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Music: “Oh No, Ross and Carrie! Theme Song” by Brian Keith Dalton. A jaunty, upbeat instrumental.

Carrie Poppy: Hello! Welcome to *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!*, the show where we don't just report on fringe science, spirituality, claims of the paranormal. We take part ourselves.

Ross Blocher: Yep. When they make the claims, we show up, so you don't have to. I'm Ross Blocher.

Carrie Poppy: And I'm Carrie Poppy. And—

Ross Blocher: We're back at the Conscious Life Expo 2024! Alright. So, for those of you who haven't followed our many other exploits at the Conscious Life Expo, it's this amazing collection of crystal healers, alien contactees, vaccine deniers—

Carrie Poppy: Channelers, tarot card readers—

Ross Blocher: Free energy machine purveyors, CBD oil supplement salesmen.

Carrie Poppy: Some classics who we've met there. Shakuntali, Kimberly Meredith, Deborah King.

Ross Blocher: *(Dropping his voice.)* Jimmy Church. *(Returning to normal.)* Cher Jolene. So many wild characters. It's almost overwhelming, this collection of people so individual and strange that converge upon the LAX Hilton every year in Los Angeles.

Carrie Poppy: And have been doing it for over 30 years. I'm repeating what they said. I don't know exactly how many years it is.

Ross Blocher: It's been around for a long time. This year we wanted to see some of our favorites and see some new folks, and you went to attend this talk by Whitley Strieber.

Carrie Poppy: Whitley Strieber, a fave of mine.

Ross Blocher: The inventor of the cotton gin.

Carrie Poppy: Nope. You have it wrong. Oh, that's Eli Whitney? Is that right?

(Ross confirms and they chuckle.)

Whitley Strieber is a professed UFO abductee who wrote one of the most famous and impactful abductee memoirs in English speaking history.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, we've talked about Betty and Barney Hill's incident, which I think was the first published abduction experience. But I feel like Whitley Strieber's *Communion*, which came out in 1987, really did put the idea of alien abduction into the common parlance, into all of our collective minds. And you all may remember the iconic photo—not photo; (*chuckles*) the iconic painting on the front of the book by Ted Seth Jacobs of this gray alien. Though, really—Carrie's got her copy of the book here, and I don't know if I would describe him as a gray. Maybe kind of a very light, yellowish gray.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, but that is how he's described.

Ross Blocher: But with those big, almond-shaped black eyes. And maybe he's outsized in my mind, Whitley Strieber, because this was just right in the era when I was really getting into UFOs. And I remember seeing that image, and it just seared into my retinas. (*Chuckles.*) But I feel like a lot of people maybe our age also remember that so strongly.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. One of my former coworkers at the James Randi Educational Foundation also kind of got into organized skepticism, as they'd put it there. Because he was at one point terrified of UFOs as a kid. And he also has this very scary association with this imagery as just like still kind of spooky to him if his eyes passed over it.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. At the time, I was very much a Christian, a believer, and I had this kind of working theory—many other people have floated versions of this—that aliens were demons, and this was some sort of thing that they were running on the side to kind of freak people out.

Carrie Poppy: Oooh! Right. Yes. Oh, the Christiano Brothers believe this.

Ross Blocher: Oh, do they have that kind of—? Okay. Well, definitely that image stuck with me. And then I was really into the *X-Files*, which came a few years later, and all these documentaries that would feature various depictions of the gray aliens. But yeah, that cover always stood out. And I've got to confess, I've never actually read *Communion*.

Carrie Poppy: So, I just started reading it for the first time. And I was going to ask you if we wanted to have our listeners vote on whether they want us to pause and hold everything for a *Communion* book review next week, or would they like us to move on? Are they like, “We know enough about *Communion*, the memoir.” But if they're interested, I'd halt and read all of *Communion* this week.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I'd gladly do that. Alright, we'll put up polls on Facebook and (*hesitating on the word*) X.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, cool, yes, X. An X poll. X.

Ross Blocher: As I'm editing this, I'll have to go do that. But I remember when we went to these conferences, and I realized that Whitley Strieber himself was appearing, I thought, “Oh my goodness, wow! What a get! You know, the guy who wrote *Communion*.” And it turns

out, I think he's just kind of made sort of a secondary career out of making appearances like this.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, the conference circuit.

Ross Blocher: Like if you're an actor who's been in *Star Trek*, you've got now a lifetime's worth of appearances at various booths and photo opportunities.

Carrie Poppy: Similar to Travis, the guy who—he was an abductee who had a movie made after him.

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Ross Blocher: Yes, we met him at the Ozark Mountain Conference.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. *Fire in the Sky*, I want to say is the name of it. Travis Walton! Yes!

(Ross affirms excitedly.)

Yes. Yes. So, similar thing where, yeah, you have this one experience, your book takes off, and, boy, you're the golden child until you go.

Ross Blocher: Not the Waltons of “Goodnight, John Boy”!

Carrie Poppy: Right. Yes. Thank you for differentiating like Wikipedia. Don’t confuse this with *The Waltons*.

(They laugh.)

Ross Blocher: That was my disambiguation for anyone who's like, “I only know those Waltons and the Waltons who own the Walmart company.” He's also not related to them as far as I know.

Carrie Poppy: I appreciate it as someone whose brain will stop and say, “Is that related to Walmart?”

(They giggle.)

Okay.

Ross Blocher: Speaking of Whitley Strieber's written output, he's got over 40 books.

Carrie Poppy: Over 40?!

Ross Blocher: Over 40, because I counted 41.

(Carrie laughs.)

But there were others that didn't have covers and maybe other language translations.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, this is a good reason!

Ross Blocher: I didn't get to the bottom of exactly how many over 40, but I feel confident saying he's written—

Carrie Poppy: Okay people, take note. A proper use of over 40.

Ross Blocher: Carrie-approved use of the over—

Carrie Poppy: All you have to do is sit down with me and explain it to me for 45 seconds, no matter what piece of media I have encountered.

Ross Blocher: Just like I am now over 40 years old.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Okay. Yes. Well, that's—yeah, that's just true.

Ross Blocher: And just like I often say with L. Ron Hubbard, you have the fiction and the acknowledged fiction. So, Whitley Strieber has written many, I think, successful books that are science fiction. But then he has other ones like *Communion* that he says are based on his real experiences. We've talked about him on the show before.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. And just, listeners, you may have this binary in your mind of like, well, it's true or it's made up. Remember, there's the third category: author means it, but there are reasons to think they're misled by the wrong narrative. The wrong internal coherence is running through this story.

Ross Blocher: Indeed. Whitley Strieber was promoting a new book that he's written that the talk was named after as well, called *Them*.

Carrie Poppy: Yes. So, I was stoked when I knew he was coming back. I have so much affection for Whitley Strieber.

Ross Blocher: I wanted to be listening to another talk at the same time, by Del Bigtree. So, we'll talk about that later. But one of the magical things at the conference is that if you wait around, they have this booth where they sell DVDs. So, they always have someone in the back of the room. I say always. They don't record everything that goes on there.

Carrie Poppy: Not the free stuff.

Ross Blocher: They've got someone in the back with a video camera. And then later on, you can find these DVDs that they've quickly pushed out. And I've seen these like computer towers they have with like 12 DVD writers in them.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, wow! Where are those?

Ross Blocher: They were right by the booth on the Monday when I came back to buy more, but I think—usually, I think they've got them behind the scenes, and they're just pumping out all these discs, slapping labels on them, sometimes just sharpie writing. It has to be a monumental effort to quickly turn all of these recordings into DVDs. The quality is not always great. It's someone with a little camcorder at the back. You kind of get what you get. I've bought DVDs that are blank. *(Laughs.)*

Carrie Poppy: Oh, you have? Okay. Oops.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. They just did not successfully complete the process.

Carrie Poppy: And so, you drove back to the Hilton, you paid 60 to park. You walked in and you said, "This is blank."

Ross Blocher: So, at the end, we're often trying to see if we can find some of the talks that we attended or ones that we really wanted to. And it's like \$10 per DVD. But if you get six, then it's only 50 bucks.

Carrie Poppy: A steal!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, or you can pay 100 bucks for more. Anyways, bought a lot of DVDs. That's what I'm saying here.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, absolutely. It's a perfect way to break our brains and make sure we buy every single thing and then a few more.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, and there's always themes each year. Just breaking away from Whitley Strieber for a second, like I noticed there was a lot of astrology this year—probably because it's the Year of the Dragon. Everyone seems to be making a big deal out of that. And a lot of light language.

Carrie Poppy: Yes. New buzzword: light language.

Ross Blocher: I'm really excited for us to cover light language.

(Carrie agrees.)

I'll just tease that it's speaking in tongues but for the alien crowd and spirituality crowd.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, is that what it is?!

(Ross confirms.)

Oooh, it's like—okay. Glossolalia. Okay!

Ross Blocher: Yeah.

(Carrie “woah”s.)

It's wild. There was some wild stuff that happens here.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, did you get to witness it?

Ross Blocher: There was one talk we were going to go to, and then we at the last minute changed.

Carrie Poppy: *(Disappointedly.)* Oh, I know the one. Damn it!

Ross Blocher: You were going to a light language talk. I was going to a different light language talk, and then we ended up at this—

(They laugh.)

Carrie Poppy: I know exactly where we ended up. Oh, yeah, yeah.

Ross Blocher: That guy.

Carrie Poppy: We'll have a lot to say. We'll have a lot to say.

Ross Blocher: I don't even know how to briefly summarize that. The vibe guy. Dr. Vibe.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah, the vibe guy. I'm about to give his book to my best friend, because it's her birthday today—Claire.

Ross Blocher: Happy birthday, Claire.

Carrie Poppy: Happy birthday, Claire. Can you read this for me and tell me about it? I don't want to interact with Dr. Vibe in my head again.

Ross Blocher: *(Cackles.)* Oh, I got signed up for the texts from him. And it was fast and furious at first. Thankfully, they've calmed down a bit.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, we'll talk about that. So, yeah.

[00:10:00]

Other themes in Conscious Life—good question. Good question.

Ross Blocher: They even had a room called the rabbit hole, where they sent all the conspiracy theorists.

Carrie Poppy: Yes! I felt like that was too on the nose! (*Inaudible*)—metaphors.

Ross Blocher: I know! I almost felt like they would find that maybe insulting or something.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

“Oh, you're putting us in the rabbit trail room downstairs?! Off the beaten path?”

Carrie Poppy: Right, right! It's hard to find! Good luck getting yourself out! Yeah.

Ross Blocher: We did see more listeners at the show this year. It's always fun.

Carrie Poppy: Yep! I saw 13, I think.

Ross Blocher: Of course, we show up so you don't have to, but you still can!

Carrie Poppy: You can. You can. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, there was a lot of DNA talk this year, I think.

Ross Blocher: Yes. Yeah, that's become DNA activation.

Carrie Poppy: Cellular memory.

Ross Blocher: Various sounds and meditations and things that can affect and improve your DNA.

Carrie Poppy: Lots of talk about trauma, but I would say usually now more as a secondary—like a supportive topic instead of like that's the—yeah.

Ross Blocher: The primary one. Yeah, okay.

Carrie Poppy: I got us a healthy dose of self-love.

Ross Blocher: Well, good!

(*They chuckle.*)

It's fascinating just to see themes that emerge. And I know soon we're going to be telling you about Contact in the Desert that we attended, and there was a lot about AI there. And I was surprised—there were certainly some here, but I was surprised that AI wasn't a bigger theme as I had expected. Also, I've been pulling all the talk titles together in a text document, and I'm running them through a word cloud generator.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, smart.

