



### LW4 To Infinity and Beyond: E.T. at the Crime Scene and the Forensic Challenges of the Current Era

Matteo Borrini, PhD\*, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, AE L3 3AF, UNITED KINGDOM

---

**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of how modern multicultural society represents a challenge for forensic investigators.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing examples of the problems offered to the investigators by the current multicultural environment and movements of populations.

The history of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS), established in 1948, and that of the so-called modern ufology that begins with the Kenneth Arnold “flying saucer” sighting on June 1947, are almost contemporary. However, they are two completely different worlds: the first based on the rigorous application of scientific principles for legal purposes, the other on the use of a (pseudo)scientific method to search evidence of contacts with intelligent entities from other planets.

But what would happen if we cross borders and combine these two worlds? What would happen, in a hypothetical scenario, if E.T. crossed the boundaries of the galaxy and interacted with the human world?

In previous AAFS scientific meetings, it has been demonstrated how topics apparently far from the forensic world may instead represent food for thought in the investigation of ancient beliefs, of historical murders, or ritual practices.<sup>1-4</sup> In addition, these unusual topics can provide a springboard for teaching and dissemination of forensic sciences.<sup>5</sup>

The approach to the ufological world is aligned with the intention of the previous presentations, but also offers a further opportunity of analysis on the theme of “other” populations. Currently, millions of people interact and cross borders, creating multiethnic nations. This scenario represents a new and greater challenge for forensic practitioners, especially for those (e.g., anthropologists) involved in the identifications of unknown individuals.

The examination of the supposed alien abduction cases and the related testimonies under regressive hypnosis is an excellent example of the dangerous use of some interview techniques. These reports are also a fertile ground for the evaluation of eyewitness statements, offering the possibility to study the mechanisms of (false) memories. It is known how testimonial evidence can create difficulties in the reconstruction and interpretation of criminal events if recorded without well-established protocols.

In addition, the critical analysis of the so-called “alien autopsy video” related to the supposed Roswell Unidentified Flying Object (UFO) crash is useful for both teaching and scientific purposes. The examination of the film allows not only the debunking of this video, but also the opportunity to analyze and discuss the evolution of autopsy techniques, particularly in contexts of Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) and mass disasters.

Finally, the cute alien E.T. and all the creatures from other planets depicted in science-fiction movies are metaphors of the problems related to foreign individuals that cross the borders without documents. If people travel without leaving a trace of their movements in the country of origin and arrival, they become vulnerable subjects who may be involved in crimes as victims or offenders. The lack of data makes their identification and protection difficult and sometimes impossible.

Although aliens have never crossed the galaxy’s borders to reach our planet, their fictional stories can inspire the forensic community to cross the boundaries of science to develop new strategies to guarantee protection and safety for everyone in new, multicultural societies.

The goal of this presentation is to provide an opportunity to discuss some of the forensic aspects related to a new reality, where individuals increasingly move between countries, and the forensic community is called upon to guarantee the safety and security of everyone.

#### Reference(s):

1. Borrini M., Rickards O., Martinez Labarga C. The Vampire of Venice: A Real Ancient Ancestor of Twilight Investigated by Modern Forensic Sciences. *Proceedings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences*, 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting, Chicago, IL. 2011. LW5, p. 453.
2. Borrini M., Lippi D. The Pazzi’s Conspiracy: An Investigation of a 500-Year-Old Attempted Coup D’État in Renaissance Florence. *Proceedings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences*, 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting, Seattle, WA. 2014. LW1, p. 562.
3. Borrini M. More Than a Cold Case: The Frozen Murder of Iceman—A Heinous or a Merciful Crime Scene? *Proceedings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences*, 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting, Atlanta, GA. 2012. LW3, p. 484.
4. Borrini M. Do You Do Voodoo? Zombies, Ritual Crime, and Forensic Investigations. *Proceedings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences*, 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting, New Orleans, LA. 2017. LW7, p. 1332.
5. Borrini M., Borrini C. Once Upon . . . Forensic Sciences. *Proceedings of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences*, 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Scientific Meeting, Orlando, FL. 2015. LW5, p. 1159.

---

#### Multicultural Society, Forensic Sciences, Ufology