

[00:00:00]

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 I did nothing in this episode.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. What were you even doing this night that we're going to be talking about?

Carrie Poppy: I don't know... hanging out with Drew?

Ross Blocher: Did you ever go watch the nighttime film they were showing at Contact in the Desert? Because that's what we're talking about in this episode. We're talking about Contact in the Desert that happened in the desert.

Carrie Poppy: We walked by it. I remember Drew and I walking by a big like inflated screen.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, that seemed unnecessary. They had this giant inflatable screen on the edge of this really big inflatable structure. And because of that you have to contend with the noise of the continuous inflation. Because they keep the motor running the whole time. It's like, why not just make a scaffold or something? Put the screen on that.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, right. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Did it compete with the audio? It must have, yeah.

Ross Blocher: It did. I remember walking by it and hearing that rrrr, like a lawnmower, keeping the thing inflated.

Carrie Poppy: Ugh! Oh, that would drive me nuts.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. What's the point?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, I want to say it was actually the movie *Alien*.

Ross Blocher: Well, at least this particular night, they were showing *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Which is funny, because a listener just wrote recently asking for some insight into how these UFO conference goers feel about that movie in particular. And I—I don't

know—waxed philosophical about their relationship and how it comes up a fair amount, but I wasn't thinking about how it was actually a movie night at the conference. Let's see.

Carrie Poppy: (*Laughs.*) And I remember there was popcorn.

Ross Blocher: Another night they were showing *Paul*.

Carrie Poppy: *Paul? Paul. Paul?*

Ross Blocher: *Paul.* P-A-U-L. I'm realizing how hard it is to enunciate the word Paul. Yeah, it's—

Carrie Poppy: Once you've decided it's strange, it definitely is. (*With an elongated vowel.*) Paul.

Ross Blocher: (*Laughs.*) Certain words sometimes, that semantic fixation—like, all of a sudden you realize the component sounds, and our language is weird. Pauuul.

Carrie Poppy: Oh my god. Don't get me started on the word chocolate. Do not get me started.

Ross Blocher: Choc-co-late. Choc-o-late.

Carrie Poppy: Oh no, it's happening! This is how you lose your sanity.

Ross Blocher: Now I can't remember where it's from, but there was this joke. “Everybody wants money. That's why they call it muh-ney.” It just cracked me up.

Carrie Poppy: (*Laughing.*) When Drew makes a really good move in chess, he says, “And that's why they call it chess!”

(*Ross giggles.*)

But it's not! It's not why they call it chess!

Ross Blocher: Sometimes the sound just feels like it really goes. Now, certain things are onomatopoeias, but chess is not.

Carrie Poppy: (*Laughing helplessly.*) That's not why?

Ross Blocher: That's hilarious. So, *Paul* is by Seth MacFarlane. It's a movie he made.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, yeah. Okay. I've seen *Jack*.

Ross Blocher: And I haven't seen it. But I know it has—I think it has a CG alien. *Jack*? Isn't that the one with Robin Williams back in the day?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. It's just another single male name.

Ross Blocher: Where he builds a treehouse, and he's a—? I did see that. Anyways, they have a movie night at the same time. And the reason we mentioned that is because we don't know what Carrie was doing at the time.

Carrie Poppy: But I was not at the movie. You were not at the movie. You were at a star watching party.

Ross Blocher: Yes. Searching the Skies: Night Vision Goggle Experience with Ben Hansen.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, Ben! Yeah, I remember walking by this and seeing you there or something. I have a visual memory of it. So, I was on my way to something. I just don't know what.

Ross Blocher: In the printed brochure, it said it was 8:15 to 11. And then—

Carrie Poppy: Wow. That's a long party. I

Ross Blocher: And then I think maybe on the website—somewhere it was saying 8 to 11. So I was a little nervous, because I was in line asking a Q at a Q&A at the end of a panel. And I was like oh no! I'm going to be late to the beginning of this thing. But then when I got outside, I was like, oh, it's still light out. You can't see any stars. And sure enough, when I wandered over there—this was at Orion's Lookout. They've given little labels to everything. And I want to say that's a holdover from the old location, that they would call the star party viewing area Orion's Lookout.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, could be.

Ross Blocher: It was just the back lawn behind this conference room space. And almost an earshot of the movie, but I don't remember being disturbed or distracted by the film noises.

Carrie Poppy: It is a noisy environment though. This whole scene.

Ross Blocher: Noise pollution and light pollution, which is a problem when you're having a star viewing party.

(Carrie laughs.)

Anyways, who is Ben Hanson and why should we pay attention to him? They tell us in the program, “Ben Hanson graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in sociology and criminology. He went to work investigating child physical abuse and sex crimes, followed by employment with the FBI.”

[00:05:00]

Already sounds fancy. Unrelated, but interesting at the very least.

Carrie Poppy: Okay! He sounds powerful.

Ross Blocher: Well, he also uses the skills he learned to validate UFO witness testimony and filter out hoaxers and cases with natural explanations.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, great!

Ross Blocher: Okay, yeah. Sounds like a good approach.

Carrie Poppy: Sounds good on its face.

Ross Blocher: Ben was the lead host and investigator of the TV show *Fact or Fakes: Paranormal Files*. “He appeared on *UFOs Declassified*, *Mysteries of the Outdoors*, *Expedition Unknown*, *Paranormal Lockdown*,”—I’m really curious about that—“and *Ghosts of Shepherdstown*.”

Carrie Poppy: Ooh!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, this guy's been on a lot of TV.

Carrie Poppy: And he's Hansen with an E-N, right?

Ross Blocher: Yes. Isn't that like the band?

Carrie Poppy: No, that's Owen.

Ross Blocher: They're an Owen, okay. Beck Hansen?

Carrie Poppy: Oh, I don't know who that is.

Ross Blocher: Oh, just Beck. You know Beck.

Carrie Poppy: Oh! Beck's last name is Hansen?

(Ross confirms.)

Huh. I just saw him on the John Mulaney show.

Ross Blocher: Oh, really? Interesting. John Mulaney has his own show?

Carrie Poppy: John Mulaney had a six episode show called *Everybody's in LA* that's over, but you can see on Netflix. It's great. Loved it.

Ross Blocher: Beck Hansen is an E-N!

Carrie Poppy: Okay, there we go. Okay.

Ross Blocher: Okay! We found another E-N. That's it for our show!

“Ben Hanson is also a night vision and thermal imaging equipment dealer for Night Vision Ops.”

Carrie Poppy: Okay. Interesting. Okay, so he sells night vision gear?

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Clearly he's on a lot of shows. If you look at his IMDb, that's just a laundry list of all these kind of UFO, ghost—well, I guess they're mostly UFO shows, where he's either a host, or a talking head, an investigative expert. And these seem to go back to like 2010 era. So, he's been doing this for a while. And I got the sense that he's, you know, like a celebrity in this group where people are like, “Woah! Ben Hanson! I've seen you on TV.” And I just—I wasn't familiar with him. But I would see like—I think he had a booth. I remember seeing like a bunch of headshots of him when he was, you know, even younger and even dreamier. Good looking dude. And I don't know, it was just that kind of weird feeling of like, oh, maybe I should be a little more in awe of you than I know to be.

Carrie Poppy: I never know what to do with someone claiming they were an FBI agent or a CIA agent. I'm just like how would I know if this was a lie? Where would I begin?

Ross Blocher: Mm! Good point. Yeah, there's just a real walled garden there, where they can neither confirm nor deny.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, I mean, you could try to ask. I haven't tried.

Ross Blocher: I also did not track that down, so I'm not gonna put my weight behind his career with the FBI.

Ben had also given a talk earlier that day that I did not attend, called *The Secret Plan for UFO Disclosure*. So, you know, I feel like giving a talk of that title already gives a bit of a nod to sort of where you're at in the UFO realm. So, I thought, okay, somebody who feels like he has inside knowledge of how UFO disclosure is going to play out.

Carrie Poppy: Can make some predictions.

Ross Blocher: I want to hear what this guy has to say about UFOs. And also, we reported on our previous contact in the desert back in 2017, the star party that I went to that year—where there were also night vision goggles and a lot of sightings. They were promising like dozens per night that you were going to see UFOs.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, wow! Yeah. That seems to give up the game. Doesn't it? *(Laughs.)*

Ross Blocher: Right. And I remember at the time, not only were people in the moment getting super excited about things they saw in the sky, but then hearing people tell stories about the previous night, the next day and making overblown claims about what we all saw. I'm like, "Wait, I was there! That didn't happen!"

Carrie Poppy: *(Laughs.)* It wasn't like that!

Ross Blocher: So, I'm hoping for more of the same. That's my attitude going into this.

Carrie Poppy: More of the same?

Ross Blocher: Let's see what kind of interpretation of this guy we're being given at this event. But it wasn't just Ben Hansen alone. There was also Marc D'Antonio, who was also listed in the speakers' section for contact in the desert. "Marc D'Antonio has a degree in astronomy and is the Mutual UFO Networks—"

Carrie Poppy: Ah, MUFON!

Ross Blocher: MUFON, that's right. "—chief photo and video analyst." So, he's the one, like when you submit, "Hey, I saw this craft. Here's my video, here's my photos I took," and you MUFON, he's the first line of defense.

(Carrie "wow"s.)

He's going to take a look at it and write you back.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, and MUFON is basically where it's at in terms of reporting your UFO. If you want to report your UFO, and you're a believer—you want to report it to other believers—you would go to MUFON.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And we talked about this in that Danny Sheehan lawyer episode. We were talking about kind of the history of both government projects and citizen projects. This is that citizen project that started in '69, I believe.

(They take a break to chuckle mischievously.)

And is still going. So, yeah, like you say, kind of the preeminent network for examining UFO claims. And I got to say, they do have some really interesting statistics, 'cause they're able to give numbers.

[00:10:00]

And like, here's how many come from the Pacific Northwest. Going back to his bio. "Marc is CEO of FX Models. He has done extensive work in the film and television arena, appearing

regularly on several networks, including programs on CNN, Discovery, SyFy, History, National Geographic, and Science Channels. His efforts creating UFO T-O-G-2—” Maybe that's UFO TOG? Oh, that would make sense. UFO TOG! Aaah! “—a remote UFO detection system with Douglas Trumbull—” Oh, that's interesting. Another visual effects big name. “—promises to bring ufology into the 21st century. As a photo analyst, his unique blend of astronomical, UFO, and computer-generated model making backgrounds come together in utilizing advanced software tool sets to coax data out of the imagery.”