Ross Blocher: So, I'll show you hopefully next time we meet to just—

Carrie Poppy: Oh, cool. And will it be weighted by number of times used?

(Ross confirms.)

Oh, cool! Yeah. Cool!

Ross Blocher: I'm just curious to see the visual for that.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah! Oh, yeah. I'm excited.

Ross Blocher: So, okay. Anyways, yeah. We were at Conscious Life Expo, and Carrie was here in the room for the Whitley Strieber talk titled *Them*, about his new book. I watched it many times on DVD later.

Carrie Poppy: You watched it many times?

(Ross confirms.)

Oh, wow. Okay. Thank you.

Ross Blocher: At least three.

Carrie Poppy: Okay! I watch, but I like—I'm pausing every 10 seconds, so my process is very dense.

Ross Blocher: There's kind of like the watch it, and then the watch it and take notes, and then the watch it and clarify certain things. Like, what did he say here?

Carrie Poppy: Okay. Yeah. So, here's how it was billed in the program. “Whitley does a deep dive into the nature of individual communication with the entities he calls the visitors and explains why there is so much secrecy surrounding their presence. This presentation is based on his book, *Them*, and the extraordinary revelations that have been made in 2023 in congressional hearings and elsewhere about their capabilities, their bodies, and our government's hidden struggle to understand. Whitley Strieber is the author of *Communion*, one of the most iconic books in the literature of the unexplained, and the bestselling nonfiction book on UFO related subjects in history. His most recent book about alien contact is *Them*, published in 2023. In 2021, he published *Jesus: A New Vision*.”

Ross Blocher: I'm curious about that one.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, me too! “And in 2022, *A New World*.”

Ross Blocher: Everybody's got to co-opt Jesus.

Carrie Poppy: Christ-opt.

“Both these books are follow-ons to *Communion* that extend his research beyond personal issues of contact and into broader areas. He is the author of—(*shocked*) Of over 40!?” He doesn't know!?

(*They cackle.*)

“—over 40 other books.” Improper use!

Ross Blocher: I'm glad that we converged on the same description! (*Chuckles.*)

Carrie Poppy: Nope, the excuse goes for you and not for him.

(*They laugh.*)

“—including *The Wolfen*, *The Hunger*, and *Superstorm*. All, as with *Communion*, have been made into films.” Wait, all over 40?

Ross Blocher: The ones that were just mentioned by name.

Carrie Poppy: Ooh, the “including”. Okay, that could use some copyediting, but okay!

Ross Blocher: This whole catalog could use copyediting. Again, to be fair, they've brought a lot of people together with a lot of wild descriptions of talks. I'm sure that's quite an effort to get them all into that little printed catalog.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, lord! I mean, once you've signed on to the whole operation of running this thing, you are making some moral calls in your—oh, man—in your daily life, that I don't even want to think about!

Ross Blocher: I mean, we'll talk about—this was, I think, one of our favorite moments at the conference this year had to do with someone announcing they were the Messiah.

Carrie Poppy: Yes! I know exactly who you mean.

Ross Blocher: And I was a little surprised they allowed this Messiah to come give a talk at the conference, considering the waves he's been making outside of the conference.

(*Carrie agrees.*)

We've got some good stories to tell. Anyways, they mentioned in the little byline about him, his research. And I think in this talk, you're going to get a feel for what qualifies as his research.

Carrie Poppy: Yes, which I'm legit excited about some of the stuff I learned from this talk about what he's cataloging and where he's cataloging it.

Ross Blocher: Yeah! Again, we've talked about him on the show before, but people who don't maybe remember a lot about Whitley Strieber, this doesn't come up a ton in this talk, But he also had a wife, Anne.

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It's very sweet how he talks about her and remembers her, obviously just loved her with a great passion. And he has kind of found ways to sort of continue his communication with her.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, she cowrites books with him.

Ross Blocher: And we're not in the business. of diagnosing people, but it does seem like he has some form of like maybe temporal lobe epilepsy, some sort of psychosis perhaps, where he does see and feel and experience things. And I believe that he does experience these things. But then he runs them through this kind of understanding of the world based around shadowy visitors to our planet.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, he often thinks that Anne visits him in the form of a white moth, so I always think of that when I see a white moth.

Ross Blocher: Mm. Because Anne's visiting you as well.

(Carrie agrees with a chuckle.)

As we said in our last episode, apparently when you're beyond the grave, you have the ability to influence the flight patterns of various insects.

Carrie Poppy: Right. So, she continues to help him write his books. And I think she is kind of a hidden piece of this whole story in a lot of ways. And she'll come up a lot here!

Ross Blocher: And Whitley Streber himself is a tall, White gentleman. He was wearing spectacles.

Carrie Poppy: How old is he? He's in his 80s now?

Ross Blocher: I'm just gonna guess early 70s.

Carrie Poppy: 78.

Ross Blocher: Oh, late 70s. Okay. Yeah. And he has a very—like, a very good speaking voice. I'd listen to an audio book read by him.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, yeah. He has a podcast called *Dreamland*.

Ross Blocher: He's been doing that—he said it's in its 25th year!

Carrie Poppy: Oh, okay. Yeah. *Dreamland*'s pretty good. I like it a lot. Yes, he has a great delivery. He's a very thoughtful speaker. As he's building his sentences, he's thinking about them and unleashing them in this very controlled, thoughtful manner.

Ross Blocher: Most of the major talks at Conscious Life Expo, like on the primary schedule, are slated for an hour and a half. And then there's kind of this secondary course of smaller lectures that are only an hour long, so they can be sort of back-to-back. But he was scheduled for the hour and a half. And the first 10 minutes were just tech problems.

Carrie Poppy: Yes! Which he interpreted as them fooling with him, which is a common thing.

Ross Blocher: Super clever.

Carrie Poppy: But it's a common thing we hear too, from these whistleblower types.

Ross Blocher: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, if you're down in the rabbit hole room or one of these UFO talks, they might jokingly or they might seriously say that the tech issues they are experiencing have to do with interference. It's like, (*skeptically*) really? At the Conscious Life Expo, the government is delaying your talk with seven minutes of scrambling?

Carrie Poppy: Or aliens.

Ross Blocher: But then you get to give it. What's the end goal there? But he cleverly said, "Oh, this happens around me all the time. I'm the reason why."

Carrie Poppy: I think he means it. I think he thinks this.

Ross Blocher: "We have three tech support guys up here trying to get my slides to work in the audio."

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. It's very hard to notice when you're the common denominator.

Ross Blocher: And guess who introduced him?

Carrie Poppy: I know this. Was it Alan Steinfeld?

(*Ross confirms through laughter.*)

Yeeees, Alan Steinfeld!

Ross Blocher: He's everywhere! How does he do it?

Carrie Poppy: I don't know!

Ross Blocher: We keep talking about him.

Carrie Poppy: Well, first I should also say this was \$50.

Ross Blocher: Oh, wow. Yeah. All the prices went up this year.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, I guess that's right. They were 40 before, right?

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I think it used to be 40 in advance and then like 45 if you—yeah, waited too long. And this year it was 50. And then if you were like me and you waited to the last possible minute to buy your tickets, it was \$60 per workshop. Yeah, brutal.

Carrie Poppy: Woah! Oh, crazy. Okay. Well, waiting in line for this talk, there weren't very many of us. But there was a woman who followed me from the disclosure lunch to Whitley's talk, because she saw me be the one brave enough to leave the disclosure lunch to be like, "I'm hitting Whitley on time." So, she—

Ross Blocher: Was she sitting at your table?

Carrie Poppy: No, uh-uh.

Ross Blocher: Okay. 'Cause there was a listener sitting at your table who wrote us later.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, I know. Two, two. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Who noticed later?

Ross Blocher: Oh, excellent. Who wrote us later, who told us—

Carrie Poppy: Oh, wrote us later! Oh, good. Oh, okay. I'll have to find them. Yeah, there were two listeners who were definitely there.

Ross Blocher: Nice. With you and do we want to say yet? You were sitting at a table with someone we've talked about before.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah. Whereas Whitley was sitting at a different table, but he got up to leave the disclosure lunch to be like, "I have a talk." And a few minutes after that, I just got up. And anyway, this other person followed.

And she was saying that "Oh, man."

I said, “Are you a big Whitley fan?”

And she said, “It goes beyond that now. I've just—oh my gosh, I've just watched like everything he's ever made and, you know, read everything he's ever written.”

Ross Blocher: I am largely here at the conference because of Whitley Strieber. Yeah.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, probably. So, she sat next to me. She was really nice. And as he was fumbling for the tech, she was like, “Oh yeah, you see? This happens. This happens to him.”

Ross Blocher: Once you get a narrative, things fold into the narrative, and...

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, that's working! That was working for her.

So, Alan Steinfeld, as you said, got up and was like—basically, said what you were just saying like, “Hey, we have a hero in the room.”

Ross Blocher: This is a big deal. Yeah, he's an important figure in this movement. And yeah, really, he is.

Carrie Poppy: Yep.

[00:20:00]

Oh, he also said something interesting. Alan said—he kind of nodded to the existence of others around Conscious Life Expo who make claims that he, Alan, is more skeptical of. But he feels like Whitley, by contrast, is the real deal. And, oh man, I was like who's he thinking of?!

Ross Blocher: For example?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, you can't say that. But I'm like come ooon!

Ross Blocher: That's interesting. 'Cause there's a moment later where it feels like Alan recognizes something that Whitley's taking a little too credulously. We'll get to it. Yeah.

Carrie Poppy: Oooh! I don't remember this. Okay, cool. Flag it. Okay, so Whitley begins, and he tells us that we are moving into Aquarius from Pisces. Always hitting that age of Aquarius, it's coming.

Ross Blocher: Boy! They've been singing about it since the '70s, but I guess it's finally becoming real.

Carrie Poppy: Yep. He said the little fish is gonna end up flopping around on dry land.

Ross Blocher: Okay, let's extend that Pisces metaphor. Why not?

Carrie Poppy: Yep. Exactly. And so, I think he was intimating that during this time, some were going to get more visitations maybe. And some of those visitors are predators, but most of them aren't. Most of them are midwives and doctors who intend to pull this infant into a new world.

Ross Blocher: He keeps referring to this new world. This is what's presaged by all of these visitations. And right, he kept using that birth metaphor for us coming out sort of kicking and screaming into the light and trying to figure out what we were in this new reality. And there was this quote he said with a lot of gravitas, "A new world, if you can take it." And he kept repeating that like a pastor or something, quoting something from first Corinthians or something. "A new world, if you can take it."

Carrie Poppy: (*Overlapping.*) "If you can take it!" Kind of pleadingly, "And can we take it?"

Ross Blocher: (*Chuckles.*) Yeah. He gets philosophical every now and then, where he'll remember all these weird little abduction experiences he's nodding to from himself and others. It's always leading back to this big, larger narrative about our souls and this battle for our souls on the planet and this new era that we're going to be pulled into—hopefully, into the light of truth.

Carrie Poppy: He also said this line, "Being born is hard. Ask any baby, they'll tell ya!" Hard to, uh—hard to fact check.

Ross Blocher: I guess with their cries?

(*They laugh.*)

Carrie Poppy: Okay. He said that the sun is our father? I didn't know if he meant S-O-N or S-U-N. I was like, "Oh man, I'm eight minutes in and I don't know what 'the sun is our father' means."

