



A Critical Examination
of the
Todd Standing
Sylvanic Video Subjects

By Daniel Falconer
and Phil Poling



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Author's note



This document exists to articulate the features that the authors have observed in the videos and still imagery associated with Mr Todd Standings purported Bigfoot Videos numbered 4 and 5. The intention is to share the reasons why we have independently concluded that Mr Standing's videos show human contrivances and not living creatures. Mr Phil Polling and I have diverse backgrounds, expertise and experience. We had no affiliation prior to the compilation of this document but agreed to work together out of a shared desire to encourage informed critical discourse regarding the veracity of the Standing videos.

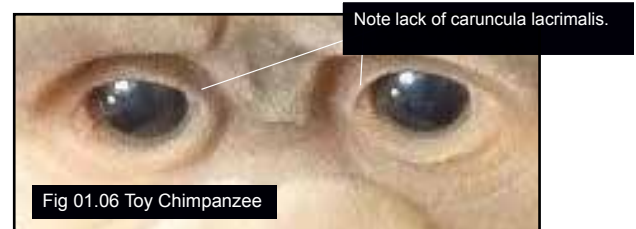
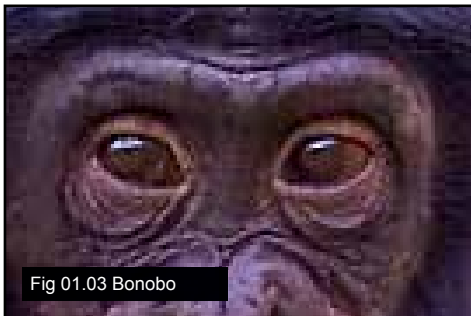
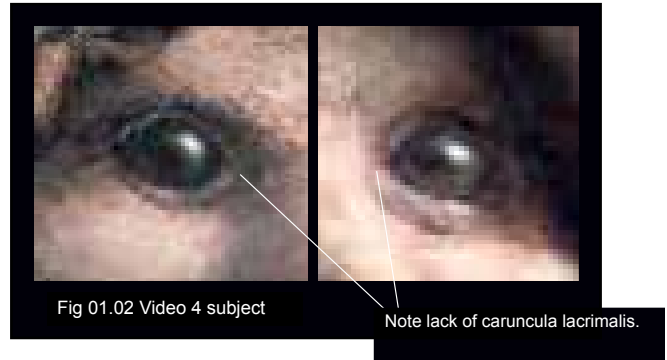
As a general rule, purported sasquatch photography and video tends to be blurry and indistinct. Often the only reason it is labelled as possibly sasquatch in origin is because it is too indistinct to definitively identify as human or not. In most of these cases it is difficult to make a definitive determination regarding the authenticity of the subject matter because there isn't enough information in the imagery.

The Standing videos are something else. Even with access only to the low resolution versions so far shared publically by Mr Standing, the Sylvania/Standing videos and pictures are of such striking clarity and quality that it is possible to observe diagnostically important details and draw solid conclusions without the usual mud of pixelation or lack of focus.

That said, it does not appear that the full, unedited videos have yet been made available to the public, so in this document we are working with what we have. There are some still images obtained from Todd Standing's websites for the purposes of analysis that do not appear to correspond to any of the numerous video clips so far released, but we have grouped them all here for analysis under the subjects of Videos 4 and 5. Mr Standing may wish to clarify which are video still and which are still photographs. For the sake of this document, we are treating them as Video evidence for objective analysis. If Mr Standing wishes to provide higher resolution material or original files to us or for independent experts to evaluate for the sake of scientific verification, we would be thrilled.

Examination of the eyes and eyelids.

Compare the eyes of Video 4 Subject with those of apes, humans and a toy chimpanzee.



