

More than half of all Americans believe UFOs and aliens exist. How did extraterrestrials come to be so real for so many? Toby Smith tracks down our fascination with extraterrestrials, showing how Roswell became the fiber out of which all flying saucer and alien stories were woven in science fiction films and television programs, especially in the late 1940s and the 1950s. It all began outside Roswell on a July night in 1947. A nearby military bases official announcement of the recovery of a crashed flying saucer went out to radio stations and newspapers nationwide--including The New York Times. The militarys quick retraction came too late. The government had already said extraterrestrials existed. Today visitors are taken to the crash site in a vehicle with license plates reading Believe. And believe people do. But why? Statements of belief in extraterrestrials from such diverse and noteworthy people as General Douglas MacArthur, Carl Jung, and Elvis Presley firmly fixed the place of aliens in modern American culture. Smith not only examines movies and the media to understand the prominence of aliens in our contemporary culture, he also shows how New Mexico and Wright Field in Ohio, where the bodies of the aliens were reportedly taken, remain particularly fertile spawning grounds for UFO stories. Once extraterrestrial visitors landed (or didnt land) in Roswell, the notion were not alone in the universe quickly became part of American popular culture.

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