Ross Blocher: I don't think I can clarify on that thought, yeah.

Carrie Poppy: But he said we need to discover ourselves, and the aliens are here to help us discover ourselves, which is really hard to do. Because every single one of us is in a deep sleep, and we gotta wake up.

Ross Blocher: That's another one of those things he says with so much gravitas. "Wow, we're all in a deep sleep. We gotta wake up!" Oh wow, okay. Thank you, Pastor.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. I don't know what to do with that, but yes!

Ross Blocher: I think the idea of *Them*, the book, is that he's collected stories that came from readers of *Communion*. Because for years people would write him, and he said that they sent something like 250 to 300,000 letters, and he just determined, "I mean, there's no physical way I can read these. So, what am I going to do with them?" But he says that his beloved wife, Anne, and a good friend of hers—a friend of theirs—

Carrie Poppy: Laurie Barnes, yep.

Ross Blocher: Laurie Barnes—that they did the Herculean job of reading these letters, often responding to them or bringing them selectively to his attention, putting them in careful—you know, filing.

Carrie Poppy: And cataloging them! Making this—like, their life's work is this epic Whitley Streber actual contact archive. And I mean, contact with his readers. It's so cool that she did this! Thank you, Anne! I'll thank every white moth that I see. And I totally want to see this archive. And he has given it to Rice University. We gotta go.

Ross Blocher: Okay. We got to go there. Do we know anybody at Rice University?

Carrie Poppy: Oh, maybe.

Ross Blocher: Well, let us know if you're there, and you can get us in. I'm sure we could request access.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, we can also just go.

Ross Blocher: But yeah, he referred to this as one of the most important human documents. At first, he was going to say like—

Carrie Poppy: The.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, the most important. Then he kind of caught himself. "Well, you know, there's like the Magna Carta or whatever."

(Carrie laughs.)

But it's one of the most important human documents that they have created. All of these letters that came in from people who read *Communion* said, "This has happened to me too. Let me tell you my story."

Carrie Poppy: And he'll focus a lot on the face. So, a lot of these writers were like, "That face, I've seen that face—that specific face."

Ross Blocher: That painting on the front.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, and he takes this as confirmation without sort of realizing he's in this echo chamber loop, right? Like, we've societally put the picture of the alien in your head, and then the alien picture is served up to you by your mind—

[00:25:00]

—if certain things happen during sleep or whatever. And now that's what your brain pulls and serves up to you.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, the causality gets lost in all of that. And also your sample is people who have read your book and have chosen to write you about it. But going by those numbers, a lot of people did.

(Carrie confirms.)

Understandable that you would think, hey, I'm sensing a trend here.

Carrie Poppy: I'm going viral. Yeah. This is early going viral. And taking great meaning from it, like Kathryn Krick. Ah, yeah. So, Laurie and Anne catalog all these letters, and they keep them in a storage space in Texas, and that's when he got Rice University involved. And now they're all there. And it also has archives from Jacques Vallée and John Mack.

Ross Blocher: Other folks we've talked about on the show, major figures in ufology.

Carrie Poppy: And the archive is not just restricted to scholars, which is good but—usually the case. But yes, good.

Ross Blocher: I don't remember what this was apropos of, but around this time he was also talking about patents that have been pulled out from alien technology. And he specifically named bodily implants. So, I assume like—I don't know—replacement hips or some other kind of—

Carrie Poppy: Oh, interesting. Or maybe those—what are those new implants that they're doing for like people who are paralyzed? Neuro whatever? I bet that upset a lot of people in this community.

Ross Blocher: I bet he would gladly label any of those as taken from alien technology.

(Carrie chuckles and agrees.)

But the point of him saying that was that there was this sort of meeting that happened in 2008, where they were going to sort of admit this. Like, this is where we got this technology—all of these various companies who are apparently in collusion on this secret. And then they decided, well, wait, then we'd lose our patents. So, you know what? Let's keep it a secret.

This is the sort of aside that you'll get from Whitley Strieber, without sourcing. And that would strain one's credulity.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. So, his theory is like that there are these materials that were taken from alien ships by the government and then given to companies to patent.

(Ross sighs heavily.)

And then the US government traded certain citizens to the aliens in return for the materials, so that they could patent them. So, that's what he's talking about.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, he ties that up in a neat little knot at the end. And, uh—huh. Okay. Let's accept that for now.

Carrie Poppy: *(Giggling.)* Put a pin in that!

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Indeed. Alright. So, the next part of the talk was all kind of organized by a letter that someone had written him that he thought was maybe exemplary of a trend of types of letters. And then he would just sort of expand on the story and give his own connection to it. The first letter was called "Call of the Morlocks". And he wouldn't like read the letter to us, but he would give us sort of his recounting of it. And for those of you who don't recognize Morlocks, they are the underground creatures in the H.G. Wells book, *The Time Machine*.

Carrie Poppy: Mmm. Oh, I didn't know that. Okay.

Ross Blocher: They lived underground and were scary.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, yeah, on Whitley's X account, he tweeted *(chuckling)* that the section called "Call of the Morlocks" is the creepiest part of the book *Them*, and it features this letter you're gonna describe.

Ross Blocher: Okay, maybe when people write something on X—now that we can't say tweeted—maybe we can say Xuded *(exuded)*.

(Carrie blows a raspberry but agrees.)

Alright. I'm going to try to—let's make it happen. Like fetch. So, this was the story of a psychologist. And oh my goodness, when Whitley Strieber tells a story, he just leaves out all of these important details that you really want. And you're like, wait—

Carrie Poppy: But litters it with kind of unnecessary information.

Ross Blocher: That too! But then he gets to a point and you're like, wait, how did you—I just watched this three times, 'cause I don't understand what you're saying! You left out some really important details.

Carrie Poppy: And then as I was saying, other times he has a very controlled and thoughtful way of communicating. He just sort of—he gets into this like scattered version where (*speeding up as she goes*) he kind of has to pull at like eight or nine things that he needs to tell you in order to communicate this one point—and so, we never get central coherence on the one point.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll just recount this as I had my takeaway, but he was talking about a psychologist that he knows who has just amazing vision. He can see the moons of Jupiter with his unaided eyes! Mm.

Carrie Poppy: Mm. Can you? I wouldn't be able to recognize the moons of Jupiter. I'm like, "Those are stars."

Ross Blocher: I'm suspicious of that, but I'm not suspicious enough to say that's impossible. So, maybe some people can do it.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, I'll let you handle those six emails.

Ross Blocher: But of course he—(*laughs*) right. I didn't check.

But he wants us to know just how clear sighted this psychologist is, because he obviously couldn't get things wrong. He saw a UFO over his head that looked like a gigantic paper airplane. And that's just a fun mental image of—I don't know—like a 40-foot paper airplane. Who knows?

Carrie Poppy: (*Laughs.*) It also sounds like an identified flying object.

[00:30:00]

It'd be a paper airplane, too close to your head.

Ross Blocher: Fair. The more you tell us, the more identified it is. But it was flying over this bright billboard. And so, I think he like got out of his car or something, 'cause he saw this thing. And there was a group of people standing under the craft near the billboard.

Carrie Poppy: Doing what you're doing: looking at it.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, exactly. But as he gets closer, they're like in a circle, and it seems like they're doing something. It doesn't sound like they're being like pulled up into the craft.

Carrie Poppy: Sending off a kite? Or something like that? Like—yeah.

Ross Blocher: (*Sighs.*) Your guess is as good as mine. But this is where it's like, okay, I need more details, Whitley. But as he approaches this group, one of them—who's described as a dwarf, I think maybe an ugly dwarf?! I don't know, like he had some description of this surly,

short character who turns to him and says, “Get out of here.” And so, the psychologist does that. Okay.

Then years later, the psychologist recalling this event says, “You know what? I think that dwarf was one of the gray aliens that you described!” That’s the story!

Carrie Poppy: Aaah, yes. Certainly. Oh, I’m so glad you caught the story in this one.

Ross Blocher: What do I do with that?

Carrie Poppy: He says so much that I missed this.

Ross Blocher: The pieces don’t go together!

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, it’s really hard to follow. I think I did better on other ones, but yeah!

Ross Blocher: He’s just missing the connective fabric—

Carrie Poppy: Of storytelling.

Ross Blocher: —to answer the obvious questions that arise from this. Like, wait, was the aircraft still like moving? Did it stop over the billboard? Why is the billboard important? Where’s the light source in all of this?

Carrie Poppy: Maybe just show us the letter.

Ross Blocher: Were they in the middle of the road? How many people were there?

Carrie Poppy: Oh, you don’t have the letter? Couldn’t you put the letter up?

Ross Blocher: I have so many questions!

Carrie Poppy: He has—the whole time, he has on the screen these titles. So, during that story Ross was just telling, “Call of the Morlocks” is just up on the screen behind him. You have a screen. You have slides. You have Rice University archival students willing to do work for you. Where are the letters?! Put them on the screen!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, great idea. And you might be asking like, well, why not ask him to clarify during the Q&A? How many Q’s were asked during the Q&A?

Carrie Poppy: I would say zero, but I would—there was one person present who I’m sure would say one.

Ross Blocher: Nominally—yeah. Oh man, wait till I tell you about the difficulty I had asking a question during another UFO talk.

Carrie Poppy: (*Sighs.*) Really a struggle in this environment.

Ross Blocher: The next either letter or section was titled:

Ross & Carrie: “Where Did That Time Go?”

Ross Blocher: And funny enough, as he was telling the story, he told his own story of missing time. Which is, as you may all recognize, a regular feature of the alien mythos—that sometimes you maybe won't see them, but you'll experience missing time. Like, wait a second! I just missed out on an hour. What happened? And then later on, maybe through hypnosis, you figure out that you got abducted, et cetera.

Carrie Poppy: One problem with this is there's no standardization between what do people think is missing time? What counts? Is it when you walk into a room and you're suddenly like, “Why am I here?” Is that missing time?

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Well, I would suspect that's part of the answer of what's actually happening when people realize, “Wait a second, I've been driving for two hours, and I don't remember the last half hour!” Well, you might have just been kind of zombie functioning without involving your memory process.

Carrie Poppy: Memory is so tied to attention. So, what were you doing? You know, if you were daydreaming, if you were in some like completely self-secluded bubble and with no reference to the outside world? Yeah, you didn't store what was happening as you walked through your house to go get scissors.

Ross Blocher: That'll feel like missing time. But as he was telling his own missing time story, he was saying that he had lunch with Danny Sheehan, who's actually the speaker at that talk that I was telling you about, where I was trying to raise my hand and not getting called on. Anyways, he said that after that lunch, he took a flight, and he went to get his luggage. And so, he's waiting around for a long time. And there's just this one piece of luggage all by itself there for a long time. And finally he asked somebody about it, and they say, “That was there for like 45 minutes before you arrived.”

And he's like, “(*Gasps.*) What happened to that 45 minutes?! Missing time.”

Carrie Poppy: So, yeah, his understanding is that his luggage arrived well before him.

Ross Blocher: Before like the plane even landed.

Carrie Poppy: And so, the only explanation here is missing time and not kind of forgetting what he was doing as he was ambling through the airport. Or that person was mistaken. It hadn't been there for 45 minutes. It had been there two minutes, and he was there before everyone, as he thought he should be.

