

BEYOND THE SEEN:

A Q&A WITH ERC'S RICK WARNER ON UFOs, THE PARANORMAL, AND THE ART OF INVESTIGATION

By Cheryl Knight-Wilson

Rick Warner is on a mission to bring clarity to the mysteries of UFOs and the paranormal, leading investigations with a rare blend of expertise, skepticism, and passion. As the executive director and director of investigations at the Extraterrestrial Research Center (ERC), Rick leads a mission to explore unexplained phenomena, working tirelessly to shed light on mysteries that have fascinated humankind for generations.

A certified UFO Field Investigator through the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), Rick has broadened his investigative horizons as the U.S. Ambassador to the Italian UFO Federation and as Lead Investigator with Phantom Detectives, a paranormal investigation team based in the U.S.

With decades of fascination fueled by personal encounters — including a UFO sighting as a child — Rick's passion for these mysteries goes beyond professional curiosity. Balancing roles as a part-time construction worker, martial arts instructor, and student of forensic science, he continues to deepen his expertise in areas such as space travel, astronomy, and business development.

In this exclusive Q&A, Rick shares insights into his work, detailing the complex web of research, investigation, and education that defines the ERC's mission.

In his words, "You're never done learning," and as our conversation unfolds, Rick sheds light on how his multifaceted background shapes his pursuit of truth within the unexplained.

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Q: You wear many hats — from being the executive director of the ERC to a certified UFO Field Investigator and even a martial arts instructor. How do you manage to juggle all these roles, and do they intersect in surprising ways?

Rick: I started out as a certified field UFO investigator



Rick Warner combines a scientific approach with personal curiosity in his UFO and paranormal investigations, driven by a commitment to evidence-based inquiry. As executive director of the ERC, he dedicates himself to unraveling unexplained phenomena. Rick's childhood UFO sighting ignited his lifelong passion for investigating the unknown. His diverse background, spanning construction work, martial arts, and forensic science studies, brings unique skills and perspectives to his investigative work.

trained by MUFON. After investigating many cases involving extraterrestrial subject matter, I decided I wanted to start my own organization, ERC, for the purpose of investigating a few select cases, as well as creating an awareness about extraterrestrial subject matter.

I am also the U.S. ambassador to the Italian UFO Federation (FUI) and lead investigator for an established team of paranormal investigators, called Phantom Detectives. Sometimes it isn't easy juggling so many hats, but I'm doing what I love to do best, and that is investigating cases involving the paranormal.

I have learned, however, that you have to be careful not to bite off more than you can chew. I have to keep reminding myself of that. Sometimes I find myself playing catch-up to get things completed.

Q: Can you share more about the ERC's mission of "educating, researching, investigating, and inspiring" and how you personally align with this mission?

Rick: I think it's important to be very thorough and try to keep things interesting for everyone. You need cover all bases if you are trying to get people interested in learning about extraterrestrial subject matter.

When I put together the ERC organization, I didn't make it just about people filling out sighting report forms to have me investigate cases only, but instead I wanted to provide interesting material for people to get engaged and so they could educate themselves at the same time.

Q: You are the U.S. Ambassador to the Italian UFO Federation (FUI). How does this international connection enhance or influence your research in the extraterrestrial field?

Rick: When the Italian UFO Federation reached out to me, I was approached by the man that ran the organization who wrote me to me in Italian, so it was a little bit challenging at first. I had to copy and paste all the material he wrote into a language translator so that way I could translate Italian to English for me to read, since I don't speak or write Italian.

Now, mainly send articles that I write to the FUI, and I must convert my English documents into Italian. So, it can be a bit of a challenge! But they brought me on not really to investigate or research on their end, but rather to corroborate and share information.

Q: With a lifelong interest in UFOs and the paranormal, can you pinpoint a formative experience from your childhood that set you on this path?



The Extranterrestrial Research Center (ERC) is dedicated to investigating, educating, and inspiring curiosity about extraterrestrial phenomena. Under Rick Warner's leadership, the ERC goes beyond simple sighting reports, providing engaging material for the public to learn and explore the field independently.

Rick: Yes, actually when I was a child, and when I lived in Southern California, I was with my mother and a friend of hers, and they were busy chatting while I was in the backseat. As we approached a freeway overpass, I saw an extraterrestrial craft quickly hover over the sky and then takeoff at an incredible speed. And then it was completely gone.

My mother and her friend were so busy talking and looking at each other that they completely missed it, as this happened rather quickly. I was a young child at the time, so I didn't feel comfortable sharing it with anyone as I didn't think anyone would believe me. Now, I feel very comfortable talking about my childhood experience.

Q: You've earned a variety of certificates in subject areas ranging from astronomy and space travel to business development. How do these different fields of study inform your work in extraterrestrial and paranormal research?



Rick brings a unique blend of expertise and skepticism to his work in the field of extraterrestrial and paranormal investigation. As both a certified UFO field investigator and U.S. ambassador to the Italian UFO Federation, he bridges international perspectives in his quest to uncover the truth.

Rick: When I took my training from MUFON, I was just starting out, learning to become a certified UFO Field Investigator. I went through all the training courses, including going through the online training university. The training I received was very thorough and covered many aspects of many things, and since I was going to be investigating cases, I was fortunate to receive such very thorough training with a great curriculum.

