

Bob Lazar and American Antigravity

Truth, Lies, and Top-Secret Propulsion Systems

By Tim Ventura, April 1st, 2006

In late 2003, Bob Lazar recruited me to work on a top-secret propulsion project at Sandia National Labs that probably never existed. Lazar speaks believably, and if it wasn't for the story itself, I never would have questioned his veracity. Two years later I still don't have the answers, but I've got a lot of questions – and the biggest is who let him work at Sandia in the first place?

In 1989, Bob Lazar came forward with the stunning announcement that he had worked as a technician on captured alien spacecraft at Area 51. He claimed that he'd been hired after famed scientist Edward Teller saw him racing "jet-cars" in the Nevada desert, and it had led him to a series of closely-monitored visits to Area 51 as a consultant in the effort to determine exactly how UFO propulsion systems might work.

Lots of claimants have come forward telling stories about seeing UFO's at Area 51, but Lazar's story had a bit more evidence than most – he had a mysterious pay stub from the Department of Defense indicating that he'd received compensation for working as a scientist, and more importantly, he had details about the times of several test-flights in 1989 that had led a group of acquaintances into the desert to watch mysterious lights in the sky that Lazar said were Alien Spacecraft being tested by the US Air Force.

Lazar speaks credibly, and his story quickly exploded into the national media after KLAS-TV reporter George Knapp decided to film an expose on the story. Lazar went from being a claimant with an interesting tale to being one of the most controversial figures in the UFO community overnight, and the surge of publicity led to all the normal spin-offs, such as magazine-articles, radio & TV interviews, and even a Testor's "sport-model" toy-UFO based on Lazar's reports about the craft he'd supposedly seen.



The Sport Model: Lazar's impact on the UFO community extends even to the X-Files.



Bob Lazar: Controversial Area 51 & UFO celebrity.

It seems that the bigger the fire, the faster it burns out, because by 1992 Lazar seemed to have disappeared as quickly as he'd arrived. Skeptics had torn apart his story looking for gaps that might indicate that he was lying, and couldn't find documentation for the MIT education he'd claimed to have received. Lazar had also been implicated as a business partner in an illegal brothel in Nevada, which supporters claimed had been a setup, since the Nevada police had known about the operation for years before raiding it. In Nevada, where prostitution is legal, the brothel hadn't been a cardinal sin – it was illegal only on the technicality of being within the city limits, and Lazar further claimed that his role had been only to install a security system there, not as a full-blown business partner.

Despite the rationalizations, nobody seemed to really know the truth, and nobody seemed to care – and the story of Bob Lazar had quickly disappeared from the media, and the UFO community had already made up their minds about his story. According to several self-proclaimed experts, Lazar was either being victimized as an honest government whistleblower, being paid to participate in government disinformation efforts, or was simply a storyteller who'd gotten in over his head telling fish-stories.

Ever wonder what happened to Lazar after the media went away? So did I, so in 2002 I decided to find out what the real story was behind Bob Lazar's amazing tale, and began my own journey into a realm of government cover-ups, black-projects, and half-truths that would lead me to question not only the foundations of Lazar's story, but also my own circumstances as well. I didn't know it at the time, but I would become the next chapter in the continuing saga of Bob Lazar...

~Mid-2002~

The short version of my background is that I created American Antigravity in early 2002, and that the Lifter & Biefeld-Brown research that I'd participated in over the course of the first few months catapulted the entire open-source Antigravity movement into the media in much the same way that Bob Lazar had become a "hot-ticket story" over a decade earlier.

If you're familiar with American Antigravity, then you know that I didn't invent the Lifter, but that I got involved with the early efforts as a way to provide some emotional closure for the AG-research that I'd put thousands of hours into in the early 1990's. In 2002, breaking the news about Lifter technology could have been anybody's claim to fame, but I had the advantage of a little more experience in putting my results into a palatable multimedia formula, and a lot more experience from prior research than most of my open-source colleagues. The result was a period between May and September with a lot of TV-filming, several radio appearances, and a couple of magazine articles – including a big one being worked on over the course of several months by writer Clive Thompson for Wired Magazine.



American Antigravity: Well known for Open-Source Lifter & Biefeld-Brown research.

