

AWAKE

PRESS KIT



SYNOPSIS

Farmers, John and Betty, can sense something's not quite right on their farm in New York's Walkill River Valley. They are disturbed to discover their beloved cow has been mutilated and their crops wrecked *again* - all while someone (or something) stalks them just out of reach. On a hot night, when Betty cannot sleep, she turns to her knitting, a glass of whiskey and a presidential radio address on national security. But there is someone outside. She cannot wake her husband, when she is consumed by light and abducted. She awakens on a hospital gurney surrounded by other victims. Upon the appearance of the men in black, the medical staff knows - this victim isn't your typical case. She is rushed into emergency surgery where she transforms into an alien hybrid.



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POSTERS



POSTERS





FUSION BOX FILMS

A Family Company

Andrea and Francesco Cordaro are the sibling directors behind *Awake*. Together they run Fusion Box Films, which has been operating for over 10 years. They hail from the Walkkill River Valley, which is located in New York's Hudson Valley region.

The children of an Italian pastry chef, they created the documentary *Cannoli, Traditions Around the Table*. The project was funded by a grant from Anthony and Joe Russo, and won Best Documentary at NYWIFT's Shorts Festival.

As many independent filmmakers, the two wear many hats.

Francesco Cordaro is a producer, director, editor, and cinematographer. He discovered his love for filmmaking as a teenager - making films with his friends on a camcorder and working as a projectionist in his local cinema. His first major collaboration would be as the producer of the documentary *Aerodrome*, winner of Best Documentary at Newport Beach Film Festival. As a director he would find more success. In the branded content space, he created a film for the Greenwich International Film Festival with Regis Philbin and Kathie Lee Gifford which would be aired on NBC's *The Today Show*. Francesco also spent time in the ad agency world, working for an agency owned by Samsung. There he created many ads for companies like JBL, Ford, Subaru, and Mark Levinson. As an editor for Sony Music, he worked on branded content for fashion brand Marni starring Future, as well as content for Fenty with singer Joy Crooks. He is also a drone cinematographer, and shot the aerials for Adrian Brody's film *Clean*, as well as spots for Kenneth Cole and Cadillac.

Andrea Cordaro is a producer, director, actress, and voice over artist. She discovered her love for storytelling in her high school and local theater. As a director, she created the pilot of *Water Is Life* for emerging streamer Hudsy, which explores the cultural legacy of the Hudson River. Her horror film *The Nursery*, was produced and filmed along side *Awake*, in collaboration with Headless Horseman Haunted Attractions - considered one of America's top haunted attractions. As an actress, she has performed on stage at Off Broadway's New York Live Arts Theater, in the award winning comedy "Gay. Porn. Mafia". Cordaro has lent her voice to characters in video games such as Dorothea in *Kiss of War* and Cleo in *Hidden Expedition*. She is a proud member of NYWIFT, SAG AFTRA and AEA.

Our Mother, Maria Cordaro, can often be found on our sets running the craft service table putting together a memorable lunch featuring embarrassing childhood stories.



PHOTO OF ANDREA CORDARO BY SEAN TURI



The UFO Encounter That Changed My Life

Feb 23, 2018

"It was a rainy evening. My roommate, David Hills, and I were driving along Main Street in Rosendale, NY (NY-213.) We were running late to an Ulster Community College basketball game.

*It was a few minutes after 8pm, when I drove around a dark bend. There we both witnessed a series of bright orbs circling around a black sphere in the middle of the road, about 20-30 feet off the ground. As I took my foot of the gas, I was paralyzed with fear. David was screaming while I continued to repeat, "What the f*ck is that?!" The UFO hovered in place with the orbs circling it - like electrons to an atom. With the snapchat app open, David took this photo, as we rolled towards the UFO. I quickly pulled off the road after driving under it. Once we jumped out of the car it was gone.*

After this encounter I became fascinated with UFOs, specifically the activity in my backyard. I quickly learned David and I were not the only ones seeing inexplicable things in the sky. I picked up a copy of "Silent Invasion" written by Ellen Crystall. I immersed myself in research. It was very therapeutic when I realized I wasn't alone.

