

# Ariel Revisited

How the Most Important UFO Event  
in Africa Was Covered Up – by Ufology



Did Grey Aliens Land in Black Africa?



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# 1. Ariel: A Misremembered Legacy. Summary Introduction

## I. *Doing Revisionist Ufology*

**HOW & WHY'S** 

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### Ariel School 62 Children Witnessed Landing Of Grey Aliens In Zimbabwe 1994, New Photo Evidence



— The site of the alleged Ariel UFO landing on September 16, 1994. Credit: Gunter Hoffer via Dailymail

**ARIEL 1994 - this one case has the power to change the world.**



This Report, *Ariel Revisited*, is unapologetically a revisionist historiography of the 1994 Ariel School UFO incident. In both intent and method, this Report rejects accepted narratives about Ariel. The Ariel encounter has been systematically misremembered in both media and scholarship: flattened in detail, recolored in morphology, and absorbed into a preexisting ufological template that obscures what the witnesses say actually happened on that fateful day. The historical picture of Ariel has not merely evolved but has been actively reshaped. Rather than proposing a novel myth, in this Report we return rigorously to the historical record itself. This Report is therefore not merely a *reinterpretation* of Ariel, but a *corrective historiography*—a forensic, restorative project aimed at reversing decades of narrative distortion.

## II. *A Compelling Case*

*The most compelling case of extra-terrestrial interaction in recorded history.* —Sydney Science Fiction Film Festival 2025

*one of the strangest and most haunting UFO sightings ever recorded.* —WHYY 2023

The Ariel School UFO Incident occurred on September 16, 1994, in a rural village of Zimbabwe in Africa. During the mid-morning recess at Ariel School a group of around 250 primary-school students were playing outdoors on the school grounds while all of the teachers were indoors attending a staff meeting. There was thus no adult supervision in the far area of the playground nearest the perimeter fence and adjoining scrubland. A number of students noticed unusual aerial activity above the tree line bordering the school grounds. Then a subset of students—at least 62 children—witnessed a remarkable event: the arrival in broad daylight of several unidentifiable aircraft. One silver, disc-and-dome shaped UFO reportedly descended and landed just beyond the school's perimeter fence. A group of children ran toward the edge of the playground that faced an area of brush and trees and from that vantage point, multiple witnesses reported seeing a shiny object resting or hovering low near the ground, partially obscured by vegetation.

According to the children's reports, there was an intense display of light and a deep humming or flute-like noise. Most astonishing was the appearance and stealth abilities of the craft's humanoid occupants, who appeared near the object. Some witnesses described the human-shaped figures as gliding, while others recalled them standing still or appearing suddenly in a new position. Several children reported direct eye contact with one of the figures. Students reported a range of emotional reactions, including fear, shock, a sense of paralysis, but also curiosity rather than panic. The figures never spoke audibly, yet a number of witnesses described having a subjective internal experience during the encounter of receiving a telepathic message from the beings.

The encounter was brief. After several minutes some students reported seeing the object rise or depart; others simply noticed that it and the figures were gone. No adult witnessed the event. Immediately afterwards, the children rushed back to class visibly shaken and excited. Multiple students independently reported to teachers and staff what they had seen. School administrators contacted parents, and the incident soon attracted media attention. Over subsequent days and weeks, the children were interviewed by teachers, parents, journalists, and investigators.

Ariel is considered "One of the most extraordinary mass UFO sightings in recent history."<sup>1</sup> This incident has the distinction of being one of the most *extensively recorded* mass-witness UFO encounters. Within days the child witnesses drew what they saw on that bright, sunny day. The general consistency of their dozens of accounts, coupled with the appropriate degree of *difference* based on perspective, location, age, and the state of mind of the child witnesses, makes this a solid case—*it actually happened*. The skeptics'

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<sup>1</sup> Ellen Mahoney, "Through their Eyes - the 1994 Ariel School Encounter Details," *Journal for Abduction-Encounter Research* June 28, 2018.

attempt to debunk this case as mass hysteria flounders.<sup>2</sup> The Ariel School UFO Incident turns out to be “the best documented and best witnessed close encounter of the third kind of all times.”<sup>3</sup>

### III. *Did Grey Aliens Land in Black Africa?*

In the popular narrative about this incident, it is taken for granted that the beings encountered by the Ariel School students are the typical Greys of popular ufology, but with pale, plastic-white faces. This image has been sanctified by the release in 2022 of the documentary *Ariel Phenomenon*, which featured testimony of some of the now grown student witnesses. According to this media, we should visualize the beings of the Ariel School UFO Incident as “**small, maybe 4 feet tall, dressed in skin-tight black bodysuits. They had narrow, pale, almost plasticky-looking faces with two enormous black eyes.**”<sup>4</sup> This Report, *Ariel Revisited*, challenges this dominant mythos rather than participating in it.