So, already I'm thinking, wow, okay! So, we've got the TV personality who's into disclosure and is on enough alien documentaries. I'm picturing that Ben is going to be kind of wild with the claims, but that we're going to have this astronomer there and person working in the visual effects industry who's maybe going to try to ground it a little more. That's what I'm expecting. Also, I feel the word utilizing and utilize is overutilized.

Carrie Poppy: (*Chuckles.*) You'd like to just say use.

Ross Blocher: Use is usually fine. I think utilizing is supposed to be specifically for using something not quite to its intended purpose.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, uh-huh. Make it useful despite the situation!

Ross Blocher: I utilize the laser pointer to scare away the bear.

Alright. That's it. I'm not going to die on the hill. Don't write me about it. Just throwing that out there.

Carrie Poppy: (*Chuckles.*) I won't. I won't write to you about it.

Ross Blocher: Just letting you know, if you write something, and I see that you used utilize, I'm going to scrutinize your utilize and be like, “Was that necessary? Was it really utilized?”

Carrie Poppy: Use would've been fine.

Ross Blocher: Alright. So, when I got there at 8:09—8:09PM!

Carrie Poppy: Very pretty.

Ross Blocher: It was still pretty bright out! Like, the sky is—you would just say blue. Maybe a cerulean blue, but it's—

Carrie Poppy: It's light out.

Ross Blocher: You can see around. Yeah. You're not going to trip over anything. That's for sure. It feels like dusk. So, could be just a combination of time of the year, and we're in the desert, and lots of light pollution—as we've talked about. But they've put out a bunch of chairs in front of a screen, and—

Carrie Poppy: I see one star.

Ross Blocher: This one?

(Carrie confirms.)

Yeah, the moon.

Carrie Poppy: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Ross Blocher: And the moon was out and pretty full, which is also not helpful for star viewing for sure. So, they have all these white chairs, and then we learned those are the free chairs. So, you're welcome to come here. You don't have to pay anything to sit in those chairs, but if you want to sit over here to the right, closer to the building, you can sit in a lounge chair and pay \$5.

Carrie Poppy: Ohhh! To recline?

Ross Blocher: Yes. And to get some of these night vision binoculars and be looking up at the sky that way while he talks. And I guess you get the chair for like 20 minutes for your five bucks. So, I went and sat in the free chairs, because—well, first of all, you can't even see anything right now. But I stayed there, because there was just no point at which I felt like, oh, this would be a value add if I could be looking at the sky with night vision goggles, right now.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. And the reclining wasn't worth it to you.

Ross Blocher: *(Laughs.)* Yeah. I declined to recline.

Carrie Poppy: No, I mean, that would be the selling point to me.

Ross Blocher: Oh, really?

(Carrie confirms.)

Like, "I'll pay \$5 to recline." *(Laughs.)*

Carrie Poppy: I mean, I'm not saying I'd go for it, but that'd be the selling point. It'd be like how tired am I? This has been two hours. Reclining chair sounds nice!

Ross Blocher: Okay. So, it took a while for people to join, but we had like a few dozen people by the time everyone came in. I'd say, you know, maybe like 50 people or something like that spread between those two different locations. And the line did form, like people were waiting to get the binoculars, so.

Carrie Poppy: It looks like a wedding.

Ross Blocher: Totally. I would believe that. Outdoor wedding. There's palm trees, of course. We're in the desert—this kind of conference resort desert. And then some trees that probably don't belong in the desert, but yeah. It's nice, and you've got a green lawn. Anyways, I show up there, it's still pretty bright, and they're hooking up Ben's iPhone to the screen, so that you can see what he's looking through. And then the iPhone is attached to a night vision scope that he brags about and says like, “Oh, this is generation three. This is the best you can get—as far as we know—that's available to the public. There might be something better in the military, you know, but this is classy.” And you know, he sells this stuff. So, later on, he'll tell us like, “Oh, if you want to buy some of these binoculars, let me know. I think you have to like place in a minimum order of five.” Or I don't know. There was something.

Carrie Poppy: This whole thing about him selling gear is—*(laughs)* I mean, it's enterprising, I guess, but it feels a little *Music Man*-y.

(They laugh.)

Ross Blocher: An unexpected pitch. Yeah, I didn't see that coming for sure. So, I was just talking with people around me and overhearing conversations. But eventually it was starting to get dark enough, maybe around 8:30, where he said, “Okay, well, let's get started. And we've got a documentary filming, so there'll be cameras around here. If you're uncomfortable with that, let somebody know. But it's a documentary by Caroline Corey.”

[00:15:00]

Carrie Poppy: Ohhh! She's so beautiful!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, she is. *(Jimmy Church voice.)* Yes, she is!

And—

Carrie Poppy: We talked about her in a previous episode and how much Jimmy Church likes to reference how beautiful she is. And I'm just a huge weirdo.

Ross Blocher: Openly flirts with her.

Carrie Poppy: I'm not just a huge weirdo.

(They laugh.)

There's additional facts about me.

Ross Blocher: Carrie is a huge weirdo and so much more.

Carrie Poppy: *(Laughing.)* Thank you.

Ross Blocher: So, the audience was quite excited. Like, “Ohh! A film by Caroline Corey!”

And apparently they've collaborated before. Ben was like, “Oh, I think this is like our third project.”

Carrie Poppy: Wooow. I wonder how much of that is the Hollywood Disclosure Alliance hooking it up.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. ‘Cause Danny Sheehan's there. Yeah. Everybody's in their pocket at this conference.

Carrie Poppy: The Dolans.

Ross Blocher: And hopefully I show up in the documentary somewhere. I don't know.

Carrie Poppy: Oh yeah! Cool. I hope so.

Ross Blocher: He also warns us, you know, “We're going to be pointing out things that we see in the sky. Feel free to use laser pointers. Of course, if it's a plane, do not point it at the plane.” I've repeated this myself many times, but just him in the moment saying that made me want to go look up is that actually true?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, is that a thing?!

Ross Blocher: ‘Cause people say, you know, you can get in big trouble, and I always think how would they actually find out? And also, if you have a low wattage—you know, like a five-milliwatt laser, what's it really going to do from that distance? It's going to be so diffuse at that point.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah! I would hope they wouldn't sell them if I could point it up at a plane and crash it.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, the idea is that it can be either very distracting to the pilots if it reflects into the cockpit or even blind them.

Carrie Poppy: Right! I would hope they wouldn't sell that.

Ross Blocher: And Ben was saying like, “Don't do it. It's a felony.” I think it was because he said it was a felony. I thought, okay, I should actually check this out. Sure enough. On the FAA.gov website, they say that it is a federal crime.

Carrie Poppy: Wow!

Ross Blocher: And pilots are encouraged to report incidents. And still, I wonder like how many can they actually figure out who shone the laser?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, no kidding.

Ross Blocher: Shined the laser? But apparently there were 13,304 incidents reported in 2023.

Carrie Poppy: WOAH!

Ross Blocher: Which was like way up on the numbers. They showed the numbers went back to 2016, and the chart I saw—the lowest per year was 5,663 incidents in 2018.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, so are any of these actually hurting anybody?

Ross Blocher: It was enough that it was noticed and reported.

Carrie Poppy: Uh-huh.

Ross Blocher: Which is crazy. So, “the agency takes enforcement action against people who violate federal aviation regulations by shining lasers at aircraft, and can impose civil penalties of up to \$11,000 per violation. The FAA has imposed civil penalties up to \$30,800 against people for multiple laser incidents.”

Carrie Poppy: But has this hurt one person?

Ross Blocher: That I cannot prove. I have not seen.

Carrie Poppy: Huh. I mean, it's starting to sound like such a large number that I'm like I think we've just proved it safe.

Ross Blocher: Well, we certainly would hear of it if a plane was downed for that reason. But apparently it's enough of a problem that truly it is a federal crime, so don't do that!

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, well, don't do it. Just don't go—you're gonna—I don't want you to go to jail, listener. (*Mumbling.*) But I think we proved it safe. That's what I hear.

Ross Blocher: Because planes don't go down.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, like, so there's like all these tens of thousands of reports and no harm?

Ross Blocher: But the harm could be just annoyance and/or eye damage to pilots, which wouldn't result in a fatality.

Carrie Poppy: No, but I'm asking about any harm! Any harm!

Ross Blocher: Oh, well, I don't know. I haven't looked into that specifically, so I wouldn't rule it out.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, okay.

Ross Blocher: It's obviously not a good thing to do. So, Ben was saying that “we're going to just talk about different categories of things you see in the sky. There's going to be man made things, natural things, and then what remains are things that we're not sure about.” And those are good categories. And he said, “I've often taken video of things or seen something and then later on realized, ‘Oh, this was a bat, or this was a spy satellite.’ And my job isn't to take the fun out of it, but I brought an astronomer along, and he can do that for us.” (*Chuckles.*) Or you know, that was kind of the implication. “And we'll kind of go back and forth as we talk. And he knows more about all the planets and the stars, that kind of stuff. I don't know anything about that. So, that's Marc's territory.”

Carrie Poppy: Interesting, okay. Okay. Yeah. I guess I just figured people who are into UFOs and stuff would automatically be into astronomy. But I guess that's wrong.

Ross Blocher: I see a fair amount of separation there. Certainly someone who's into astrology, I should hope that they're pretty good at astronomy. Which I think we've talked about before, is so backwards! Really the term for the science part should be astrology, and they just got it first.

Carrie Poppy: Ah. Well, what are you going to do?

Ross Blocher: Call it astronomy.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah.

Ross Blocher: So, then Ben said that he and Marrk had been friends for a long time and that they'd worked together on a “documentary”, quote/unquote; I don't know what to call this thing—called *Alien Invasion: Hudson Valley*.

So, at the time I thought, “Interesting.” But I watched it recently. And boy, do I have stories to tell you about that.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. You're putting your fingers in a temple.

Ross Blocher: And then he said, “And we worked on something else together.”

[00:20:00]

And Marc said, “We did?”

(*They chuckle.*)

And finally he thought about it and said, “Oh, you know what? My show *UFO Witness*, I brought you in as an expert on one episode.”

“Ohh, okay, okay.” I watched that as well.

Carrie Poppy: It's such an incestuous little group. I mean, everybody's just—this show and back on this show and then go back on her show and go back on his show and go back to the conference, and now let's go to this other conference, and now you got to go see so and so's talk who recommends so and so's talk, who recommends so and so's podcast.

Ross Blocher: Totally. Though, when I think of that, I also immediately think you could easily say that about, say, the skeptical community, the pro-science community.

(Carrie agrees.)