Though I knew my father and grandfather, John Perrone, had also experienced UFOs in the 1980s, I was shocked to discover my grandfather's personal account in the book "Night Siege".

This phenomenon has been happening in my area for a long time. Now I deal with it the best way I can - I make art.

You may think this is a strange occurrence, but for Hudson Valley natives, there seems to be little question. It has become a fact of life. It is not an exaggeration to say, that most residents either know someone who has experienced this phenomenon, or has experienced it themselves."

- Francesco Cordaro -

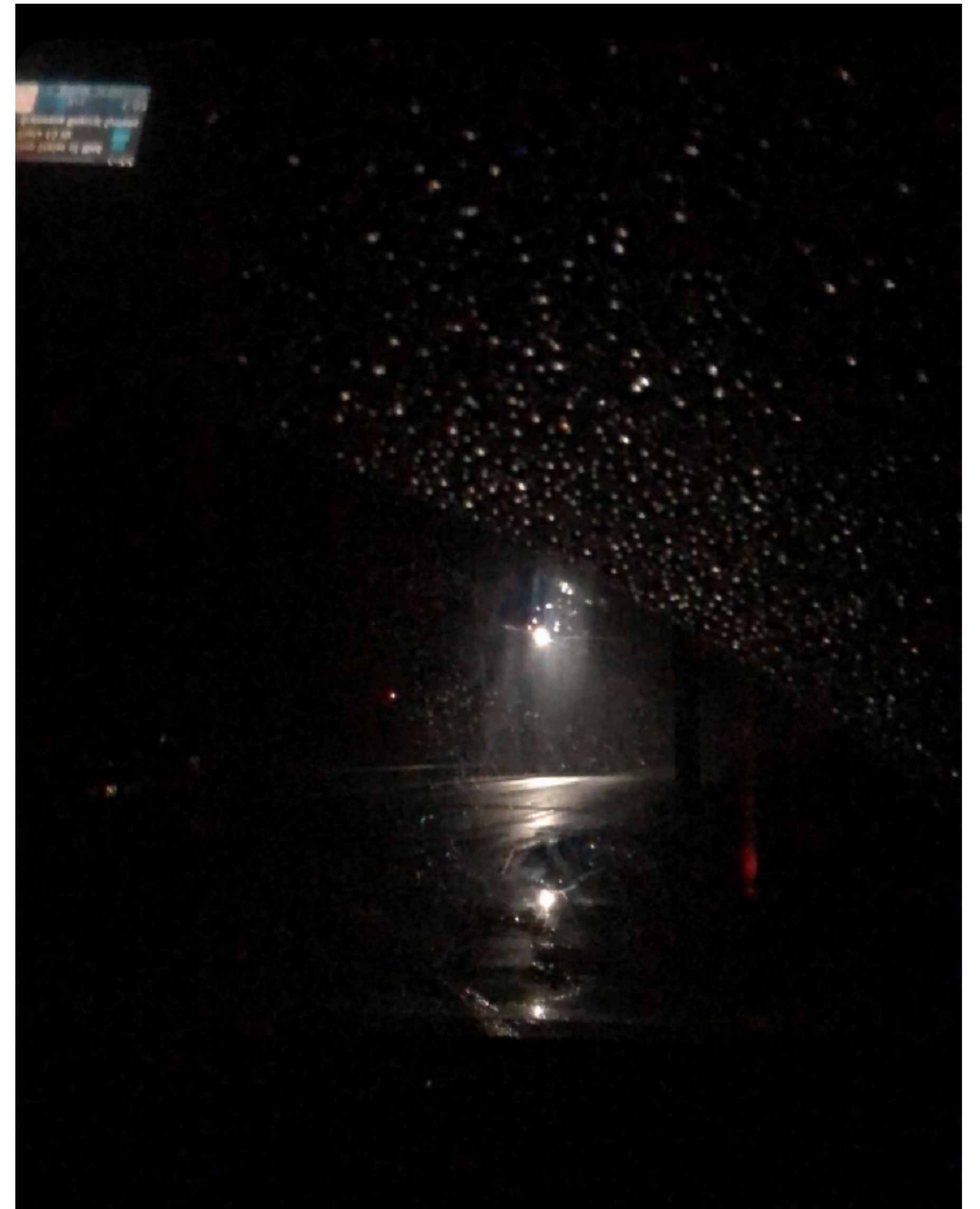
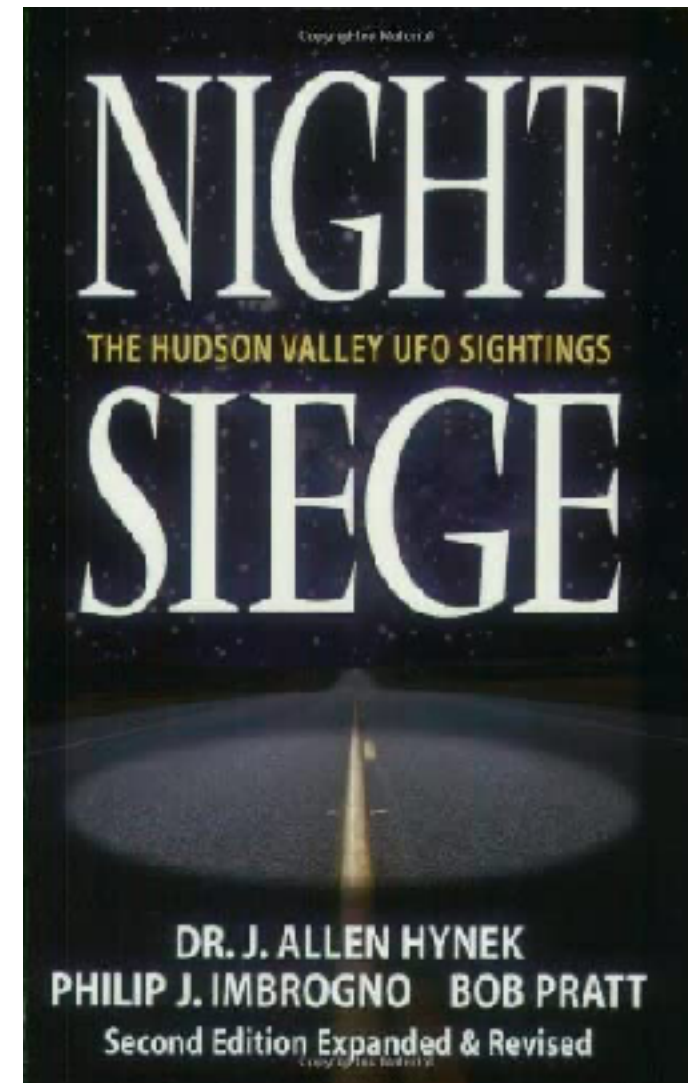