Ross Blocher: You have to consider these options! Because somebody telling you the wrong information is more likely than the laws of physics being broken.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, he also asked us how many of us had a missing time experience. And so, I was like, sure. Because I've had that feeling, right?

(Ross agrees.)

Broadly defined, sure. He said, "Okay, a few of you." Yeah, so he said he lost seven minutes recently when he went out to dinner. He lost seven minutes while leaving his house. He has no idea what happened there.

[00:35:00]

And then he had a letter from a woman who was vacuuming alone when she looked up and there was a gray alien, presumably just in her living room. And she wrote, "Later recognized the face on the cover of *Communion* and saw dwarf figures." So, she was missing time, but hypnosis didn't work. She didn't actually recall any alien stuff.

Ross Blocher: I feel like the short aliens seem to be kind of exclusive to Whitley. At least, he talks about them more. And he has a blue dwarf. There's some kind of blue, short aliens he regularly talks about.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, little blue men or something. Yeah. But he said she was horrified, and that gives you an idea of just how easily they can penetrate into our world. There's no gateway; they can walk into your life any damn time!

I mean, that really does sound scary!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, absolutely. There's no defense against that.

Carrie Poppy: And he said that also you may feel telepathy suddenly and not really realize that you had that ability. But oh my gosh, I can understand this alien, but he's not opening his mouth. You interpret that as telepathy, and then you think, "I didn't know I could do that!" Oh yeah, and then he ended that story with this line—he said, "I'm gonna take what I want, and the rest of it can just go to hell!"

(Ross laughs.)

And then there's just this smattering of confused applause. Because we're all like, *(confused clapping)* "Well, I could tell it was a clap line."

Ross Blocher: Yeah, he loves to make these just grandiloquent, large proclamations every now and then. Every ten minutes or so, "I gotta say something profound and memorable!"

Carrie Poppy: And I think he's feeling it too! But it just comes out as this just sort of imprecise emotionality.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I think right at the same time, he also said, “And this leads to a bigger question than, you know, what is time? The question is: who are we?”

(Carrie cackles.)

Alright. Yeah. Who are we? It's a great question.

Carrie Poppy: I missed that one! Wait, wait, wait! What was the smaller question? What is time?

(Ross confirms.)

What is time? And then even better, who are we?

Ross Blocher: Yeah, because we were talking about—“These stories make us ask what is the nature of time, but more than that, who are we?” Okay!

Carrie Poppy: But more than that, what is friendship?

(Ross laughs.)

But more than that, is government anything? Goodness.

Ross Blocher: These are the questions one asks themselves.

Carrie Poppy: These are the questions.

Ross Blocher: Okay, so the next letter was “Evil From Above”.

Carrie Poppy: Yes, this is a letter about a possession event. That's the phrase he used. Possession event. So, this musician came home—I guess maybe from tour?—and lays down, and his head explodes!

Ross Blocher: I've heard of exploding head syndrome. But I guess he said this wasn't that.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. So, there is like a phenomenon where you lay down and you hear like a bang or something in your head. I don't know why Whitley is discounting that explanation, because although he said his head exploded, he went on to write a letter.

(Ross laughs.)

So, I don't think his head exploded.

Ross Blocher: Not literally.

Carrie Poppy: So, you came up with a different theory before, Whitley, and I'm missing why you dropped it. So, Whitley thinks, at first, that it's exploding head syndrome. But he discovers that it can't, because he also sensed an evil entity trying to enter his body and replace him when he heard the bang noise.

Ross Blocher: Mm. That's a feeling one can have.

Carrie Poppy: (*Chuckles.*) He felt his soul being dragged and heard a thrumming sound.

Ross Blocher: I feel a connection between Whitley and Linda Moulton Howe, in that I feel like their strongest form of evidence is the anecdote that's just interesting to them. Like, "Oh, that presents a little puzzle piece, and where do I fit that in my overall narrative? It must be true, because this is interesting, and I want to tinker with it."

Carrie Poppy: Yes. High pattern seeking, for sure. Which I think you and I relate to.

Ross Blocher: Sure. Absolutely. But it just seems like he'll say some of the right things sometimes, where he's like, "Well, I don't want to say this without evidence." He'll make these little comments that make you think he cares about the right things, but then he'll proceed to say something that is pure speculation as far as I can tell.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. I mean, I think he's limited the idea of evidence to things he can hold in his hands. And so, you know, if a letter validates another letter—wow, that's two pieces of verification right there, but it's ignoring this huge context of your culture and the internet and blah, blah, blah.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, and other credible explanations for these things that don't blow up our understanding of how the world works in general. Somewhere around here, he also had this little aside about how great the Day of Disclosure is going to be. And then he says that "It's not like they're going to land on the proverbial White House lawn." But then he catches himself and he says, "Well, you know what? Actually, I know them well enough that they have a sense of humor, and they will actually land on the White House lawn."

Carrie Poppy: Oh wow, I missed this!

Ross Blocher: Just to make that common human phrase literal.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, goodness. Okay, so I wanted to return to that possession event for a second. So, that writer said that his soul was dragged. And the thrumming sound went on for two hours.

[00:40:00]

And then dawn came.

Ross Blocher: It sounds like a horrible migraine.

Carrie Poppy: Oh yeah! And the sound begins to drift away, and they're left shaken, but still together. Because he and his wife kind of went through this together, but it's not clear what she was actually experiencing. So, like that's so fascinating. What a fascinating letter! I want to see it too. I'm glad you cataloged this, but your explanation for it is so different from mine.

Ross Blocher: Indeed. And Whitley uses this to introduce a concept that he'll repeat a couple more times. When the guy was talking about his soul being dragged down, Whitley has this—and I'm guessing his Jesus book maybe is about this theme. He has this explanation of our souls and how if we are surrounded by enough fear and bad decisions, our souls will get heavier, and that will drag them down to what we would traditionally call hell. But if we think on the right things—if we do good deeds, if we are surrounded by happiness and joy and all the other things that we would agree are good, that we will have lighter souls. And they can't be dragged down, and they will float up to the top.

So, that seems to be kind of this little metaphor of weight that he has for our souls.

Carrie Poppy: Boy, I can see why this makes sense with someone with the kind of tunnel vision that Whitley has. Because he has this immense capacity to just be like, “I am looking only at the thing in front of me, and I'm comparing it to this other data point, and the hell to everything else.” But the people who have that—!

Ross Blocher: Yeah! (*Laughs.*) “All the other details that do not corroborate this story can go to hell!”

Carrie Poppy: But also, that is the phenotype that makes a great scientist—if you can get it actually corralled. You know? So, I am like seeing some—I'm watching this and I'm just like, “Whitley, like you're so close to something so glorious!” You know?

Ross Blocher: Something I think about often is that both science and superstition are driven by our proclivity to see patterns. It's just science introduces some controls to help us weed out things that aren't real patterns.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, and look at even more bigger patterns that you wouldn't have thought of, because you were specializing in some other field.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Yeah. And I think we're just stopping a little short of those corrective measures.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Which is why, Whitley, you and I just got to hang out for like five hours! (*Chuckling.*) Show me these things, and I'll explain every single one! And then you and I can go on tour and do like a two-person live show about like this crazy archive you have and what every single thing could mean. This could be amazing! Let's hit the road! Whitley and Carrie!

(*Quietly, as an aside.*) And Ross, do you want to come?

(*Ross agrees.*)

YEEEEAH!

Ross Blocher: I'll at least be in the front row. I'm trying to think of what the mashup would be between *Dreamland* and, *Oh No. Dream, No.*

(*They laugh.*)

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, okay. I think I'll get people to follow me to *Dream, No.* Yeah, if you're willing to leave Disney to be with me and Whitley Strieber as we do this nonstop. Okay, then it's golden.

Ross Blocher: We can write that 40-something-th book, in collaboration.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. (*Giggles.*)

(*ADVERTISEMENT*)

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Promo:

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(*Music fades out.*)

Ross Blocher: Okay, so the next letter title—these all pop up on screen as he's talking. So, the next title is “A New You”.

Carrie Poppy: “A New You”. So, this one starts with a little girl who telepathically wakes up in a UFO and is told that they won't harm her. And then Whitley interrupts himself and is like, “Who remembers *Mars Attacks?*”

Ross Blocher: (*Chuckling.*) I remember *Mars Attacks*.

Carrie Poppy: I never saw it!

Ross Blocher: Oh, yeah, one of the joys to me of being a parent is that I get to play movies for my son and get his reactions and kind of relive them through his eyes. And *Mars Attacks* was one of those. And the point that Whitley's referring to is that these aliens go around with flamethrowers killing people, but the whole time they keep saying, "We are not here to harm you! We are not here to harm you." While they are obviously harming.

Carrie Poppy: Oh yeah! Okay. That's basically what they were doing. Was it telepathic? That they're saying? Or can they speak? Okay.

Ross Blocher: No, I think they have like an actual vocal system.

Carrie Poppy: Well, it's funny because whenever I hear that—like, these UFO people do it all the time. They say, (*dopily*) "It's kind of like in *The Matrix*."

And I'll think, "Well, do you think it traveled to you from *The Matrix*?"

(*Ross agrees.*)

So, when I hear it's kind of like *Mars Attacks*, I'm like, "Well, maybe this little girl got it from *Mars Attacks*!"

Ross Blocher: Right. Right, can you predate this before *Mars Attacks*? Yes. It might not be like—*Mars Attacks* might not be like it. It might be like *Mars Attacks*.

Carrie Poppy: EXACTLY! That's the entire—the whole talk, listening to Whitley Strieber is that feeling. Is like, "You explained it! And then you explained it away! Whyyy?!"

Ross Blocher: Okay so, we keep saying that we need to give a talk at Conscious Life Expo. I need to start taking notes on like themes to cover—like, just sort of basic skepticism. So, I'm just gonna write here, "order of causality". We just need to think of like general concepts that we need to get across in this talk.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, okay. Yeah, I already have ideas. Okay. Cool. "A New You". So, what's actually happening here? Whitley has the answer.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, yeah. They've been abducting her and doing what?

Carrie Poppy: Getting bio samples. So, bio samples have been taken for years!

Ross Blocher: This was an odd detail. "Scraping the skin from the bottom of her feet."

Carrie Poppy: Oh, yuck! Okay.

Ross Blocher: “And her hair.”

Carrie Poppy: And then, one of my favorite Whitley quotes, “Semen has been taken! It's been taken from me!”

Ross Blocher: “I know for a fact it's been taken from me!” Yeah. Okay!

Carrie Poppy: You made me cover my face, ‘cause I'm like, “I know every person has a wet dream. But don't announce your wet dreams to me, Whitley Strieber!”

Ross Blocher: We know what his are like! Yeah, but he'll just announce these sorts of things. Like, he knows for a fact that his semen has been taken by the aliens. You do? I'd love—I'd love to know more.

Carrie Poppy: Buddyyyy. No, you don't.

Ross Blocher: Would I? I don't know.

Carrie Poppy: Come on, buddy. Come on, buddy—no, you don't.

Ross Blocher: So, because of this, he's convinced that they are making human clones. It's the kind of thing he'll just throw out there and you'll be like, “Wait—why are you convinced?” Like, how did you get from A to B? ‘Cause that's a big jump from A to B!

Carrie Poppy: Right. And you want me to follow you. So, show your work.