The anatomy of the Video 4 subject's eyelids is exceedingly simple and uniform, having more in common with a toy than a living animal, suggestive of a sculpture rather than real anatomy. The eyes of the Video 4 subject never move. In all the still images and video they seem to stare blankly in the same straight-ahead direction. They do not dart, shift focus, or change the direction of gaze in reaction to their environment, the subject's attention or any other stimulus. They stare dully ahead, even as the animal moves. In animals with mobile eyeballs a turn of the head is predicted by a change in eye direction, leading the turn or shift. If the animal is focussed on something then the eyes will remain focussed on that subject while the head or body moves, but in the case of the Video 4 subject the eye position is locked to the head position, an unnatural state that does not correlate with genuine animal behaviour but matches what would be expected to be seen in eyes glued permanently into position on a prop.

The pupils of the Video 4 Subject do not appear to dilate or contract at any point in the video or any of the still images, even when shadows fall across them. This is inconsistent with a real animal with animate pupils that react involuntarily to the intensity of the light shining into them, but is consistent with glass eyes used in taxidermy and practical creature effects.

The eyelids of the video 4 subject never blink or squint. In fact, they never demonstrate any flicker of movement or life at all. Once again, if the subject were a real animal some reaction or change would be expected. The lack of movement is consistent with an unarticulated, sculpted and cast prop.

The eyes of the Video 4 subject appear to lack a caruncula lacrimalis at the nasal terminus of each eye (compare Fig 01.02 with known apes and human).

The eyes themselves look very much like commercially available taxidermy eyes and do not show any organic structures such as veining or colour variation. The reflection is dull and lifeless, like those of the toy rather than those of living apes or human.

The 'wink' in Video 5

The 'wink' featured in Video 5 offers some of the most conclusive evidence that the video does not show a real animal. The reason for this involves the mechanics of the 'wink' which do not correspond to those of living primates.

When a human or nonhuman ape blinks, both lower and upper eyelids shift to varying degrees to effect a brief covering of the eyeball, with the upper eyelid usually doing most of the work. The muscle action is a small one, usually subconscious and very fast, effected in a matter of a fraction of a second (Fig 02.04). The brow is usually only involved in a blink when a frown occurs or if the subject is squinting, which uses different muscles that in turn change the expression of the face, with tension occurring beyond the brow region, including on the cheek, bridge of the nose and forehead (Figs 02.02 & .03). Furrowing the brow does not result in an occlusion of the eyeball.

In Video 5, the 'wink' observed is unusual and seemingly in conflict with the underlying muscular anatomy of apes and humans. It is awkwardly slow compared to an unconscious wink, and while the shadow of the brow and low resolution nature of even the brightened version of Video 5 makes it difficult to see whether the upper eyelid moves at all, what is plainly visible is that the brow provides all or most of the movement involved in the wink action, collapsing to partially occlude the eyeball, but without any observable effect on any of the other parts of the face normally effected by a squint or furrow where this muscle action should be evident (Fig 02.01). The remainder of the face is completely rigid. No tension is observable in the cheek, forehead, bridge of the nose or lower eyelid. The remainder of the face is utterly and unnaturally passive, as if there were no muscle connection between these features. Even if it were possible for a human or nonhuman ape's orbit to collapse under some hitherto undescribed muscle and bone articulation, there should be some contraction visible in the forehead, cheek or bridge of the nose. In Video 5 there is nothing - only an unnatural crushing of the brow to partially cover the eye ball.

While not something that can be replicated on the human or ape face, the strange brow-blink action would be what might be expected to be seen if the subject were a prop and some very basic (though flawed) attempt has been made to create an artificial approximation of a blink, either by an animatronic or post-production effect.

An animatronic action could be produced by placing a mechanism beneath the 'skin' of the prop and triggering it via puppetry - either servo-driven, rod or cable-actuated, or by hand. There is some expense and expertise required to achieve this.

Alternately, a post-production effect, ie: CGI, involving the use of a program like After Effects to digitally warp several frames of the video in an approximation of a wink is also very possible and probably the most likely explanation in this instance. It is cheaper and easier to create than a mechanical blink effect, but either technique could achieve what is seen in Video 5 easily and offer a far more plausible explanation than a hitherto undescribed muscle action.