PHOTO BY DAVID HILLS

UFO Capital of The East Coast

History - Publications

Awake was filmed in and inspired by the history of close encounters in the Walkill River Valley, which is located in New York's Hudson Valley region. Its history of UFO sightings is vast. Tens of thousands of sightings have been reported over the course of 100+ years, with one of the first dating as far back as 1909. Below are some of the most notable written works on ufology documenting encounters from the area.



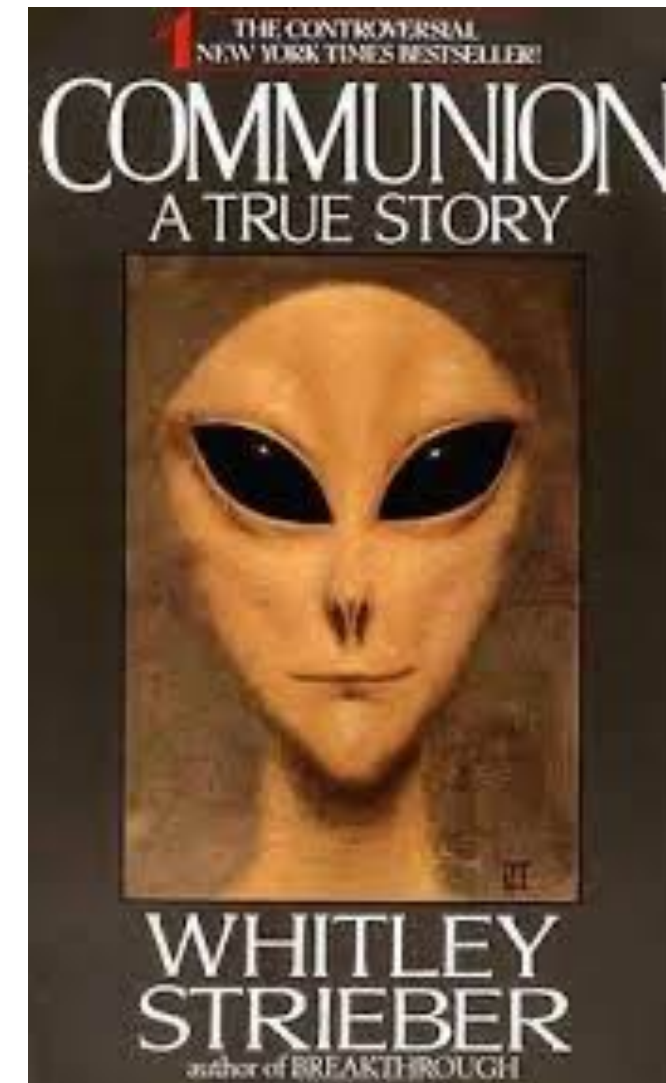
Dr. J. Allen Hynek

Known as the "father of ufology," was an American astronomer, professor, and ufologist.

Hynek acted as scientific advisor to UFO studies undertaken by the U.S. Air Force under three projects: Project Sign (1947–1949), Project Grudge (1949–1951) and Project Blue Book (1952–1969).

In later years, he conducted his own independent UFO research, developing the "Close Encounter" classification system. He was among the first people to conduct scientific analysis of reports and especially of trace evidence purportedly left by UFOs (Wikipedia).

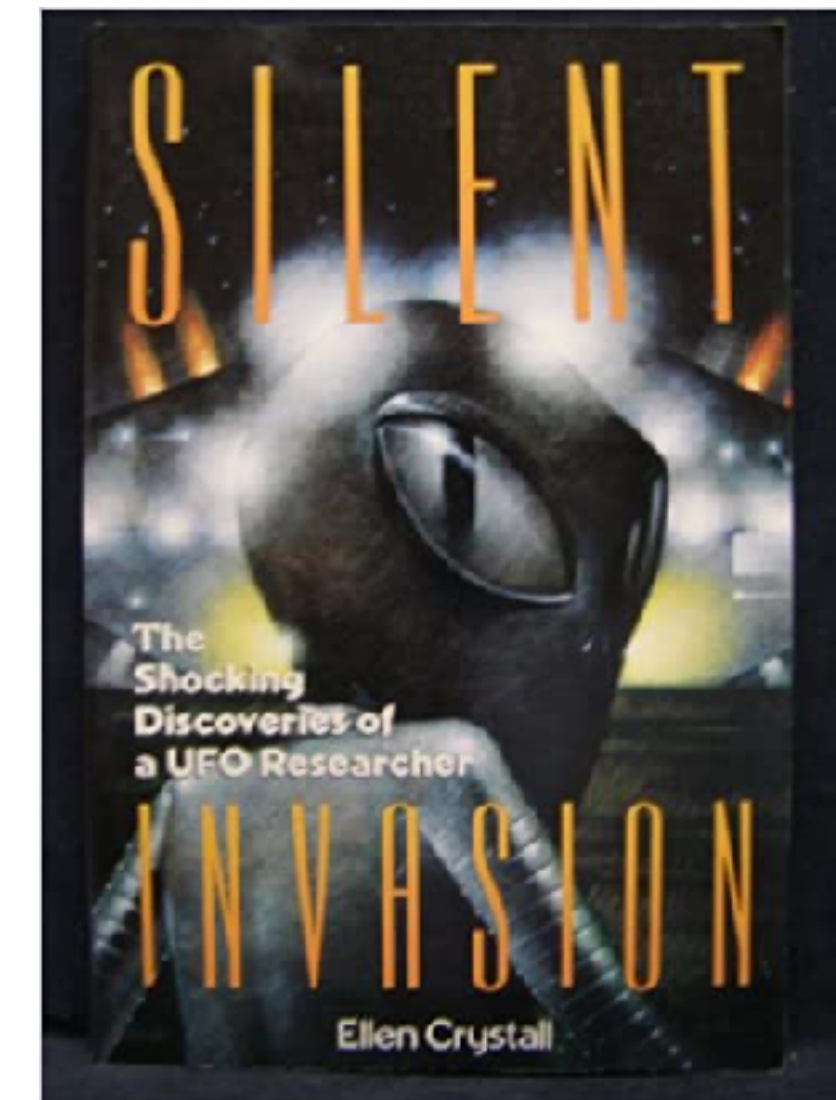
Dr. J. Allen Hynek was featured in and served as consultant for Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the 3rd Kind*.