Ross Blocher: But after introducing this whole idea that they are reproducing humans, he says, “This is real. This has happened.” Wow. That's a bold proclamation. And he made a really good point here, actually, that I liked. Because he had us all sort of do the thought exercise of what if we were the aliens? If we were visiting another planet, what would we do? Well, you'd have a bunch of psychologists telling you, “Don't let them see you, because that's going to mess with their path of technology and development.” You know, the whole prime directive idea from *Star Trek*. But we would also want to be collecting samples. So, we probably would grab them every now and pull them off the face of the planet and do things to them. And I really liked that he was thinking that way. ‘Cause I think that's important. To ask—

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“Okay, what would we do if we had the technology to go visit other planets?” So, I liked that he was thinking that. But. He had made this kind of realization about how aliens had seen that we had already decided when we captured them in the '50s that we weren't going to treat them like ourselves. We were going to prod them and torture them with the alien bodies we recovered. So, then what did they do, starting in the '60s?

Carrie Poppy: Uh, they start abducting us.

Ross Blocher: Right, so they'd seen like this is the—

Carrie Poppy: They'd be like, "The feeling's mutual. We are enemies now."

Ross Blocher: Yeah. "This is how you treat us? Well, Betty and Barney Hill, we're gonna abduct you! Poke and prod you and inseminate you."

Carrie Poppy: And he said, "So, if you turn it around, and we're the aliens, it all makes great sense if you don't assume that the beings that you're dealing with have rights."

This reminded me of—Stephen Hawking kind of made this argument that like if we're really worried about the aliens coming, yeah, they would probably treat us roughly the way we treat non-human animals—which is as not worthy of the same rights as humans.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And I think he used the example as well of like people from the old world first setting foot on the shores of the new world and spreading disease, killing people just without compunction. But I think there's also the argument about once we get to the point where we are a spacefaring race, then at that point you've learned to work collaboratively. You might have a few more voices hopefully speaking about not treating people like we have in the past. I don't know. I didn't buy the Stephen Hawking argument.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, interesting! I've always found that persuasive. I've always been like, "Yeah, of course. Whoever's smartest treats everyone else like shit. Of course."

Ross Blocher: Okay! I mean, yeah, I don't necessarily think that. Because I think if we found slime molds on other planets, we'd be so excited! If we found dolphins, we'd be so excited. And I don't think it would immediately be like the whaling ships of the 1800s, you know, where we'd suddenly just start finding ways to monetize them. And I'm talking myself out of the idea, so I'll stop.

Carrie Poppy: (*Laughs.*) Okay. So, that's "A New You". Next was "Visitors in the Trees", which I think we're both excited about! Because! Mike Clelland, a *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!* former interviewee and swell guy, has been cataloging this himself—people who have visions of owls in particular outside their windows right when they also had a UFO-adjacent experience. So, he says, "Visitors in the Trees" and I'm like here we go!

So, this story was a letter from a family with three kids, a mom, and a dad. The mom notices lights in the driveway, but they go away. So, it's no big deal.

Ross Blocher: I'm so eager to hear your retelling of this. 'Cause it was such a badly told story. But yes, keep going.

Carrie Poppy: Then she sees someone in a red windbreaker go in their barn.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, a woman is walking into their barn with a red windbreaker. Okay, nothing to do with aliens so far.

Carrie Poppy: And then she jumps off the roof of the barn and into the trees.

(Ross giggles.)

So, then she—then the writer of the letter asked her daughter to check on the barn. But no one's in the barn! The mom goes to the grocery store. She comes home. The family's in the front yard, and there are funny little people in the trees! And she goes out there with her kids—

Ross Blocher: Like little humans.

Carrie Poppy: And they can see these little beings in the trees, and they don't know what they are!

Ross Blocher: I need so much more than I'm getting from this story.

Carrie Poppy: *(Laughs.)* But then he continues to ramble on with too much detail about the minutiae of this story without, again, any of the surrounding context. What's the bigger picture happening for this family?

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And as he tells like the next part of the story, you're like, wait, where's the connective fiber? W-what happened? How did we get to the—? Because next like you have the mom going into the barn, and now she sees a human-like figure in a green jacket. And it's filming her?! Why—?! What does it look like? Why is it human-like?

Carrie Poppy: Just slap that letter on the screen, my buddy. Slap that letter on the screen.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, let us see it, at least.

Carrie Poppy: He says, “At this point, she's very perplexed, but she has been shown these things step by step.” And when he said that I was like, shown these things? Is this hypnosis? Are we talking about hypnosis?

Ross Blocher: Ooooh, quite possibly. But yeah, another sighting was the mom. Again, the mom is having most of the sightings here. Sees a woman-like figure wearing this shiny necklace. And she has beads on her forehead. But then she turns into an alien being. She no longer looks human-like, but she's wearing the same regalia. And I'm just listening to all this going like, okay, none of this sounds real or consistent with any other alien account that we have. What are we supposed to do with this?

Carrie Poppy: Right. So many contradictions.

Ross Blocher: But again, just the pieces that are interesting are enough to validate the whole. And he takes those and presents them as real.

Carrie Poppy: Who was saying “so many contradictions”? Was that Linda Moulton Howe? “So many straaange contradictions. Huh. So strange.”

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Kind of like saying the quiet part out loud.

(Carrie chuckles and agrees.)

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“So strange.” And that's all we need to do is just acknowledge that it's strange. He did have an interesting takeaway though, about all of these weird things that the mom was seeing. He thought that this was indicative of this program that the aliens had to measure how quickly we could adapt to shocking things happening to us.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, that's interesting. Oh. Kind of like panic tolerance.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, that the aliens were running this little experiment. “Oh, if I change—” Yeah. “If I change right in front of their eyes, what do they do? Interesting, let me write that in my notebook or capture it on my—”

Carrie Poppy: Oh, very *Men Who Stared at Goats*, CIA, MK Ultra, that kind of—okay. Interesting.

Ross Blocher: That was the narrative.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, so in another story—

Ross Blocher: And he promised us this would be the last story.

Carrie Poppy: *(Giggles.)* We'll see! This one is about a little girl being abducted with her mom in the car.

Ross Blocher: Mm-hm. 1968 in Texas.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, thank you. Daughter screams, “I hate you, mommy.” The mom doesn't understand that. It turns out the daughter has an incurable cancer of the nervous system, which kills her. Then a friend of Houston calls during this mother's grief and says, “I have to tell you something.”

Ross Blocher: There was an extra piece there, in between the girl telling her mom that she hated her and the introduction. So, they were driven off the road while they were on the road. And maybe this was recovered later, but they were abducted into the ship, and they were separated. And this is where the mom learned that the aliens were taking her because of their

soul lineage, because of their family. Because of their inheritance, they were of interest to these aliens, and they were abducted.

Carrie Poppy: How many generations?

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And then once they were let back on the earth, that's when the daughter then said, "I hate you, mommy!" Because I guess she was upset from this whole experience of being abducted.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. I see. See, I bet I wrote this down this way, because I was thinking, "What do we know actually happened?" It sounds like a mom and a daughter were driving in a car, and then the daughter inexplicably shouted, "I hate you, mommy."

Ross Blocher: Oh, I relistened to this so many times, because it was so confusing!

Carrie Poppy: So, the reason I think that it's like that is because then there's a third character. The woman—the legally blind woman who calls and says, "I got a message from your dead daughter who died recently," and then I think introduces the alien narrative to explain it.

Ross Blocher: Oh, maybe. Because somehow they'd incorporated that into the timeline of the original story. But the one thing I was trying to get clarification for, and I couldn't, was: were the aliens trying to heal the daughter? Because it sounds like maybe that's why they had pulled her up, but they were unsuccessful? Because the daughter did die. But then you have this weird third party who received the message from the daughter telling the mom, "Actually, she loves you, and she'll love you always." Which counteracts the "I hate you, mommy". What do we DO with this?! Ugh!

Carrie Poppy: Yeah—right?! Okay, good point. And! The third party is legally blind, but she drives to Austin to deliver the news.

(They wheeze with laughter.)

Something's wrong with this story.

Ross Blocher: *(Desperately.)* I need more info! I guess I have to read them.

Carrie Poppy: Also—yeah. I think also Whitley has that pronoun confusion problem, where he'll introduce like five or six characters, give us all their genders.

(Ross agrees.)

And then just say, "He, she, he, she, he, she, he, she."

And I'm like, "WHICH ONE?!" *(Laughs but through gritted teeth.)*

Ross Blocher: Absolutely. “And then they were finding out that”—but who's they?!

Carrie Poppy: Mm-hm! Just use their whole name! Please just say their name.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, repeat the name!

And speaking of his big takeaways—for this story, the takeaway, I guess from the daughter speaking from beyond the grave, is that the new reality that we are moving into—this new world, if you can take it—will be so much bigger. And you're all living these small lives now, but when we emerge from the birth canal into this new world, we will see with so much more light.

Carrie Poppy: The blinders will come off.

Ross Blocher: Mm-hm. Amazing.

Carrie Poppy: Which is so funny for someone with such tremendous tunnel vision to talk about the blinders coming off.

Ross Blocher: Oh! Yeah. (*Disappointedly.*) Oh, Whitley.

Carrie Poppy: I know! I know! (*Whispering.*) But I wanna—I get—I see it so cleearly. We should be friends.

Ross Blocher: This wasn't like a chapter from the book, but then he gets into this other story. It's just another weird transition. Like, why are we talking about this now?

Carrie Poppy: Yes. Yeah. I wrote down, “Stuff about Roswell.”

Ross Blocher: Okay. Yeah. So, he was talking about experiments that were being done right after World War II with V2 rockets being tested at White Sands. He was saying that the aliens would just shoot them down. And I was like, okay. I need more info. ‘Cause he's saying they were nervous about us combining rockets with nuclear warheads. But were the tests with live nuclear warheads? Somehow I doubt that, at least from the way he told the story. And eventually we did have that technology. So, they didn't really stop us. But his purpose in telling the story about aliens shooting down test flights of V2 rockets at White Sands was to illustrate the point that sometimes the aliens—

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—rather than like communicating with you, than sitting down with the president and saying, “Hey, we don't like that you're doing this. Can you please cut it out? It's dangerous for your civilization.” They'll just jump in and blow things up!

And Whitley was saying, “I know this is true, because that's what they do to me. Because I'll be trying to accomplish something. Maybe I'm trying to meditate, and all of a sudden I'll hear like a loud explosion.”

Carrie Poppy: “And inexplicable explosion.”

Ross Blocher: Yeah. He doesn't say that it's actually like something exploding, just that he hears that. Which, again, makes me think of experiences people describe when they have something like temporal lobe epilepsy. Like, “I heard a loud explosion that was just, as far as we can tell, generated inside my head.”

Carrie Poppy: Which we should mention, he claims he was tested for and passed the test. That's part of the—part of his lore. No comment on whether that's true, but that's what he says.

Ross Blocher: He entertains it and dismisses it. But he says that so regularly, he'll just notice that the aliens are messing with things in his life. And then he'll have to work backwards to ask, oh wait, what did I do to piss you off? And that's the phrase he kept using. “I pissed off the aliens, but I don't know why, but this is how they act—kind of passive aggressively. And then I have to—”

Carrie Poppy: I have a joke, crank.

Ross Blocher: And it just—it made me think of the Old Testament and earlier animism where the lightning happens and you're like uh-oh! What did we do to piss off whoever caused that? Because we can only think in terms of human agency. And I just—again, I felt so bad for Whitley. Like, oh, he's living his life kind of like I used to do when something bad would happen. And I would be like, oh, what's the lesson god is trying to teach me? What am I doing wrong in my life? Am I being too prideful? I feel like he does that same sort of thing. Like, “Oh, what are the aliens responding to that I did? Why is it my fault?”

