



Bigfoot or Skunk Ape, Florida Everglades

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February 21, 1999 - Just before we went on the air tonight, I talked with the Miami Dade County Mayor's office about the circle of holes found at a construction site at the mouth of the Miami River in downtown Miami.

On February 17th, the Miami Dade Board of County Commissioners voted ten to one to legally seize the archaeological site under eminent domain. With this vote, the commission has a temporary restraining order against the apartment contractor who wanted to dig up the holes so he could finish his building project. With the commission's actions, a jury will now have to decide how much money will be paid the contractor to buy the site for Dade County preservation.

I also learned that scientists studying the site have discovered hundreds of smaller holes inside the one big circle of larger holes. No one has ever seen anything quite like it before. The Miami-Dade Commission issued a press release that says:

"Miami-Dade County archaeologists have determined that prehistoric South Florida Native American inhabitants known as Tequesta Indians constructed the circle. Pottery fragments found at the site indicate that the prehistoric circle cut into the limestone bedrock may be 2000 years old. The 38 feet in diameter circle has numerous postholes and a carving resembling an eye on an east-west equinox alignment. Scientists speculate that it may have been a Tequesta temple or council house. Scholars who have visited the site have indicated that the archaeological finding is unique in Florida, and possibly North America."

Florida Everglades "Skunk Ape" Sighting

There has been another Bigfoot sighting in the Florida Everglades this month. Down there, it's called a "skunk ape." Even the Seminole Indians in the past century had a phrase: eh-stee jap-jack-ee, which translates roughly as "tall hairy man."

This new February eyewitness doesn't want his name or voice on the record for fear of ridicule. But he called James McMullen -- a nature photographer, tracker and author -- who has researched the Florida panther for the past twenty-two years. His book *Cry of the Panther*, first published in 1984, was a New York Times best seller.

Mr. McMullen learned tracking skills as a U. S. Marine who fought in Vietnam. During the August 1997 Bigfoot flap in the Everglades, he tried to find physical evidence that might prove whether the "skunk ape" was truly unusual or simply a mis-identification of brown bears. He was exploring north of the Big Cypress Preserve when he finally had his own encounter.

McMullen also talked to a farmer who had been riding his horse through a remote area called the Devil's Garden and saw a Bigfoot-type creature.

Interview:

James McMullen, Nature Photographer, Author and Tracker, Big Cypress Preserve, Florida: "The farmer said, 'I saw a skunk ape, man. That's why I'm calling you -- I saw me a skunk ape!'"

I said, "Well, what did you see?"

And then he went into the dark brown coloring. He said that when it saw him, it turned toward the tree line and rapidly walked along a trail where the cows come down to the fence line and just disappeared. And I asked, "How long did you see him?"

He said, "Somewhere in the neighborhood of five to maybe seven seconds. But I saw him! And he was big!"

He said it was seven feet tall, maybe weighed about 350 pounds.

"But it was the way he looked. He was erect, but leaning forward a little bit."

Another thing he said was that when it turned, it saw him and he saw the side of it and when it turned, he saw the back side of it. And he said, "I saw that sucker's butt." (laughed)

I asked, "What do you mean?"

He said, "I saw his butt."

And I said, "What do you mean?"

And he said, "There weren't no hair on it."

That's what he saw. I asked him if he could remember anything else peculiar about it and he said probably the way it swung its arms. And the other thing was how fast it moved when he saw the guy sitting on his horse.

I said, "How far were you from it?"

He said, "I was pretty far away -- maybe about 75 or 80 yards. I had an inclination to chase him on the horse, but the horse wouldn't move towards him."

I thought that was really neat -- the horse saw it, too, and wouldn't go towards it. I asked when he turned his back towards him, did he run?

He said, "No, but he walked so fast."

He couldn't believe how fast he was walking. He rides over there after the Bigfoot is gone and there wasn't a track in sight. He was up on that high ground, a kind of gravel trail where the cows come down. We've gotten a little rain down here during the winter months, but not that much to where there is a mud line out there in the pine forests.

WOULDN'T YOU THINK THAT ANYTHING THAT IS AS HEAVY AS YOU HAVE ESTIMATED AND HE'S ESTIMATED WOULD LEAVE SOME KIND OF TRACKS?

Yeah, but he said there was nothing there that he could see. I asked him if he could write all this down for me, but he didn't want to do that. So, I asked him if we could back all this up. I told him I would write all this up and give him a call and he could come over and sign it. And he didn't want to do that. He said, "I know who you are. I know what you've been doing with the panther research and I really admire you for your work. But I'm not going to get involved. I could lose my job." Click.

WHAT SHIFTED YOUR ATTENTION FROM THE PANTHER TO THESE ANOMALOUS SIGHTINGS BY SEVERAL EYEWITNESSES OF THIS PRIMATE CREATURE?

On August 23rd, (1997) at 2:30 in the afternoon, daylight hours -- and over on the right, I glanced over to the right hand side 35 feet away -- next to trees underneath a sable palm frond was this gorilla standing there. That was the

absolute first impression I got. Yeah, I was out looking for, tracking the phenomenon of Bigfoot. But I did not have it in my head that I would ever see one. I saw a gorilla!

