Subject: Evening with Donald Schmitt, "Roswell" premiere.
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An evening with Donald Schmitt, SHOWTIME Premiere of Roswell
The Human Side to an Extraordinary Story
by SVJ

On July 31, 1994, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon, a small group of nondescript supporters gathered at the private quarters of Donald Schmitt, co-author of the recently published book "The Truth about the UFO Crash at Roswell." We came in peace, to watch the premiere showing of "Roswell," an exclusive made for cable TV SHOWTIME docudrama concerning the alleged crash of an extraterrestrial craft in the deserted fields of New Mexico back in July 1947. It would appear that the Roswell incident has reached a legendary status in our society. As the magical hour approached everyone jockeyed for optimum seating in the living room next to Mr. Schmitt's TV. I was no different, having found a comfy spot at the end of a couch worth defending.

It should be noted that the SHOWTIME "Roswell" movie follows the time line of their previous book "UFO Crash at Roswell" which was first published back in July of 1991. Randle & Schmitt's more recent book "The Truth about the UFO Crash at Roswell" published earlier in 1994 has changed the chronological time line of certain events somewhat, the result of face-to-face interviews with additional witnesses whose testimonies, I believe, have been collaborated by independent sources.

I suspect there were many present in Donald's living room who over the years had done what they could to lend logistical, intellectual, as well as emotional support to the Randle & Schmitt team. The dynamic duo's investigations have been all-consuming with no sign of letting up. There have been the inevitable problems introduced by debunkers, hoaxers, as well as what appears to have been deliberate attempts to mislead them down paths that would have cost them considerable time and money chasing after mirages. Mr. Schmitt more than once has made the comment that there are many in the business of UFOlogy who, if truth be told, don't want the Roswell incident solved primarily because a considerable amount of investment money has been tied up in perpetuating the mystique of an unsolved mystery, or because it would be the death of alternative pet theories.

There have also been a few odd stories Donald Schmitt has mentioned which probably will never make into print primarily because of their anecdotal nature. For example, there is the curious story concerning Kevin Randle's missing galley sheets to their most recently co-authored book, "The Truth About the UFO Crash at Roswell." Randle and Schmitt live in separate states, and thus, mailed the final corrections to their galley sheets independently to the publisher. They both took diligent care in packaging and mailing the manuscripts. Donald Schmitt's package made it to the publisher successfully. Unfortunately, Kevin Randle's manuscript didn't. A postal investigation turned up nothing. In the end, the post office inferred that someone had

to have entered the building and had to have "walked away" with Randle's package. Perhaps the revised manuscript really had been "lost," the result of ineptitude on the part of our Post Office. On the other hand, who might possibly be interested in getting their hands on a manuscript that deals with the names of a new batch of Roswell witnesses. More specifically, who might be interested in previewing documented accounts of government suppression and threats directed at witnesses who were involved in recovery operations concerning a crashed extraterrestrial craft and recovered alien bodies. Now, whoooo might that possibly be!

On the lighter side, Mr. Schmitt pointed out his cameo role in the "Roswell" movie where in a couple of brief scenes he got to play an overworked bartender for the 509 bomber squad reunion. Of course, anyone who reads "UFO a forum on extraordinary theories and phenomena," Vol. 9, No. 4, 1994, already knows this little bit of trivia! (See page 29 for details.) There is, however, another brief scene worth noting! Schmitt pointed out a pair cadaver feet briefly seen laying on a gurney in Roswell's morgue. You guessed it, they belong to Mr. Randle who is still very much alive and kicking, fortunately! (I wonder what the going union scale is for "dead feet.")

At the end of the presentation we did our best to show our appreciation with a round of applause a few rousing cheers. Afterwards, Mr. Schmitt tried answering our questions concerning the latest developments. He mentioned that within the past two months they have discovered the names of two dozen additional military personnel who claim to have been involved in the Roswell incident. Apparently, more witnesses are beginning to feel confident enough to come out of seclusion because of what they have read and/or heard about the Randle & Schmitt team. Their most recent book lists the names of approximately 500 individuals who claim to have had first and second hand knowledge. Concerning all of the listed witnesses, Schmitt and Randle have made it a point to interview each and every individual, face to face.

