PHOTOGRAPHY & SASQUATCH

Low-end Point-and-Shoot Camera

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Photography and Sasquatch

Low-end Point-and-Shoot Cameras
(Script for Video Narrative No. 9)
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Photography is a very complex subject. In my experience, it seems the more I learn the less I know. Professional photographers are like scientists; if they don't know the answer to something they prefer to say nothing rather than speculate.

Nevertheless, we must depend on photography in sasquatch research until tangible, physical evidence is obtained as to sasquatch existence. I would say that 99.9% of people carry a low-end point-and-shoot camera, a cell phone camera, or low-end video camera, so it is highly unlikely we will get images taken with a high-end point-and-shoot or a professional camera.

The quality of digital images depends on subject distance and with a sasquatch getting within even 200 feet is rare; thus our ever-growing file of "blobsquatch" images. Sometimes you can enlarge such an image and make out an arm, head, or leg, but humans have the same and the distance does not allow one to differentiate between hair and clothing. I recall discussing such photos with John Green and his words were, "Well, it's another could-be." The term "blobsquatch" came about after the advent of digital cameras. Prior to that, few people carried cameras. Once, in discussing cameras with René Dahinden, he said, "If a researcher worked for me and did not have his camera, I would fire him!" This was the result of so many sightings with no photos because the witness did not have a camera.

I think a camera like that seen in this image would likely provide a superior image at a very great distance. I asked the cameraman the cost for a camera like that and he said, "About $60,000." The chances of a camera of that nature and a sasquatch coming together are so remote we will forget it.

Certainly a regular professional DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera with a telephoto lens would get a good distant image, but telescopics are cumbersome and require a tripod unless one lucks out, so we will put that aside also. Note that a DSLR camera has a removable lens; you replace the regular lens with a telephoto lens. A point-and-shoot camera has a fixed lens. DSLR cameras start at about $500. The telephoto lens shown here would cost about $385. At least $1,000 is needed to get started with this type of camera. Switching the lens takes about 30 seconds. By this time a sasquatch would be long gone. Leaving the telephoto lens on the camera is fine, but it becomes heavy and troublesome.

We are down to, "It's what you do with what you've got" as to a sasquatch, so in short we are stuck with non-professional digital camera images (cameras under $200 or a cell phone camera). Nevertheless, as I have stated, it's a matter of distance and if these cameras have a zoom feature that is used, they are OK (depending on the zoom) for distances under 150 feet. If the zoom is not used, reduce this to 50 feet. However, light is also a factor. They don't do very well if something is in the shade.

I have stated a few times in the past that regular film camera images are superior to digital images, but everyone (save a few die-hards) now uses digital because of convenience and the cost factor (film developing is expensive). Let's face it, without digital our chances of getting a sasquatch photo would be much more remote.

If Roger Patterson had used a point and shoot camera with no zoom, what you see on the left here is the absolute best image quality he would have been able to provide. A Patterson and Gimlin film frame is on the right. Keep in mind that the point-and-shoot image was taken using a tripod. I doubt many of us would be paying the same attention to the P/G film if a low-end point-and-shoot camera had been used. The same applies to a low-end video camera.

With all of this churning around in my head, I geared up to have Thomas Steenburg help me with a photo experiment while visiting Lacey, Washington. I asked Thomas to take photos of me holding my sasquatch head sculpture at 50, 100, and 150 feet, using his point-and-shoot camera. The property at the Lacey Museum allowed us to mark these distances in a direct line. Shown here is the head sculpture. Its size is about that for a sasquatch 7 feet, 6 inches tall (walking height). I went to each measured distance and held the sculpture up to my head height and Thomas took a photo.

The following discussion provides the results of this experiment. You need to keep in mind that to see and photograph a sasquatch in the first place is a very tough call. That one can get out his or her camera, focus and take a photo is rare. In most cases you have just a few seconds because the sasquatch realizes he or she is being observed and quickly moves away behind trees and so forth. There are cases of fairly long durations, but the witness did not have a camera.

When skeptics, journalists, and even scientists harp on why we don't have good photos of a sasquatch, they are totally ignorant of what I am saying here. This is not unusual; most people who write about the sasquatch are short on research and very long on words.

