ...Residents near the ranch on which the (debris) was found reported seeing a strange blue light several days ago about three o'clock in the morning."¹

The intriguing parts of this story revolve around the bodies that were said to be found in the pasture and that Secret Service agents were dispatched to oversee these crash activities. In addition, during (later) press conferences it was documented that the original debris was not shown to the media. Rather, only pieces from a weather balloon were publicized.²

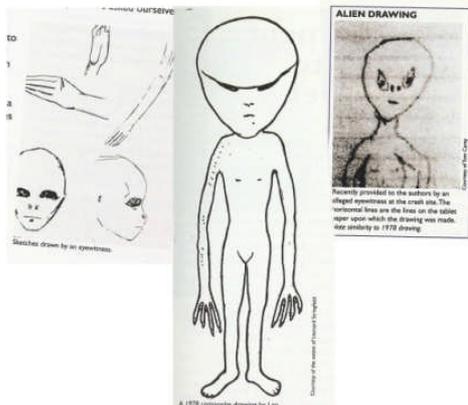
What about those bodies? Do "bodies" ride in weather balloons? According to various sources, four to six bodies were recovered from the crash site. They were autopsied and several people wrote about them. They appeared to resemble ET. Here are some observations from these witnesses:³

- The being was half humanoid, three-and-a-half-feet tall. It weighed 40 pounds.
- The eyes were deep-set and wide apart. Its nose was vague. Its mouth was a small slit and opened only into a slight cavity. There were no teeth. There were no ear lobes.
- The neck was thin. It had four fingers and no thumb (No thumb? Anyone worth their appendages know thumbs are requirements for advanced beings. How could an alien fly a space craft without thumbs?)
- Under magnification...the tissue structure appeared mesh-like.

¹ Donald R.Schmitt, *UFO Crash at Roswell* (Toledo, OH: Moonset Publishing Group 2001), 37.

² Many of the final conclusions on this incident have dwelt with the possibility that the military had to do a cover-up to protect secret projects---none dealing with aliens.

³ Tom Carey and Don Schmitt, *Witness to Roswell* (Roswell, NM: The Triton Group, 2003), 45 and 53.



Again, an ET-like creature.

Figure 1 shows sketches made by these witnesses.⁴ As best I could determine from the sources in footnotes 1 and 3, they were made independently, without the witnesses consulting one another.

Why bring in the Secret Service? This organization was set up to guard the President and his family. Granted, in those days, the press was not kind to Margaret Truman's looks. But she did have hair, and as far as it is known, did not pilot weather balloons.

Figure 1. Renditions of Roswell Man.

Can Multiple Witnesses Visualize the Same Fantasy?

Given my earth-bound, pre-Copernican mentality, I've been reluctant to accept the Roswell Man story. But I admit my learning that several people---independently from one another---drew the sketches (and others) shown in Figure 1 gave me pause. One possible explanation is based on some recent research on the brain that deals with remembering and forgetting. The research substantiates the common sense idea that people form opinions on a subject based on what they know about the subject in the first place.⁵ Thus, these witnesses might have unintentionally thought they saw an ET when they might have seen dummies or even nothing. Perhaps they visualized pictures from science fiction books and later drew images of their recollections.

Roswell Capitalizes on its Man

For my readers who are not familiar with the location of Roswell, New Mexico, the place is out-of-the-way from America's rush hours. The nearest Interstate is 150 miles to the North. Its main claim to fame is the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) and the former home of some of Billy the Kid's allies and enemies. But giving Roswell citizens their due, they've done a fine job of capitalizing on the Roswell Man. In the downtown area alone (and downtown itself is a bit alone), I counted four shops and museums associated with the Roswell Man. What the Smithsonian museums are to Washington's National Mall, the Roswell Man curio shops are to Roswell's Main Street.

I paid a call on them. The biggest show in town is housed in a former movie theatre and shown in the right photo in Figure 2. The museum contains many of the artifacts associated with the Roswell Man story, such as the teletype machine used to report the crash to other teletype machines, and a mock-up of the autopsy room. A tour guide is available, free of charge.

⁴ Ibid., see footnotes 1 and 3.

⁵ Claudia Kalb, "To Pluck a Rooted Sorrow," *Newsweek*, April 27, 2009, 53-54.