For me, all this had happened during the 2002 dot-telecom layoffs, and I'd had a busy schedule in between job-hunting and doing presentations on this remarkable technology, and during this period of time I started getting email from other inventors wanting me to do stories on their technologies. American Antigravity rapidly grew from being an experimental journal of Lifter technology into what was starting to look suspiciously like a magazine, and my focus began to shift as well – I was spending less time in the garage working on my own projects, and a lot more time on the computer writing up other people's.

Maybe it was one of those selfish writer's motives, but after a few months of writing about technologies that other people had submitted to me, I wanted to start pursuing stories, technologies, and innovators that I had a personal interest in. Not that it wasn't great doing

write-ups on the ideas coming into my inbox, but I'd thought that since we were getting tons of traffic from all the media exposure we'd done that I should capitalize on that to share some of my own favorites ideas with our audience, and maybe even try to provide some insights into them that the mainstream media had missed.

So when I first attempted to get in touch with Bob Lazar, there was a mixed motive – on the one hand, I really felt that I could help connect his experience to a rapidly growing technology base that we were building online at American Antigravity, and on the other hand this personal interest in “seeing beyond the pale” of what had already been published about him. I had an intense curiosity about his story – both personal and professional – and I was positive that if I could only get a few minutes with him on the phone that I'd know for sure whether he was an honest victim of a government conspiracy or instead a story-teller who's tall-tales had cost him his reputation.

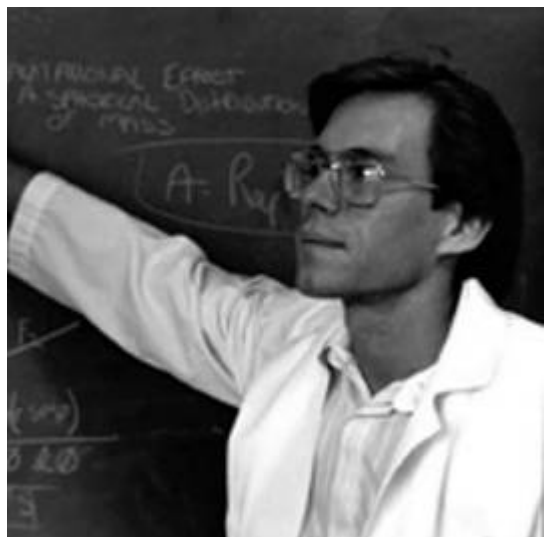
In mid-2002, I'd mentioned an interest in the Bob Lazar story to a friend online, as well as the regret that I had no way to get in touch with him to ever learn the truth. The friend replied by telling me that Lazar hadn't disappeared, and that he was in fact running a startup company called “United Nuclear” in New Mexico. I quickly found the website, and sent an email to their customer-service address about trying to get in touch with Bob Lazar. The first one bounced, the second one just plain didn't make it through, but after a couple more tries over the next couple of months, I finally got a response...and I was able to schedule time to talk with the infamous Bob Lazar.

~Late 2002 / Early 2003~

Was it November or December? I can't remember which, actually – I'd gone back to work in the telecom-industry, and was juggling American Antigravity on the side along with a 9 to 5 job at Telecommunications Systems in Seattle. The commute sucked and the job wasn't what I'd interviewed for, but it was bread on the table, and gave me a bit of cash to pursue bigger & better Lifters in my garage lab.

What I do recall is that the first time I talked to Bob Lazar, I was impressed. That's not a compliment that I hand out lightly – the UFO, Antigravity, and alt-science communities draw from a pretty diverse group of people, and there's no qualification for this area other than having an interest in it. While I'm not judgmental about the various ideas out there, I have to recognize that a lot of them are dead-ends, and the reason is that a lot of non-technical people get involved with areas of physics that even PhD physicists don't understand. Fortunately, Bob was not one of those people...

Bob Lazar is a friendly, thoughtful, well-spoken man – the kind of person that you instantly like, and immediately want to believe. He speaks to you on your level, so in my case our conversation started out technical stayed that way. If you hear him on the radio or see him on TV, you end up with this strange impression that maybe he's holding out on some big secrets, but my personal impression of him was that he was very forthright, honest, and interested in sharing some of his insights to help move the open-source research along.



Bob Lazar: Speaks impressively on science & breakthrough technology innovation.