Carrie Poppy: My emo friend from college, Kevin, he had this problem.

Ross Blocher: Is he still emo?

Carrie Poppy: I think he's less emo. I mean, he's emo—bless him. Blessings to all the emo kids. But maybe a little less emo for him. I just remember one time we were getting out of his car. And he opened the door in such a way that he banged his head, and then he said, “Why do things like this always happen to me?!”

(Ross “aw”s.)

And I was like—banging your head? I mean, it happens to everyone!

Ross Blocher: And you smacked your forehead and said, “It happens to all of us, Kevin!”

Carrie Poppy: I don't know how to answer this except to say you're not seeing the larger context.

Ross Blocher: This is where Whitley will insert like an aside. Like, just something will pop into his head all of a sudden. And so, he adds a new bullet point to whatever earlier discussion. And I guess because he'd mentioned explosions, he said, “By the way, we know that there's been the destruction of many bodies in these explosions.”

And I'm like what bodies? What explosions? What are you talking about?! While I'm still confused about that, he says, “But we don't know if they were real bodies. They could have just been simulations.” I was like wh-what?! What are we talking about? What destruction of bodies? Alien bodies, human bodies? Is this even a thing?

Carrie Poppy: A simulation—I bet that's to excuse away something that's been debunked. Who knows?

Ross Blocher: But what are we even talking about?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, so he kind of said that people that hear voices and things have it wrong in their abduction stories. He said, “Other people get telepathic messages, but that's actually maybe imagination, because the reality is this kind of display seems to be much more their method of communication.” Meaning visual displays. He was talking about a visual thing. So, that's interesting. He's kind of taking a stand against telepathic messages.

(Ross agrees.)

But there was a mention of telepathy earlier.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I'm not sure what the through line is there. So, then he started talking about this guy named Dr. David Webb.

Carrie Poppy: Dr. Webb!

Ross Blocher: Who actually has a pull quote at the beginning of *Communion*. And he mentions this, because this highly placed intelligence agent was interested in Whitley and his experiences before *Communion* was published.

Carrie Poppy: And he's described as a specialist.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And on the pull quote—I'm looking at the back of Carrie's copy of *Communion* here, signed by Whitley Strieber to Carrie.

Carrie Poppy: Mm-hm! Spoiler.

Ross Blocher: He's credited as member of the National Committee on Space, Chairman of Space Studies, University of North Dakota. And the quote is, "The reader should remember the words of a famous biologist, Dr. J. B. S. Haldane."—who is a famous biologist. We've mentioned him on the show before. That, returning to the quote, "Not only is the universe stranger than we suppose, but stranger than we can suppose. *Communion* is a brilliant, compelling, and provocative work."

Carrie Poppy: And I'm sure when he said that, he meant, "So, anything gooooes!"

Ross Blocher: (*Laughs.*) Right. You can use my blanket seal of approval on anything you say.

Carrie Poppy: I approve anything strange!

Ross Blocher: But yeah, Whitley has this long list of organizations that Dr. David Webb was involved with—DARPA, NASA. He keeps on going.

Carrie Poppy: And where did he end up, Ross?

Ross Blocher: Oh, I don't know. Where did he end up?

Carrie Poppy: He ended up at our cabin before our reunion. "Our" meaning Whitley and Anne's. I've got to start—I'm not going to lose pronouns the way Whitley does.

[01:05:00]

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Let's not confuse our listeners the way Whitley confuses us. Yeah, indeed. So, before he published *Communion*, Dr. David Webb was visiting him at their cabin, where a lot of these events take place in the original communion. At least, I've heard him tell the stories about all of these visitations happening at that cabin. And so his takeaway from this was they knew—like, the well-connected intelligence officers, the government. "They all knew before 1987, before I published this book, that these abductions were happening. So, when later on they tried to say, we're all crazy, just know that. They knew and they realized this was a real phenomenon."

And I'm thinking, well, Betty and Barney Hill—they published their book back in 1966, *The Interrupted Journey*. So, the story had been out there for a long time. Anyways, he thought that was very important that we all know that they knew. But also he mentions here—again, without any evidence, just he's been convinced by this—that all of this abduction activity has been part of a seed bank plan.

Carrie Poppy: Yes! They are storing our DNA in case Earth is toast.

Ross Blocher: Maybe we have a, you know, nuclear fallout. Maybe climate destroys us. Whatever it is, they're backing us up. But he thinks that, sure, this is about insurance, but it could also be—all of these abductions could be about creating something, an in between, a

hybrid between humans and aliens that can understand both of them and facilitate communication. Okay. Okay.

Carrie Poppy: Could be, Whitley. Could be. It could be. Yeah, this idea of insurance, of our government trading us off so they can get tech—oh my god, it's like voluntary hostages. I mean, it's a truly brutal vision.

Ross Blocher: Where is this tech? Why are we still using fossil fuels and solid rocket boosters if we have all this alien tech?

Carrie Poppy: It's all in the military industrial complex; that's why they can't get to it.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, but why is the military still using all this old technology that we had to figure out the hard way?

Carrie Poppy: They aren't, Ross! Keep up! You only thiink that they're using the old tech. They're using the new tech from the aliens, which is better. And then they're patenting it—

Ross Blocher: And well documented in grainy videos.

Carrie Poppy: Yes, thank you! Now you're following.

Ross Blocher: Oh, okay. Well, speaking of grainy videos. He's talking about how our weapons are ineffective against aliens. So, they're just so far ahead of us, there's nothing we can do. So, he—

Carrie Poppy: Oh, yeah, shows that video of a fire base off Afghanistan?

Ross Blocher: Yeah, so he demonstrates this with a video from Afghanistan, and I think it was shot in 2011. I think that was the date on the footage. When you look at it, it looks like infrared footage, and you've got a light backdrop and then dark objects in the foreground. Or as he tells us, kind of hovering in the air. And there's two shots. There's one that's just kind of zoomed in on two of these floating, simmering objects that have kind of material sort of dripping off the bottom of them. And then there's a later shot that's more zoomed out where you see the mountains, I guess, of Afghanistan and these objects. And there's I think up to four of them that you can see.

Anyway, so he tells us to wait for it. And all of a sudden, what looks like a rocket comes in from the side and blows up to the left of them.

Carrie Poppy: So, it looks like a projectile goes through two objects and the objects disintegrate and then reappear.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Visually, it looks like there's an explosion, and it knocks them down. But then, weewwp!

Carrie Poppy: They sit back up.

Ross Blocher: All of a sudden, there they are again. And the audience laughs at them. And Whitley Streber says, “Yeah, I mean, how silly that we think we can do anything to them.”

Carrie Poppy: So, the implication being, actually, this is alien tech that zips itself back up. And we were—our silly little weaponry barely scathed them.

Ross Blocher: Right. So, I'm thinking, okay. I think we need more info here. So, I sent this to some skeptical podcasters I know, and I sent it to Mick West, who is—he and his website, Metabunk, are the best places to go for analysis of this kind of footage. So, I sent it to him, and he said, “Yeah, we haven't covered it on Metabunk, but this has come up a lot in forums. Definitely something we've seen before.” And he was able to send me a longer, more full-featured YouTube clip of this original footage. And it becomes so obviously clear what's going on here. And that's that these are flares. Some people—

Carrie Poppy: Flares. So, that's just like fire?

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Like, with a flare gun. You can like set up this burning object that can be used, and it can just kind of float in the sky for a fairly long time. And these probably have chutes on them, hence chute flares. So, they can just sort of linger in the sky, and you can do target practice or marking a certain area or whatever it is you need to do.

Carrie Poppy: Are they on a drone or something? How do they stay up there?

Ross Blocher: That's one way to do it. Another way would be to put them on parachutes, so they just kind of slowly descend to give you enough time to do things. And so, he analyzed this, and he pointed to a lot of helpful comments in the YouTube video. And so, I'll read one from PatriotCondor. Because indeed, it does look like there's this huge explosion and then—yeah, why are these things just rebounding to where they were before?

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And PatriotCondor says, “Believe it or not, the missile really didn't even hit the flare. The flare itself is only a few inches across. Hitting it perfectly is almost impossible, as the missile tracks the plume of heat, not the flare itself. That large, dark plume is the heat signature, which looks like several feet in diameter in the FLIR.” The forward looking infrared. “As the missile literally flies by it within just a couple of feet or so, the turbulence from the missile causes the hot ash from the flare to fly off and get caught up in the turbulence of the missile. Because the missile is actually undamaged, it continues on and locks on to the next flare it sees.”

So, this seemed like a very good explanation of what we're seeing. And they look like flares, especially when you see the longer clip that Whitley didn't include. Obviously there's, you know, like material dripping down from it, because it's sizzling probably Phosphorus things. Entirely consistent with that.

Carrie Poppy: I totally believe that. You made so many, though, category distinctions that Whitley just wouldn't even make. Like, you know, you said this is an infrared video. And I was like, oh yeah, I guess that is an infrared video. Hadn't thought about it.

You know, I feel like Whitley doesn't even do that sort of that moment where you go like, well, hang on—what am I looking at here? What am I missing in the entire view? If I zoom out, now let's try to zoom out again, now let's try to mentally zoom out again.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, indeed. And I think it's consistent with the pattern of locking onto the one interesting piece of information and just sort of ignoring everything else and the context. And Whitley mentioned another thing, and he called it angel hair. That's how he described the trails descending down from the object and slightly upward.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. The object that turned out to be fire.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And I'm sure we've encountered this before, but I just didn't recognize that term—angel hair. So, Mick let me know that's just kind of part of the alien mythology. And sure enough, I was able to find references to this, the idea that there's this like wispy material that often is associated with UFO sightings. And apparently the Raëlians have made a big deal about this as well.

Carrie Poppy: About angel hair?

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And they've described it as “ionized air sleeting off of the electromagnetic field that surrounds a UFO”. Okay, those were a lot of words.

Carrie Poppy: Ionized air sleeting off the what?

Ross Blocher: The electromagnetic field that surrounds UFO.

(Carrie echoes him with a doubtful laugh.)

Hey, sure, we explained it. Another is excess energy converted into matter. Okay.

Carrie Poppy: Wow! That's quite a statement, isn't it?

Ross Blocher: Yeah, converting energy into matter. Yeah.

Carrie Poppy: Wow, they did it!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, the opposite of an atomic explosion. Yeah. Impressive. And then also this list is from a Wikipedia article about angel hair. Another explanation is “the usage by UFOs of a G field that would cause heavy atoms in ordinary air to react among themselves and produce a kind of precipitate that falls to the ground and disappears as the ionization decreases”. Those were words.

Carrie Poppy: Hm. It do be like that, though.

Ross Blocher: (*Laughs.*) I hadn't heard the term angel hair before, but now I have.

Carrie Poppy: I love that pasta. Great pasta.

Ross Blocher: Yeah! So, that was the first footage he showed us.

Carrie Poppy: So, next he showed us another video that you were looking at as we were preparing to record here. So, I can't wait to hear your thoughts. This was a video that he prefaced by saying, "You know, people are always complaining that UFO footage isn't clear enough."

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I am always complaining about that!

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah! "But I have some very clear footage."

Ross Blocher: Oh, thank goodness. I can't wait.

Carrie Poppy: And then he shows what I have to say is like kind of grainy. I mean, it's better than a lot of stuff, but I'm still like—it wasn't shot on my iPhone, I'll tell you that. This is bad looking.