Now follows images showing the results of our experiment using Thomas Steenburg's point-and-shoot camera. The camera is a Fujifilm FinePix Z20fd. Digital zoom: Approximately 5.7x. I need to mention that point-and-shoot cameras are available with a much higher zoom, but cost goes up accordingly. I am assuming 5.7x is about standard for low-cost point and shoot cameras.)

The first set of images shows the subject as it would be seen with the naked eye on the left and at maximum camera zoom on the right.

The second set of images shows the heads only in the first images, which have been isolated and enlarged using PhotoShop. The size provided simply fits this paper. Nevertheless, I don't think the detail credibility level would be much greater than the size provided. In other words, looking at these enlarged images with the naked eye at 200% likely provides all of the detail available.

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SUBJECT AT 50 FEET FROM THE CAMERA

These enlarged images provide sufficient clarity to identify a sasquatch at 50 feet. The close-up is naturally the best, but the normal image would be acceptable. Nevertheless, hoaxing cannot be ruled out for any image. I don't think that even having the actual camera card would help. Hoax detection is now beyond my level of expertise. Please note that the less the clarity, the easier is the fabrication.

In cases where a sasquatch is seen closer than 50 feet, it is usually moving—such as walking or running in front of a car or truck. As in most cases, your vehicle is moving and the sasquatch is moving, getting a decent photo is very difficult, even if you had your camera at the ready for such an event. With a vehicle dash-cam, your camera is at the ready, but the same conditions apply.

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SUBJECT AT 100 FEET FROM THE CAMERA

In this case, the subject was in the shade, which was not considered at the time the photos were taken. Nevertheless, the enlarged images can (and have been) adjusted in PhotoShop to bring out facial details. The normal image (left) would hardly be accepted—looks too much like a human. The close-up (right) might be marginally considered, mainly because of the heavy brow ridges. We can't see facial hair, but we get the impression of a hairy hominoid. Nevertheless, few PhD scientists would accept this image unless there was supporting evidence like footprints (photo and casts) or a hair sample that indicated an unrecognized primate. Hoaxing something like this would not be difficult. A costume with a head mask would result in very convincing images.

One hundred feet seems to be pushing the envelope for a low-profile point-and-shoot digital camera if the subject is in the shade. This photo (close up) was taken with a Cannon DSLR camera at the same distance (in the same spot). It uses a different process for images. This camera does not have a "zoom" like the point-and-shoot camera. It has a focus "ring," which is called a "zoom ring," but it only marginally enlarges the subject. With these cameras you use a telephoto lens, as previously discussed, to get closer to the subject. Nevertheless, the image is certainly better than the point-and-shoot image. It would likely be just good enough to get some scientific attention. If there were several shots at different angles, that would make a big difference. I think the point-and-shoot image would be reasonable if the subject was in the sun.

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SUBJECT AT 150 FEET FROM THE CAMERA

The first (left) enlarged image would not be accepted. The second (close-up) has enough to conclude a large, hairy, human-like something. It can be seen that light made a tremendous difference, but it is simply not good enough. Generally speaking, the image resolution must be such that you can clearly see eyes, other details about that size, and individual hair strands. Note that you cannot even marginally see my finger nails in the close-up, which are in direct sunlight.

Shown here on the left is the enlarged head of the subject in frame 352 of the Patterson and Gimlin film. Mathematically, the subject was about 150 feet from the camera in this film frame. The film was taken in "normal" mode (what you see is what you get); there was no close-up feature. It has been compared here with the point-and-shoot close-up at the same distance. We can see that the P/G image is very close to the point-and-shoot image. This implies that a 16 mm film frame can be enlarged to about the same clarity of a point-and-shoot camera image at 5.7x zoom.

The bottom line appears to be that if a person does not have a point-and-shoot camera with at least a 5.7x zoom, which he or she was able to use to film a sasquatch, and which subject was not much more than about 100 feet away, then all we are going to get are "blobsquatch" images—as we have been getting since digital cameras became available.

My final word is that your are going to need an expensive point-and-shoot camera with a very high zoom (maximum you can get), plus a lot of luck to satisfy scientists and all the skeptics.

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