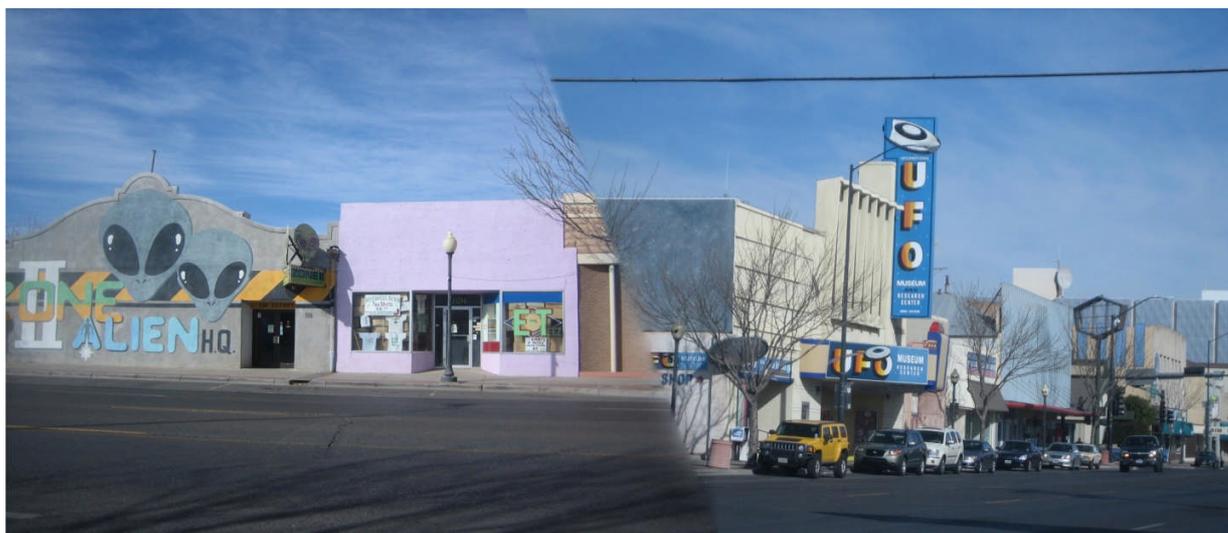


Figure 2. UFO museum sightings.

Curio Shops

Ah yes, those curio shops. To a T-shirt addict, they are as dangerous as a saloon is to an alcoholic. I've chronicled my addiction to T-shirts in earlier reports. For this filing, I am proud to report I bought no T-shirts while in Roswell, New Mexico. The twelve-step T-shirt Anonymous program continues to be effective. My only problem with this addiction is that I tend to over compensate with vast amounts of other consumptions, such as stoking-up on Big Macs and Snickers bars.

For this trip, I engaged in purchases of post cards. My relatives were probably baffled and the postal service happy with my mailings. My favorite is shown in Figure 3. Personally, I like the ET descriptions by the eye witnesses better than the image on this post card. The artist shows the Roswell Man with thumbs, which is contrary to the statements of the witnesses.



Figure 3. Post card postings of the Roswell Man.

Space Visitors?

What are we to make of this fantastic story? Not the city of Roswell story, but the alien story. I've read that some astronomy experts think the long distances between earth-like planets and planet earth make it physically impossible for any supposed aliens to make the trip to pay a call on us.

But it is generally accepted in the scientific community---less so in the religious community---that there are earth-like planets out there. For example:⁶

We are fairly certain of more than 300 "exoplanets," including a five-planet system that orbits star 55 Cancri in the constellation Cancer, 41 light years away...one of 55 Cancri's five planets may be temperate enough to support life.

These people state that 41 light years is too great a distance to permit space travel. (One light year is equivalent to 5,888,000,000,000 miles.)

I've these questions for the scientific community: First, why must you suppose that all the other planets in the universe must adhere to the constructs of planet earth? Why can't a planet that is light-years away operate with its own physical laws? Why must a "temperate" climate be required to sustain life? Many organisms function just fine on the polar caps and in volcanic fissures. Granted, they aren't very high up on the evolutionary ladder, but the manner in which life on other planets might have evolved does not have to be the same as on earth.

I find this stance (which I call Scientific Ptolemy) to be egoistic, arrogant, and self-centered. In fact, some of our scientists are coming around to the notion that other parts of the universe don't adhere to the physical laws of our solar system.

Second, why must we assume our laws place a boundary on travel, constrained by the limitations of our perceptions and formula? Even today, the experts are at odds about the issue of solar energy being used to propel a space craft to another solar system. Some say sure. Others say nay.

Your Surreal World is more Surreal than my Surreal World.

For myself, one of the most fascinating aspects of life is how disconnected our day-to-day factual world is to that of our religious and scientific worlds. When I consider the unalterable fact that we die, I don't see any of us levitate to an unending life, as espoused in some religions. On the other hand, I think about the scientific idea of an infinite universe, yet my life on earth is woefully finite.