LET ALONE 35 FEET AWAY.

35 feet away.

WHAT EXACTLY WERE YOU SEEING IN DETAIL IN THAT FACE?

Well, that's the interesting part. Even though I'm a researcher and have been for almost 23 years -- it was a very shocking event that was taking place and it was seconds. I would say from beginning to end, it was 35 seconds. But the actual sighting of actually seeing him was 8 to 9 seconds (meaning the Bigfoot's face). But I saw him underneath the sable palm tree. I saw what I thought was a gorilla standing up right. The thing that threw me was that it was a gorilla all the way down to the waist and then it had two long, oak tree type legs. And he was standing there with his arms hanging down along side him and could see his chest moving up and down, breathing very hard.

WHEN YOU SAY TWO LONG OAK TREE TYPE LEGS, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Well, backtracking a little bit. Knowing gorillas, seeing pictures of them and seeing them on the Discovery Channel -- they are huge down to the waist and suddenly they have these little skinny bowed legs -- there is not much to their legs at all. Well, this particular species did not have the small bowed legs. It had long human like legs and both of the legs were covered with a deep, dark chocolate fur or hair on them. But they were long. They weren't short or bowed. They were long which made this species exceptionally tall.

LIKE ABOUT?

Well, I measured it. After the incident, I went back the next day and went to where he was standing and measured up under the sable palm where the top of his head was and that went 6 feet 8 inches, conservatively. His face was back up in the shadow, but the sun was shining on the top rear of his head. It had a sloped back, sort of cone-shaped head, it sloped back and you could see short fur -- with the sun shining on it, it was lighter brown than what was on the rest of the body. So, I didn't really see his face. It was all shadowed in there. I could see the outline, but I couldn't see his eyes and nose. I couldn't see his face.

WHAT ABOUT HANDS?

Well, his arms were hanging down along the side of his body, extremely long arms and hands. The fur was longer on the arms. It was a male and I say it because you could see his chest and there were no breasts on the chest and no hair up on his pectorals or down on his stomach. But I have to tell you that the skin was colored with kind of caramel color. It wasn't black or white. It was like caramel. I could definitely see that.

IT WAS SKIN NOT COVERED WITH HAIR?

From the angle I was looking at 35 feet, him standing in shadow with a little bit of sunlight there, I could not see any hair on his pectorals or stomach, but the hair picked up at his hips and legs. Longer hair on the arms and on the body, it seemed.

YOU COULD SEE THAT HAIRLESS CHEST MOVING AS IF...

He was breathing hard. I could see his chest heaving. I was both fascinated at what I was looking at, but also frightened. I was glad I was inside the van. If I had been walking up through there 35 feet away, I wonder what he would have done? And wondering after all this when I calmed down a little bit, what was he doing there standing there to begin with? He wasn't there when I went down there to begin with -- or at least I didn't see him standing there before. But when I came back up, there he was standing there. He could have been back further in the trees.

MAYBE HE WAS CURIOUS ABOUT THE NOISE OF YOUR TRUCK?

I'll bet you money that's right. Some people said the van would scare him off, but it didn't. It was like I was hit with an electric wire -- my whole body was in

super stun from it. And I panicked -- I didn't know I did it unconsciously -- my foot hit the gas and I surged ahead and then slammed on the brake and put it in reverse and went back to where he was and he was gone.

BUT DID YOU FIND ANY TRACKS?

Even when I went back the next day, there were no tracks underneath the sable palm. Where he was standing, there was high level grass -- even the next day it was all pushed down. But there were no tracks there. So, what I did was super back track him from there. I spent the whole day out there. I didn't get one track.

Not until 13 months later did I finally get a track and I can't really tell you that those tracks were of my sighting in the tree line.

13 MONTHS LATER IS WHEN?

It took me 13 months later October 18, 1998 -- I came on seven tracks near a water line -- big guys. But the problem was they were full of water and heavily deteriorated, but you could clearly see that something had walked along the water's edge.

WAS THERE THREE TOES?

I got five toes. Five toes. So, what I did was take the best of the seven prints and got as much water out of it as I could and took a plaster caste of that one. You can see the 5 toes and I got the length and width. The length is roughly over 14 inches and the width -- I think because it's so deteriorated and spread out -- I got 8 inches across. So, it makes for a big foot.

HAVE YOU, OR HAS ANYONE YOU KNOW, RECORDED ANY SOUNDS OF WHAT THEY SAY ARE THESE CREATURES?

I had my brother with me one night and we got sounds. But when I say we got sounds -- we didn't have tape recorders. We went into this area and all of a sudden to the right hand side, we heard this very high pitched screech. And it was the longest screech I have ever heard. I've never heard that sound in the Everglades -- mainly because of how long it was. I know basically all the sounds of the panther in the Everglades. And this was not a panther. And it was maybe like 75 yards away and in the tree line.

My brother heard it and jumped in the van and shut the door. And as I was opening the door to get into the van, to the left hand side over a water line -- and another 80 yards away -- there was another screech, almost identical to the screech we heard in the tree line to the right. And I got in the van and shut the door and we both looked at each other and said it at the same time, "Bigfoot!" Wait a minute -- two of them. Because one of them answered the other."

Credits

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