

Frank Edwards: Flying Saucers Serious Business (video)

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{tab=Part 1}

Frank Edwards (writer and broadcaster)

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For other people named Frank Edwards, see Frank Edwards (disambiguation).

Frank Edwards (August 4, 1908- June 23, 1967) was an American writer and broadcaster, and one of the pioneers in radio. Late in his life, he became well-known for a series of popular books about UFOs and other paranormal phenomena.

Born in Mattoon, Illinois, Edwards broadcast on pioneering radio station KDKA AM in the 1920s, making him one of the earliest professional radio broadcasters.

During the '30s, Edwards continued his career in radio, but also worked a variety of other jobs, including a stint as a professional golfer. He was hired by the Treasury Department during World War II to promote war bond sales.

[edit] National radio, UFOs and controversy

After WWII, the Mutual Broadcasting System hired Edwards to host a nationwide news and opinion program sponsored by the American Federation of Labor. Edwards' program was a success, and became nationally popular.

In 1948, Edwards received an advance copy of "Flying Saucers Are Real," a magazine article written by retired U.S. Marine Corps. Major Donald E. Keyhoe. Though already interested in the UFO reports that had earned widespread publicity since 1947, Edwards was captivated by Keyhoe's claims that the U.S. military knew the saucers were actually extraterrestrial spaceships.

Edwards began mentioning UFOs on his radio program, and wrote several books on the subject.

He was dismissed from the radio program in 1954, for reasons that remain uncertain. His interest in UFOs was believed to be a factor[1], but Edwards's editor and friend Rory Stuart[2] wrote, "[AFL President] George Meany insisted that Frank Edwards not mention any [competing labor union] CIO labor leaders on his program. He flatly refused and was fired." In spite of thousands of letters in protest of his dismissal, Edwards was not reinstated.

[edit] Later career

After his dismissal from Mutual, Edwards continued working in radio, mostly at smaller local stations. He created and hosted a syndicated radio program, Stranger Than Science, which discussed UFOs and other Fortean phenomena. In 1959 he published a book, with the same title, that was largely a collection of his radio broadcasts.

From 1955 until 1959 and 1961 and 1962 Edwards was a commentator for WTTV television in Indianapolis. He was on radio station WXLW, also in Indianapolis in 1964 and returned to television on WLWI in 1965.[3] His book "Strange People" recalls a television interview that was video taped on October 3, 1961 with psychic Peter Hurkos.[4] It is not known if any of these programs survive. During his time at WTTV, his program was the subject of experiments in subliminal advertising during 1958. The movie preceding his show had the subliminal message "Watch Frank Edwards" inserted along with similar messages for bacon. Neither was a success in changing viewer habits. It is unknown if Edwards knew of the experiments.[5]

Edwards made an appearance on the Johnny Carson-era Tonight Show, in October, 1966.[6] The episode was guest-

hosted by singers Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme. Although Carson saved videos of the show past about 1969, this episode is presumed lost. On that telecast, Gorme made references to the fact that she enjoyed various science-fiction shows, like Star Trek and Time Tunnel, and Edwards made various references to experts' sightings of UFOs, to promote his then-current book, "Flying Saucers--Serious Business!"

[edit] His death

It is one of the myths of ufology that Edwards died on June 24, 1967, exactly 20 years after Kenneth Arnold's famous first "flying saucer" sighting. Actually, Edwards had died a few minutes before midnight, on the evening of June 23, but his death was announced at the Congress of Scientific Ufologists in New York City on June 24, 1967.