Consider this concept about religious surrealism: Water turns to wine. If that were only so! Or consider this idea about scientific surrealism: Parallel universes exist; thus, so do multiple Angelinas. If that were only so! My point is both are far-fetched from our day-to-day experiences.

⁶ Thomas Mallon, "Across the Universe," *Atlantic Monthly*, May 2009, 60.

Let's put aside religious and scientific canons for a few moments and consider how surreal our mundane existence on earth is in relation to what we are told exists around and beyond us. We'll try an experiment. In so-doing, certain religious and scientific creeds will be examined. It is not my intent to insult any readers who do not like their beliefs questioned. (It is my intent, as usual, to present alternative ways of looking at an issue.) I will make light of some ideas, again with no intent to offend anyone. But a word of warning: if you can't examine views opposing yours on the subjects of religion and science, perhaps you should stop reading at this paragraph. Here we go.

In light of our experience on earth, what is plausible? Must we disregard our day-to-day experiences and say, "They don't count; we need to move beyond what we actually perceive to what we imagine we perceive."

To do so requires an act of faith. But not just religious faith. It also requires an act of scientific faith. It also necessitates a look at plausibility, both from the religious and scientific perspectives.

Plausibility: Beyond Roswell

A short discourse on the subject of plausibility: Here are some points for your consideration. I ask you to judge if they are plausible. They are framed in two of the contentious debates of our lives: Jesus and the Bible, and the scientific theory about the universe.

Plausibility idea number one:

- Jesus was conceived from a virgin. From there, Jesus went on to become an infinite being.
- The universe was conceived from microscopic matter. From there, the universe went on to become an infinite system.

Plausibility idea number two:

- The Bible contains so many factual errors it cannot be considered to be authoritative enough to be interpreted literally. If God is unerring, and the Bible is the word of God, and the Bible has errors, where does that leave those who say every word of the Bible is correct? Where does that leave those who say God is unerring?
- The theories about the universe and its composition are so contradictory they cannot be considered to be authoritative. As one example, no one knows if the universe is actually made up of "dark matter" or if so, is it really dark...maybe black? If it is white, does its color change its unknown behavior? (I joke, but I do not joke. Listen to the experts, they offer similar contradictory explanations.)

Plausibility idea number three:

- Religious folks often say the human race is destined for an everlasting life in hell or heaven.
- Scientific folks often say the human race is destined for a universe in which the universe expands then contracts, like a balloon that is inflated and deflated time and again---over billions of years. When it expands, we are in a sort of heaven. When it contracts, we will be in a sort of hell, as all of us (and the entire universe) will be compressed into the original microscopic speck.

Plausibility idea number four:

- Religion teaches us there are constants in life. Sin is constant. Jesus is constant. So is redemption.
- Science teaches us constants may not be constant.⁷ The velocity of light (c), Newton's constant of gravitation (G), and the mass of electrons (m_e) might not be the same at all places and times in the universe.

Plausibility idea number five:

- The Bible states there was only one Jesus.
- Science holds forth one theory that an infinite number of parallel universes exist along with multiple replicas of humans, dogs, cats, talk show hosts, and yes...an infinite number of Jesuses.⁸ (This notion is especially troublesome to those who read the Bible literally. For myself, I find it interesting to think there might be multiple Donalds out there.)

Plausibility idea number six:

- The religious people claim the certainty of God and Jesus. Why? Because the Bible---a book that is seldom evaluated for its historical accuracy, but has many inaccuracies---says so...and an historical assessment of the Bible is threatening to the faith of many believers.
- The scientific people claim the certainty of uncertainty. The scientists' basic idea is that in order to know God, one must understand how an atom functions. In order to understand an atom, one has to actually observe an atom in operation. This idea sounds straight-forward enough, except for one small problem. Multiple atoms can be observed, but an individual atom is shy. The observation of one atom (in order to understand the basic God-oriented, atom-inspired underpinnings of the universe) will never reveal the actual behavior of this atom, because the act of observation changes the behavior of the atom.⁹

We could go on with these somber ideas...and on...and on. This sidebar will lighten-up the topic.

Sidebar 2. Jesus, just show me the numbers.

Many humans believe in a universe that operates with mathematical, mechanistic underpinnings. Others trust in a spiritual cosmos that is devoid of equations.

This approach separates the race into those who understand math, and those who do not. These latter humans (the innumerates) lack a basic knowledge of mathematics, and do not consider 0 to be a number. On the other hand, the numerates believe formulas explain everything in existence...even though preexistence presents challenges for their algorithms.

The innumerates have gravitated to religion. The numerates have gravitated to the Theory of Relativity.

⁷ John D. Barrow and John K Webb, "Inconstant Constants," *Scientific American*, June 2005, 57-63.