I spoke to him several times over the course of early 2003 – he’s an easy person to talk to, so if you get him on the phone and he has the time to spare, he’ll spend a couple of hours with you discussing technical issues relating to whatever your current project is. For me, this was a big indicator not only of his intelligence, but also of that “creative thought-process” that had supposedly led Edward Teller to hire Lazar for the job at Area 51.

One example of this was the Lifter itself – I’d been talking with Bob about using Ultraviolet light as a means to enhance the air-conductivity for increased ion-wind thrust. I’d mentioned to him a few of the challenges, and also the notion of increasing atmospheric conductivity using excimer lasers – something that I’d worked on with HSV Technologies earlier in the year for a non-lethal project that never materialized.



The Sport Model: An artist's rendering of the UFO Lazar claimed Area 51 had captured.

The concept of enhancing ion-wind thrust by changing atmospheric conductivity is a pretty rarified subject – I’d discussed this with 7 or 8 PhD physicists that I knew, and none of them had any helpful suggestions about it. Bob, however, had several – including a personal experience involving focusing-down a carbon-dioxide laser to create a narrow beam capable of ionizing an air-channel.

At the time, I’d been considering laser photo-ionization with a high-frequency excimer (UV) laser, not a low-frequency CO₂ (IR) laser, and was stunned by his announcement that the not only could the lower-frequency work, but that in fact he’d tested this himself a while back and seen sparks jumping around in mid-air within a region of plasmified air. After a few days of research and several calls to laser-specialists, I found out that Bob was indeed correct – and realized that not only did he sound intelligent, but that he had a solid foundation in both theoretical & experimental knowledge to draw from.

Lazar had another idea as well – again, a real stunner: I’d been talking to him about the corona-wire in Lifters early on, and he mentioned to me the idea of putting a nuclear material on the corona-wire to increase thrust. Most people would have dismissed this as a silly notion, but Lazar drove the point home by discussing an experiment in which nuclear-materials in a high-voltage environment gave off a massive excess of electrons, thereby becoming a nuclear battery of sorts. It’s not free energy, but more like a transistor for ion-wind: a small voltage on the corona-wire excites the nuclear decay process, and serves as something like a “control voltage” for a much larger flow of stimulated-decay electrons that emerge from the uranium coating on the corona wire.

For me, this suggestion of his was the indicator of real genius, because I’d been working on a story about stimulated beta-decay batteries that I hadn’t told him about, and everything he’d described fit perfectly with the research of Michael McDonough, Dr. Paul Brown, and a few other innovators doing obscure work in this area. Very real research, and because it was on the fringe, none of it was in textbooks. Not only did Lazar know about this phenomenon, but he was talking about cross-pollinating Biefeld-Brown plasma-physics with stimulated beta-decay nuclear physics, which is an idea that had taken us a few months to arrive at. In Bob’s case, it only took a few minutes...

If you could ask Bob Lazar one question, what would it be? Obviously, unless you’re either a true believer or completely disinterested, the question would be, “Is the story that you told about Area 51 true?” In my case, I’d already spent hours on the phone with him, and we’d developed a solid rapport when I broached this topic, so I’d like to think that he’d be a bit more honest with me than just some fellow off the street.

I'd already checked up on the information about CO2 laser photo-ionization, and already knew that he was right about stimulated beta-decay, and for whatever it's worth, his response to the UFO question didn't seem any less honest when he replied, "Tim, coming forward to talk in public about my experiences at Area 51 is something that I did to save my life. They ruined my career, destroyed my reputation, but after I went public, they couldn't kill me. It's a part of my life that's caused me a lot of pain, and an experience that I've put behind me. If you want information about my experiences at Area 51, check the internet – everything I experienced is out there online."

That was it – I'd been hoping for more, but at least it seemed honest, and I didn't think that prying would have been helpful given the rather final nature of the comment that he'd made. For him, it seemed, the days of government conspiracies were over, the book was closed, and the final chapter had been written. At least that's what I believed in early 2003...

Over the course of the next six months, my life would change considerably, and while I talked to Lazar a few more times after that conversation, we eventually quite conversing altogether. Part of the reason is that we didn't have much more to discuss – 20 hours on the phone had exhausted both of us in terms of interesting notes to compare, and in both our cases we had lives to lead & careers to pursue. I wasn't his best friend – only an acquaintance with similar interests, so after a time we quit talking and went our separate ways.

