



Sasquatch - A Forensic Expert Says It's A Different Species

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Cast made by Georgia police officer in 1997 of a 16.5 inch footprint found in woods after "large gorilla creature" reported. Print has same unusual vertical derma ridges similar to two other casts found in California and Washington State. The diagonal line is a cast artifact. Forensics expert Jimmy Chilcutt says the cast footprints he has studied are from "an animal of a different species that we haven't studied before."

March 16, 2000 Conroe, Texas - Recently I talked with Dr. Jeff Meldrum, an anatomy and anthropology professor at Idaho State University in Pocatello who has examined at least 100 casts of alleged Sasquatch footprint casts. He has also collaborated with Police Officer Jimmy Chilcutt of Conroe, Texas who is a crime scene investigator and latent fingerprint examiner for the Conroe Police Department. Officer Chilcutt was so impressed by three of the casts he studied that he told *Field and Stream* magazine in January, "I can assure you there's an animal up in the Pacific Northwest that we have never seen."

Interview:

Jeff Meldrum, Ph.D., Professor of Anatomy and Anthropology, Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho: "You get the whole gamut of reactions from people. You know, the biggest, burliest outdoorsman will tell me that they were

just scared to death and will never go back to that spot to hunt again. Or they never go in the woods now without being armed. And it's interesting and I think it's just simply a fear of the unknown. Just something out of the ordinary and it's big, obviously. But, I try to tell people 'Look, there's really no reason to fear these animals. If they were a threat to people, they would have been pushed to the forefront of our attention long before now.

If there were people being killed or attacked by these animals, then it would have made them much more notorious than they are currently. That in itself is an interesting observation because if you think about the history of our understanding of the Great Apes, especially in their natural habitat, and you think about the media you know, the Hollywood portrayal of the ape for so many decades up to about the 1950s it was the King Kong image, the raping, lustful, ferocious, blood thirsty beast. And yet, all of the Bigfoot sightings even those that pre-date the popularization of the gorilla as the gentle giant are completely devoid of those Hollywood trappings, the monster image. They describe perfectly in both the anatomy and behavior what one might expect of a large ape like a gorilla.

Which suggests that humans do try to give honest detail about what they see.

Exactly.

The descriptions of most people that I've interviewed have been that the tall primate in front of them, scaring the human, seems to want to run the other way as if scared, too.

Yeah, right, and I think that's why they have remained as illusive as they have because they are very shy. Clearly, on occasion their curiosity about humans wins over when they come in and investigate camps or construction sites or things like that. But otherwise, the contacts are usually they are as surprised to see you as you are to see them!

Is there any suggestion that the Sasquatch creatures eat any kind of meat? Or are they entirely herbivorous? Any indication they have eaten deer or other wild game?

Yes, there is actually quite a lot of indication of everything from small rodents up to deer and elk. I have reports of them taking elk and dispatching them. So, they seem to be totally opportunistic omnivores. They will eat just about anything that is edible. Again, that's consistent as well. Not only have we learned a lot more about chimpanzees' hunting behaviors and predilection for meat, monkey meat in particular. But they have also found that some of the gorilla population also on occasion takes small animals and supplements their diet with meat.

What is the best testimony about Sasquatch eating an elk?

All I have are anecdotal reports stories that have been passed on. Usually the ones I have are not eyewitness reports of I saw this Bigfoot reach out and grab an elk or run down an elk, but where carcasses have been found where the heads have been literally unscrewed or the backs have been clearly broken by blunt blows, that type of thing. So, I can't say that with real authority.

I have more stories that I'm aware of both directly and indirectly of deer hunters shooting now, whether these are about the one that got away, I don't know, but a hunter shooting a deer to see it drop and then a big hairy arm reach out from the bushes and drag it off.

That has actually been reported?

That's been reported, yes. There was one really quite startling one that have

prints associated with the sighting. But the man reported that he returned to their hunting camp. There were two deer dressed out and hanging out to cool with cheese cloth hanging over them and something was lifting up the cheese cloth peaking under. At first, he thought it was some interloper had come in and was messing around with his camp. And he shouted, 'Hey!' And at that point, it turned around and when he saw its face he realized this was a big, hairy ape and it immediately just reached up and pulled down both deer, just broke the ropes and stuck one under each arm and disappeared into the woods.

Did he go to the sheriff?

I don't know. I don't have the details. Unfortunately, those just become good stories around the campfire because there is no documentation that I'm aware of.

But there are suggestions that they do take animal matter. One of the most interesting reports and this is well documented. The individual has been interviewed and is in print was near Estacada, Oregon and he was out on a hike out in the woods.

That is where?

That's in Oregon, just outside of the greater Portland area over towards Mt. Hood. And this story is related in a couple of books. John Green reports it in his book, *Apes Among Us*. And also John Bindernagel talks about it in his book *Sasquatch, The North American Ape*.

But anyway, there was this big talus slope with these big chunks of basalt that are over there by the Columbia Gorge.

What is talus?

On the fringe of the hillside where the rocks have tumbled down and create a slope. That is referred to as a talus slope. He just sat down taking everything in when all of a sudden into his view came these - this is one of the few reports of what appeared to be a family group, or at least a consort group. There was what looked like a male or female and a young one. And they started rummaging through the rocks. The big male was picking up rocks some of them weighing 40 or 50 pounds, just very gingerly and turning them over and sniffing the under surface and then he would set them down and as he set them down, they would end up in these vertical stacks of these relatively flat rocks.