Fig 02.01 Video 5 subject 'wink'

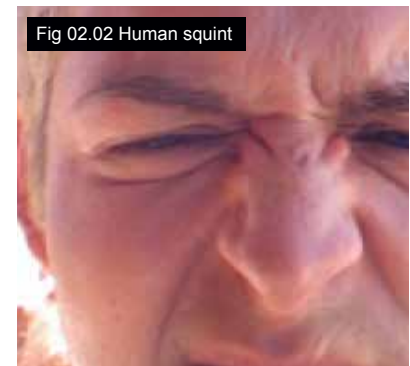


Fig 02.02 Human squint



Fig 02.03 Human shut tight

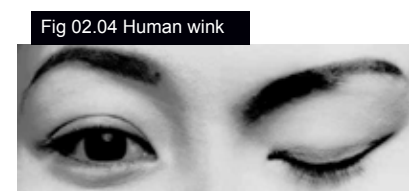


Fig 02.04 Human wink

Examination of the skin and fur/hair.

Compare the skin surface of Video 4 Subject with flocking on an animal mask.



Fig 03.01 Video 4 subject

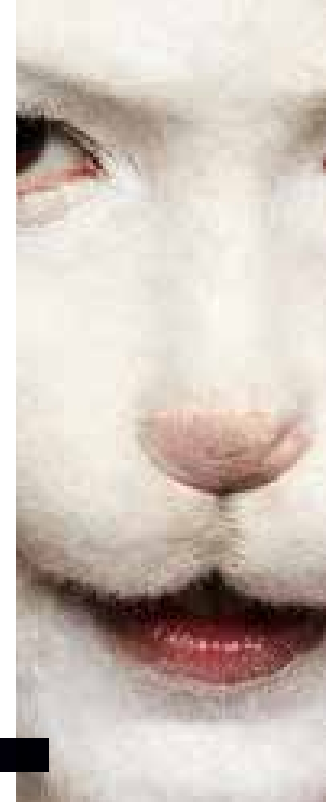


Fig 03.02 Flocked mask

The entire face surface of the Video 4 subject is covered in a kind of soft fuzz, even covering the eyelids. This covering does not match anything seen on humans or any of the higher primates (see Figs 03.06 to .09), but does happen look exactly like the flocking used in toys and physical make-up effects as a proxy for a short-furred surface (Figs 03.02 & .10)

The transition from short, flocked facial fluff to thick, woolly hair on the circumference of the face is remarkably abrupt. The edge looks like that which is seen when flocking gives way to a glued on pelt.

There is also what looks just like glue residue in places such as the periphery of the lips and chin. This is consistent with what would be seen when practical make-up effects techniques are employed. Top effects technicians are usually able to minimise or eliminate visible edges, but often they are visible in less accomplished work.

Compare the hair growth pattern of the Video 4 and 5 subjects.



Fig 03.03 Video 5 subject



Fig 03.04 Video 4 subject



Fig 03.05 Video 4 subject

It is curious that the hairlines of the subjects in Videos 4 and 5 are inconsistent. Even allowing for natural variation between individuals, it would be expected that if these two are members of the same species that there would be some commonality. Instead the Video 4 subject has a thick woolly hairline beginning at the circumference of the face, and most notably at the top of the forehead like a human's, whereas the Video 5 subject has a more fur-like hairline that begins at the bridge of the nose and runs across the brows. It even has hair growing up onto the cheeks. The direction of growth on the head runs from front to back on the Video 5 subject but on the Video 4 subject it appears to fall forwards to hood the face. Why such disparity in texture, length and growth pattern? Surely a more likely explanation that this level of variation within the species is that of differences in the construction of the two props, the Video 5 subject being a more sophisticated second attempt?

Compare the skin surface of the Video 5 subject with those of humans, apes and hand-laid hair-work used in physical special effects.