Incestuous as well. You know, you find the same speakers. And it's a smaller group, and they don't get nearly as much airtime. But yeah, you're right. Once you know about these people, you see them everywhere. And that's been kind of a fun part of this podcast is just, one by one, adding little lights to my understanding of who these people are and their unique contributions to this.

Carrie Poppy: And seeing new characters emerge, like TwinRay's emergence into our lives really bowled us over. Didn't expect what a big splash they'd make on arrival.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, when that one broke the horizon. And sometimes by the end of a lecture, you're like, woah! Okay, you're going to be part of my email feed from now on, and I'm going to be checking your Instagram. And, whoo, you're one to watch.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. You're not one to forget. Yep.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Cher Jolyne is another one.

Carrie Poppy: *(Chuckles.)* Lori Spagna. I'll always be watching her content. That's just gonna be how it is. Yep, yep.

Ross Blocher: Oh, yeah. Kimberly Meredith.

Carrie Poppy: Yep. Yep. Shakuntali, we'll be looking at her every once in a while, forever.

Ross Blocher: The ideas are important, but obviously the people are really where this all comes from. And the popularity of an idea can really rise and fall with the personality of its proponents.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. And you never know what'll come out of their face!

Ross Blocher: Exactly. So, we're starting to see more lights in the sky. At first you just had like one bright one, and Ben asked him, ‘Hey Marc, what's that?’

And Marc said, “That's Venus.”

And I thought, okay, that already kind of tells us that Ben isn't like super adept at identifying things in the sky if he didn't immediately know like that's Venus.

Carrie Poppy: And was it Venus? Could you confirm?

(Ross confirms.)

Okay. I would have no idea.

Ross Blocher: Well, in the next anecdote, I shall reveal that I had already pulled out my phone, and I have three star viewing apps. But the one I always recommend to people is *Stellarium*. I think it's 10 bucks, but I would say totally worth it.

Carrie Poppy: S-T-E-L-A-R—?

Ross Blocher: I-U-M.

Carrie Poppy: I-U-M, okay.

Ross Blocher: And there was another light that everyone started looking at and going, “*(Gasps.)* Ooh, ooh, this one's not an airplane, because it's bright, but it's moving! And it's not blinking. It doesn't have like the green—”

Carrie Poppy: Oh, okay. And planes usually blink?

Ross Blocher: Yeah, but it seemed unusually bright. And so, I had my theory, but I pull out *Stellarium* and I look. And yep, it's the ISS. So, I shouted that out. I said—

Carrie Poppy: The International Space Station.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I said, “That's the International Space Station.”

So, they had a little bit of debate about that for a second. “Are you sure that is?”

And Marc started telling facts about it. “The astronauts on the ISS, they see the sunrise 16 times a day!”

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Woah, that is crazy to think about.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, it is. And to the lady next to me, I said, “Oh yeah, and that thing's traveling nearly 17 and a half thousand miles per hour!”

She's like, “*(Gasps.)* Huh, how did you know that?”

I said, “Well, that's the speed that things that stay in orbit have to travel at.”

And then Marc was pointing out that, like, it's going to disappear shortly, because it's going to fall into the shadow of the Earth. And you know, all good info. So, already this is—

Carrie Poppy: What's going to fall into the shadow of the Earth?

Ross Blocher: The ISS, like it'll disappear. And you'll wonder like—

Carrie Poppy: Oh, I see. Oh, oh, metaphorically. Okay. Got it.

Ross Blocher: Why did it stop shining? As far as we know, it'll just blink out of existence. Oh, that's because it will fall into the shadow.

So, then Ben goes back to introducing other categories of things. “Sometimes you'll see something on the camera that looks like maybe a giant moth moving around, that's usually a bat. And I haven't seen any in this location yet, but something that'll show up often in your UFO sighting footage.” Ben was also encouraging us to shout out if we see something, it's okay to interrupt. And just try to use like the cardinal directions. Tell us this is north, or this is south, and also point out degrees off the horizon. So, you know, 0 to 90, 45 is halfway. So, that was useful info as well. And then he went off on a little bender about these night vision goggles and how white phosphorus is better, because it lasts longer, and you might have better contrast with it.

Carrie Poppy: That's what I'm always saying.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, I didn't realize at the time that he was going to be trying to sell us these things later. But now it all makes sense. And then he started quizzing us, talking about like which direction you launch satellites. You launch them to the east, so you're using the rotation of the earth to help you out rather than going against it.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, I didn't know that. Makes sense.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Yeah. Again, more useful information. He was talking a bit about how the Starlink satellites might launch east, but then have little corrections to get them into a different orbit.

Carrie Poppy: It's crazy that they can do that.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Right?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, completely.

Ross Blocher: Just the proliferation in recent years, I would say even between that last contact in the desert and now the number of objects, manmade objects in the sky, has—I would say—gone up like an order of magnitude.

Carrie Poppy: Is that true? Wow.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. I mean, I feel like there's so many things up there now—

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—where it used to be every now and then you could spot a satellite if you were paying close attention, and now it's just almost all the time. If you're looking carefully, you can be like, oh! There's a satellite. Follow that. Oh, there's another satellite! Follow that.

Carrie Poppy: So, we're just going to get more and more and more UFO reports then.

Ross Blocher: That's right. Unless all the UFO enthusiasts are attending talks like this, where so far they're doing a yeoman's job of helping people identify other things it could be.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Okay.

Ross Blocher: And this seems to be Marc's job, because he's constantly giving us little stories about a report that was submitted to him. And usually the moral of the story is—I mean, kind of like *Scooby Doo*, where the moral of the story is always it was the guy wearing the mask. You know, all of the stories seem to end up with, “Ah, that was actually this thing. It was actually that thing.”

Carrie Poppy: I think I have never seen a whole episode of *Scooby Doo*.

Ross Blocher: Woah!

Carrie Poppy: I don't know how it happened. Because I know that's the deal. I think I'd be into it. Girl with big glasses.

Ross Blocher: Oh, and it's the right era. Fun, quirky—yeah!

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, a dog is the star! Every single paranormal happening is better explained by humans.

Ross Blocher: The dog and his drug using, hippie, owner/human.

(Carrie laughs.)

Yeah, it's a good aesthetic that I feel would be totally up Carrie's alley. Yeah, What's going on here?

Carrie Poppy: It just hasn't happened yet. I don't know. I gotta do it, right?

Ross Blocher: There's like a character who wears a scarf all the time.

Carrie Poppy: Right. She got big glasses, right? Yeah. Come on. How has this not happened? And a dog is the star! A dog!

Ross Blocher: Right. Yeah. What'ssss the disconnect? Yeah, maybe we just need to sit down and watch it together.

Carrie Poppy: Maybe.

Ross Blocher: I feel like I have so many of these things where you don't need to convince me that I'll like something, I just haven't gotten around to seeing it yet. And I was having—

Carrie Poppy: You still haven't seen *Breaking Bad*.

Ross Blocher: I've seen all of *Breaking Bad*, and I have seen all of *Better Call Saul*. How dare you?

(*Carrie giggles.*)

But I don't know why you refuse to watch *Midnight Mass*.

Carrie Poppy: Oh yeah. Yeah, Beowulf wants me to watch that too. I don't have a TV. That's why. I don't have a TV right now.

Ross Blocher: What happened?

Carrie Poppy: Oh, our—(*sighs*) we kept our TV in the garage, and the garage flooded. It was destroyed. Yeah.

Ross Blocher: Ugh! Ugh. You have a computer.

Carrie Poppy: I do have a computer. Yeah, but it's just changed my watching habits and patterns and blah, blah, blah, blah.

Ross Blocher: Sure, understandable. Yeah, shoot, I feel like yesterday I was having a conversation about something that I was fully convinced, yes, I know I need to watch that. You don't need to convince me. I realize I need to watch it as well. And for whatever reason, my brain won't give it to me right now. So, I get where you're at with *Scooby Doo*, but in this case, I feel like so far they are the *Scooby Doo* of UFO watching. Like, this all feels very responsible.

Carrie Poppy: Okay, great!

Ross Blocher: There's an airplane passing overhead, not a UFO. UFOs don't make that kind of noise.

Carrie Poppy: I don't know! We're not looking at it. We're not looking!

Ross Blocher: That's funny. Speaking of which, right at that moment, Ben said, “You know, if I hear about a sighting, and someone's telling me that it has the properties of a plane, if it made a sound that sounded like a plane, if it blinked like a plane, it's not going to convince me that you saw a UFO. Now, I guess we could argue that a UFO could mimic any of those things, but—” He didn't say like Occam's razor, but you know, “Why would I jump to that conclusion?”

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Good in principle. But man, I watched a Ben Hansen video before you got to my house that makes me think he's not as good about following what he says.

Ross Blocher: Yes! So, we're going to talk about Ben, the star party host, and then we're going to talk about Ben, the TV personality.

(Carrie laughs and agrees.)

These are two very different Bens.

Carrie Poppy: Interesting. Interesting.

Ross Blocher: But yeah, at this point he's just saying that would be a good disguise if the aliens wanted to have a disguise. They could pretend to be a plane, and we'd rule them out pretty easily. For all of our aliens listening, there's a good way to fool all of us. Just blink a green light on one side, and—

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, make yourself a decoy plane.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, exactly. And this was an interesting point he made. He said, “My theory is that UFOs want to be seen, because if they wanted to cloak, they could. There's no reason why they need to be emitting light all the time.”

Carrie Poppy: Okay, fair!

Ross Blocher: And I thought, wow, I like that! They could be stealth, but they are choosing for us to see them.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Although, mmmm, I guess I assume that they still have to use lights. Like, I'd still expect them to have eyes and respond to light. So.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And to be reflective. But I guess we're just assuming a certain lumping of technology. If you've mastered the technology to sail through interstellar space and you're here, you can also cloak yourself pretty easily.

Carrie Poppy: You use something other than vision maybe to guide you.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, or you know enough of optics to counteract optics, or—you know, that somehow you could make us unaware of your presence if you wanted to. The same principle kind of applied to a satellite. Yeah, they could move like a satellite if they wanted to, just in a straight line. It would be hard to tell the difference. But if you see something in the air that's moving like a satellite, and then it starts turning rapidly—if it like starts making a tight curve, or it goes at a right degree angle—something you should pay attention to.

He also addressed apps, 'cause I'd just like shouted out with my app input.

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And he said, “They're good. I highly recommend that you all use apps. I'll have one to recommend later. Just be aware, none of these can be complete. There's sooo many objects out there.” And the estimate they threw out was over 30,000 pieces of manmade objects that could light up that we would see them.

Carrie Poppy: Wow! Yeah. It almost feels hard to hit an alien!

(Ross agrees with a chuckle.)

