

## **An Analysis of the ABC PRIMETIME SPECIAL “The Outsiders”**

By J. Allan Danelek

As the co-author of Stan Romanek’s recent book *Messages: The World’s Most Documented Extraterrestrial Contact Story*, I was looking forward to the long-awaited ABC special detailing his unique case. When it finally aired on the evening of August 18, I, along with much of America, watched with great anticipation, assuming that I would see a truly objective and balanced approach to Stan’s remarkable story. I was soon to be badly disappointed.

I know the subject matter—alien abductions—is a controversial one, but as one who has an insider’s view of the entire case and was privy to the massive amounts of evidence Stan possesses that support his story, I thought ABC would do its best to demonstrate the veracity of Stan’s story. After all, they had tremendous amounts of material to choose from, from video footage and still photos to eye witness accounts and even phone recordings of a mysterious electronic voice giving Stan advice about how to handle the “visitors”. Little or none of this made it into the piece, however. What I did see, however, was a first-class hatchet job that barely deserves the title of investigative reporting.

What was wrong? Well, for starters the reporter, JuJu Chang, looked like she would rather have been doing something else—anything else—besides talking to Stan and Lisa about their experiences. It was clear by her pointed questions and general demeanor that she was not buying any of it, even on a hypothetical level. As far as she was concerned, Stan was making the whole thing up and insinuated such at every turn. I especially found her question to Lisa as to why she hadn’t divorced Stan years earlier to be not only crass and unprofessional, but insulting. What was she supposed to say-- “Yeah, I’ve thought of dumping the guy lots of times but just never seemed to get around to it”?

But that wasn’t the worst of it. What I found most objectionable was the way ABC gave only half the story. For example, they showed footage of the five puncture wounds that ran down the side of Stan’s knee (which they implied was probably self-inflicted) without giving the context behind it. To those who have not read Stan’s book, the puncture marks were found the morning after he had been supposedly abducted and had his knee—swollen from a recent ACL tear and in a leg brace—“healed” by extraterrestrials, a fact that is medically documented (the injury and subsequent healing were documented—not the extraterrestrial part). The also briefly discussed a “probe” that had supposedly been removed from Stan’s body, which Chang tells us was “suddenly” lost, implying, of course, that it had never existed in the first place. The fact that the probe had been examined by researchers at UC Berkeley was never mentioned, nor was the fact that it phosphoresced under black light noted. (Additionally, the sample disappeared from the UC Berkeley lab several years ago—not “suddenly” as Chang said. She

makes it sound as though Stan was destroying evidence.) Even more inexplicable, none of the considerable evidence of paranormal activity evident around his home, much of it filmed and caught on tape and witnessed by numerous observers, was used, nor were reams of other intriguing and curious evidences presented. I recognize that the producers only had an hour and the program also spent some time outlining the stories of four other abductees, but the cavalier way in which they chose to ignore the vast majority of Mr. Romanek's evidence bordered on the criminal.

Finally, I was surprised at how ABC treated Dr. Leo Sprinkle—insinuating that he had been essentially fired from his post at the University of Wyoming because he was nuts—but I was even more surprised at how casually the formulaic equations Stan had penned on several occasions, many in front of witnesses and with his eyes closed, were so easily dismissed by astronomer Joe Patterson from Columbia University. It appears that after a solid forty seconds of looking over one of Stan's earliest equations, he decided it was bogus and likely made up, thereby insinuating that Stan was a fraud. The fact that there are over a half dozen such equations and that many of them have been proclaimed as valid and beyond the realm of being easily faked by two eminently qualified physicists—University of Nebraska Professor Dr. Jack Kasher and Dr. Claude Swanson, an MIT and Princeton educated physicist and author who has worked as a conventional applied physicist for more than twenty years and has conducted extensive research into the physics of the paranormal—was never mentioned. Now I don't begrudge Dr. Patterson—who is an astronomer and NOT a physicist—his opinion, but ABC made it sound as if he were the first scientist to lay eyes on Stan's scribbling and further, that he has the final say as to their authenticity. No mention was made (or even implied) that other equally qualified scientists had contradictory positions as to the drawing's authenticity. So much for balanced reporting.

I recognize that Stan Romanek's story is fantastic and needs to be approached with a healthy degree of skepticism. I further believe that the entire issue of alien abductions (which is actually only a small part of Stan's complete story) is a phenomenon that deserves careful consideration before rendering judgment, but I got the impression that Stan had to make his case with one hand tied behind his back. Whether this was intentional on the part of the producers is unknown, but that it made Mr. Romanek look like a fool or, worse, a liar, is unquestionable. It was like watching a defendant in court being badgered by a hostile prosecutor while his own defense team was content to sit on their hands and watch. ABC should be ashamed.

In the end, ABC essentially dismissed the entire issue of alien abductions as nothing more than cases of sleep paralysis (and, in Stan's case, outright hoaxing) without for a moment acknowledging the many cases of people claiming to have been abducted not from their beds, but while walking in the forest or driving their car along a deserted road (i.e. the Barney and

Betty Hill case and Travis Walton incident). I suspect that was the point they intended to make all along, and were just using Mr. Romanek and the others in the story as a backdrop to flesh out their theory. As such, in the end the viewer came away with nothing more than another exercise in highly selective editing and lazy debunking, which is a great tragedy considering how important this issue is.