~Late 2003~

By late September, 2003, I'd been through a layoff at Telecommunications Systems and been brought back onboard to finish up the development project I'd been managing. I was also doing an overwhelming burden of paperwork while we tested the systems that would eventually automate the process, and I hadn't thought of Lazar in months. I'd considered doing a write-up on my conversations with him, but it just didn't feel appropriate. It would have been odd to write "Bob Lazar says to put Uranium on the corona-wire", so I just let things sit as they were and focused on other stories & making it through the daily grind.

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2 Employer's name, address, and ZIP code			3 Employer's modification number	4 Employer's OIG ID number	
United States Department of Naval Intelligence Washington, DC. 20038			46-1007639	N/A	
5 Employee's name, address, and ZIP code		6 Federal income tax withheld	10 Wages, tips, other compensation	11 Social security tax withheld	
Robert S. Lazar 1029 James Lovell Las Vegas, NV. 89128		168.24	958.11	71.94	
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17 State income tax		18 State wages, tips, etc.		19 Name of state	
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W-2 Wage and Tax Statement 1989
Printed on recycled paper. See instructions for more information.

Credentials: A copy of Lazar's pay-stub from the Department of Naval Intelligence in 1989.

I remember sitting in the parking lot of Larry's Market in Kirkland when my cell phone rang – I'd been getting ready to hop out of the truck and follow my wife into the supermarket when I answered it, only to be surprised to hear Bob on the phone. I hadn't thought about him in months, and was surprised that he'd called me – since in our previous conversations I'd usually be the one calling him.

Lazar seemed frantic and nervous, and quickly said, "Look Tim, I don't have much time, but I've been down here at Sandia Labs doing some calibration work on their equipment, and I've found out that they've made a major breakthrough. I calling because they're ripping off your website – stealing your research – and I'm going to see if maybe we could bring you in on the project to help you out a bit. I'll call you back in a couple of days after I get home and we'll talk more about this."

It was an interesting phone call, to be sure – I didn't know the details of it, and for the next couple of days I was on pins and needles waiting for his call. I knew that Lazar had been doing contract work at Sandia from his secretary, who had told me nonchalantly on previous calls when he'd be out of the office. My impression had been that he'd visit Sandia occasionally to work on their equipment as a way to earn a living with United Nuclear, and that his work had been exactly what he'd told me: calibration on Geiger-counter equipment that he'd sold them for uninteresting day to day tasks. The information in his phone call was anything but uninteresting, though – and it raised some very interesting questions.

Who exactly is Bob Lazar? I'd thought that I'd known, and the answer had originally been somebody who might have been caught up in a process larger than himself, and gone public with the details to try and put some distance in between himself and the shadows that he claimed had been chasing him. However, according to Lazar, this entire episode had been ancient history – he was building a company now, and not mixed up with cloak and dagger activities like he'd claimed to have been involved with at Area 51.

I also started asking myself questions about his circumstances. In the case of Bob Lazar, you have an individual who's recognized around the globe for being a government whistle-blower. That reputation stands whether or not he actually worked at Area 51 – it's not the reality of the story that made him a whistleblower, it's the fact that he came forward and went public with it that earned him the reputation.

I kept asking myself how anybody at Sandia National Labs – a facility doing top-secret research into a variety of nuclear technologies – would have ever hired Lazar to entire the premise. The fact that his secretary confirmed this on several occasions led me to believe that he really did contract work there, but the question that haunted me was how he ever got in the front door. After all, if you have the reputation for talking publicly about classified projects, what authority is ever going to let you back into a secured facility?

This raised the further question to me about one of the other allegations against Lazar – that he hadn't been a stool-pigeon as he portrayed himself to the media, but that he'd intentionally participated in a disinformation campaign for the government. Maybe they were testing something at Area 51, but some of the UFO-buffs had claimed that Lazar was part of the cover-up, and not a whistleblower trying to shed light on this secretive facility. Was Lazar telling government-sanctioned lies about Area 51 to divert attention from a project like the hypersonic "Aurora" spy plane? I began to wonder...