Mr. Schmitt mentioned that they have acquired the services of a very large and well known law firm located in Washington (name withheld by Schmitt). The firm's function would be to legally represent a number of key first-hand Roswell witnesses should it be deemed necessary to call a press conference and go public in order to challenge the speculated future possibility of governmental denial and charges of falsehood. Mr. Schmitt elaborated that apparently there have been a number of military witnesses who have wanted to go "pubic" for some time. He mentioned that every time word got out that these individuals were thinking about going public they were "visited" and warned that they would have the entire bulk of their past history erased, disproving that they had ever existed in the military, and thus, making it next to impossible to verify their claims.

It is hard for many of us to believe that this kind of threat could be implemented or even be considered feasible in this modern age of alleged "Freedom Of Information." Never the less, it helps to understand that citizens both believed in and

followed the orders of their government with a great deal more respect forty five years ago as compared to what our current eroded attitudes have become. It is also important to realize that most of the Roswell witnesses were geographically separated from each other after the event had been more-or-less contained. Mr. Schmitt implied that for the past forty years most have remained psychologically isolated having no one to talk to, that is, except for an occasional visit by "officials" making sure they remained motivated to stay silent.

Donald Schmitt stressed he was happy that a key point at the conclusion of the movie had been enacted concerning the concept of "disinformation." It has been theorized by many that an official program of disinformation, as dramatically enacted by the Chiefs of Staff, or as the Schmitt & Randle duo have called it in their book, "The Unholy Thirteen," may have been implemented as early as 1947. As depicted in the SHOWTIME movie, it has been theorized that disinformation tactics would allow accurate information to be released to the public primarily through sources whose credibility had been made out to be questionable and unreliable. Meanwhile, the media would be simultaneously bombarded with a flood of inaccurate data making it virtually impossible to uncover the truth.

Several in the living room asked Donald Schmitt to express his personal feelings about the movie's speculative and dramatic conclusion. Near the movie's end there were a number of enacted scenes concerning "captured" extraterrestrial beings interacting with government top brass. Mr. Schmitt mentioned that he would have preferred that the SHOWTIME movie had toned down the "live" extraterrestrial special effects scenes since the enactments for the most part revolved around second hand accounts. However, Schmitt mentioned that the SHOWTIME producers did honor their requests by keeping scenes of "live" alien beings down to a minimum. For the technically curious, it apparently took the rehearsed skill of five hidden puppeteers working levers and cables in order to animate the alien who "communicated" with Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal.

Near the end of the movie there is an enacted dramatic incident of the speculative kind involving the Secretary of Defense, who back in 1947 was James Vincent Forrestal, and a live "captured" extraterrestrial. Apparently, there have been a number of controversial rumors suggesting that Forrestal had been deeply involved in the extraterrestrial equation. Prosaically speaking, it certainly would have made logical sense to assume that our nation's Secretary of Defense would have been personally involved with discussions and/or interactions concerning ultra-secret extraterrestrial meetings - had contact actually been established. Tragically, Forrestal allegedly committed suicide on May 22, 1949 by jumping out of a window at Bethesda Naval Hospital where he had been held for treatment of emotional exhaustion which included paranoia and suicidal tendencies.

Why Forrestal needed treatment to the point that he was essentially isolated from most of his family and friends, as well as why he had become emotionally unstable, paranoid, and suicidal in the first place, has been debated for decades by a number of

prominent UFO investigators. Forrestal was (and still is, I believe) the highest ranking U.S. government official to have allegedly committed suicide, an incident that did not escape the attention of communist block countries who attempted to milk the embarrassing situation for all it was worth. Apparently, there are some who knew him closely and who remain convinced that his death was not accidental or suicidal, or at least that his death had been desired by some who, in 1949, possessed a considerable amount of power in the United States.