It feels like I'd be more likely to hit a manmade object.

Ross Blocher: And the principle was sound. If it doesn't show up in your app, that doesn't mean it's therefore a UFO. And they said, “Elon Musk—”

Carrie Poppy: Well, it kinda does though. It's still unidentified to you.

Ross Blocher: Sure. Yes. Absolutely. But in parlance, we're all talking about something we suspect to be of alien technology. He mentioned that Elon Musk, as a shorthand for SpaceX, has launched over 4,000 satellites already.

Carrie Poppy: That's crazy.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Bonkers.

Carrie Poppy: And a car.

Ross Blocher: So, then Ben tells us the story of the very first UFO he ever saw, and this one, he was on a cruise in the Caribbean. He was working in Florida, and he was with his buddy, and they were both single at the time and thought, “Hey, maybe we can meet some ladies if we go out on this cruise.”

And he said, “This was—I don't mean to offend anybody—it was the real Walmart of cruise ships.”

(Carrie laughs.)

And then someone chimed in, and he's like, “No, no, no. Not Carnival. I actually like Carnival.”

Carrie Poppy: Oh, I wonder what it was.

Ross Blocher: I know! Yeah.

Carrie Poppy: Norwegian? Wouldn't be Princess. It would not be Princess. That's not—no, they're not even top tier.

Ross Blocher: Okay. I've heard the Disney ones are quite good.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. People love the Disney ones. I think it'd be too much.

Ross Blocher: My boss, Tracy, just did her first cruise, and it was on a Disney cruise. And she's like, “Oh yeah, it was top of the line,” as far as she could tell.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. Well, you know, Princess owns the love boat, so.

Ross Blocher: Oh, okay. Well, and my cousin, Leia, worked for Princess for many years.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, that's right! Hi, Leia!

Ross Blocher: AKA. Princess Leia.

And this would be constant. So, he's like telling this story, and then it just totally gets railroaded for a while. Because we were all looking intently at the sky, and then all of a sudden people start like shouting, because we're not seeing just one satellite. We're seeing another satellite pop up behind it and another and another and another. And it's like this string of what ends up being like 20 to 30 satellites following each other through the air. And now most of us have come to recognize that as Starlink. It was an early launch of Starlink. We keep mentioning Starlink. That's from SpaceX. Elon Musk's—one of his companies. And these are internet satellites.

The idea is to provide this worldwide network, so you can get internet anywhere, and they're just constantly cycling through the sky—some in polar orbit. And when they first launch, they're all together. And then over time, they kind of space out. It is truly astonishing because—I mean, for all of history, when we see things in the sky, you know, they're not usually forming these very human shapes, like a string of dots. And it's just—it's weird to see in the air. So, yeah, everybody gets all wild about that.

Carrie Poppy: I think my friends, Eline and Heather, saw something like this at a beach bonfire party I was at. Because I remember they were both so captivated by it, and I remember thinking like, “Oh, this is the kind of thing Ross would remember to look at, but it's just not even registering for me.” And then they were both screaming, and then Heather was like, “Carrie, where's your wonder?!” And I was like, oh, fuck, okay. (*Breathing*

heavily.) I'm keyed in, keyed in, oh my god. Didn't know the stakes were so high. Okay, yes, you're right, that's a UFO! But yeah, I just feel like things moving in the sky, I just—like, I don't know! It's like, of course, why would that be an alien?! (*Laughing.*) I mean! I don't know, that's just my immediate reaction.

Ross Blocher: Well, and it might just be interesting in and of itself as a celestial phenomenon or as an atmospheric phenomenon without even thinking of aliens.

Carrie Poppy: A bird, maybe.

Ross Blocher: I mean, theoretically, if society all kind of caught on, like, "It's probably not aliens," there'd still be really cool stuff to look at in the sky.

Carrie Poppy: Birds. I do like birds.

Ross Blocher: Well, we're talking the day after, there was just like a major coronal mass ejection from the sun. And like the aurora borealis expanded.

Carrie Poppy: The Northern Lights!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, so that essentially, all of the US could see—even like down to Texas and Florida, people were seeing lights up in the sky of the aurora borealis.

Carrie Poppy: (*Grouchily.*) I didn't see anything.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Fricking Los Angeles sent in this huge cloud cover!

(*Carrie giggles.*)

I don't know who ordered that, but I didn't see diddly squat.

Carrie Poppy: Man, I saw all these pictures, and I was like, "This is so much better than the eclipse! Why did the sun even try with that dumb eclipse?! This is so much better!"

Ross Blocher: Well, the eclipse we could see coming, you know, decades. But this one, no predicting that, that we just happened to be down the barrel of the sun shooting out a bunch of material. So, yeah, I was so bummed, because my wife and I went to Iceland a few years back. And we had booked an excursion to go see the Northern Lights, 'cause that's like a great place to see them.

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It was overcast. So, they booked us for the next night. It was overcast! We never got to see them. And so, finally they're coming to me in LA, still can't see them.

Carrie Poppy: Aw. Oh boy.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. So, I'm somewhere in between. I haven't traveled to another state to go see an eclipse more clearly or anything like that. Maybe in the future, who knows?

Carrie Poppy: Our friends, the Pavlises, almost did that this time.

Ross Blocher: Oh, okay. A lot of my friends did and get like super excited at these phenomena. I won't be like—you know, I won't be as attentive, but then all of my science loving friends will get super excited, and I'll get caught up in the excitement of it.

Carrie Poppy: You gave me some of those glasses to look at the sun. Oh my god, I couldn't do it! It hurts too much.

Ross Blocher: Oh, really? Even looking through that intense dimming?

(Carrie confirms.)

Amazing.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, I think Drew found it painful too.

Ross Blocher: Shout out to my friend, Lee, for handing me a bunch of glasses. That's why I was so generous passing them off to others. Anyways, the real lesson here is lots of interesting stuff in the sky, if you're looking at the sky. And sometimes, geez, like a shuttle launch or a satellite launch can look super crazy as well. I remember I was at camp one year—Camp Omni, sign up; CampOmni.org. Send me an email, you get money. We were with the kids, and there was this object coming toward us. And my first thought was it looked like a comet, and I was kind of freaked out. This felt very apocalyptic, this giant object in the sky, super bright with this big dramatic tail coming off of it in all directions. And the kids are all freaking out, and we're all yelling.

And then we put it together that there was an air force base nearby, and it was actually yet another SpaceX launch that had happened. The timing worked out just perfectly.

Carrie Poppy: Yet another SpaceX launch.

Ross Blocher: You'll notice a theme to this story! They're putting a looot of stuff in the sky. And Marc chimed in and said, like, “Ugh, at MUFON, I get so many reports about Starlink.” So, presumably over time, this will just sort of seep into the popular consciousness, and people will know what's going on. Or maybe they'll stop launching quite so many once they have their network all set up. Anyway, so he gets back to his story on the cruise ship. So, he was chatting up this one lady, and while they were talking, she said, “What's that?”

And so, he looks over at the sky where she's pointing, and Ben says, “Oh, okay. Well, it looks like a satellite.” But then (*gasps*) it made an S turn! Like, he had gotten the impression that it

was high enough in the sky that it was a satellite, but now all of a sudden it's making like a snaking motion and then doing little spirals. So, he said, "Maybe it's a bird. I don't know, but it felt like it was farther away than that. I can't explain what it was." And he was willing to just leave it there.

Ben made another good point. You know, we often—and myself included—we'll kind of pick on people for saying like, "Hey, you've got phones in your pockets. Why don't we have more images of these things?"

And he said, "You know, sometimes there's a sighting, and an average one might last like four seconds. And it's not enough time to quickly pull it out the phone and properly aim. You know, by that time it's gone."

I thought, okay, that is a fair point. You could miss a lot. If it's something—

Carrie Poppy: On an individual level, it's a fair point.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, but exactly. In aggregate, we should expect a lot more quality.

Carrie Poppy: It's been a while, and people are still like, "Here's a grainy photo that we took in 1992."

Ross Blocher: Mm-hm. And let me just say, I highly encourage all of you—if you do see something weird in the sky—yes, pull out the camera, start taking a video. But give a little bit of context first before you zoom in; make sure your video includes a little bit of your surroundings, where you are, the scale of things. 'Cause when it's just a video that's just zoomed in on the sky, and it's grainy, you just got nothing to work with there. Give us a little more.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Yeah, that's true. People think they're adding information by zooming in like that, but not necessarily.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, at least start—you know, give us an establishing shot. Then it'll be ready for its close up.

Carrie Poppy: You want wide, medium, tight! Tight, medium, wide! They taught us this in grad school.

Ross Blocher: Exactly. Give the investigators something to latch on to. And he made another fair point, which is that for the most part—they keep getting better at this, but for the most part, phone cameras don't handle low lighting very well. Fair. So, this is where he starts telling one of his other UFO stories, which is when he was jogging in Huntington Beach, and this black triangle flew overhead.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. I heard about this on his interview.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, so Carrie found this YouTube clip of him on another show talking about this in a lot more detail, which is super helpful. But he said this was one of those examples where he has a business, selling night vision stuff, but he was out jogging. He didn't have night vision equipment on him and like a camera rig and everything. So, he was chagrined at this, like, Ugh! Everyone's going to be mad. I'm going to tell them the story that I saw this thing, and I wasn't able to capture it, and I should be the guy."

Carrie Poppy: He got to make jogging friendly binocs.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And he says, "Now I scrupulously always have night vision goggles on." But it was like this triangular thing. And he mentioned black triangle like it's this kind of classification of UFO that I guess a lot of people report seeing. But he said that it came over the ocean toward him, flew over his head, and it was completely silent.

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And he had a friend there with him who had been at the experience, and he didn't mention her here, but he did in the YouTube interview—and that she corroborated many details of features of the craft that are like these white structures and stuff and disagreed on others. But yeah, it seemed like he was being kind of responsible in how he reported on it. And his conclusion was, "Huh, still don't know what that was."

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. She had seen it from a distance more than he, though they were both obviously at a distance. And he had like some pretty intricate details about it compared to her. Hers was more basic, I think. But yeah, what I really loved about the interview version is that he gets into such finite detail. And these two hosts, it's clearly their jam, so they're so into it. They want every last detail. It's very fun to watch. But then near the end, he basically says, "Or it could be a plane." And I was like what? Well, yeah. Yeah, or it could be a plane. That actually seems like the obvious version. It just—everything he described, I was like, "That sounds like a plane. That sounds like a plane. That sounds like a plane. You're describing a plane."

