

# Special Screenings Of Ariel Phenomenon, Featuring Harvard's Dr. John E. Mack, Coming To Cambridge

*IN CELEBRATION OF THE 29TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARIEL SCHOOL SIGHTING AND THE LIFE OF DR. JOHN E. MACK, ARIEL PHENOMENON IS SET TO SCREEN AT THE BRATTLE THEATRE.*

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, August 29, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- String Theory Films, LLC, is pleased to announce Ariel Phenomenon, the acclaimed documentary by filmmaker Randall Nickerson, will screen at The Brattle Theatre, located one block from Harvard Square, on September 14 and September 16, 2023.

Ariel Phenomenon is the first to thoroughly document the account of over sixty schoolchildren at Ariel School in Ruwa, Zimbabwe, who, in 1994, witnessed an unidentified craft land outside their rural African schoolyard. Thanks to the courageous work of Dr. John E. Mack, who jeopardized his reputation as a Harvard psychiatrist, the mass-sighting event was made impossible to ignore.

“

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*Dr. John E. Mack*

“I am equally excited and humbled to be able to bring this film to an audience in Cambridge,” said Ariel Phenomenon director Randall Nickerson. “To be able to screen Ariel Phenomenon in celebration of Dr. Mack’s life and his work, and to do so on the 29th anniversary of the event, is overwhelming as a filmmaker.”

Ariel Phenomenon is about an extraordinary incident at a school in a distant land. Still, the film



dives deeper and finds something arguably more profoundly human: the event's impact on witnesses, their families, the investigators, and their jobs, not just in the moment but for the rest of their lives.

With a sensitive and non-sensational approach to the subject, the film highlights the journey of an Ariel School student present at the time of the event as she travels from her home in Toronto, Canada, back to Zimbabwe in search of answers - and the courage to speak the truth.



Ariel Phenomenon

Along the way, the audience meets Harvard psychiatrist Dr. John Mack and respected BBC war correspondent Tim Leach, both forever changed by their investigations and experiences.

Head of Harvard's Department of Psychiatry from 1977-2004, Dr. Mack won a Pulitzer Prize for *A Prince of Our Disorder* in 1977. In the early 1990s, he began studying individuals who reported alien abduction experiences; when no obvious mental illness presented itself, he deepened his studies, eventually concluding that the issue was far more complex than he initially had thought.

Dr. Mack traveled to Zimbabwe to interview the schoolchildren at Ariel School and openly declared that their version of events was to be believed.

Dr. John Mack: "The children we talked with clearly were talking about a phenomenon that occurred in physical reality. In other words, their stories were consistent, and the way they talked about it left virtually no question in our minds that what happened was just about what they said happened."

Mack would become persona non grata at Harvard for his case studies in alien abduction accounts and involvement in the Ariel School event. The Dean of Harvard Medical School appointed a committee of peers to confidentially review Mack's clinical care - the first tenured professor in Harvard's history to be investigated privately in this way.

"Dr. Mack's story is integral and is featured extensively in *Ariel Phenomenon*; without him, the encounter may have dropped off the radar like so many other unexplained sightings," Nickerson added.

Due to his untimely death in 2004, Dr. Mack's current-day thoughts on the event could not be included; however, his philosophical and curious nature delivers some of the more poignant

lines in the film, borrowed from interviews conducted for the 2008 documentary, *Touched*, by Laurel Chiten: “Why is it that we tend to want to shrink this powerful phenomenon to our notions of reality rather than being able to stretch ourselves to expand what we know and admit that we don’t know?”

With a cinematic score by Nathaniel Walcott (*Fault in Our Stars*; member, *Bright Eyes*), and editing/writing by Christopher Seward of *Fahrenheit 911*, *Sicko*, and Sundance Grand Jury-winning *One Child Nation*, the film blends stunning wildlife cinematography and a poignant musical score to create a documentary well outside the expected genre.

For the eyewitness students, investigators, and those around them, what began as an investigation into the extraordinary 1994 incident transforms into something equally as remarkable: a genuinely human story that explores what happens when you experience something so extraordinary that nobody believes you.

Details:

The Brattle Theater  
40 Brattle Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Screening: September 14, 2023, 8:00 PM, followed by a special Q&A session with director Randall Nickerson on the film, Dr. Mack, and the connection to Harvard.

Screening: September 16, 2023, 1:00 PM, followed by a special Q&A session with director Randall Nickerson on the film, Dr. Mack, and the connection to Harvard.

Tickets can be purchased online at [The Brattle Theatre website](#).

[View Trailer](#)

[Press Kit](#)

Acclaim & Reviews:

- Acclaimed film praised by former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Intelligence under the Bill Clinton and George W. Bush administrations Christopher Mellon, Emmy-award-winning actor and filmmaker Dan Aykroyd, and top critics.
- Reviewed in the Washington Examiner, Los Angeles Times, PBS, The Debrief, and more.
- 100% Tomatometer on Rotten Tomatoes and 4.6/5 stars on Amazon.
- “An extraordinary portrait of the psychology of human experience.” - Mitch Horowitz, PEN

Award-winning Author and Historian.

- "A unique and moving film, made with humanity, honesty, and a sense of awe. I highly recommend it." - New York Times contributor Leslie Kean.
- "...there is undeniable power in hearing the recollections of people who shared something so remarkable and so inexplicable." - Noel Murray, LA Times.
- "...the success of Nickerson's work is that it leaves us with more compelling questions than easy answers." -Tom Rogan, Washington Examiner.
- "Powerful, life-affirming, and brought me to tears." - Josh Boone, Fault in Our Stars, The Stand.

#### About Randall Nickerson

Since 1987, Randall Nickerson has worked in the film industry, first as a stage and film actor, later transitioning into cinematography, and ultimately into directing in 2001. After several short documentaries, Nickerson made the leap to his first feature-length film, Ariel Phenomenon.

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