They wanted to make sure that all investigators are well-rounded and know how to conduct a thorough and complete investigation. To this day, I always hold if you want to be successful in something it's very important to keep yourself well informed and educated.

Q: As someone who has had personal experiences of spotting UFOs and experiencing ghostly visita-

tions, how do these personal encounters influence your approach to investigations?

Rick: I've learned that it's very important not to just take everyone's word for what they tell you they are experiencing as being extraterrestrial in nature or ghostly paranormal. It's important that you're always thorough in an investigation and keep in mind that sometimes the things that people tell you they actually believe, but that does not mean that it's true.

You have to try to debunk things first and look at the facts of the case, as well as pay attention to important details and accuracy. Many times, the things that people see can be explained by natural phenomenon, such as man-made crafts, a star or a planet, weather phenomenon, and other objects. Or they capture pictures that they may think show spirits or orbs, but instead are specs of dust, flying insects, moisture, or particles of dust, etc.

Q: You're involved with Phantom Detectives, a paranormal investigation group, as the lead investigator, tech manager, and director of client relations. How does this role complement your work at ERC, and do you find overlaps between UFO and ghost investigations?

Rick: I feel both that the work that I do and training that I received working with ERC, and also training to become a field investigator to interview clients over the phone and in person, I've taken those skills that I've learned to enhance my interviewing skills with clients to establish credibility and to gain history and knowledge of the places that we are going to investigate. I've also taken some of the skills I've learned as being a paranormal investigator and those skills that I've learned from being a lead investigator has also helped me as a UFO/UAP case investigator.

The word paranormal encompasses both of these worlds. And, regardless, if you're going to investigate paranormal activity to find and locate spirit activity or if you're going to investigate real sightings, it's important that you are very thorough in your research. And when you are interviewing a client, you cannot just take their word on everything that they say. Before you take on a case, the last thing you want to do is agree with everything that they are saying, but rather you want to be a good listener and let them tell their narrative and then use the information they have given you.

Then, once you investigate a case, it's important to be thorough and try to debunk anything that you may see first and make sure that you are thorough in your investigation techniques. Your job isn't just a throw information out there, but rather to gain accurate knowledge about a case and let the data speak for itself.

Q: Being a part-time construction worker, have you ever encountered any strange or unexplainable phenomena on worksites? If so, could you share one such experience?

Rick: It's interesting that you asked me that, and the answer to that is yes! Not really something that was extraterrestrial in nature, but there was a time when I was working in one of my client's homes, and my helper was with me at the time, and the strangest thing happened. The phone started ringing, which is very weird since the electrical service, as I was informed, was completely shut off. This was told to me by the client that hired me that owned the property. His grandmother had passed away in the house that we were working on.

My helper and I were thinking maybe he made a mistake and it didn't get shut off, but the homeowner said that wasn't the case. He said it was just his grandmother trying to communicate with us. We weren't scared really, but after that, I remember we heard a loud bang coming from inside the closet when there was no one else inside the empty apartment except for us. When this happened, I said: "Hello Grandma, would you give us a sign and let us know that you are here with us?" After that, we heard a loud bang come out of the closet, and it freaked my helper out a little bit and she ran outside of the apartment.

Q: What have been some of your most memorable cases to date?

Rick: As both a paranormal investigator and an extraterrestrial UFO investigator, there are quite a bit of cases between the two of them that had many exciting experiences. There was one instance when I was investigating a Class Level 3 case in the state of Delaware, when a very credible witness, who previously had a high position working at a military base, had filed a case report that I investigated.

She claimed that when she was walking her dog on a rainy day, she stopped for a moment to take a couple pictures, and when she got back home, She looked at the pictures and claimed that she could see what appeared to her as being an extraterrestrial spaceship. She also claimed to have seen in the photo a giant, reptilian alien being. After analyzing the photos, I headed out to where the sighting supposedly took place.

After conducting some field tests, we determined that what looked like a giant reptilian alien being in the photograph wasn't that at all, but instead it was a giant evergreen tree. And what appeared to be two eyes were actually a couple of pinecones sitting at the very top of the tree. In the instance of the shadow in the photo that was shaped



As a young child, Rick saw a UFO out of his car window, helping to shape his fascination with unexplainable phenomenon.

like an extraterrestrial craft, it was actually a shadow that was cast against the wall from a row of a bunch of trees. This will happen on a rainy day, so, even though there wasn't any sun out, you can still have shadows cast without the Sun.

It wasn't that this lady wasn't smart or that she was trying to be deceptive, but it was rather the fact that she was playing off of her own fears because in her past. This particular person had some extraterrestrial experiences that scared her, so she kind of jumped the gun a little bit in her findings. But in the end, she was relieved to know that we could completely explain and debunk what she thought was alien activity.

Q: With ongoing studies in forensic science and information technology, what's next for you? Are there any upcoming projects or research that our readers should be on the lookout for?

Rick: Things are always evolving, and we are always growing and constantly learning. For someone to say that they know everything is a big mistake and a bit shallow. No matter how much knowledge you have, you're never done learning. There's always a lot to learn to and grow to educate yourself.

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Learn more about Rick Warner and his work at the [Extraterrestrial Research Center and Phantom Detectives](#). ♦