Fig 03.06 Video 5 subject

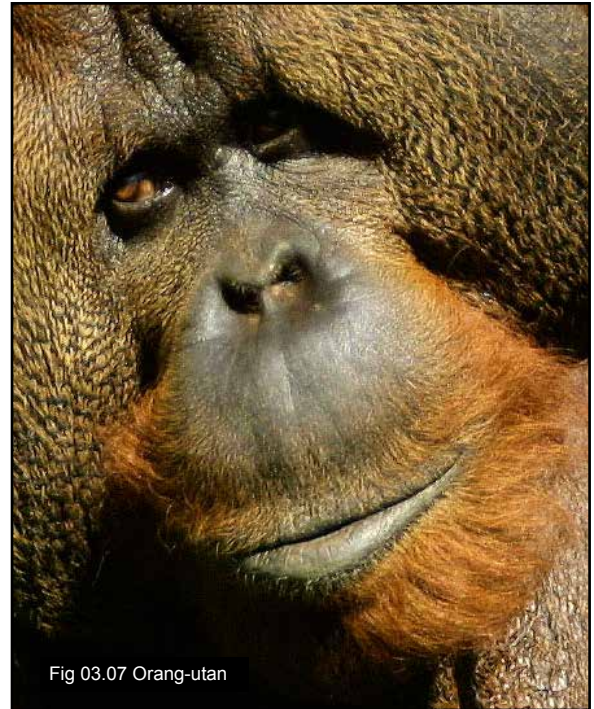


Fig 03.07 Orang-utan



Fig 03.08 Chimpanzee



Fig 03.09 Lowland Gorilla



Fig 03.10 Hand-laid Hair

The hair of the Video 5 subject appears hand-laid across the cheeks and messy glue work is evident on the upper lip and top of cheeks. Shine visible on the hair is also consistent with what would be expected from glue that has been smeared on the top of the hair inadvertently during the gluing process. Compare Figs 03.06 and .10 - the same technique and glue residue is visible in both.

Examination of the lips and mouth.

Compare the skin surface of the lips of the Video 4 subject with those of a human and the lips of a foam latex mask.