Ross Blocher: I feel like he had enough specificity there to raise the possibility that it wasn't a plane, but sure. Of course, it could always be a plane. But at least in that interview, he was still being fairly circumspect about it.

Carrie Poppy: Sure, yeah. I mean, the bar is low.

(Ross laughs.)

But I'm just—it's still just the basic question, the like, should I even be thinking about this question, for me, is like kind of asked and answered on that. I'm like, oh yeah, probably a plane.

Ross Blocher: Okay. At least keep it in the running, for sure. Or even make it your default explanation. But I'm all for the stories, and it's always frustrating when there's no way to replicate it. And he was even saying in that interview that he called his dad and said, "Hey,

Dad, pull up this website where you can see weather patterns. Tell me how high the clouds are.” And this will come up later. There's also apps for like tracking plane flights. So, if you happen to know there's a plane in a certain area—well, I'll bring it up now. Like, [PlaneFinder.net](#) Mick West told me about. Great tool. And you can see—whenever I hear like a helicopter nearby or a plane that's making a lot of noise when I'm at home, I'll just pull up the website real quick, and I can instantly see. Oh, okay. There's this commercial airliner. Oh, there's that stupid helicopter. Why is it looping around? Go away!

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(*Sci-fi beeping.*)

Ross Blocher: So, a woman asked a question at this point. And I got to say, I think most of the—if not all of the question askers were women in this audience.

Carrie Poppy: Huh! Oh, that's interesting.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, they were bringing good questions. And so, this woman said, “Hey, I had this sighting where like I saw light, and it would disappear. And 30 seconds later it would come back, and it would disappear again. 30 seconds later it would come back.”

Carrie Poppy: Okay. Lighthouse?

Ross Blocher: That was my first thought. I thought lighthouse, but both Ben and Marc went in a slightly different direction. They said, “Okay, this sounds like, like a discarded rocket booster, something that's been sent tumbling through near-space, and it's just catching the sun at a certain angle, and then it's continuing its rotation. Then it's catching the sun at an angle.”

So, yeah, especially if you're seeing it up off of the horizon, then that seems like a very good go to explanation. And Marc had a whole story about this, about how he was at like a bootcamp in Arizona, and people were doing this kind of meditation thing, and they were all treating this light like it was reacting to them. And he said while they were doing this and sort of over interpreting this, he was taking a time lapse photo of this path. And it showed up as this straight line that had a bright spot, blank, bright spot. And it followed a straight line. And he introduced a really useful concept here, the autokinetic effect. And this is where if you see like a fixed point of light or just a small light in an otherwise blank, large area, our brains will make it move. Like, we'll feel like it's jumping around. And that's what they were describing. They're like, “Oh, now it's there! Woah! Now it's there.” And probably just a combination of us not being great tracking systems, but also—

Carrie Poppy: And no orienting data.

Ross Blocher: Right, right. And just the movement of our eyes, probably a lot of contributing factors. But this is like a well-known effect. And after they had made all these descriptions, he just kind of silently, patiently waited and said, “Well, here, look at it photographically. This thing was moving in a straight line, but it really felt like it was jumping around. Didn't it?”

Yeah. And like, so far I'm thinking like, “This is the same talk I would want to give to these folks.”

Carrie Poppy: Aww! That's nice. That's a good feeling.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. So far I endorse this. And Ben was totally down with that. Also, he brought up something that I mentioned after the previous Contact in the Desert star viewing party, which was that people were seeing a satellite sort of disappear into the shadow of the Earth and then emerge going another direction at what looked like a right angle, but he was pointing out, people will say this all the time, like, “Oh, I saw it make a right angle turn or disappear and stop for a while and then go to the right.”

But he said, “Those are two different satellites, probably.”

Carrie Poppy: Mm! Okay. Yeah. I've wondered about this. When I hear this two lights thing, I'm like, “Same light, different light? I don't know.”

Ross Blocher: Again, pulling out the camera helps, but usually—as far as he's aware—that's the explanation. The *Scooby Doo* style explanation—

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That it was one satellite you were tracking. You lost that one, but you gained another one, and you'd turn them into the same object.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, that makes sense to me.

Ross Blocher: Yep! And I was like okay, nicely explained and everything. And he said, “Now there are debunkers out there who then I think get a little too carried away with this and just assume that anything anyone sees or describes, you know, that it's just a misperception.”

Carrie Poppy: Mm. This is me. Okay! This is where I come into the chat. Okay. *(Laughs.)* Yeah. I see it and I assume, yeah, that it's from this world. When I see things on this world, I assume it's from here. That's just my basic—that's where I start!

Ross Blocher: That should be the null hypothesis. That's where you start. And to budge you from that position, we need something compelling. Which is, I think, fair.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah. Like, really compelling, like out of this world compelling.

Ross Blocher: Which seems to be Marc's stated stance, that when he's evaluating submissions to MUFON, 90+% of them—I think he gave an even higher estimate, like 97% them are going to be things that he feels he can fairly easily give rational explanations for. But he's very excited about the remaining, you know, 3% or what have you.

Marc then kind of went off on sort of a star viewing party. Like, “Hey, that's Polaris.” And he's talking a bit about the Earth's procession and how over like 26,000 years, it might be pointing at a different star that would become our North star, like Vega's been one before. Then he's pointing out Arcturus and Virgo. You know, this is all just star viewing stuff, which is something we do at Camp Omni, by the way—if you want to sign up for Camp Omni, CampOmni.org. We'll take turns like giving little pieces of a star talk, and I'll do the first part, where I do sort of what we've done here, which is just talking about the—well, actually, no, Brian does the different things that you see in the sky. I do kind of the number of stars out there and the magnitude of stars. Anyways, we take turns, and we fill out different pieces of info.

So, he's doing David's part of the talk, which is just showing certain asterisms and constellations.

Carrie Poppy: Oh yeah! Do you think this will affect your Camp Omni astronomy talk? Did you learn anything?

Ross Blocher: Oh, yeah! Oh, I've gotten some good talking points from this! Absolutely.

Carrie Poppy: Aww, that's nice!

Ross Blocher: Yeah. I feel like some of it I could have given, but yeah, I endorse this talk!

But I won't recount all of that. It's just I think a good star talk can give you some little footholds, so that when you see stars in the sky, you can identify, oh, there's Orion. Okay. And I'm going to follow the line of this thing to that. And okay, now I know how, this arcs to Arcturus. Yeah. That kind of—

Carrie Poppy: Mm-hm, little details to hold on to and qualify or disqualify your object.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And you just pick up more over time and feel like you understand the sky a little better.

There was a question from a lady about black holes. So, we talked about black holes for a while and white holes! I actually hadn't heard of white holes. It's sort of a theoretical counterpart where information from a black hole could escape something that you can't travel to, but you can travel from. I don't know. I didn't spend too long looking into it, but it's something I hadn't heard of.

Carrie Poppy: Sounds like a riddle.

Ross Blocher: Oh yeah, so the flight tracker that Ben was recommending is Flight Radar 29, and you've got all these planes, and they broadcast their ADSB information. So usually you can find out their altitude, their height, for commercial aircraft. And of course, there are going to be military planes and some other planes that for whatever reason don't broadcast that info, but still you can find a lot. Again, I recommend PlaneFinder.net. Very useful. Spend a lot of time there. And right at that moment, really good timing, a woman said, “Oh, oh, oh!”

Constant interruptions to this talk, because someone sees something. She said, “Look at that! Look at that! I mean, it's kind of blinking like a plane, but it's not moving in the sky.”

And Marc said, “Oh, that probably means that it's moving toward us. But hey, let's go look it up.” And so, they did, they pulled up the website, and they're like, “Oh yeah, look, it's a SkyWest plane.” They could identify exactly which flight it was, the flight number. It's coming toward us. We can see it on the map.

Carrie Poppy: Wow! Yeah. Look at that.

Ross Blocher: I fully endorse this! You know, yeah, yeah, good job! Yeah.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah, that's a plane again!

(They laugh.)

I totally believe it.

Ross Blocher: Debunker. Okay, something else new that I learned. There was a question from a woman about Black Knight and whether it was space junk. And I was like what's this

Black Knight? I'd never heard of this. So, apparently it's this internet conspiracy that there is this spacecraft that was put into orbit around the planet 12 000 years ago, or—you know, in the distant past—and that it's been keeping watch over us for all this time. And apparently, this all really took off in 1994 when there was a photo that NASA put out there that showed this object just kind of floating in the horizon. And I'll show you a picture, because it is pretty compelling. So, this is out in space. And yeah. There's the shape that feels—I would say manmade, but you know, it doesn't look like a natural shape. Almost reminds me a little bit of Boba Fett's ship.

Carrie Poppy: Is that *Star Wars*?

Ross Blocher: That's from *Star Wars*. But anyways, it was pretty compelling.

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The photo's sort of upside down, where the Earth is on the top, and then you see this thing contrasted against the atmosphere. And then it's space underneath. So, people started making all of these conspiracies about what it was.

Carrie Poppy: Hm. What is it?

Ross Blocher: And to Marc's credit, he was the one to debunk it in that moment. He said it was actually just a piece that fell off the International Space Station during a mission. It was a thermal blanket that got loose and was captured in that photo. And then everybody—

Carrie Poppy: Oh, interesting. Can I see it again? Now that I know it's a blanket.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Not like a blanket you would wear as a person, but a piece of equipment that was supposed to protect another piece of equipment. And it got loose—oops!—and tumbled through space. And then everybody made conspiracy theories about it. And then he talked about why sometimes things can appear darker than they actually are in photographs of things in space, due to exposure. Like, the camera was exposed to see the clouds of the Earth, which is quite reflective. And so, this thing appeared darker than it actually was. Again, rational explanation. He saved me a lot of time. Still makes for a fun read to read about Black Knight. And now I'll know what that is! So, thank you, Star Party.

Marc was then waxing poetic about the James Webb telescope and all the cool things that's revealing to us. And this was interesting. He was kind of talking about his role as. Someone trained in astronomy. He said, “An astronomer can tell you sort of what's out there, what we're looking at, and basic info about how it works. An astrophysicist can get into far more detail about how it works.”

Carrie Poppy: Okay. Fair.

Ross Blocher: “And then a cosmologist will tell you why all of it's here, and why you're here.”

Carrie Poppy: What the system is. Okay. Yeah.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Felt like a good distinction.

Another woman had a great question. “Can we ever get like a time lapse of a galaxy spinning?”

And he said, “Well, I mean, you'd have to go past many generations in human lifespans to put that all together.” I was thinking, yeah, if you start to get the motion measured, even at a small increment, you can then extrapolate forward and do the animation. But he then made a point about how Chinese astronomers spotted a supernova in 1054 AD, and that we can now see where it's at currently, and we can sort of extrapolate backwards. Like, okay, this is when it exploded. Here's how far it's expanded since then.