Communion: A True Story

is a book by American ufologist and horror author Whitley Strieber that was first published in February 1987. The book is based on the experiences of Whitley Strieber, who experiences "lost time" and terrifying flashbacks, which hypnosis undertaken by Budd Hopkins later links to an alleged encounter with aliens.^[1] *Communion* was a nonfiction best seller for six months in 1987.^[2]

The book was later made into a film directed by Philippe Mora and starring Christopher Walken as Strieber and Lindsay Crouse as his wife, Anne (Wikipedia).



Silent Invasion:

Silent Invasion is a startling, well-researched, and well-documented account of Ellen Crystall's close encounters in Pine Bush, New York. She presents fascinating explanations for many UFO mysteries and compelling photos of aliens and their spacecraft (St. Martin's Press).

Crystall, who has taken nearly 1,000 photographs of strange lights and objects (as well as a few aliens), has spent decades scanning the nighttime sky around Pine Bush, New York, an area of intense UFO activity. Hundreds of people have accompanied her and witnessed the same phenomena (George Eberhart).

UFO Capital of The East Coast

Community Impact



PHOTO OF PINE BUSH UFO PARADE BY "ORANGE COUNTY TOURISM"



PHOTO OF PINE BUSH UFO PARADE BY "ORANGE COUNTY TOURISM"