Ross Blocher: And the reason it wasn't shot on your iPhone is that it's from 2002, before iPhones were a thing.

Clip:

Whitley Strieber: This was taken in—when was it? 1998 in—or no, 2002, excuse me. In the Okanagan in British Columbia by a guy who just happened to take it off of his back deck. And you'll see it in a minute. It'll come up. I know it's—the video is a little long, but it will come up in a moment. Let's just wait for it. I'm sorry. I should have taken the front of this clip off. Uh—is it running? Yeah, okay, good. It'll come up. And you see a wonderful image of a UFO in utter clarity here in just a moment. There it is.

Now, that's not a balloon. And look at around the edges of it. Those distortions around the outside of it. Because it's a—there's a very high intensity magnetic field involved in that, and now it will immediately disappear. What we did was we expanded each frame by seven, so that this—

[01:15:00]

Because it happens more quickly. This is slowed down, but it's not altered in any way whatsoever.

Carrie Poppy: Once again, Whitley offers a rational explanation and then just says, “No. Not a balloon.” I’m looking at that, Ross. That might be a balloon.

Ross Blocher: I think of how in politics lately, you often have to ask yourself is an accusation an admission of guilt? Like, I feel like that’s a theme I keep seeing with Donald Trump. Like, he’ll point at somebody else for doing something and I’ll be like, oh, is that you accusing someone of doing something you just did? ‘Cause it sounds like that’s your modus operandi.

Carrie Poppy: Showing your ass by accusing others.

Ross Blocher: I feel like when Whitley tells you something is definitely not this, it might be this!

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, he’s like, “I explored that counterpoint, but I found a way around it.”

Ross Blocher: “I ruled it out. And you can take my word for it.”

So, yeah, it’s this BlueSky video that someone was taking off of their deck. And he says it’s completely clear. It is not!

Carrie Poppy: Oh my god. It’s clearly like a time capture. So, that’s already not a clear video by its nature, because everything jerkily moves across the screen in a way that makes it animated in the wrong way.

Ross Blocher: And he tells us, “This has been slowed down 7x. We’ve, you know, expanded the frames, but it hasn’t been manipulated in any way!” It’s like, okay, well you just told us how it was manipulated. Thank you for that. But—

Carrie Poppy: You didn’t paint on it, good.

Ross Blocher: We see during the footage that the guy is zooming way in. So, he’s zooming as far as his camera will let him, I’m guessing, to lock in on this object. And I’m quite certain the reason the camera footage is so shaky is because it is really hard to keep something in frame when you’re that zoomed in. Any slight movement of your hand is going to shake the footage incredibly when you’re zoomed in.

(Carrie “oh”s and agrees.)

We don’t know what the optical or zoom enhancement is of this image. But yeah, like it’s going to be herky-jerky, and that explains the movement. So, it’s fully consistent with a completely steady object.

Carrie Poppy: Like when I tried to use binoculars to look at birds, and you have to have like such a steady hand or you lose the animal immediately.

Ross Blocher: Exactly. And that helps to have a tripod when you're dealing with those kinds of distances. But yeah, any slight motion covers a ton of ground. And—

Carrie Poppy: Oh, that's interesting. I just assumed it was time lapse footage, but you're right. That's a—here we go! Two explanations that didn't involve aliens!

Ross Blocher: Right. And then it is this kind of gray circle, and it has interesting features to it. My guess would be a mylar balloon floating in the air.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, me too. It looks like a balloon to me. But it's not, though!

Ross Blocher: (*Chuckles.*) Yeah. And it starts as like more of a circular shape with some defining features. But then it, I would say, rotates so that you sort of see it on edge. And now it's more like a pill-like shape. Fully consistent with a balloon that just sort of rotated up and very high. And Whitley even goes so far. He adds more details again, like “Oh, the distortion you see around it is because it has a very strong magnetic field.” You don't know that! The distortion is artifacting from compression from a video from 2002 shot on someone's camcorder from their backyard. Anyways.

Carrie Poppy: Which is not “clear”!

Ross Blocher: Again, I sent it to Mick West, and he's like, “Yeah, that's not super clear. The criticism remains. This is firmly in the LIZ.” The Low Information Zone. So, anyways, we got experts to look at it. And Brian Dunning had kind of the same reaction to it, that poor Whitley is probably confused.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. But he said that was a UFO in utter clarity, so there you go. Then he showed us a video of a gray looking through a garage or something. He said there was a lot of controversy about it on the internet, and I think you were looking at this before we started recording, so I'm interested to hear your take.

Ross Blocher: Okay, and here's the moment where I think Alan Steinfeld was even skeptical of this. Because he says—Whitley introduces this and says, “You know, I believe this is real footage of an alien.” It's a dark room, and they've got like a light shining on this gray alien face. And it looks like, you know, if you imagined a mold—a rubber mold, a silicone mold of an alien. You know, it looks like that, but it's kind of moving around and having expressions.

And Alan, I can hear from the audience, offers, “Oh yeah, I think this is called *Alien Interview*.” And sure enough, this is footage that first appeared in 1997 as part of a documentary called *Area 51: The Alien Interview*. And it's this credulous thing where they show a little bit of this footage, and then they have talking heads—including one guy who's, you know, lit from behind. And his voice has been modified because, you know, he's worried about threats if he reveals why he knows what he knows. But they're all talking about this. Whitley acknowledges that it's been controversial. But I think Alan Steinfeld pointing out that this is called *Alien Interview* was him saying like, yeah, we kind of know the provenance of this video.

Carrie Poppy: Maybe.

Ross Blocher: And I don't know, maybe he does take it seriously. But I got the impression that he's like, “(*Inhales through teeth.*) Maybe we shouldn't be using this as an example.”

Carrie Poppy: Okay, that was the vibe.

[01:20:00]

Ross Blocher: Because it really does look like a human made model of an alien.

Carrie Poppy: It's also—listen, if a documentary is the first place something appears, the documentarian is supposed to take responsibility for where that came from. So, who's that?

Ross Blocher: Absolutely. And we were looking at this disclaimer at the beginning of the footage that says, “The following program deals with controversial subjects. The theories, opinions, and beliefs expressed are not the only possible interpretation of the evidence. Viewers are urged to make a judgment based on all available information.” That tells me you made a documentary where you know it's ridiculous, but you want to give people a little rope that they can use to form their own theories and feel justified.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, or not get mad at you, ‘cause you can point at this one text slide.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. But tell us, Carrie, how did Whitley know that this had to be real footage?

Carrie Poppy: Great question. He said, “The reason that I believe it's real—see the green light flashing up and down?” And he points to the video.

Ross Blocher: Oh, like a little green laser pointer almost that's like hitting a little diffuse glass piece or something. That's kind of what, visually, it looks like. Bouncing green light.

Carrie Poppy: Something bouncing up and down in green light. He says, “A light like that was flashing up and down on my desk when I was writing *Communion*. If that's a fake, why would they choose to do that?”

Ross Blocher: (*Sighs.*) Why, indeed?

Carrie Poppy: So, I think this is really interesting. It's interesting about how Whitley's mind works that he can just isolate like, green light—that's so convincing to me.

Ross Blocher: And speaking of that tunnel vision you were talking about—like, okay, I see that one little detail in the frame. Never mind that they get up and push and prod this like alien mask. “I see the green light. I experienced a green light like that! And I could never prove it to you, but I swear while I was writing!”

And he said, “I always saw it out of the corner of my eye, and I tried to like touch it with my hand, and then it would ooze out of my fingers. But if I looked directly at it, it would go away.”

(Carrie “ah”s.)

I'm thinking, okay, you're having some sort of experience but—

Carrie Poppy: Or like visual floaters, could be anything. Like I get like a little flashing light in the corner of my left eye sometimes, and the doctors looked at it, and they're just like, “Yeah, it's like migraine plus 40 plus, you know, little floaters in your eyes moving around. Yep. It's nothing.”

Ross Blocher: That's not the fun explanation. So, yeah, he's convinced by that. Then he shows us this photo of an alien and says that people in Mexico call them ant people. They come up from the ground, and they want to steal your soul. And he refers to how, again, we need to have light souls so they can't drag you down. But it's this, you know, photo of what you would consider a typical gray alien.

Carrie Poppy: Walking through a doorframe, right?

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And he says, “I had to cut it off so that it wouldn't be restricted on YouTube, but you can tell that it's a woman, ‘cause it's naked, and she's pregnant.” I looked up the original photo. It—you know, it looks like a model. I don't think anybody would worry about it showing up in this video. Here it is without the cropping.

Carrie Poppy: But he said she was—ooh, okay. He said she was coming up out of the ground? Which I took to mean maybe he was looking at a tree, but no. That's definitely like supposed to be an alien.

Ross Blocher: It's just the mythology, apparently, that they pop out of the ground and drag people down. But yeah, this looks like, again, a model at very low resolution and—

Carrie Poppy: I see something there—the name Uri Geller.

Ross Blocher: (*Chuckling.*) Yes. Okay. I think almost every instance of this image I found was in relation to Uri Geller posting this image, because he was credulous and felt that this was proof of aliens.

Carrie Poppy: Ah, fuck! Uri Geller.

Ross Blocher: Uri, are you that starved for attention?

Carrie Poppy: I'm gonna pick up my man Randi's mantle of Uri Geller suuucks. He does!

Ross Blocher: He does.

Carrie Poppy: He's been sucking for sooo long!

Ross Blocher: He's a—as, again, James Randi would say: an unsinkable rubber duck. He just keeps popping up again!

Carrie Poppy: Uuugh! So annoying.

Ross Blocher: He is annoying. He was very convinced by that particular photo.

Carrie Poppy: There was also a caption on this one, so I just want to read out the caption. It said, “Alleged alien photographed on September 22nd, 2004, at 10:45PM with a Kodak DX4530 camera. The photo was taken by a security guard in an abandoned office in Rayones, Nuevo Leon, Mexico.”

Ross Blocher: I love that all those little bits of detail are, I assume, there to just make it sound all the more credible. Exactly which model of camera got this grainy photo?

Carrie Poppy: Oh yeah, well, I'm glad for it.

Ross Blocher: I appreciate the “alleged”. Yes. And I'll take all the details you want to give me. So, next he showed another clip. This was his final clip, and it was of these boys playing soccer. He said it was in Argentina. Later on, the audience corrected him and said, “Uh, actually that was in Mexico!”

Carrie Poppy: (*Chuckles.*) The guy in the front row was like, “That can't be from Argentina. They're all speaking Mexican Spanish.” Which is a great fact checking moment!

And he's like, “Oh, really? I thought it was Argentina.”

Ross Blocher: “Weird, okay.”

Carrie Poppy: Oh, really, Whitley? Why did you think that? You need to go back! You need to reassess!

Ross Blocher: (*Laughs.*) Indeed. Yeah. Yeah. Maybe stop and ask those questions. But as they were playing soccer—this was at night. It was dark. And the boy farther from the camera, he kind of walks back. And there's some kind of either tree or pole.

[01:25:00]

And an alien steps out from behind it. And it looks like—you know, this alien has been hiding behind this thing thinner than the alien's body. And it's suuuper grainy, but it does look like one of those kinds of gray aliens. And it reaches out towards him, and the boy recoils.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, that's what happened. I couldn't even make out what was happening. Okay.

Ross Blocher: And Whitley says very dramatically—

Clip:

(In the background, you can hear people speaking Spanish on the video.)

