

AMERICAN MORNING

Obama Vows to Jolt the Economy; Wall Street Rallies; Obama Plans to Create 2.5 Million Jobs; Education System Needs an SOS; What Really Happened in Roswell?

Aired November 25, 2008 - 07:00 ET



"In Search of Aliens."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DON SCHMITT, ROSWELL INCIDENT RESEARCHER: I remain convinced that it is still a cover up of ignorance.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

JOHNS: Beyond the tourist trap, Miles O'Brien digs up the real story behind the Roswell Incident.

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CHETRY: The Roswell Incident.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

FRANKIE ROWE, HANDLED ALLEGED UFO DEBRIS: When you wadded this up in your hand, you could not feel it in your hand.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHETRY: The woman who said she touched a UFO. Miles O'Brien investigates what could be the biggest cover up in history.

You're watching the "Most News in the Morning."

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: So you believe in this kind of things.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Let's just say I want to believe.

CHETRY: I get goose bumps every time I hear that music. All this week we're bringing you a special series "In Search of Aliens." And today, we turn to one of the most famous sites across the globe for conspiracy theorists. That's Roswell, New Mexico. Sixty-one years and the mystery hasn't faded. So what really happened at Roswell?

Our space correspondent Miles O'Brien is here with us this morning with more details. I can't wait to see this.

MILES O'BRIEN, CNN SPACE CORRESPONDENT: Well, you know what they say, the truth is out there, Kiran. Roswell is the granddaddy of all suspected UFO sightings. And while the government says it can all be explained by some secret military testing, those who insist an alien spaceship crashed there may never be convinced otherwise.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

JULIE SHUSTER, FATHER STARTED ROSWELL INCIDENT: We are in the vicinity of the debris field.

O'BRIEN (voice-over): So there I am on hallowed ground for the alien nation, Mecca for Martians, site of the crash we now know as the Roswell Incident.

SHUSTER: It's a good overlook...

O'BRIEN (on camera): Yes.

SHUSTER: ... of where the space and also the debris field where the crash allegedly impacted and broke up.

O'BRIEN: All right. Allegedly. What do you mean allegedly?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: We use alleged a lot.

O'BRIEN (voice-over): They sure do. That's Julie Shuster whose late dad started the whole thing 61 years ago. While serving as the Roswell Air Base public affairs officer, he wrote the press release announcing the U.S. military had found a crashed flying saucer here on this ranch in Corona. Yes, the Roswell Incident didn't happen in Roswell.

(on camera): It couldn't have happened in a more remote place, could it?

SHUSTER: Could have tried but I'm not sure if it would succeed.

O'BRIEN: There's no question that something very weird crashed here. Everyone agrees on that point, right, Julie?

SHUSTER: Right.

O'BRIEN: That's pretty much in a body of fact, right?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes. The (INAUDIBLE).

O'BRIEN: All right. Take that allegedly, are we ever going to know for sure what happened here?

SHUSTER: Good question. I'd love to know.

O'BRIEN (voice-over): So would I. So would you. So would this guy.

DON SCHMITT, ROSWELL INCIDENT RESEARCHER: I'm 99 percent convinced -- convinced, it's not a belief.

O'BRIEN: Oh, I forgot, Don Schmitt knows what happened. He's gumshoed Roswell for years, turning out three best sellers with a made for TV plot. A thunderstorm, a crash, alien spacecraft, four diminutive alien bodies. Everything brought to this hangar then spirited away in the dark and, of course, a massive government cover-up.

O'BRIEN: What's your theory why the government doesn't come clean?

SCHMITT: I remain convinced that it is still a cover up of ignorance.

O'BRIEN: Our government ignorant? I guess that's not an alien concept. I saw "Independence Day."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP, "INDEPENDENCE DAY" FROM 20th CENTURY FOX)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: There is no recovered spaceship.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Oh, excuse me, Mr. President, that's not entirely accurate.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

O'BRIEN: Truth be told over the years, the Pentagon has provided a case study of how not to put out a brush fire on the grassy knoll. First they said it was a saucer, then a weather balloon, then a secret nuclear explosion detector, then finally a parachute test using crash dummies.

COL. DOUG KENNETT, PENTAGON SPOKESMAN: The Air Force we searched did not locate or develop any information that the Roswell Incident was a UFO event or any indication of a cover-up.

O'BRIEN: They called that one the "Roswell Report Case Closed." SCHMITT: Case closed.

O'BRIEN: Case closed?

SCHMITT: No. Clearly not. Just don't spend 20 years talking to, you know, eyewitnesses, describing everything contrary to the official explanation and say you're all lying.

FRANKIE ROWE, HANDLED ALLEGED UFO DEBRIS: This looks more like --

O'BRIEN: Frankie Rowe was 12 when it happened and got a chance to play with the piece of the wreckage. She remembers some, well, out of this world properties.

How big was it? Like tin foil thickness?

FRANKIE ROWE, HANDLED ALLEGED UFO DEBRIS: Not that thick. Thinner than a hand. When you wadded this up in your hand you could not feel it in your hand. Then you take it and you drop it on the table before it ever hit there it's flat.

O'BRIEN: Frankie said a soldier came to her house a few days later and threatened her.

ROWE: He said don't talk about it. I didn't talk about it. Now kids in '47 are total different, I think they are from a different planet than kids today are.

O'BRIEN: So to speak, right Frankie?

ROWE: Because if we were told not to do something we didn't do it.

O'BRIEN:: Whatever you think about flying saucers, there is one thing that is certain, one thing that everyone can agree on in this story, this 61-year-old mystery has been awfully good for business here in Roswell, New Mexico.

And Julie Shuster should know. She runs the UFO museum which her dad started in '92. 160,000 now beat a path here every year. There's a 25 million dollar new building in the works.

So a skeptic watching this would say of course you don't want to accept the air force explanation. If the case is closed the tourists stop coming.

JULIE SHUSTER, DIR., INT'L UFO MUSEUM: I don't think even if it's proven one way or the other, I don't believe it's going to make a difference. It hasn't so far.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

O'BRIEN: So where it stands is really where it all began. For more than 60 years we've been kind of running in circles in the New Mexico desert. And in Roswell they've been laughing all the way to the bank. Maybe one of these days someone will find a piece of that magic metal. Kiran. KIRAN CHETRY, CNN, ANCHOR: Yes, it's hard to believe though the way the woman described it is fascinating. But there aren't any other ones out there, any pieces of this wreckage. I mean -

O'BRIEN: Yes, what they say the government came along and collected most of it. But the hope is that maybe somebody will find something in an attic someday or potentially they will find a piece of it on that ranch ground. They've actually done some digging there.

CHETRY: So they have not been able to even find the smallest piece to test?

O'BRIEN:: No. There's no evidence. No smoking gun proof. Lots of witness testimony. Lots of weird things happened there but no smoking gun proof.

CHETRY: It's still fodder 60 years later. We still talk about it. Still fascinating.

O'BRIEN: When we talk about it 60 years from now we'll still be doing this.

CHETRY: Exactly. Miles, thank you. And by the way tomorrow "Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's glowing so brightly that I can make out the figure. I'm really scared. It climbs up.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CHETRY: Now we're talk about alien abductions. You will meet one man who talked to hundreds of people all of them claiming they were kidnapped by extraterrestrials. Tomorrow you'll hear some of those stories here on AMERICAN MORNING. And if you've seen funny in the sky or you're convinced that aliens exist or you think it's all just science-fiction, we want to know, send us your pictures, video at cnn.com/am. Just click on the I-report link. Joe.