I had trouble getting through to Lazar for nearly a week – he'd been "held up" at Sandia, and got back a few days after he'd indicated that he'd call me. Nearly a week had passed, and I finally got through to him on the phone on a Saturday afternoon at home. The phone rang, and nobody picked up – but I thought that I'd try again a few minutes later, and after a few more rings, Lazar answered the phone.

Lazar answered the phone strangely, and I heard him shout something like "I've got to take this – I'll be back in a minute" to somebody apparently in the room with him. After a few more seconds and the



Back-Stage Pass: Does this security badge mean Lazar really worked at Area 51?

sound of a door closing, Lazar was back – and said, “Hi Tim – I’m in the garage right now, so they can’t hear me. Listen, I can’t talk, but the military’s here – we’ve got a couple of officers and some scientists discussing what to do with this breakthrough. I’m sorry for not getting back to you sooner, so I’ll quickly give you the rundown on what’s happening, even though I shouldn’t be on the phone right now.”

“Basically, they’ve done something to a standard Lifter to give it more thrust – like 40 or 50 pounds worth – and the modifications don’t require any additional power. Apparently they’ve been going through your website without your knowledge and got the idea there, but I don’t know exactly the breakthrough is yet. As I understand it, part of the breakthrough is the orientation of the Lifter to the Earth, but I don’t understand why.”

“Anyhow, we’re talking about building a craft for them as a prototype – something maybe about 20-feet long and computer-controlled. The idea is that if we can prove this on a small scale then they’ll finance us for a larger project later on: maybe even a full-scale manned craft. As I understand their breakthrough, they can boost the thrust a lot higher than they’ve demonstrated so far, and I’m going to fly to Washington DC this week to talk about it with some really high-ranking officers to determine how to arrange this project. If it works out, then we’ll fly you down here as a consultant, and you can work on it for a few months, but don’t tell anybody. You can’t write this up, or else we’re all going to be in real trouble. Just keep it quiet for now and I’ll get back to you.”

I responded by telling Lazar thanks for the information, and pointing out to him that American Antigravity does open-source research – I’d be more than happy to send them information free of charge if it would help move their research along. “It’s public,” I said, “I don’t own Lifters – have them give me a call and they can have anything they want.” He responded by saying that “they don’t work like that”, and that if I hung tight for a few days it would all be settled.

Believe it or not, after that second phone-call I actually felt relieved, when I think that most people would have been more on-edge than ever. Part of it was at least the knowledge about this “breakthrough” – an increase that magnitude in Lifters would have made them a practical aerospace technology, and would have put me in a founding role of what could very well be the next step in the evolution of aircraft technology.

Both times that I spoken with him Lazar seemed nervous, like somebody was either just around the corner, or perhaps he was worried that his phone was being tapped. In all fairness, if he was being honest on the second phone call, then somebody truly was right around the corner, and the nervousness made sense.

At the time, I really believed him. In hindsight I’m not sure if I should have, but in the moment I felt like I might have a job waiting right around the corner, and that my future might get a little bit brighter from his efforts in Washington DC. It’s easy to say that I was being naïve, but it wasn’t just a single statement that made him believable – it was the tone & context, and a complete lack of rationale behind any fakery.



UFO's at Sandia: Lazar claimed that Sandia had a black-project for developing a type of “Super-Lifter”.

In other words, if I'd been talking to Lazar on a daily basis in 2003, then I could understand him coming up with a gag to throw me off guard – there could be a million reasons why, including a simply practical joke to get me going. He'd always sounded honest & straightforward, and everything that he'd told me up until this point had always checked out, but I could at least rationalize a lie if there had been a constant interaction.

The reason that I believed him was a compilation of circumstantial evidence: I'd known that he did jobs at Sandia National Labs from both him and his secretary, and they'd never made any special claims about those jobs other than the mundane truth of calibrating Geiger-counters. I'd also assumed that given Bob's talkative nature that he'd make friends at Sandia, and probably a few of those friends would share some insights with him about work that they probably shouldn't have. This all made perfect sense—hang around somewhere long enough, and people open up to you.

The part that seemed especially convincing at the time was his timing – again, he called me out of the blue after 6 months of silence, and we'd parted on good terms earlier in the year. After something like 20 hours of honest conversation on the phone earlier in the year, why would he spontaneously call me on the spur of the moment to fabricate a lie about a breakthrough in Lifter technology? It made no sense whatsoever, and consequently I believed his story...