⁸ Max Tegmark, "Parallel Universes," *Scientific American*, May 2003, 41.

⁹ An atomic level microscope affects the behavior of the atom it is examining.

We could talk about the religious proponents exalting Jesus rising from the dead. Alternately, we could talk about the scientific proponents claiming a three-dimensional universe is an illusion and that reality is more like a two-dimensional hologram.¹⁰ Which is more plausible to you?

One more idea: gravity. For most of our lives, we have been told by the scientists---with their absolute assurance---that the nature of gravity not only means we are bound to earth, but all objects attract each other through gravity. As examples: (a) earth's gravity attracts people to its surface, preventing them from drifting off into space, and (b) celestial bodies attract other celestial bodies.

However, the Hubble telescope's sightings have revealed the alleged Big Bang's expanding universe is continuing to expand, but the expansion is increasing in speed---an anti-gravity effect. This startling discovery has sent the scientists back to their blackboards and algorithms, disappointed they have not yet found the answer to the universe, but delighted their grants and paychecks will continue. They explain this anti-gravity mystery to the general public with the following demonstration, shown on television:¹¹

A scientist reaches into his pocket and pulls-out his car keys. He tosses them up in the air and they return to his hand. He explains to the *60 Minutes* journalist that the Hubble telescope's findings has empowered him with the inability to explain why the keys did not continue their upward journey into the universe, requiring the scientist to take a bus home. The focus of the interview was the possible demise of the Hubble telescope, because of the reluctance of the head of NASA to send a space shuttle to the Hubble site for maintenance. (It could be that the scientists were disappointed because they might no longer have a tool to discover more questions they could not answer.)

The journalist was skeptical. He asked: So what if the telescope becomes floating scrap metal? The scientists responded that they would lose their ability to create more unanswerable questions about the universe and invent more names to amplify terms such as axions, white dwarfs, brown dwarfs, massive neutrinos, photinos, and largesse. I joke about their answer, but the car key demonstration actually took place.

A Pause to Examine the "Plausibilities"

Consider what we have covered with these plausibility ideas. From both perspectives, religion and scientific, they are so far afield from our every-day experiences that both could be reasonably described as fantasy.

Which is true? Is it somewhere in between? What is so far-fetched about the Roswell Man visiting Earth in relation to Jesus leaving it? The numerologists will say neither is possible. I offer to them: Until you get a handle on gravity and dark matter; until you can explain why the universe is expanding and experiencing an anti-gravity effect, don't pretend to tell us Jesus could not leave earth (another anti-gravity effect, so to speak).

¹⁰ Jacob D. Bekenstein, "Information in the Holographic Universe," *Scientific American*, August 2003, 59.

¹¹ Your Reporter saw this demonstration on *60 Minutes*, dated March 14, 2004.

And for the religious zealots, it would be healthy to admit the so-called holy books are erring historical documents. This admission should in no way diminish one's religious faith. I possess religious faith, and I read the Bible from a historical-critical standpoint. If I can, so can others (and others do of course). The Dali Lama advises his subjects to alter their views of religion as new scientific facts are discovered.

It would be immensely helpful to world peace if religious intolerants would accept that there is more than one way to practice a religion; that they respect all faiths that are earnestly seeking (innumerate) answers to life; that they are not required by their God to convert everyone else to their way of thinking.

It would be helpful if the scientific numerates would step away from their blackboards and offer something beyond balancing an equation in relation to the equation of life. I'm asking all of us to say: We don't have all the answers.

I suspect the idea in the sentence above will never be realized. The religious and scientific mountebanks have too much of their intellectual and prideful capital invested in their own views. They cannot stand back and be in awe of the very mysteries in which they live; *in accepting they will never know*. I can. And I hope you can, too. That is what makes each of our days and nights so wondrous.

Salute to the Roswell Man!

Whether he visited earth or not, here's to the Roswell Man. Here's to his legend and the ideas he has come to symbolize.



To the left is a photo reflecting a modest salute to the Roswell Man from Your on the Street Reporter. I'm not much of an alien model. I weigh-in at more than 40 pounds. I'm more than four feet high. But my skin is becoming a bit alien to me, as are most of my appendages. Such is life.

I concluded my book *2084 and Beyond* with a quote from Albert Einstein. It seems fitting to close this report with the same quote.¹²

The most beautiful and most profound emotion we can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the sower of all true science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead. To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness.

Your on the Street Reporter

PS: Take a trip to Roswell. Take-in the various museums and curio shops. It's a kick, and you will find this part of New Mexico a tonic to your soul.

¹² Lincoln Barnett, quote from Albert Einstein, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, (New York, Bantam Books, 1980), 108.