Fig 04.01 Video 4 subject

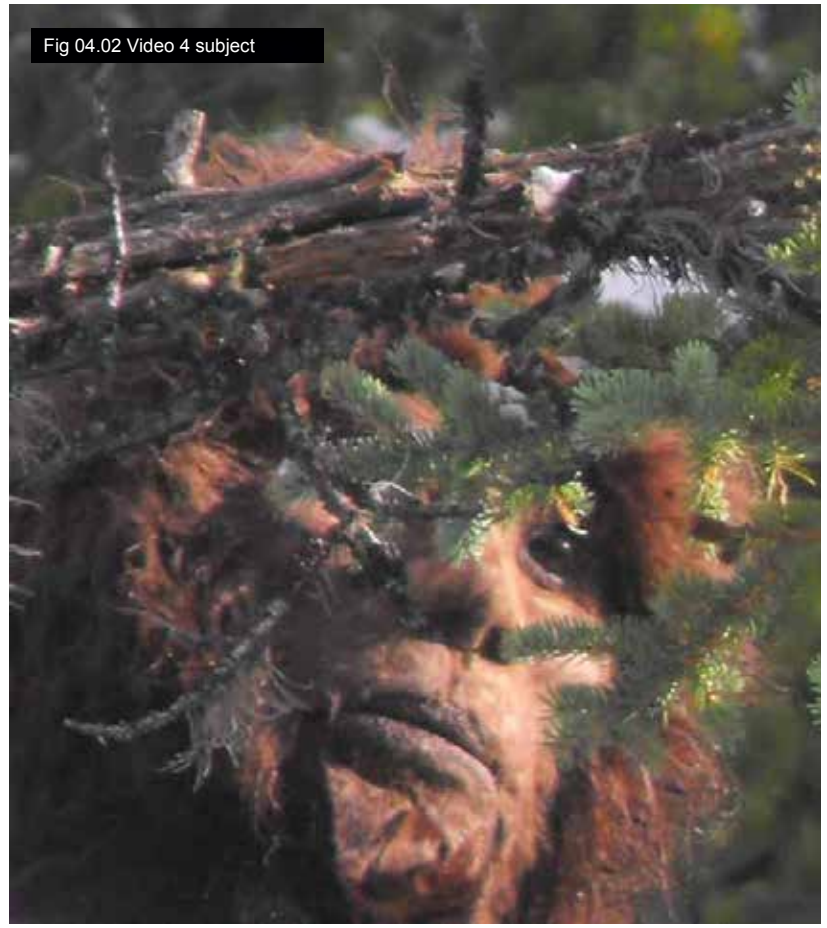


Fig 04.02 Video 4 subject

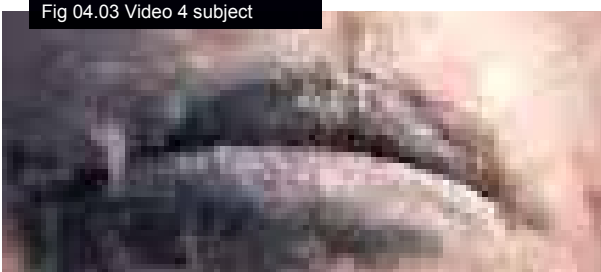


Fig 04.03 Video 4 subject



Fig 04.04 Human



Fig 04.05 Video 4 subject

The lips are the only surface on the face of the Video 4 subject that are not in some way covered in fuzz. They appear dry and match the look of painted foam latex. There is a hard edge running along the perimeter of the lips and down from the corners of the mouth towards the chin, suggestive of the edge of a pattern being cut or gluing edge.

Examination of the nasal anatomy.

Compare the nasal anatomy of the Video 4 subject with that of apes and humans.



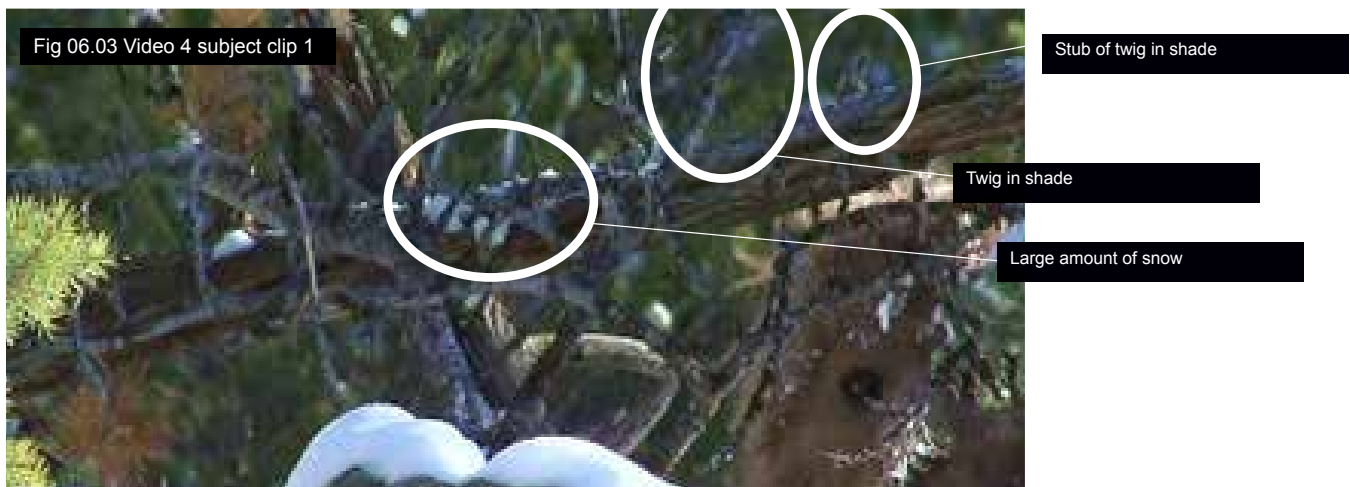
The nasal septum of the Video 4 subject has an unnatural looking line where it joins the surface of the face (see Fig 05.01). This suspicious looking feature is not present in extant nonhuman ape species or humans. In each case the nasal septum blends smoothly with the surface of the face. The presence of a line of separation here is suggestive of a seam or join, an artefact of its artificial construction and not a naturally occurring feature of anatomy.

Compare the bridge of the nose of the Video 5 subject with those of apes and humans.