And he said, suddenly he appeared to pick up the scent of something because he just started digging with his hands by lifting rocks out of this hole until in short order he had a hole that was about 5 feet deep in these rocks. Now if you've ever been on these kinds of rocks to do something like that would just take Herculean strength. Anyway, he suddenly came up out of the hole with a big wad of grass and it was a nest, probably one of these rock chucks, not lemmings, but they were these little hibernating rodents curled up in this nest and he pulled the nest apart and pulled out these hibernating rodents and literally just passes them out to the other two and they sit there and munch them down head first, whole, chomping them down.

At that point, they apparently picked up his scent or noticed a movement. And suddenly, the male was staring straight at him and uttered some vocalization and the female and youngster scampered up and lit out from behind him and they just melted back into the foliage. And those holes in the rocks are still there. In fact, John Bindernagel went back recently within the past 3 or 4 years and you could actually find the holes and along the area there were areas of stacked rocks adjacent to the holes. And there is a picture of him standing down in one of these holes. The hole comes up to his shoulder almost.

Where were the photographs published?

I'm looking at one of them right now in *On the Track of the Sasquatch* by John

Green. (1971)"

Police Forensic Research

Another book is *Sasquatch, North America's Ape* written by John Bindernagel, Ph.D., and published in 1998 and still in print by Beechcomber books. John Bindernagel is a semi-retired Canadian wildlife biologist who has been intrigued by the Sasquatch question for 24 years. Dr. Meldrum highly recommends this book with its photographs.

Police officer, Jimmy Chilcutt, studied Professor Meldrum's hundred footprint casts of alleged Sasquatch. Officer Chilcutt has over a thousand hours of forensic training from the State of Texas, the FBI and local Texas agencies. He guest lectures at the Criminal Justice Program at Sam Houston State University Criminal Justice Department.

Jimmy Chilcutt, Forensics Expert, Conroe Police Department, Conroe, Texas: "I've been a latent fingerprint examiner for Conroe PD for the last 13 years. And I do a lot of research. I do all the lab work for the Conroe Police Dept. in my fingerprint lab. I do a lot of research and development in the lab and a few years ago one of the projects I started working on was being able to determine gender and race by looking at fingerprints. And I developed several, or isolated several characteristics that were unique to females and also isolated some characteristics that were unique to the three different races, Mongoloid, Negroid and Caucasoid which are white, black and Hispanic. Actually Hispanic would be all Orientals in the Mongoloid race.

So, anyway I isolated these characteristics but when I started testing myself, I could only get about 75% accuracy. And I kept wondering why and it finally dawned on me that the interbreeding throughout the ages has caused the races to mix. Since fingerprints are genetic, then when I have a fingerprint that looks like a white male and turns out to be a Hispanic male. That's the reason, the interbreeding. So, to solve that problem I came up with the idea that if Darwin was correct in his theory of evolution, and we did in fact evolve from primates then if I studied the primate prints of the three Great Apes which are chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans if I studied those prints because they do not interbreed, then I might find a key that would unlock the mysteries of the human fingerprint.

So, I started to develop a data base of primate fingerprints. And believe me, it was very hard to find a zoo or research center that would let you come in and print the animals. But I did find through Dr. Ken Glander at Duke University. He helped me a lot in setting me up with Harold McClure who is the Director of Yerkes Primate Center on the campus of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. And Dr. McClure arranged for me to come to Atlanta and stay on the campus and print the animals he had at the research center and he has tons and tons.

But I spent a week printing gorillas, orangutans, chimpanzees, monkeys, several species of monkeys. I also went to the zoo in Atlanta and printed some of their famous gorillas. I developed a data base and started studying the fingerprints and made a lot of unique discoveries that most people don't know about the likes and dislikes or differences and similarities of primate prints and human prints.

So, when I saw Dr. Meldrum's Discovery Channel program where he was showing the castings that had been cast in different parts of the country, when he started talking about the dermatoglyphics which are the ridge details that are visible in these castings, my interest really peaked and I started paying attention to the program.

These were castings specifically of what are known as Sasquatch or Bigfoot?

Reportedly. These were cast after sightings of this animal. Once they had a

sighting, then they went out and cast the footprints the animal had supposedly left.

So I presented Dr. Meldrum with the proposition that I come up and look at these prints because if they showed the animal characteristics, then that would pretty much conclude they were authentic because there are only a handful of people in the whole world who know the difference. So, if they were going to fake this, they would have to know what primate prints look like and know the difference.

So, I felt if I did go up there and examine those castings and found the primate characteristics, then you could pretty sure know those were authentic, some type of animal.

The second day as I was looking at the castings, I came across this 14-inch casting that was cast in Northern California in 1967. Now a lot of scientists have seen this and looked at this casting and studied it, but they all missed what I saw immediately being a latent fingerprint examiner, you know, derma ridges jump out at me like it wouldn't other people.

The derma ridges displayed definitely were not human because they ran in a different direction, they had a different pattern flow than humans. They also had a slightly different pattern flow than primates, the non-human primates. So, my first thought was: maybe these are faked ridges. But the more I studied them, I realized they could not have been faked.

These were completely different ridges than I've ever seen. And we came to the conclusion that while anything can be faked and I'm pretty hard to fool because I've been a police officer for 23 years and I studied this and thought of every way it could be faked or someone could be perpetrating a hoax there. And I came to a conclusion that even though there may be a way, I could not find it and I felt these derma ridges were real and that they certainly were not human nor exactly primate. It was an animal of a different species that we haven't studied before."

Credits

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