Carrie Poppy: Wow. It's crazy anybody can do that.

Ross Blocher: Science is so cool! But with that, things were starting to kind of wrap up. I think we were well before our 11 o'clock. We didn't go quite that late. Yeah. I think there was another question. Oh, a guy. Okay. And there was a guy who talked, he mentioned that he had an iPhone that had an attachment for it that allowed him to do night vision, and that he had got this cool formation of four stars that were traveling together in a shield formation. And then they split off from each other. And Ben heard that and said, “Okay, I would suspect birds. They'll fly in formation, but then sometimes they'll make independent decisions and move off.” Also, sometimes you might see something that feels like a blinking motion, and it could just be wings flapping. They capture more light, then less, more, less, more, less, more, less.

Carrie Poppy: I took a good bird picture yesterday.

Ross Blocher: Yeah?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, if you like bird pics.

Ross Blocher: I do.

Carrie Poppy: Look at this.

Ross Blocher: My buddy Leonard Trammell takes some amazing bird photos. (*Gasps.*) Oh! This is good. Yeah! Oh, this is nice.

Carrie Poppy: Thank you! Yeah, that hummingbird.

Ross Blocher: It's a hummingbird mid-flap!

Carrie Poppy: I just looked over, and she was right there by my face, and I had my phone up to my hands. (*Laughs.*) So, I was like I'm just gonna try to get it.

Ross Blocher: It's in savior pose with its wings just like straight out, like I said.

Carrie Poppy: Cool, right?

Ross Blocher: Yeah, nicely done.

Carrie Poppy: Here's the other, not as cool, but pretty cool.

Ross Blocher: No, that's beautiful. What a marvel, just that we can capture moments like that.

Carrie Poppy: Right? I had to take, you know, 25 snaps, but you get it!

Ross Blocher: But then you get to pick the ones. And yeah, it's not like back in the day where you had to like click, advance, click, advance, and then pay a lot of money to develop all those. So, you were miserly about every single photo. Amazing. But credit to the photographer as well. That's great.

Carrie Poppy: Thank you!

Ross Blocher: And this was interesting. Another guy got up. Okay, so there were guys talking.

Carrie Poppy: Fellas, what's up?

Ross Blocher: But he was talking about being at Joshua Tree a few years back at the same conference. So, maybe the same year we were there, maybe a different one. He had kind of a complex description of the movement of something that he saw. And there were multiple points, and they were like elevating, but then they were moving straight, and it was changing up quite a bit. However, he described it, Ben said, "Sounds like it could be bats. I'm not saying it has to be bats, but that feels like a potential explanation."

And then Marc kind of jumped in and said, "Oh, and if you shine a laser at a bat, it'll sort of sense that and probably irritate it, and it'll fly in a different direction. And that's been misinterpreted as a UFO sighting."

Carrie Poppy: Don't shine your light to the bats, people! That should be a felony!

Ross Blocher: Yeah, that's a felony! That's a federally restricted activity.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, battery.

Ross Blocher: Be careful with those laser pointers is the moral of this story.

Carrie Poppy: Ross, did you hear my—you hear my pun?

Ross Blocher: The battery?

[01:00:00] Oh, very good. Yes, okay.

Carrie Poppy: Theeere we go. (*Giggles.*)

Ross Blocher: Quality. Quality. So, that was it. We kind of petered out and all went off in our various ways, unless we were sticking around to buy binoculars. I was not, though, you know, a pair of night vision binoculars would be nice to have. I wouldn't kick them out of bed. But I went away from that going wow! I mean, on one hand we go to these things 'cause we want to hear some kind of extraordinary thoughts about the world, but I felt it was refreshing to see. Contact in the Desert, I think, does a pretty good job of having some rational voices, some science-based voices in the mix.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. It seems like they'll let anybody who wants to come and pay their way in—they'll let you do it, it seems.

Ross Blocher: So, we were prepping to do this podcast, and I thought, well, let's watch their TV collaborations. Let's see how they did on *UFO Witness* season 2, episode 2.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. So, I was looking around for them too. Well, I was mostly looking around for Ben.

Ross Blocher: Okay. Ben Hansen.

Carrie Poppy: I was more curious about him. And the first thing I found was a video of him at the Travis Walton abduction site. And it seems like he was making fun of it. And also, he has an English accent, but he's American? It was very weird.

Ross Blocher: (*Imitating the accent.*) Yeah, he was doing this kind of, "Hear ye! I proclaim to any spirits or aliens—!"

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, a goofy English accent.

Ross Blocher: "Come back to visit us now! We are here, and you were previously, the evening of November 1975!" Or whatever it was.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. When Americans want to be fancy, we have nothing to do except become British. That's like—(*laughs*) the first thing people turn to. Yeah, I don't know what the hell was going on in that video.

Ross Blocher: From that clip, I have no idea what the intended tone was, or the audience, or why. But yeah, it was clearly tongue in cheek.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, so strange. Yeah. And then I found that interview that I told you about, where he described what sounds like a plane. But he sure has a good presence on camera. You know, he can hold that moment well.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. And it's interesting—like, on IMDb, he has some credits as being like a camera guy. I'm guessing he was maybe like—I could be totally wrong about this, but I just sort of have this mental image of him having been on the crew for some of these shows. And then maybe people recognizing him and saying, “Hey, you're a good-looking guy. You seem—”

Carrie Poppy: You're talking about Ben Hansen?

Ross Blocher: Ben Hansen.

Carrie Poppy: But he had been an FBI agent, supposedly.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Well, I mean, for whatever reason, he has credit working as sort of like a camera operator or lighter or something like that on TV shoots. I don't know.

Carrie Poppy: Huuuuuh. Huh. Yeah. That seems suspicious, doesn't it?

Ross Blocher: I feel like we could learn more about his career path, but I'm guessing at some point they're like, “Well, you seem really invested in these things. You want to be in front of the camera?”

Carrie Poppy: “You used to be an FBI agent!” (*Laughs and then groans.*)

Ross Blocher: “You willing to commit yourself to this alien stuff now?” Which really does seem to be his beat. Yeah, on one of the shows, they introduced him as like an expert in alien visitation and the paranormal. So, that's quite a shift from whatever he was doing before with, you know, child abuse investigations in the FBI.

Carrie Poppy: Which I tried to look up. I looked up his name and some keywords for, you know, the area of research, child sex abuse. And the only thing I came up with was a different person by that name, spelled slightly differently, who was on a sex offender registry in a particular state. And for a second I was like, “Oh my god! Oh no!” But it turns out that was Hanson, O-N. But I couldn't find anything about this guy's, you know, advocacy or whatever in that area.

Ross Blocher: Ben Hansen is a name that I can only remember for this episode by repetition. It's—well, it's just such a kind of generic sounding name to me that it just sort of flits right out of my head. But anyway, so I looked up first the episode of *UFO Witness* season 2, episode 2 in IMDb. I saw that was the one where Marc D'Antonio had been a guest star, or—you know, he'd been brought on to comment on one of these cases. And the name of this episode from 2022 was called “Orbs and Insectoids”.

Carrie Poppy: Ooh, okay! Sounds like something Linda would like. Linda Moulton Howe.

Ross Blocher: Uh-huh. “Uncovering UFO sightings and alien encounters in New England, Ben and Melissa investigate a sadistic, insect-like species that poses a threat to humanity!” And then written by [TravelChannel.com](https://www.travelchannel.com). So, I guess that's where it originally came from.

Carrie Poppy: Ohhhh, that's what I was wondering. Okay. So, is he a Travel Channel guy?

Ross Blocher: Apparently, at least this show was on Travel Channel. And I was able to find both of these things I'll talk about I found on Max. Formerly HBO Max.

Carrie Poppy: Wait, this was a UFO show on Travel Channel in 2020?

Ross Blocher: Yes. 2022.

Carrie Poppy: I wonder if this is the show that they offered me.

Ross Blocher: Oh yeah, you were invited to host a show?

Carrie Poppy: I was invited to host a UFO Travel Channel show right around then, and I—

Ross Blocher: If it is, you were right to refuse. It's a horrible show! I'm just gonna say flat out.

Carrie Poppy: They wanted—yeah, they wanted like a believer and like—this is their word—

[01:05:00]

A skeptic. And then they called me in, and I like tried to hang, and then they offered it to me. And I said to my agent, like, “I guess.”

And then she said—*(laughs)* she was like, “You should sound happier when we get you TV deals. You don't wanna do this.”

And I was like, “No, I don't wanna do it!” So, maybe this guy did it

Ross Blocher: If so, this is a lot of nonsense. If there was a skeptic on the show, I didn't see him!

(Carrie laughs.)

“Ben and Melissa have uncovered alarming reports of orb-shaped UFOs descending upon New England. Now, new testimonies reveal disturbingly close encounters with a sadistic

species of insect-like aliens that has humanity in its crosshairs! What is happening in America's Northeast Corridor?!"

And so, as they were doing like the intro to this episode, they were alluding to the previous episode in which they talked about blue skinned aliens. I was like, oh no, are these Whitley's blue skinned aliens, or are these Corey Goode's blue skinned avians? Who knows?

Carrie Poppy: The Smurfs?

Ross Blocher: You'd have to pay me to watch that first episode. But they had like three main stories, and they were all kind of like around Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, I think where the three states represented. And as they would introduce the person who was going to tell their story about this either orb or insectoid that they saw, they would have this threat level! And it went from green to red. And when they introduced Thomas Reed and his story, threat level was all the way up! So, I paused it so I could take a photo and send it to you. And I went on this whole dialogue to my wife, like, "Cara, look at the threat level on this! Orbs and insectoids. It's all the way to the top! You might've thought a guy with a chainsaw coming at you in a stated intent of cutting you in half was a high threat level. This is the next—"

Carrie Poppy: Thomas Reed, a man looking to the left.

Ross Blocher: "Look at this, Cara. There's a threat level over here, and then it goes all the way up to here, (*whispering*) and this is all the way up to here! It's red!"

And she's like, "What is wrong with you?"

Carrie Poppy: Who is Thomas Reed?

Ross Blocher: Oh, he was just the guy who was about to tell the story about a sighting in 1969 when he was in the car with his mom and his grandma, and they stopped because they saw this light coming towards the car. And then later on they found they were missing time. The threat level could not have been that high. There's so many things more threatening than what happened. And he had all these specific memories. Never once did they ask him how he got the memories. Anyways, this Melissa that they keep mentioning, this is Melissa Tittl.

