

Larry Battson

June 18th, 2009

MADISON: Hi, this is Mark Madison, and today is June 18th, and we're doing a Podcast with wildlife educator Larry Battson who was just out here to talk about Bigfoot for a public lecture, a very well received public lecture and a distance broadcast.

Larry, thanks for agreeing to do this Podcast with us.

BATTSON: Oh, absolutely.

MADISON: So, Larry, why did you first become interested in Bigfoot?

BATTSON: Well, I think it was maybe a magazine article or book I read as a youngster, and I'd always had a mild interest in it. The years [inaudible] when I started working with animals and worked with Jim Fowler from the old television program "Wild Kingdom." He had an adventure in Russia where the -- they were filming Russian brown bears and all the guides wanted to talk about was Bigfoot. So, I thought, that's pretty incredible. And so years later -- I shouldn't say years -- shortly after that I was contacted by someone to actually construct an exhibit on Bigfoot. After doing a little bit of research and a few phone calls, I realized -- what's the expression, "Where there's smoke, there's fire"? There was definitely something to this. There's a great possibility that we could share this planet with a bipedal mammal that may be not too far from -- not too far from us.

MADISON: What types of evidence have you come across to support this idea of a bipedal mammal like us?

BATTSON: Well, the footprints. They've been -- there's been tens of thousands of those found all -- basically all around the world. The hair samples that when analyzed, they're said to be unknown primate, but the hair samples were collected in places like in Northern California, Washington and Oregon.

Feces, dung has been found that doesn't really tell anyone anything except possibly the diet, which seems to be very similar to a bear.

But I tell you what, the tens of thousands of eyewitnesses, and we're talking about law enforcement officers, rangers, scientists, people that have actually had a chance to see one of these animals, usually for just a short glimpse, but realizing that, hey, this -- the moment that we think we know everything that exists on this planet, we're really kidding ourselves.

MADISON: Have you ever seen one, Larry?

BATTSON: I can't say for sure that I have. I've seen things that -- that looked weird or, you know, a dark shadow, but until I actually see one, clear view, I can actually sit there and observe it and study it for a few seconds, that's when I'll say I have seen one.

MADISON: I imagine a lot of people who have seen one have come to your various talks and presentations?

BATTSON: Well, they have. In fact, believe it or not, when I was in Shepherdstown, I was approached by a gentleman from Virginia, and he'd had a sighting in 1995, and not only did he see it, but he was with -- he's in the security business -- he was with two FBI agents that saw it as well, and basically when they got out of the area where they had -- where they had seen this animal, they pretty much made it clear that they would have no intentions of ever going back

there again.

MADISON: Sage advice, I'm sure.

What fascinates you about Bigfoot so much that you travel around the country to talk about it?

BATTSON: Well, I think it's -- it's a pretty darned good story. I mean, some of the sightings and some of the things that have been involved with it, I mean, it's just absolutely fascinating. We did a lecture there in Shepherdstown that was an hour and 15 minutes long, and basically I was just getting warmed up, because sometimes for some of these -- believe it or not, there are actually Bigfoot organizations that have had me come in, or some of these library talks, I get so wrapped up in what I've heard, I can't spill out the information quick enough and the talks last two and three hours and everybody just sits there. I mean, it's really wild.

MADISON: How do you answer the critics, and I'm sure you've heard this before, who say, "Well, you know, how come we don't have more film footage of Bigfoot or other -- or a dead body," perhaps? I imagine these questions have been thrown at you quite a bit.

BATTSON: Well, they have, and they all -- you know, they're all legitimate, but there's, believe me, several animals that we have on this planet that live in remote areas of the world there's not that much film footage of. As far as a body, there were bones found up in Conneaut, Ohio in a makeshift graveyard which were very large -- as they put it, very large human-like bones, and, you know, in certain parts of the country -- you know, a bear skeleton looks very similar to a human skeleton. So, who knows, maybe someone ventured

across one of these things thinking, wow, it's just a big bear. Just a possibility.

But someone asked me what evidence do we need -- "If I were to find a body, what should I do?" I said, "Well, there's no way you're going to carry the whole body out, so just bring back part of it and that will be enough for the scientists to prove the existence of this mammal."

MADISON: That's an interesting point. How big are these Bigfoots?

BATTSON: Well, I've gotten reports from the state of Washington, 23-inch track with an eight-foot stride. So we'd be looking at an animal anywhere from eight to nine feet tall. Of course, then, everybody says, "Well, how can something hide like that?" Well, don't give yourself too much credit because mother nature, many creatures -- believe me, I've told people when they walk through national parks and things, they say, "Oh, I'm so afraid of a mountain lion." I said, "If you walked through most national parks in the western part of our United States, if you've taken any kind of a hike, I will guarantee you that you've been observed by a mountain lion from high up on a rock or high up in a tree or a black bear that you had no idea that was close by."

MADISON: Larry, one last question we should ask you... what is your day job in addition to Bigfoot expert?

BATTSON: Well, the Bigfoot thing is kind of a sideline. In fact, it is a sideline. I'm a wildlife educator. I travel all over the country with my collection of wild animals and visit about 200 schools each year. Of course, we come to the National Conservation Training Center every October for the open house and do shows there and various other nature centers and so that's what I do. I'm an educator. And then my wife and I on the side, we also write and illustrate

children's books. So we keep pretty busy. Plus raising baby animals. Right now we're raising a bobcat kitten and a baby olive baboon. So that right there is a full-time job.

MADISON: Yeah, I think you said you were with the bobcat right before I got in touch with you.

BATTSON: Yeah, Cheryl, my wife was mixing up the formula and I was baby-sitting it, and right now the bobcat is just starting to get its legs, and its teeth like little hypodermic needles, and, you know, when you raise a kitten how physical they are, well, just imagine that kitten on steroids and you'd have this -- give you an idea about what raising this bobcat's like.

MADISON: Larry, finally, if people wanted to learn more about Bigfoot or help support your organization, is there a website or some means they could contact you and Cheryl?

BATTSON: Oh, absolutely. In fact, it's real easy to remember. It's larrytheanimalguy.com, and you can go to that website, and if you have a question or want to contact us about something or the other, maybe doing a wildlife lecture or doing a Bigfoot lecture, they can go to the site and e-mail me and I'll get back with you just as soon as I can.

MADISON: Well, that's great. It's larrytheanimal.com --

BATTSON: larrytheanimalguy.com.

MADISON: I'm sorry, larrytheanimalguy.com.

And, Larry, we really appreciate your time. We appreciate you coming out to NCTC for about the last 10 years during our open house and the Bigfoot lecture you just did out here. Thank you very much.

BATTSON: Thank you. It was always a pleasure to come to West Virginia.