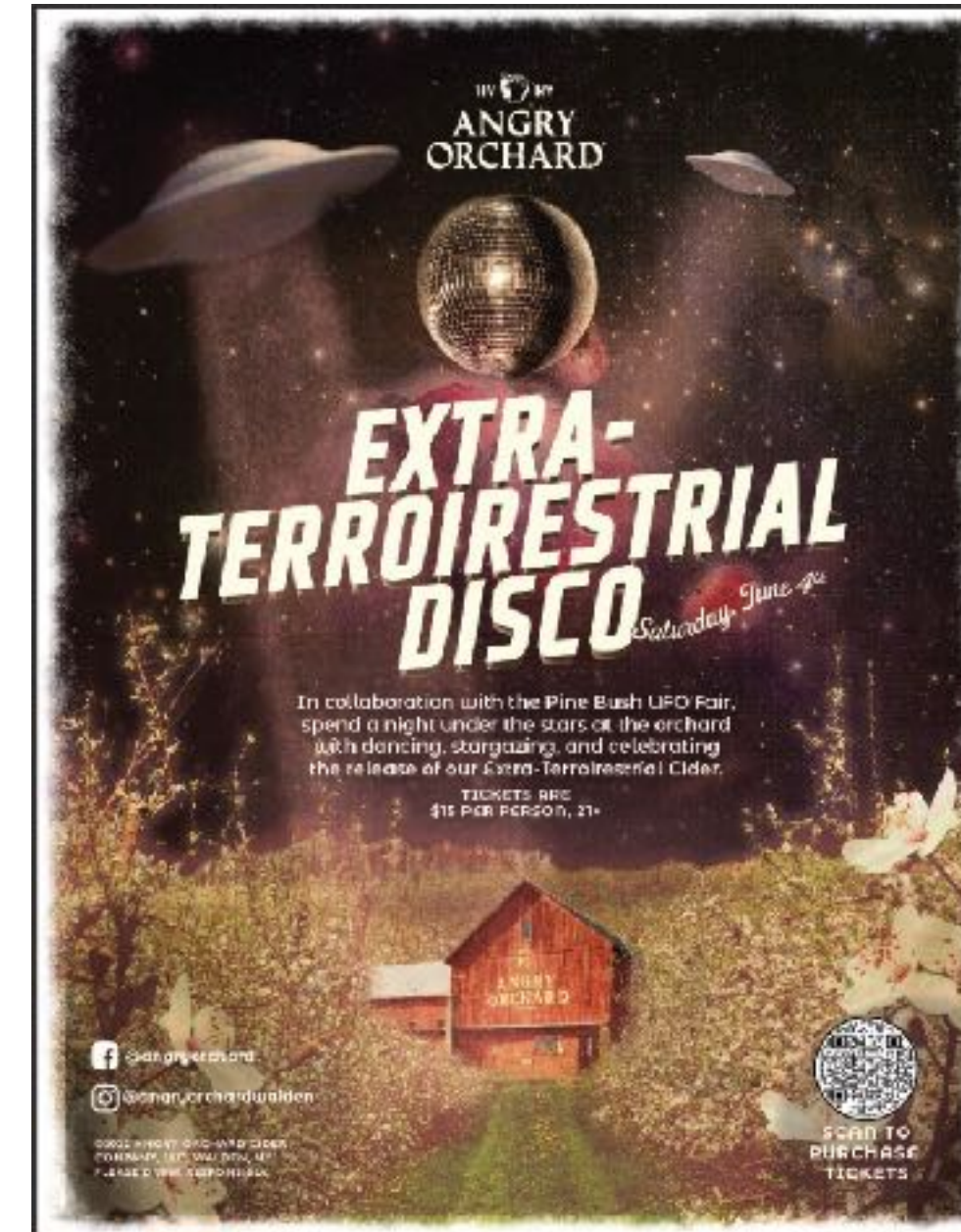


PHOTO OF PINE BUSH UFO PARADE BY "I HEART ORANGE COUNTY NY"

The paranormal has become a part of the culture of the Walkkill River Valley, a part of New York's Hudson Valley region. Annually, Pine Bush hosts a UFO Parade, and has now become home to the Pine Bush UFO and Paranormal Museum. Angry Orchard is located in the heart of the majority of the UFO activity and is embracing its history with the release of their Extra-Terroirestial cider. The Hudson Valley is also known for its hauntings, is the home of Sleepy Hollow and the Headless Horseman legend, and the setting for the tv show "Ghosts". It also has a thriving alternative spirituality community of psychics, Wiccans, paranormal investigators and the like.