Carrie Poppy: Ooh! Titillating.

Ross Blocher: T-I-T-T-L.

Carrie Poppy: Woah!

Ross Blocher: Like Ben is a handsome man. She's a very pretty woman. And they just go around and they—

Carrie Poppy: T-I-T-T-L?!

Ross Blocher: Yep. That's it.

Carrie Poppy: I gotta recover from that. There is—it needs another vowel somewhere at the end there. You can't do that.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, there's gotta be an interesting history to that name.

Carrie Poppy: I gotta think about that for five minutes.

Ross Blocher: But the whole format of the story was them going to one person after the next, having them tell their story. And it's just like maxed out with all of the scary noises and the jump cuts. And it's just over dramatized. Then they sit around, and they talk about it, and like, “Oh, what do you think that could be?” And then they wildly speculate, and they never even offer a conclusion! They don't go back to the person and tell them what it was they came up with. They don't solve it at all. They just let it all just hang out there in the air. So, I'm mostly watching for—

Carrie Poppy: I'm so glad I'm not in this.

Ross Blocher: (*Laughs.*) Oh, it's embarrassing! Then you should be embarrassed!

Carrie Poppy: It would be so much stress like having to be the only person there to be like, “I want to persuade everybody.”

Ross Blocher: And then everything useful you'd say might get cut out. 'Cause, you know, it's a producer's medium, you know, and they get what they want on camera. Oh, it was just so irresponsible. And so, I was watching for Marc D'Antonio, and he just came on as a brief consultant in this one and even started with, “Now, I'm a man of science and I don't want to jump to conclusions.” But then he states a little later, “This has been happening in this area for thousands of years.” Alright, man of science, not too impressive. But he wasn't in that one much. So, I'm far more interested in *Alien Invasion: Hudson Valley*.

So, this was like more of a documentary. It was like an hour and 20 minutes long.

Carrie Poppy: That's in New York, Hudson Valley?

Ross Blocher: Yes. And I guess it's part of a series. 'Cause if you search for *Alien Invasion*, there's a bunch of them. And I guess this was just the one focused on Hudson Valley! But yeah, apparently in this one part of New York, there's been over 3,000 sightings for over a century, and people have been stalked by aliens. Just using all this inflated language, dramatic music—bum-bum-bumbum!—and (*dropping his voice*) dramatic guy describing this way, kind of thing.

Carrie Poppy: Jimmy Church must want to be the voice of one of those places. History channel, SyFy, one of those, Travel Channel.

Ross Blocher: Yeah! I mean, it's a thing. It's like, it's the trailer guy, you know. (*In a "trailer guy" voice.*) "One man, in an outpost in space."

[01:10:00]

I'm available if anybody needs recording for your dramatic readings.

Carrie Poppy: Or to go to Camp Omni.

Ross Blocher: CampOmni.org! Sign up!

Carrie Poppy: Also, Ross is available for that.

Ross Blocher: Still time. Do it. Why wouldn't you?

So, they visit this little town called Pine Bush, which has more sightings than residents, they say.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. Well, that just means the residents are making multiple sightings, right?

(They laugh.)

Ross Blocher: Correct. Meaning the average sighting is at least, you know, 1.1 per person or something like that.

Carrie Poppy: Okaaay. It sounds popular there, yes.

Ross Blocher: One by one, they find people who are willing to tell these stories, and they just become increasingly desperate. One woman is like really hesitant, like, "Oh, I don't know if I really want to go there."

And then the pretty lady keeps convincing her, "I don't know, maybe it'll help you. You sure you don't want to share this with us?"

"(Sighs.) Okay. There were seven greys, and they were in my room."

(Carrie "wow"s.)

Yeah. That kind of thing. And there's so much wrong with this thing. This was a ridiculous documentary. But Marc D'Antonio played a more crucial role in this one. He was along with them for the journey. Once he joined investigators, Ben Hansen and Melissa Tittl, he kept showing up. And in almost every shot where he'd appear, he would say something to the effect of, "Now, as a scientist, I am far more circumspect about it." But then they get to this woman's basement, and they're talking about like how she's lived there her whole life. And

her grandma saw creatures here. And they go downstairs. And one woman, I assume in the family—I'm not sure who this woman is, but she starts saying, "I'm getting really uncomfortable standing in this spot." And it feels like a ghost hunting show where, you know, we haven't gotten any interesting footage. So, someone say something tapped you or something. Just "I feel like a finger just touched me on the back. And—"

Carrie Poppy: Well, that's meaningful on its own!

Ross Blocher: So, I'm not going to stand here anymore. And then Marc, my great skeptical MUFON evaluator guy—

Carrie Poppy: Your ally!

Ross Blocher: —I fully recommend for star talks, he starts saying—

Clip:

(Loud, grating ambient noise overwhelms the dialogue.)

Speaker 1: You okay?

Marc D'Antonio: I'm actually being really affected right now by something.

Speaker 2: You are?

Marc D'Antonio: Yeah. Tingling everywhere, and I don't know where it's coming from.

Speaker 1: Now a third person has had a physical. Physical experience in the house

Speaker 2: Where?

Marc D'Antonio: It's in my arms and my legs. My head's tingling. You know, it's like something's riding up the floor into my body.

Speaker 1: Marc feels ill. I'm concerned that he might collapse at any moment.

(Scene change.)

You still numb? You okay?

Marc D'Antonio: Yeah, it's a tingling.

Speaker 2: You wanna sit down?

Marc D'Antonio: No, I don't wanna actually.

(Scene change.)

It started right in the balls of my feet. And it started riding up my legs. It was not a temperature thing. It was a neurological tingling thing. It was terrifying.

Speaker 1: Is it gone now?

Marc D'Antonio: No.

Speaker 2: Now you know how we feel.

(Spooky musical transition.)

Speaker 3: Is the activity in the house happening because this is a portal? Or is the family actually attracting this situation? We seem to have more questions than answers at this point.

Marc D'Antonio: I'm a science guy, this stuff doesn't happen to me! I'm genuinely perplexed. You know, I didn't know why my feet were tingling. I didn't know why I felt like something was choking me. But I didn't make that up, you know. That was happening.

Speaker 1: It's almost like layers, right? So, you maybe have these terrestrial layers, where we are dealing with paranormal and spirits, but then you have this other thing.

Marc D'Antonio: I honestly think that some of the things they're experiencing could actually be the result of a potential advanced technology using a potential portal. And I think that's possible here.

Carrie Poppy: *(Sarcastically.)* It could be. It could! It COULD BE! It could be! Okaaay!

Ross Blocher: A portal? What? A responsible scientist who like takes a time lapse photo, so he can explain to people the autokinetic effect and that they shouldn't jump to conclusions when they see things in the sky? He's all of a sudden offering a portal?

Carrie Poppy: I wonder if he feels guilty. You know, he's taking money for this, but then when he like is standing in front of the actual believers, maybe he feels like, oh, this is when I should really inoculate them.

Ross Blocher: These are two different people. And I feel like, yeah, it has to be this effect where you put a camera on someone and say, "Here's what we need," that they just deliver.

You're like, okay, well, alright. I want to help you, producer. This is what you want to hear. Oh, I'm feeling this thing coming from the balls of my feet! And I was just—

Carrie Poppy: Totally. No, it reminds me of working on *The Bachelor*.

Ross Blocher: Really?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, yeah.

Ross Blocher: Wait, you worked on *The Bachelor*?

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, I worked in post on *The Bachelor*. I guess it would be before we met. Yeah. It was just one season, Jake's season. And yeah. Anyway. But yeah, I learned how manipulative the producers can get. (*Laughs.*) It's really manipulative.

Ross Blocher: For all that, I love the topics of our show. You know, my interest in aliens and all of that.

[01:15:00]

I really don't like produced TV on these topics. So, I don't watch the ghost hunter shows. I don't watch the alien shows. I really have to be looking up something for this podcast, because it's so many layers of phony that I feel like I'm just getting nothing from it. No useful information.

Carrie Poppy: Totally. And always just so much editing, like so many different source materials and things flashing in front of the screen with no particular headline. And who's that from? And oh, now I have to pause and look that up. And oh, you just mentioned a scientific phrase I've heard, but not that way. Okay, now I have to look that up.

Ross Blocher: Oh, you showed us five seconds of the woman's footage from her phone, but now we've shot to the recreation. And yeah, the whole time you're just kind of looking at the film craft that they're using to pull one over on people.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. And then for me and you, yeah—it's sets off this like fact check solar flare. You become the Northern Lights.

Ross Blocher: Right. And it's such a confabulated thing that like—at least with a more earnest documentary, I feel like there are things I can latch on to. Like you said, ooh, there's that screenshot. I can go look that thing up.

But this is just all artifice. And they would just throw out apropos of nothing these theories—like, let's consider portals! Or they would bring in like this little beeping device called the REM pod. And I hadn't heard of this before, but it was this tall hockey puck type thing that they would lay out around them. And it would just occasionally blink and light up. And I

found Kenny Biddle had written an article about it. And apparently it's built on a junior theremin circuit and—

Carrie Poppy: The instrument? Okay.

Ross Blocher: Yeah. Right. And they just found something that would essentially be reactive to random objects.

Carrie Poppy: Aaah. This is like the things that listen to plants. Okay.

Ross Blocher: And its only purpose is for ghost investigation. It was built as a little hobby device. And he took it apart, and he could see like the little tubes that came out of it and would light up. They were actual glue sticks with LEDs at the bottom of them.

(Carrie “wow”s.)

Yeah, this thing was purely just made as something that would randomly, occasionally light up. And on every level, this “documentary”—quote/unquote—was so irresponsible. And they would throw out a theory, and you'd be like where did that come from?! You just introduced this idea! At one point, like they get it in their minds that like—they talked to this guy on the phone, and he's saying, “These spheres that you're seeing, these are for genetics purposes. The only thing interesting on the Earth to the aliens is our genetics.”

And so, they leap from that to, “I bet all of these alien contactees, the people who have had these sightings, what if they have the RH negative factor? ‘Cause that's rare. Only 7% of the population has them. Let's draw their blood.” And you're squinting and looking to the side, ‘cause you don't see the connection, because there is none.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Well, I mean, it would be interesting if they found that.

Ross Blocher: Uh-huh. And so, I'm watching this, they draw blood from these people. And then they talk about all these other things. They visit more people. They jump to other wild theories. And we're getting toward the end. I'm texting you. I'm like, “They never brought up the test results. What the hell is going on?” With like one minute left in the documentary. And then they just bring up a little card that says, “To protect people's health information, we're not going to show you the individual results. But instead of the 7% of the general population, 50% of the people we measured were RH negative.”