The wrinkling at the bridge of the nose of the subject in Video 5 looks unnatural. It lacks any natural variation such as can be seen in real wrinkles on skin, regardless of species. The wrinkling on the Video 5 subject appears to be a simplistic sculpt. It does not correspond to any expression such as a furrowing of the brow, not an effect of age as the rest of the face appears devoid of wrinkles. It is hard to imagine what function this puckered area of skin would serve on the face when the rest of the complexion is so smooth. It seems problematic to justify from an anatomical perspective and is more readily explained as a simple sculptural choice, a crude approximation of the wrinkles above the nose seen in some apes.

Situational concerns.



Snow in Video 4

In all images associated with Video 4 a branch bisects the picture frame. It is the same branch in each image, although the subject moves in position behind it. Snow is present on this branch in some stills but not in others, suggesting some significant time has passed between them - possibly hours.

Fig 06.04 Video 4 subject in first position. Light source (sun) is to the right of frame and behind the subject. Note backlit fur, twigs and snow.



Fig 06.05 Video 4 subject in second position. Light source (sun) is clearly in a different position, now being higher and more forward of the subject. Note the light now hits the top of the head, branch and needles.



Fig 06.06 Video 4 subject in second position. Light source (sun) is clearly in a different position, now being higher and more forward of the subject. Note the light now hits the top of the head, branch and needles.



Video 4 Lighting

In the various video clips and still images grouped under the Video 4 title the lighting appears to change quite dramatically, with certain twigs lit by sunlight in some images and clips but shadowed in others. Did hours pass during which several videos were shot or were the images/videos obtained on different occasions in the exact same spot? The two options available for us are that either Mr. Standing had been there recording for that entire length of time or the short snippets of video were shot at different times, or even on different days.



Videos 4 & 5

From a photography standpoint and based upon what has been presented thus far, the composition of these videos simply don't make sense. At no time do we see any portion of the lower body. A mid-shot was taken of the Video 4 subject only when it had a rock to hide behind, and of Video 5 only when there was a log providing cover. The subject is cropped off in a shot even when that means the image is framed with the subject at the bottom of frame or in a corner rather than in the centre of frame as would be expected if the photographer was trying to film as much of the animal as possible. The camera zooms in and out, shifts focus, swings around, but always keeps the subject framed so that everything below the chin is hidden. At most in Video 5 there is a suggestion of a shoulder. Even in the 3/4 angle still images of the subject from clip 3 of Video 4 the creature is cropped below the neck. Compare these with other Video 4 clips (see Fig 06.10 & .11) and the same branch is recognisable, this time at the bottom of frame where in the Video 4 stills it is above the subject's head. The subject's neck and chest would have been visible to the photographer in clip 3, but they were not included in the frame. This is either a remarkable coincidence or yet more evidence of the photographer's motivation to avoid showing the subject below the neck at all costs, possibly because this would have revealed the limit of the prop? The framing seems consciously staged and is suggestive of someone trying to hide the subject below the neck rather than expose as much of the creature as possible. Were this to be a peculiarity of just one video it could be overlooked but because it occurs in both videos and in spite of several cuts and reframes in video 5, it arouses suspicion regarding the photographer's motives.



The simplest scenario to explain all these discrepancies is that the videos were contrived and that the time taken to set up, orchestrate and frame the multiple takes ate several hours. The alternative is that the videographer spent several hours videoing the subject, in which case why has the rest of the video not been shared? Alternately, the subject must have returned to the same spot several times over those hours. Either strains credibility.



Video 5

Note the different in video quality in these Video 5 stills (Fig 06.15 & .16). The location appears to be the same as the same stick and branch formations appear in both videos. Why the difference in video? Were they filmed at the same time with different video settings on the camera, or were they filmed at separate times and by coincidence the videographer and subject assumed almost the exact same positions to line up with the somehow unchanged branches?

An uncanny likeness?



Video 5

A curious feature of the Video 5 subject is its resemblance to Todd Standing himself. Note in the overlaid images of standing and the subject that the morphology of the mouth including lower creases of the cheeks and lip area is remarkably similar. The positioning of other features aligns well also. This could simply be a coincidence, or it could suggest the Standing's own head cast was used in the manufacture of the prop.