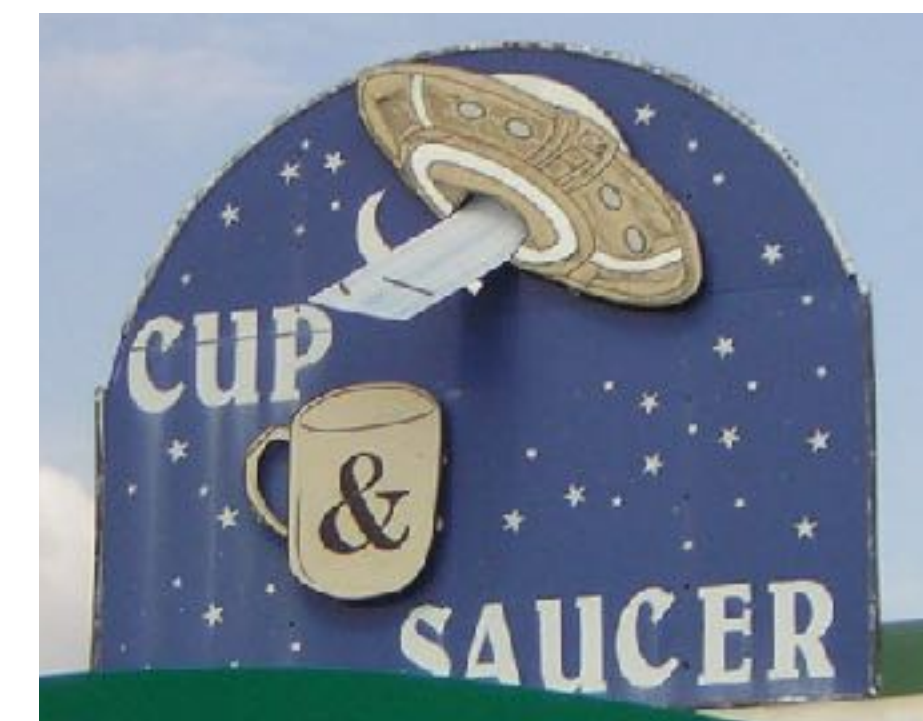
PHOTO OF PINE BUSH UFO PARADE BY "SPECTRUM NEWS 1"



ANGRY ORCHARD, WALDEN NY



PHOTO OF PINE BUSH CUP AND SAUCER CLASSIC DINER FROM: [HTTPS://CUPANDSAUCERNY.COM/](https://cupandsaucerny.com/)





Headless Horseman

Haunted Attractions

Collaboration

Awake was executive produced by Headless Horseman Haunted Attractions, who also served as the location and art department for the film. Headless Horseman's Haunter Eric Sapanara was the art director for the film.

But Awake is not the first collaboration between Fusion Box Films and Headless Horseman. Their previous films include *Glutton's Diner*, *The Lunar Motel*, as well as 2022's *The Nursery*, which was produced and filmed alongside Awake. It is currently featured on their [homepage](#).

One of America's Top Haunts

Headless Horseman is consistently named in the Top Ten Haunted Attractions by CNBC and AOL. It has been featured on The Travel Channel, Comedy Central, Emeril Live, Good Morning America, Nightline, CBS Evening News, The Today Show's segment "Sara in the City" and several national magazines.

Headless Horseman Haunted Attractions is located in Ulster Park, NY, part of the Historic Haunted Hudson Valley. The historic manor circa 1793 incorporates over sixty-five acres of naturally landscaped property including foreboding woods, surreal ponds, fruit orchards and more.

Headless Horseman Haunted Attractions has received numerous awards and honors:

- America's Scariest Haunted House in the Northeast by MTV
- #1 in America two consecutive years by HauntWorld Magazine
- #1 *Hallow Scream* by The Weather Channel
- World's Best Haunted Hayride by AOL News
- #1 on the Planet by New York Daily News
- "One of America's Best Hometown Haunts" by Fangoria Magazine
- #1 Outdoor Attraction by American Airlines
- #1 Scream Park and Hayride in America by HauntWorld Magazine
- #1 by USA Today
- Named #2 Haunted Attraction for 2019 by USA Today 10 Best Readers' Choice Travel Award



Behind the Scenes

Gathering together on the grounds of Headless Horseman's 65 acre haunt, film production ran over the course of 3 days. Actors and crew had to be driven back and forth from hair and makeup to set, where they went through incredible transformations, thanks to the work of Sara Altrock and Eric Sapanara.