To this day, I don't know if Lazar was being honest with me or not, but if he was lying, then his secretary was in on it – because when I called in the middle of the week to ask where he was, she'd replied that he was still in Washington DC on business, and acted as if I was supposed to be aware of this. I was forced to wait another week until he returned, when I was able to get through to him again.

On his return from DC, Lazar clarified some of the earlier points in our conversation, and described speaking with some very high-ranking officers about putting together a secret project to develop a prototype aircraft that would use some of the technologies that they'd found online in the open-source community, along with their own proprietary breakthroughs. He also gave me some insight about the project itself, stating that the officers had tentatively approved the proposal, but that because of funding cuts due to the War on Terror that it wouldn't be funded for several months. He promised to call me back in the springtime, and I realized that if this project was going to happen that it would be a long time in the making – I made a note to myself to call him back in a few months when he'd indicated he would have approval.

~Early 2004~

Several months later, I called Lazar back and brought up the subject of the project. I didn't realize it at the time, but this would be our last conversation. It was a short conversation, and unlike the frantic phone calls from the previous fall, he once again seemed relaxed & unhurried. I wish that I could provide you with a better description of our chat, but I don't remember most of it –only the notion that the project funding had been held up, and that I shouldn't talk about it at the risk of getting both him and myself in trouble.

Lazar restated some of the fundamentals of our earlier conversations, and I realized at this point that he'd already told me everything that he was prepared to disclose. He promised yet again to call me back when he had an answer, but that call never materialized. I wasn't left holding the bag, because by early 2004 I'd realized that this “top-secret project” either didn't exist or would never get funding, but I was left with a lot of unanswered questions.

I've follow up with Lazar twice since early 2004 –and it seems that we're back to square-one, whatever that might be. In both cases I had a short email reply, not notable for anything other than the statement that he was busy and didn't have time to chat. That's fine with me – that had

been the way we'd left things in early 2003, making those frantic calls later in the year an anomaly to what had otherwise been an honest dialog on a variety of topics in breakthrough technology.

~Conclusion~

Nearly two years after our top-secret project was supposed to get funding, I can say with some certainty that I never ended up getting a contract job for the government, although that's about all that I can say. I've never heard as much as a rumor about a secret "super-Lifter" at Sandia, and haven't heard a peep from Lazar until today – April 1st, 2006– when he'll go on-air with George Knapp to discuss his experiences at Area 51 for the first time in several years.

To me, this upcoming appearance raises the question of what he'll discuss on-air, and what he might just gloss over in the process. Was there a secret project at Sandia to develop a next-generation aircraft? Was it in fact based on open-source research? We'll probably never know, and it all begs the bigger question of who let him in the front door at Sandia in the first place, given his checkered reputation.

I've met friends of Lazar's who claim that he makes up stories, and that those stories sometimes come back to bite him – in their opinion, you can't trust anything that he says. However, if that's the case, why would Lazar orchestrate such an elaborate lie involving Lifters in 2003, and then ask me to keep the entire thing quiet? Also, given his obvious intelligence and ability in terms of technology, why would he involve himself in activities that would damage his credibility time and time again, especially when he's so busy getting his United Nuclear company off the ground?



Lightning Strikes Twice: Was Lazar really involved with BPP black-projects at Sandia?

The most fitting question for me is whether lightning strikes twice: what are the odds that Lazar could go through the experiences that he's claimed he went through at Area 51, and then later end up getting involved with secret military research at Sandia National Labs? The odds aren't high, but maybe the reason that lightning struck twice is due to his reputation as an expert in exotic propulsion systems. Maybe, in fact, the reason that Sandia would seek his expertise with Lifter technology was because they didn't know whether his story about Area 51 was true any more than you or I do, and they ran into a problem that required his unique-brand of hands-on skill to solve.

Perhaps it's fitting that today is April Fool's Day, but I can tell you with certainty that what I've written isn't a joke – or perhaps that if it is, the joke is on me.

Tim Ventura is the Founder of the American Antigravity, a 501c [3] non-profit dedicated to community space activism and support for breakthrough technology development. You can learn more about him online at <http://www.americanantigravity.com>