Whitley Strieber: If it had touched him, this video would never have been made. Everyone concerned would have had missing time. They wouldn't have even known that it happened.

Ross Blocher: Woow. Okay.

Carrie Poppy: So, then I start thinking, okay, so you're telling me that every single missing time story you've heard, they have not touched the aliens. So, it was not even a very impressive abduction story. But okay.

Ross Blocher: So, someone asks him to replay the clip. He can't. Technology breaks on him again. He can't rewind to the previous slide. Whatever. But then he wraps this up for us thematically. “All of this activity, everything we've been talking about here, it's about the harvesting of souls, the exchange of souls, the freeing of souls. We're all going to be reborn. And some of us will have free souls, but some of us won't. And I want for everyone who listens to me—I want for them to have a free soul.”

Again, this is like very much like a pastor doing the altar call.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah! You do have a soul, and this is your primary reason for being! You are a master of the soul!

Ross Blocher: Okay. And then he has additional stories. Like, he's talking about the bodies, and he says that they've known about it for a long time. And he talks about this General Arthur Exon, “Who was friends with my uncle, Edward Strieber,” and when they were young officers—again, he's like leaving out important details, because he talks about like the holding of the bodies. But is it—was it someone that General Exon knew that held the body or was it Exon himself? I'm not sure about—

Carrie Poppy: Can we define “the bodies”?

Ross Blocher: And then he tells us, “My sister knew about this when she was young. I didn't learn about it until after communion.”

Carrie Poppy: At my cousin's wedding!

Ross Blocher: “But General Exon never told me about it directly. My uncle never told me about it directly. But I put two and two together.”

I'm like what?! Where did this info come from?! You've completely erased all of the pathways back to this original story. Oh, your storytelling is—I hope your writing is better.

Carrie Poppy: It is, it is.

Ross Blocher: And if you all vote for us to read the book, we'll—okay, okay.

Carrie Poppy: The writing is definitely better.

Ross Blocher: Good, I'm glad to hear that.

Carrie Poppy: He also said that there was a Reddit document that has something that resembles his feelings when he got abducted. And I was like a Reddit document?! (*Chuckles.*)

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I found a few Reddit threads that talk about aliens producing smells, so it must have been one of them. But yeah, he was saying how he personally had witnessed something in his own life where he saw an alien outside a window, and it was exuding—and I don't know how he smelled it through the window, but ammonia-smelling like gross substances through its skin.

Carrie Poppy: Oh yeah! Like feces pools on its skin.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, and apparently the Reddit document was saying other things about aliens, but it was saying that these EBOs—

Carrie Poppy: (*Whispering.*) Reddit document.

Ross Blocher: (*Chuckles.*) Yeah, Reddit document. Reddit thread. Was saying that EBOs don't have like proper digestive systems, and so they just exude stuff through their skin. Okay.

Carrie Poppy: It's so gross. And their pores.

Ross Blocher: And that it's foul smelling. And he's—again, just like that green light, Whitley says, “Well, there's no way they could have known that, because I shared that with my uncle,”—or this general or whatever—“but they never told anyone, and I never told anyone. So, there's no way they could have known this detail about aliens.”

Carrie Poppy: Which is like it's sort of like sweat? The theory is sort of like sweat. So, I'm like, okay, how close were your two pet theories? (*Sighs.*) Didn't tell me anything.

Ross Blocher: And then he has another piece of data for us. They have extremely large amounts of type one muscle, the endurance muscle.

Carrie Poppy: Is that a type? Is this real? Okay.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, there are two types of muscle. Yeah. And like, if you're a runner, you try to build up the endurance muscle. I wasn't aware of the numbers being assigned to them, but I've certainly heard this before. And then you have like your quick strength muscle. And he says that they are just replete with all of this muscle. And he knows this because he's been held from behind by these aliens—

Carrie Poppy: Hell yeah, buddy.

Ross Blocher: —(*chuckling*) for a long period of time. And he could struggle to get free, but they could just hold him like a vice forever.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, okay. Alright. Not as fun as it sounded at first.

Ross Blocher: (*Chuckles.*) Who knows what was going on during that embrace? But apparently this also, for him, verified the Reddit information. Like, this has to be a real document, because I can back up this one piece of information with my remembered personal experience.

Carrie Poppy: So, he also said something really sweet that just really touched on how alone Whitley can feel. He said, “There's nobody else out here doing this. I'm all alone. One of these days, these strange stories are gonna be to your children and your grandchildren just part of ordinary life in the new world.”

Ross Blocher: Yeah, he was pleading with the audience. Please stay with me. I'm all alone.

Carrie Poppy: And I was like, (*shouting*) “I'm here!” That's how I felt!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, it's like you want to help him? I'll go to the archives with you. I'll tell your story.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, I would! Oh my god, I'll do it. I'll do it. 100%.

[01:30:00]

Ross Blocher: We're in Whitley.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah, please. So, then he was pretty much done. He got a standing ovation. And then Alan said, “Do you want a question? Do you want any question and answer?”

And Whitley was like, “Oh, they told me I couldn't. But okay, how about just one?” And then picks the first person who shoots her arm up. And boy, did she biff it!

Ross Blocher: (*Laughs.*) Wasted opportunity!

Carrie Poppy: She did not have a question! She just wanted to have an interaction with him and tell him how much she loves him, and he is so great. And we all listened to that. And then I went up and got him to sign my copy of *Communion*!

Ross Blocher: Yeah! Yeah, I'm a little jealous. Last time I saw him at the previous Conscious Life Expo, I took a picture with him. I wish I had a signed copy of *Communion*. He sells them on his website.

Carrie Poppy: Which he will sign. He said anything directly from his website will come with a signature.

Ross Blocher: That's UnknownCountry.com. But maybe I can wait and get him to sign it in person.

Carrie Poppy: And his podcast is *Dreamland*.

Ross Blocher: *Dreamland*. Yeah. He reminds us of all of that. He also had this one last piece of data from the Crabwood—?

Carrie Poppy: Crabwood Formation.

Ross Blocher: Formation? I don't know what that is. I didn't look it up. But he told us to beware those with false gifts and broken promises. And I thought, "Hm."

Carrie Poppy: Great. Really helpful.

Ross Blocher: That seems relevant for the UFO community. Lots of promises going on about disclosure and technology.

Carrie Poppy: So, when I got him to sign my book, there was a woman behind me in line, and I recognized her, but I couldn't figure out from where. And she was like, "Do you want me to take a picture of you and Whitley?" And it was like—she had like a DSLR. So, I'm thinking, "Well, it's just going to be on your camera, lady. Okay. If this will make you happy." I mean, she just follows around Whitley Strieber and takes pictures. Okay.

Ross Blocher: Here, let me hand you my phone.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. No, nope. She was holding her DSLR like, "I'm going to take it on this."

Ross Blocher: It exists somewhere now.

Carrie Poppy: And so, she took it. And then as I was leaving, she was like, (*whispers*) "Hey, Carrie."

Ross Blocher: Oooh! A listener!

Carrie Poppy: And she had taken this beautiful photo of me and Whitley Strieber, which I'll share.

(Ross "aw"s.)

And her name is Jill Simpson, and she—

Ross Blocher: Jill, you had a plan. It all makes sense now.

Carrie Poppy: And so, I wanted to say what her impression was, because she stayed for this whole \$50 talk. Yeah. She said, "I totally wanted a photo with Whitley. I got one after you. I mean, he's the OG alien abduction guy! *Communion* was my introduction to that whole phenomenon when I was a teenager. That book was everywhere, even in little English bookshops." She's English. "I was quite surprised at the small turnout for this lecture! I thought he'd draw a much bigger crowd."

Ross Blocher: Yeah. About how many people were in there?

Carrie Poppy: So, I went back to my notes and looked, and there were 57 attendees. And I wrote down that—

Ross Blocher: In the Carmel room. Yeah. That's not full.

Carrie Poppy: And I wrote down that my guess of ratio of women to men was one to one, which is uncommon. The alien guys seem to get a lot more men.

Ross Blocher: Okay! Yeah. Yeah, that's true. Absolutely. Yeah, the whole rabbit hole crowd is definitely more represented with the men.

Carrie Poppy: More male. Yeah.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Interesting. Well, that was fun, catching up with Whitley.

Carrie Poppy: That was fun! Yeah, tell us if you want us to read *Communion* or if you're like, "I get it. A guy thinks he was abducted by aliens."

Ross Blocher: Okay, I'll remember to put those in the polls.

Carrie Poppy: Okay!

(They laugh.)

I get it. Yeah, okay, good.

Ross Blocher: Those will be the two options. And I'll share that video footage as well. I'll put that up on the Facebook page so you can see it. Alright, well, that's it for this episode. But boy, do we have some really wild stories to tell you coming up.

Carrie Poppy: We sure do. Well, that's it for our show! Our theme music is by Brian Keith Dalton.

Ross Blocher: Our administrative manager is Ian Kremeeer!

Carrie Poppy: This episode was edited by Ross Blocher at the last minute. Thank you, Ross.

Ross Blocher: And you can support us. You can help make this show possible at MaximumFun.org/join. But guess what? We've got Maximum Fun coming up in the next month or so.

Carrie Poppy: MaxFunDrive!

Ross Blocher: That's a good time to do it.

Carrie Poppy: Should we say our special event that we're doing, or do we wait? Do we wait? Maybe we wait. Let's wait!

Ross Blocher: We wait.

Carrie Poppy: But there is something! (*Strangled noises.*)

Ross Blocher: Oh, Carrie's doing amazing things with her hands right now. They're all over the place. You can also support us by telling a friend.

Carrie Poppy: Telling an alien. (*Gasps.*) Tell the first alien to listen to ONRAC.

Ross Blocher: Telepathically. The first alien? Yeah.

Carrie Poppy: Get us our first alien listener, and we'll put you on the show.

Ross Blocher: Absolutely. And remember!

Clip:

Whitley Strieber: To give you a flavor of what a new world will really be like: it will be much bigger. You! You will be much bigger in this world than you are now, because you're living with blinders on, believe me. They're going to take those blinders off. That's what it is to be born is you come out of the womb, and all of a sudden, light everywhere! What are you going to do? You can't see straight! But you can. Actually, you can. You can do fine. We'll do fine. Alright, let's see—

Music: “Oh No, Ross and Carrie! Theme Song” by Brian Keith Dalton. A jaunty, upbeat instrumental.

Promo:

Jesse Thorn: The following are real reenactments of pretend emergency calls.

Music: Dramatic, ominous music settles in.

Operator: 911.

Caller 1: My husband! It’s my husband!

[01:35:00]

Operator: Calm down, please. What about your husband?

Caller 1: (*Sobbing in terror.*) He—he loads the dishwasher wrong! Please help! Oh, please help me!

(*Scene change.*)

Operator: Where are you now, ma’am.

Caller 2: At the kitchen table. I was with my dad. He mispronounces words. Intentionally.

(*Scene change.*)

John Hodgman: There are plenty of podcasts on the hunt for justice, but only one podcast has the courage to take on the silly crimes. *Judge John Hodgman*, the only true crime podcast that won't leave you feeling sad and bad and scared for once. Only on MaximumFun.org.

Transition: Cheerful ukulele chord.

Speaker 1: Maximum Fun.

Speaker 2: A worker-owned network.

Speaker 3: Of artist owned shows.

Speaker 4: Supported—

Speaker 5: —directly—

Speaker 6: —by you!