The haunted houses we filmed in were built inside of barns. These barns don't have the luxury of air conditioning, because Headless Horseman's customers are only there at night. Suffice it to say, in mid July, they became saunas. We combated keeping actors makeup on their faces by running the car AC just outside the sets. Cool air in the evening brought a massive downpour - the roof in the surgery room becoming so loud that we could not record sound.

Filming with a strobe light, we vacated the set to only essential crew in order to prevent disorientation.

The majority of the effects in the film are practical. The medical staff who die at the end of the film, performed their death scenes backwards (from their death to their initial shock), as Eric pulled the tentacles from their neck. What you see in the film is the footage played in reverse.

These haunts are full of incredible detail but they are not designed for film production. The spaces are small and often have large props in them that can not be moved. And so blocking around them and moving the camera to cheat them out was an ongoing challenge.

There's always a million things you can't control on a film set but one we can and take pride in is the food. Our Mom, Maria Cordaro, ran a flawless craft services. A few cousins and an Aunt and Uncle also found their way into the film as well.

We rapped late in the evening and celebrated with a cake shaped like a brain from our Dad's bakery.



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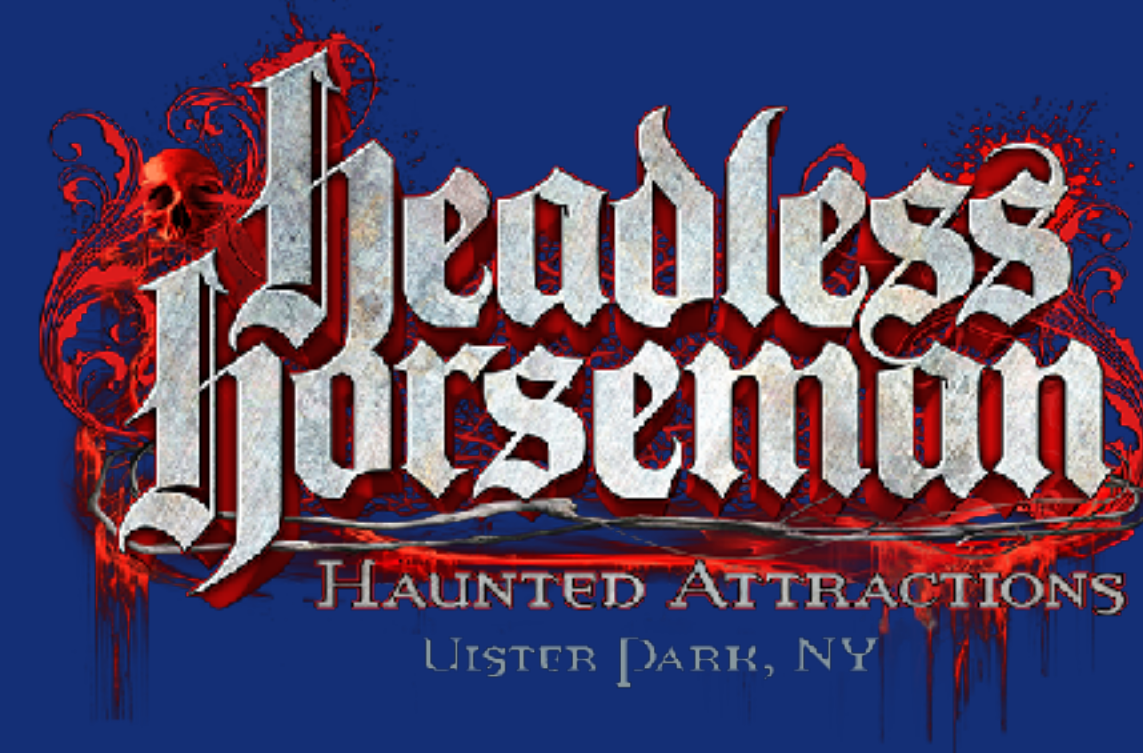
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