

MILLIONAIRE LEADS QUEST FOR UFO DATA

Published: Oct 20, 1996, 12:00 a.m. MDT

By [Deseret News](#), Zack Van Eyck, Staff Writer

The search for answers to life's greatest mysteries has led millionaire Robert M. Bigelow to an isolated cattle ranch in the heart of the Uinta Basin.

Here, far from the bright lights of his native Las Vegas, the real estate magnate hopes his team of scientists can unearth the roots of UFO folklore prevalent in this region since the 1950s. Bigelow, easily the most prominent American financier in the paranormal research field, is convinced there is more to the observations of Terry Sherman's family than the simple misidentification of mundane events.

The Shermans made national news in July - the same time as the blockbuster "Independence Day" hit the theaters - by going public with bizarre tales of anomalous activity on their 480-acre ranch, nestled beneath a red-rock ridge between Fort Duchesne and Randlett.

Sherman told the Deseret News and journalist Linda Moulton Howe on a national radio broadcast that his family saw several types of UFOs, witnessed lights emerging from circular "doorways" that seemed to appear in midair, had three cows mutilated and several others disappear and found unusual soil impressions and circles of flattened grass in a pasture.

Weeks later, Bigelow hopped a jet to Vernal and met with the Shermans, offering to buy the ranch for about \$200,000. The deal closed in September. The Shermans have purchased a smaller ranch 15 miles away near Whiterocks - far removed, they hope, from the disturbing occurrences they endured for 18 months.

Bigelow has erected an observation building and moved in a pair of scientists and a veterinarian. He has someone on the property 24 hours a day, recording anything out of the ordinary.

Officially, the research is being conducted by the National Institute for Discovery Science, which Bigelow formed last October. Among the big names in the institute's stable of scientists is John B. Alexander, former director of non-lethal weapons testing at Los Alamos National Laboratories in New Mexico.

"Our approach is to do good, high-quality research using a standard scientific approach and do what we can to get hard data," Alexander said in a telephone interview from the institute's Las Vegas offices. "One of the missions of the institute is to make information widely available."

But for now, the lid is on tight. Bigelow won't talk to the media and Alexander would give no details of how or why the research is being conducted. Sherman, now employed by Bigelow to

maintain the ranch, said he can no longer discuss the activity because of a nondisclosure agreement Bigelow had him sign.

Alexander said results of the study would be published in scientific journals and on the institute's Web page. Other research documents and information about the institute is available on the Internet at (<http://www.accessnv.com/nids>).

The secretive behavior concerns several regional UFO researchers, including Ryan Layton of Davis County and Chris O'Brien of Crestone, Colo. Both visited the ranch in July before Bigelow became involved.

"It's the most impressive case I've ever personally investigated," said O'Brien, author of "The Mysterious Valley" about UFOs in Colorado's San Luis Valley. "It should be public knowledge, and the public should be allowed some sort of involvement in any investigation."

Moulton Howe, who has written books on cattle mutilations and other phenomena, received a research grant from Bigelow in 1994 to study plant and animal tissue associated with mutilation cases. She was not surprised at Bigelow's interest in the Sherman ranch.

"There's a lot of speculation about possible openings or tears in the electromagnetic fabric of our planet," Howe said from her Pennsylvania home. "To the general audience, that sounds like science-fiction. However, even in quantum physics today, there is discussion about space time, worm holes, black holes. The fabric of reality having something to do with the relationship between the electromagnetic spectrum and gravity forces is becoming a language that we are seeing more and more in print."

Gary Hart of Bloomington, Ill., an investigator of "hyperdimensional" phenomena, said he believes the Sherman ranch may be the site of an "interdimensional doorway," similar to ones he has investigated near Sedona, Ariz., Pine Bush, N.Y., three other U.S. locations and elsewhere in the world.

"People in Russia say they're very clear that we are contacting other civilizations and they say that we as humans need to open up to this. We have to get past the fear factor," Hart said.

"There are places like this where people can actually see into the next dimension. Some of this is very angular in nature. If you stand in one spot, you see things out around it that you cannot see 100 feet away."

That could explain why folks who live around the Sherman ranch say they haven't seen anything unusual. Members of four neighboring families interviewed by the Deseret News did not want their names published, but most said they aren't sure they believe the Shermans' stories.

Further investigation, however, revealed three of the families have experienced unusual activity. The Uintah County Sheriff's Office confirmed that John Garcia, who lives east of the ranch, reported two of his cows were mutilated earlier this year.

Another neighbor said one of his cows disappeared recently. And the man's nephew, Dean Derhak of Salt Lake City, said he was riding a horse on his uncle's property in 1980 when he saw a silver sphere on the ground of what later became the Sherman ranch.

"It was fairly big, about 30 to 40 feet wide. It looked like a bowl upside down," said Derhak, who was 11 at the time. "It scared me and I took off."

Roosevelt veterinarian Dan Dennis said Bigelow met with him Tuesday to ask for his assistance in performing necropsies on any animals that might be mutilated in the future. Asked if cows were being released onto the former Sherman ranch as guinea pigs, Alexander declined comment. Dennis said Bigelow plans to write all area ranchers requesting that they notify his personnel of any unusual animal deaths.

That's OK with the Uintah and Duchesne sheriff's offices. Uintah County Sheriff's Sgt. Steve Hatzidakis said ranchers who discover mutilated animals also should contact his office, although there's not much it can do.

"The problem we've always had is that these guys always call a week, two weeks, three weeks after the animal is located, and by the time you get out there, the animal is in such a decomposed situation" little investigative work can be done, he said.

In an "authentic" mutilation, the animal's sexual organs are removed and the anus is cored out with laser-like precision. Often, an eye, tongue or patch of skin is removed. Blood, footprints and tire tracks are noticeably absent.

Hatzidakis said a typical mutilation is easily distinguished from animal sacrifices that might be performed by satanic cults. Those rituals generally involve a lot of blood, not a lack of it, he said.

According to Layton, UFO and related activity continued on the ranch after Sherman's public statement. Sherman and his wife, Gwen, were outside one evening when a bluish-white ball of light, about the size of a tennis ball, came out of the field, circled the head of one of the family's horses and came within 10 feet of Gwen Sherman. It stopped and retreated when she shined a flashlight on it.

To date, Layton said, 10 of the Shermans' cows have disappeared. The family's three dogs also vanished after chasing the light ball. Layton said a circular burn mark was found on the ground near where the dogs were last seen.

He said Terry Sherman also saw a humanoid figure get out of one of the craft.

"He supposedly had it on a scope or binoculars," Layton said. "It was a human type, over 7 feet tall, decked out in a totally black uniform and very huge, very heavysset."

The whole ordeal has been difficult for the Shermans, who say they lost money on the sale. Sherman said he was offered more money by a Colorado family and a local hunting club but did not want to put anyone at risk.

"It's just been a bad deal all the way around," he said. "All that's really redeeming is that you have some knowledge that a lot of people don't have, for what it's worth."