As had been suggested by the SHOWTIME movie there has been a lot of speculation concerning an alleged Forrestal "diary." For those who would like to do a little scholarly research of their own, there exists an excellent biographical book on Forrestal titled "James Forrestal, A study of Personality, Politics and Policy" by Arnold A. Rogow. (I believe it was published back in the 1960s and, thus, may be somewhat hard to find. Ask your local librarian or professional book locator for help!) The author, Rogow, writes in the biography the following series of puzzling events as well as recovered official documents on page 47:

> ... on White House orders a number of papers and documents were removed from Forrestal's files, either for "security" reasons or other reasons. Although evidence is not conclusive, it is probable that certain individuals, for a variety of reasons, were reluctant to make Forrestal's private papers available until they had been properly "screened." Two such individuals, apparently, were President Truman and [the next] Secretary of Defense Johnson. In a memorandum to the President of August 27, 1949, Johnson wrote:
>
> > I am glad to be able to advise you that the individuals who were in the best possible position to know the truth or falsity of the rumors about the Forrestal "diary," the Forrestal "recordings" of telephone conversations with you, etc. have assured me that there is absolutely no truth whatever to the stories which you and I have heard.
> >
> > Specifically, I have received categoric assurances to the following effect:
> >
> > 1) There was never a recording device on Forrestal's White House' Phone.
> >
> > 2) No conversation between you and Forrestal was ever recorded, either by machine or otherwise.
> >
> > 3) There was never an occasion when a secretary or anyone else was permitted to pick up the extension "phone and "listen in" on conversations between you and Forrestal.
> >
> > 4) There was never a volume that could accurately be described as a Forrestal "Diary."

> FOOTNOTE: In a letter to the present writer [Rogow], Johnson declared that he had no recollection of this memorandum, and therefore could not comment on its significance or discuss the context in which it was written.

It should be mentioned here that nowhere in Rogow's book that I'm personally aware of is there any mention of rumors concerning crashed extraterrestrial craft and/or alien bodies. Never the less, I personally find it rather odd and somewhat unconvincing that Johnson claimed he could not "recall" the contents of the memos he had written to Truman which likely had to have been of a (difficult to forget) sensitive nature. The reader is invited to draw their own speculations.

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Most curiously, at the same time that Shmitt and Randle's latest Roswell book hit the book stores, another prominent book on UFOlogy was published and widely distributed. It is titled "Watch the Skies, A chronicle of the Flying Saucer Myth" by Curtis Peebles. Mr. Peebles's book was published by the Smithsonian Institution, which has affiliations with the government. The book is packed with a number of delightful tales and stories that leads the reader to the assumption that the UFO phenomenon is largely the result of misidentified aerial phenomenon, mis-communication and unsubstantiated rumors, and just plain out right chicanery. Peebles discusses the Roswell incident briefly, explaining the event away in a few pages as a "balloon." The book was reviewed in the Washington Post on Sunday, March 29, 1994 by Carl Sagan who concluded near the end:

> It would be a healthy sign for the United States if books like Peebles's were commonly found in school bookbags, excerpted in supermarket weeklies, and made into television specials.

Meanwhile, in a magazine called "UFO a forum on extraordinary theories and phenomena, Vol. 9, No. 4 1994, George W. Early, UFO's Opinionated Oregonian, (TM), made the following comment about Peebles's book (See pages 40-41):

> Unlisted, and hence clearly not consulted, was anyone from CUFOS, MUFON or FUFOR (Center for UFO Research, Mutual UFO Network and Fund for UFO Research, respectively). MUFON's Walt Andrus told me that when Peebles used quotes from MUFON sources, "They are from published papers. He never spoke to anyone." While this does ensure accurate quotations, it also eliminates the danger of having one's preconceptions challenged by discussions with real people.

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It was late in the evening when we left Mr. Shmitt's house. I think most of us felt reasonably confident that an important historical event had been accurately enacted on the screen in the creative guise of a docudrama. It would appear that we may have a sociological mystery of modern mythic proportions in the

process of unraveling before our eyes. Is it really possible that over forty five years ago a craft of unknown origin crashed in the remote deserted fields of a sheep rancher in the sparsely populated state of New Mexico? How after all these decades could such a momentous event be kept a secret from the world? Is this actual fact or enacted Myth. In the end, perhaps the fiercely sought after hard-edged facts CAN'T be separated from the subjective and deeply personal mythic interpretations due to the extraordinary nature of the incident and the experiences they have generated.

It is hoped that the recent Roswell books by Donald Schmitt and Kevin Randle, the earlier publication by Charles Berlitz and William L. Moore titled "The Roswell Incident," and the newly released SHOWTIME movie, "Roswell," may help answer some of these riddles once and for all.

I'm sure there is more to come!

Steve

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