When creating a humanoid prop it is common practice in the special make-up effects world to begin with a cast of a human face rather than starting from scratch. Head casts are created by making a mould of a person's head and face and then casting a reproduction from that mould, usually in a professional grade plaster or casting stone. It is a basic skill any special make-up effects artist should know. Natural positioning and the complex sculptural forms of features such as the mouth and nose are already in place before the sculptor starts, providing a firm foundation upon which to work and make modifications.

If the creator of the Video 5 subject prop were to require a head cast from someone but be concerned about keeping the project a secret (as would be expected with a hoax) then who better to use than the person who commissioned the prop? It would therefore follow that a likeness to Mr Standing would be not just be possible, but even expected.

Furthermore, the mouth area is one of the few features of Video 5 subject that appears very natural and doesn't look sculpted. That would follow if it were left for the most part as found when beginning the construction process with a head cast. The resculpting of the nose, nasal bridge and eyes (head casts are conducted with eyes closed) all seem to be much less accomplished, which would make sense in this scenario.

While not constituting proof of duplicity on its own, the astonishing physical similarity is a detail that should not be overlooked when analysing the integrity of the video.

Contributors' Concluding Remarks

Phil Poling

Video 4

An area of concern to me as I evaluate the Standing Video # 4 is the light colored (auburn) Bigfoot and appearing in three positions within a small area and with different lighting conditions in each.

The position of daylight to the subject changes in all three, indicating a significant passing of time. The two options available for us is that either Mr. Standing had been there recording for that entire length of time or the short snippets of video were shot at different times or even different days.

From a photography standpoint and based upon what has been presented thus far, the composition of these videos simply don't make sense. At no time do we see any portion of the lower body. A mid-shot was taken of the subject only when it had a rock to hide behind. The rest are close cropped either during the time of the shoot or done in post-production.

Given the length of time involved in these recordings, I find it suspicious that he would not have captured at least some footage of the lower body area. In fact; this would have been the natural case if capturing footage of the subject moving from one position to the next. At least two positions noted were above the branch, which would have allowed for exposure of the lower torso. Yet there is none presented.

It could stand to reason for the original recordings to show this but simply not have been presented publicly at this writing. That being said, since this document is being assigned to a member of the team, it would make sense that this person would have seen all of the footage and thus be in a better position to make a determination as to the accuracy of my opinion.

I have noted, however, that Mr. Standing's own statements in regards to the incident don't match the photographic evidence.

In a televised report/interview, Mr. Standing stated that during the time of this recording, it was only when a small bird landed next to him and began chirping that his location was discovered by the Bigfoots.

Yet the videos indicate that he had a very clear view of the subject. It stands to reason that if he did have a view clear enough to see the subject then the subject would also have a clear view of him.

Also; the videos show that the subject was looking directly at him and because we now know he was in the area for an extended period of time, it would be difficult to believe that he was not observed prior to a small bird landing near to him.

Although not directly related to the video, I found other statements by him in regards to the incident suspect.

He stated in the televised interview that there were 3 Bigfoots in the area and that he was surrounded by them. There was a map that indicated the exact locations of all three Bigfoots. We are made to believe that Mr. Standing was able to discern how many Bigfoots there were and pinpoint the locations of all three as he was quickly leaving the area.

Another statement about outrunning a grizzly bear I also find suspect.

Video 5

In my opinion, the eye blink is CGI. A morphing tool was used to select the upper brow area and skew/stretch it down over the area of the eye making it appear as if it was blinking. A close up examination of this makes it obvious in my opinion.

In my experiment with a photo of subject 5, I noted that a dissolved overlay between it and Mr. Standing revealed a resemblance that is uncanny. The position of the eyes in proportion to the nostrils, the lower creases of the cheeks and the mouth indicate this resemblance. What was most striking to me was the actual shape of the mouth and how closely it matched that of Mr. Standing.