This Report challenges this popular modern depiction of the Ariel beings as “Greys” or pale, plastic-looking humanoids. This Report demonstrates that such a depiction is at variance with the general consensus of the witnesses themselves. Near the hovering or landed object, several children reported the presence of humanoid figures, which they consistently described in their own words as *men*. These mysterious *men* were reported as black in appearance, with bodies that appeared black and dressed in tight-fitting black coverings. Importantly, a number of witnesses emphasized that the figures did not appear dull or shadow-like. Instead they were shiny and luminous and they thus conspicuously stood out visually against the background, despite their dark coloration. The encountered beings were distinctly *black men*. They were *exotic* looking Black men for sure—not your typical Zimbabweans—but they were *black men* nonetheless according to the majority of the witness testimony *at the time of the*

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<sup>2</sup> On this theory see Demobly Kokota, “Episodes of mass hysteria in African schools: A study of literature,” *Malawi Medical Journal* 23:3 (2011): 74–77.

<sup>3</sup> On the Ariel School UFO Incident see: Cynthia Hind, “The Children of Ariel School – Case No. #96. Ruwa, Zimbabwe,” *UFO Afrinews* 1994; idem, “UFO Flap in Zimbabwe Case No 95,” *UFO Afrinews* No. 11 (February 1995): 4-18; idem, “The Children of Ariel School – Case No. #96,” *UFO Afrinews* No. 11 (February 1995)19-23; idem, “Ariel School Report (Cont.) Case No 96,” *UFO Afrinews* No. 12 (July 1995): 7-15; idem, “Recent UFO Sightings in Africa – The Cultural Implications,” *UFOs: Examining The Evidence. The Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> BUFORA International UFO Congress 1995*, ed. Mike Woofen, pp. 35-38; idem, “UFO Flap in Zimbabwe Case No 95,” *UFO Afrinews* No. 11 (February 1995): 4-18; idem, “‘There’s an Alien on the Playground,’” *Fate* (April 1997): 46-48; John E. Mack, *Passport to the Cosmos: Human Transformation and Alien Encounters* (Largo, USA: Kunati, 2008) 42-43; Dominique Callimanopulos, “Exploring African and Other Alien Encounters” *CenterPiece* 5 (Spring/Summer 1995): 10-11; Michael Hesemann, *UFOs: the Secret History* (New York: Marlowe & Company, 1998) 490-496; idem, “The Ruwa Incident: 62 Pupils Witness UFO Landing (Part 1),” *Magazin* 118 (2000): 1-8; idem, “Der Ruwa-Zwischenfall (Part 2),” *Magazin* 119 (2000): 40-46; “Rare interviews and articles with children who witnessed the Ariel school UFO landing in Ruwa, 1994” 2000 @ <https://odysee.com/@RealEOC:1/rare-interviews-and-articles-with-2:b>; *Ariel Phenomenon*, 2022 documentary directed by Randall Nickerson; *Encounters. Episode 2: Believers* Netflix documentary 2023 directed by Yon Motskin.

<sup>4</sup> Liz Tung, “Documentary explores the UFO sighting that changed the course of 62 children’s lives,” *WHYY* October 23, 2023.

*incident*. It is demonstrable that over the years the story as the Ariel children continue to tell it has evolved and has grown taller than their original telling; this is to be expected with children. However, this growth was not totally organic; rather, it was *directed* by the investigators. Exotic Black beings were *not* compatible with Western ET imagery, so the Ariel story had to be reshaped into something more familiar to Western ufology. The Grey-physiology template was imposed on Ariel rather than derived from it.



*Depiction of Ariel School “aliens” based on some more recent testimony of witnesses.*

Another myth associated with the Ariel School incident is that it was experienced by village Black African children. There were some. But the majority of the witnesses were children from wealthy white Zimbabweans of British and South African origin. This is an important sociological point. The Ariel incident is often dismissed by the skeptics on the grounds of the racist presumption that “(Black) African children” are prone to mass hysteria.<sup>5</sup> This *trope* has no footing here when it is acknowledged that it is largely *White* children of wealthy *White* expatriates, who were the majority witnesses at Ariel and who give some of the clearest and strongest testimony. And these are *White children* claiming that they saw *Black men* coming out of a UFO.

#### IV. *Cynthia Hind and the “Greyification” of Ariel*

All prior historiographies of the Ariel School UFO Incident—despite their differences in tone and emphasis—converged on a non-Black, Grey-compatible

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<sup>5</sup> Demobly Kokota, “View Point: Episodes of mass hysteria in African schools: a study of literature,” *Malawi Medical Journal* 23:3 (September 2011):74-7.

“Black man” testimony from the historical record. Hind’s interventions became history, forming the foundational layer of what later became the “Pale Grey at Ariel” narrative.

Hind was not a malicious actor, but she did have an agenda that incentivized her distortions. Hind was operating within a 1990s ufological framework in which the Grey was the dominant, culturally sanctioned alien morphology. Reports of “black men emerging from a UFO” failed to support these prevailing physiognomic expectations; in any case, in Africa this could too easily be dismissed as misidentification. The children’s actual testimony therefore threatened the extraterrestrial hypothesis that Hind championed. Because Hind hoped the Ariel case would become “the biggest story in the world,” she had a strong incentive to establish the case’s ET legitimacy. What emerged was a clear clash between witness testimony and ufological expectation. Hind therefore repeatedly redirected children away from describing “black men,” reframing their accounts and rephrasing their testimony to match ET norms and fit ufological orthodoxy. As a consequence, the children’s explicit testimony of Black beings—an extraordinary and culturally charged detail—was almost entirely removed from mainstream representations.