Carrie Poppy: Interesting if true. How many people were we looking at? What's the sample size here?

Ross Blocher: It looked like a group of six people.

Carrie Poppy: Okay.

(They laugh.)

I mean, it's interesting. 'Cause I am thinking I wonder if there's any chance that the RH negative is associated with any cognitive abnormalities.

Ross Blocher: Interesting! Interesting.

Carrie Poppy: But that's the only connection I would draw.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, it could give us a self-selected group, yeah, out of the general population. Oh, this was another hilarious moment. So, this one guy who was telling his story mentioned this humming tone that he heard when he was downstairs or visited. And they said, okay. And Ben had this iPad app. And he said, "Would you say that the tone you heard was higher or lower than this tone that he played on his iPad app?"

And the guy said, "Lower than that."

So, he hits a little slider. "How about this?"

"Oh, even a little lower."

"Okay. How about this?"

"Yeah, I like that, but it also had like a bit of texture to it."

"Okay, let's add a little bit. How about that?"

"Yeah, that's kind of what it sounded like."

Now they feel that they have decoded the tone of the UFOs, and that they can broadcast this sound and bring aliens to visit.

Carrie Poppy: Wha?!

Ross Blocher: Yeah! So, they go, just based on the recollection of this guy and this app, they generate a tone. They go outdoors, and they play it in the woods, and they film around them, and they see two little arcing lights over towards the trees across the field. And they're like, "We summoned the aliens to us!"

It's ridiculous!

[01:20:00]

The whole thing is so absurd!

Carrie Poppy: That just sounds like we had to make TV, and Thursday was almost over.

Ross Blocher: It's 100% that. It's just completely contentless.

Carrie Poppy: My lord!

Ross Blocher: For the most part, they don't go back to the people at all, but they did go back to the woman who'd lived in the house for years and told her that her home is an alien highway.

(Carrie giggles.)

My god. Oh. Yeah, if you want a good hate watch and you've got a subscription to Max, look for *Alien Invasion: Hudson Valley*. It's an hour and 20+ minutes of head scratching.

Carrie Poppy: I see there is the token beautiful woman following around the men. What's she doing? Is she also a paranormal investigator?

Ross Blocher: Oh yeah, she's introduced as—I think they call them both investigators, and I thought, “You give out that term too easily.” I can't remember what her specialty was supposed to be. Oh, and she pronounced it as Whitley Stry-ber when she was talking about his case, and oh my goodness. It was sad after having such high esteem for these two guys after watching the star talk and being like alright! Some good, reasonable voices. I still think they are that in that particular topic with that particular crowd. But boy, the things that people will do if you put a camera in front of them.

Carrie Poppy: Yes. Sorry, going back three minutes. The people who were alien abductees and had the RH negative blood. Were they mostly men?

Ross Blocher: Maybe even. Well, they didn't tell us who was who. Why?

Carrie Poppy: Well, we don't know. I'm looking at the American Psychiatric Association, 2002. “In the past decade, several studies have implied that various factors associated with fetal development and birth may increase a child's risk of eventually developing schizophrenia. Many of those studies have implicated various events that have an impact on the developing fetus, either directly or indirectly. Now, a new study again suggests that babies with RH positive blood born to mothers who have RH negative blood,”—oh, okay!—“a condition known as Maternal Fetal RH Incompatibility, are increased relative risk for developing schizophrenia.”

Ross Blocher: Interesting. And some of these people, I think, were related to each other as well.

Carrie Poppy: Okay. So, maybe a factor, maybe not.

Ross Blocher: Looking at Melissa Tittl's IMDb, she is known for *Ancient Aliens*, *Ancient Civilizations*, and *Code 12*, also *UFO Witness*. She was on both of the shows that we talked about. *Secrets of Antarctica*, executive producer, *Awaken the Sixth Sense*. On her website,

she's listed as producer, writer, investigative journalist. "For more than a decade, Melissa has been developing and producing motion pictures and television. Her particular expertise is to create narrative stories around nonfiction subjects. Truth is stranger than fiction. Melissa can be considered an investigative journalist in ancient civilizations, sci-fi, and the science fields, but she also produces transformation content with some of the biggest names in that space."

Carrie Poppy: "Can be considered" is an interesting way to describe yourself. But fair enough.

Ross Blocher: (*Laughs.*) Yeah, can be considered. Arguably, one might say.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, fair enough.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, that was highly irresponsible, and I was grumbling at the TV a lot.

Carrie Poppy: Well, good on you for checking another source from them. Yeah, but it sounds like the more you pay them, the more nonsense you can get out of them.

Ross Blocher: Yeah, well, I think that plays a major role in all of this. The reason we have a lot of the media that we do is probably just, "I like work!" Like we were just saying with John Hodgman the other day talking about—

Carrie Poppy: Christopher Walken.

Ross Blocher: Christopher Walken. Yeah. Why he agreed to play Whitley Strieber in *Communion*. "Well, I like work."

Carrie Poppy: "I like to work." Yeah, which, speaking of—

Ross Blocher: Showing up on our BoCo!

Carrie Poppy: Yes, showing up on our BonCon.

Ross Blocher: I don't like either of those. Bonus content! It'll be on our bonus content feed soon, as soon as I edit it. So, look forward to that.

Carrie Poppy: Members only, though!

Ross Blocher: We mentioned our *Communion* Communion Bonbon BonCon. We had communion, we talked about *Communion* in communion with John Hodgman. We ate bonbons, making bonus content. Yeah, coming soon. And we'll have video as well. Fun stuff.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah, it was fun. John's the best. Oh, you know what? Hi, John. Because you know what? John once told me that whenever he turns on his phone and pulls out the podcast app, it just automatically plays *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!*, and he can't fix it. (*Laughs.*)

Ross Blocher: Good podcast app! That's right. Don't let John listen to other things. That's hilarious. It's like, well, I guess I have to listen to their show.

Carrie Poppy: *(Laughing.)* Yeah, yeah! I'm glad he likes it that much that he hasn't figured out how to fix it.

Ross Blocher: Normally my first reaction would be, “Oh, I should recommend a way to fix that. But no. This is in my own self-interest.”

Carrie Poppy: No, no, we should make every phone do this.

(They laugh.)

Ross Blocher: Stupid Apple. Only play *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!*. Well, thank you for coming along on this journey of discovery with me.

Carrie Poppy: Thank you for going. Thanks for looking at all the stars that were, in fact, planes and satellites.

Ross Blocher: *(Laughs.)* We saw nothing out of the ordinary, but to their credit, neither did they.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Alright. Fair enough. Until they got to TV.

[01:25:00]

Ross Blocher: Alright. Well, that's it for our show. Our theme music is by Brian Keith Dalton. Also our administrative manager is Ian Kremer, who's in town today!

Carrie Poppy: Ian!

Ross Blocher: I should—when I leave here, I should ask if he's still around.

Carrie Poppy: Oh, good. Yeah. Yes, I didn't even know he was coming until the last minute.

Ross Blocher: And you can support this show, all of our investigations—including a very expensive one that's been draining a lot of money out of my pocket recently—at MaximumFun.org/join. That's where you can support and replenish our coffers.

Carrie Poppy: *(Chuckles.)* Yeah. Ross is really taking a crack at something.

Ross Blocher: Hm! You can also support us by telling a friend, messing with someone's podcast app so that it can only play our show and no other. What a sabotage. Or just, you know, play an episode for them. Be like, “Hey, I think you'll like this.”

Carrie Poppy: And then if they don't, chuck their phone in the sea.

Ross Blocher: Also, leave us a positive review. That helps.

Carrie Poppy: Yeah. Okay. That's a backup plan.

Ross Blocher: And write your senator.

Carrie Poppy: Why not!?! Do you even know their name? Think about it. And remember!

Ross Blocher: A personal alien visitation story from Marc D'Antonio, (*sadly*) my science guy!

Clip:

Narrator: After meeting with the town council, Marc is moved to share with the team his own curious tale.

(Cricket noises.)

Mark D'Antonio: I've had experiences too that I've not shared.

I had a house in this area. I was lying awake at 3:14 in the morning, and I heard this. (*Knock, knock, knock. Knock, knock, knock.*) Just like that. And I'm thinking what's that? I got out of the bed, and I went to look out the window. And I look up—and boom! Right in my face, I got this bright white light that blinded me.

(Dramatic musical stinger.)

I just froze there. That next night, that's when the real thing happened that was transformative. I woke again, but I couldn't tell what time it was.

(Discordant music.)

And that's because I couldn't move. I could only use my peripheral vision. Because I went to turn my head, couldn't move my head. I see something cross in front of that light through the window. It started coming toward me. And I saw something here—like a—call it a being or some kind of entity, whatever, creature. And then the thing does is it comes out and has this wand that was glowing, and it passes in front of my nose like this. Bang!

(A loud crack.)

It's morning, and I can't breathe. I'm on my belly. I push off the pillow to see that I was literally drowning in my blood. It was a cupped pillow, and I was in the blood.

And I was like ah! And it took me two years to go to a doctor. He looked up there and he said, “You've got something huge up there.” He says, “I've never seen anything this large in a human sinus before.” And this is on record. He took it out. It was literally—

Speaker 1: Did it hurt?

Marc D'Antonio: Yeah! It was this big. It was the size of my two thumbs, and it came out that little tiny hole.

Speaker 1: What?

Speaker 2: What did it look like?

Marc D'Antonio: It was a big, gigantic blob. He said, “If this is a nasal polyp, this is one of the biggest nasal polyps I've ever seen.”

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

Promo:

Music: “Medicines” from the album *Exhilarating News* by The Taxpayers.

Justin McElroy: Hey, Sydnee. You're a physician and the co-host of *Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine*, right?

Sydnee McElroy: That's true, Justin.

Justin: Is it true that our medical history podcast is just as good as a visit to your primary care physician?

Sydnee: No, Justin. That is absolutely not true. Uh, however, our podcast is funny and interesting and a great way to learn about the medical misdeeds of the past, as well as some current, not-so-legit healthcare fads.

Justin: So, you're saying that by listening to our podcast, people will feel better?

Sydnee: Sure.

Justin: And isn't that the same reason that you go to the doctor?

Sydnee: Well, uh, you could say that, but—

Justin: And our podcast is free?

Sydnee: Yes, it is free.

Justin: You heard it here first, folks. *Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine*, right here on Maximum Fun: just as good as going to the doctor.

Sydney: No, no, no. Still not just as good as going to the doctor, but pretty good.

Justin: *(Softly.)* It's up there.

(Music ends.)

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!