Daniel Falconer

While evaluating Todd Standing's motives and stories is an inherently subjective exercise, the video and still imagery that he has provided can be objectively studied by anyone with the relevant expertise. Standing's Sylvanic videos and still images offer an excellent opportunity for purported evidence evaluation because of their remarkable clarity and abundance. The majority of video or still photography usually put forth as potential bigfoot evidence is too hazy or lacking in detail to permit any firm conclusions to be drawn, but not so this material. Standing's unambiguous videos can be carefully scrutinized and objectively evaluated without having to consider misidentification as a possibility or argue differing interpretations of vague constellations of pixels.

While I make no claims to be an industry expert and would welcome the insights of others more qualified to make determinations, my own familiarity with special make-up effects based on nearly two decades working for a special effects company grants me a measure of confidence in my ability to recognize what I am seeing in Standing's material, so I feel comfortable saying this much at least:

In my professional opinion, the Standing/Sylvanic videos and associated stills depict contrived props shot in a staged manner. They do not show living, breathing examples of a hitherto unknown species recorded spontaneously. The videos and associated stills are transparent fabrications, lacking any dynamic or surprising features.

Looked at as a group (including Videos 1, 2 and 3), and in order, Standing's purported bigfoot videos demonstrate a series of increasingly ambitious staged events, each one building upon the lessons of those gone before, but with commonalities that betray their construction. The various set ups in Video 5 appear to be restaged replays of Video 4, better resourced and using a more accomplished prop. The physical inconsistencies between the two props used speak against their authenticity. The improved prop used in Video 5 highlights the deficiencies of that which was employed to shoot Video 4, but it is the commonalities in the staging of both videos which, in my opinion, most strongly argues that they are contrived rather than natural.

I will not speculate on Standing's motivations, that being a subjective endeavour, but I will go so far as to say that what he claims regarding the authenticity of these videos contradicts what I observe in them and everything that my professional experience leads me to conclude.

If Mr Standing is to be taken at his word; that he is dedicated to the task of proving and gaining protection for sasquatch as a species, then I would expect him to immediately turn over his considerable body of video and still image evidence to an independent expert source for proper analysis. So far, this material appears to have been withheld and only low resolution, edited versions drip-fed out (for a fee), always with the promise of more and better to come, and a growing list of 'celebrity' endorsement by association thanks to his podcast and television appearances. With that in mind, I struggle to reconcile Standing's stated goals with his actions, and have no faith in the evidence he has thus far produced.

Contributor Biographies

Phil Poling

Phil Poling is an on-line vlogger who is internationally known as a skeptic of many paranormal claims. On his channel "ParaBreakdown", he combines many years of training and experience to examine photographic, audio and video evidence.

Phil had spent 20 plus years in law enforcement and has investigated the gambit of crimes including homicides. His first formal training in photography came from this and his interest sent him to college for education in darkroom, videography and studying Ansil Adams "Zone Methodology" in still photography. Phil has been a musician since High school and played professionally for several years prior to his Police career. He continues to compose music and has released 3 CDs to date; "Global Charts I and II" and "Tiki Trauma" that he produced himself. Although a skeptic, Phil is a believer in Bigfoot, having had a personal experience as a young man. His skepticism is reserved for those who would fake or hoax evidence.

Daniel Falconer

Daniel Falconer is a designer and writer for New Zealand based special effects house Weta Workshop where he has worked for 17 years. As a senior member of the Weta Workshop design team he designed creatures, costumes, armour, props and weapons for film properties including *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit*, *Avatar*, *District 9*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, *King Kong* and the *Hercules* and *Xena* television shows. Daniel is also a published author, with ten books to his name, examining the design and special effects work Weta has provided for a number of these projects.

Appendix 1: Video 4 stills and imagery for study



The image below appears to be a Photoshop composite, stitched together using clear areas in different frames from the images at left to obtain an uninterrupted view of the face. It should only with caution to identify diagnostic features due to the digital retouching, but nonetheless does provide a good unobstructed view of the face, if not one that can be relied upon 100%.





Appendix 2: Video 5 stills and imagery for study









Sylvanic 2011
Video 5 Expeditions









2011 Sylvanic