## V. *Aim of this Report*

This Report meticulously reconstructs the 1994 encounter in a way that differs sharply from today’s popular memory. Where previous accounts of Ariel prioritized cultural resonance over raw testimony and evidentiary integrity, this Report’s guiding historiographical value is primary-source fidelity. Its methodology is forensic rather than speculative. Accordingly, this Report:

- Prioritizes the earliest verbal testimony and contemporaneous student drawings as primary sources.
- Treats later paraphrases, summaries, and documentaries as secondary or tertiary layers that inherited and perpetuated the distortions.
- Conducts a forensic analysis of interviewer contamination, documenting where and how investigators reshaped witness accounts.
- Identifies and restores suppressed or erased witness descriptions of the black beings.
- Compares archival interview footage directly against published quotations to document discrepancies.

The original Ariel testimony has been distorted over time. Correcting this narrative drift reveals an encounter unlike any modern UFO archetype. When the earliest testimony is foregrounded, a striking and consistent picture emerges—one that differs sharply from the modern, globally circulating version of this event. Early witnesses did not describe pale, plastic, or “Grey”-type beings. The Ariel encounter, as initially described by witnesses, involved three luminous, black humanoids, observed in broad daylight by largely White schoolchildren. The figures were perceived as humanlike in posture and movement, yet clearly exotic in appearance. Crucially, the witnesses

morphology for the beings seen by the students. This Report demonstrates that this convergence did not arise because witnesses described the beings as such, but because of a layered *process of distortion*:

- On-site investigators reshaped witness testimony through leading questions.
- Media accounts flattened anomalous detail.
- Witnesses later *internalized* earlier distortions.
- The custodians of ufological orthodoxy sanctioned certain morphological types (Grey Alien) while marginalizing others (Asiatic Black Men).



At the center of this process of distortion and misremembering stands Cynthia Hind, Africa's MUFON coordinator and the first ufologist to investigate the Ariel School UFO Incident at the time. She was the foundational yet *flawed* chronicler of the case—and the single most influential distorting force in Ariel historiography. Hind's influence was not neutral but was *interventionist*. She grossly mishandled children's recollections of their experience.<sup>6</sup> Hind's on-site interviews—observable in archival footage—show consistent interviewer contamination: repeatedly leading, reframing, or overwriting children's descriptions.

Hind arrived at Ariel School shortly after the initial media coverage. She interviewed the children on camera on September 20, 1994, and her written summaries—published in *UFO Afrinews* and later in her book *UFOs Over Africa* (1996)—became the canonical early record of this remarkable event. Her position in the chronology gave her outsized influence: her framing of the event became the scaffolding upon which all later popular histories of Ariel were built. Hind intervened and redirected the narrative, leading to decades of misrepresentation and the effective erasing of the

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<sup>6</sup> See especially Gilles Fernandez, "Close encounter at Ariel School, Ruwa, Zimbabwe 1994? Some Counterpoint," *Skeptics vs. Flying Saucers* June 26, 2016 @ <http://skepticversustheflyingsaucers.blogspot.com/2016/06/rencontre-rapprochee-ariel-school-ruwa.html>

consistently categorized the figures as “men” rather than monsters, robots, or abstract entities.

Restoring the original witness testimony dramatically changes the nature and the significance of the event. The Ariel School UFO Incident was not a “Grey-alien visitation.” It was an encounter with exotic, black-skinned, humanlike figures, three of whom behaved in coordinated but non-threatening ways near a silver, disc-shaped craft. This version of events is more internally coherent and more faithful to the raw testimony than are later interpretations promoted through media and documentary treatments such as *Ariel Phenomenon*.

At its core, *Ariel Revisited* is a *revisionist historiography*: a forensic attempt to recover a suppressed past by returning to the undistorted record. By excavating early testimony, child drawings, and neglected archival footage, *Ariel Revisited* undertakes the first systematic effort to undo decades of distortion. When primary sources are restored to their proper place, the Ariel School UFO encounter reappears not as the familiar Grey-alien myth, but as something stranger and *more disruptive*, but also more historically grounded. Ariel was misremembered not because the event was unclear, but because its earliest and most influential interpreters deliberately reshaped its memory. Correcting that intervention is necessary to understand what the children actually saw and experienced—and to understand how UFO history itself is constructed. Thus, *Ariel Revisited* is not only a study of a single UFO encounter. It is a study of the politics of UFO narrative shaping. It deconstructs ufological orthodoxy by showing how alien imagery is manufactured and defended—often directly against the evidentiary record.



*Some of the Ariel School students. Top center is headmaster Colin Mackey.*



## THE BEINGS



*From testimony of student witnesses, for example Francis Chirimuuta, it appears that the landed disc-shaped UFO had several luminous spheres hovering above it, until they simply “disappeared.”*



*From the testimony of the 35 Ariel School students who say they saw the beings, these figures likely looked more like the above depiction than like the current, popular depictions of Greys and Pasty-Whites.*