



Bigfoot sighting in Kentucky? Couple recounts bizarre tale at Mammoth Cave

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Bigfoot is back. But did he ever really go away?

Brad Ginn and Madelyn Durand, a couple of Western Kentucky University students, said they were awakened in the middle of the night last weekend during a camping trip to Mammoth Cave by a gun-toting man hellbent on tracking down the legendary creature.

"It was scary to know there was a man out there shooting a gun at nothing," Durand told the Courier Journal on Wednesday of the couple's weekend adventure in the woods.

Bigfoot sightings have been reported hundreds of times across Kentucky since the time of Daniel Boone. What makes Durand and Ginn's story so unforgettable, though, is the randomness of their tale. Neither says they actually saw Bigfoot — and they weren't looking, either.

The couple had been sleeping in a tent early Sunday morning when Durand, 22, woke up Ginn, 24, to tell him that a man and his young son were approaching. When they got to the tent, the man said that his own campsite and tent had been destroyed and that they were in "Bigfoot country."

Then he showed them a gun in his back pocket and told them to "run if we hear shots," Ginn said.

The man and his son then left.

"A few minutes later we see their lights approaching again," Ginn said, "and as they get closer we hear the man yell something like 'oh my God! Do you see that? There it is!'"

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Looking out from their tent, Durand and Ginn watched as the man "shot his gun into the darkness."

Durand and Ginn said they then ran from their tent to the man to see what was happening.

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The man "says he saw Sasquatch emerge from the brush near our tent and start approaching him," Ginn recounted.

"We're like, 'Are you serious?'" Ginn said. And the man said he was, they said.

The man then told them "it's dangerous" and he "hopes we have weapons," Ginn said.

The man and his son then left, Ginn said, and the couple called 911 and hiked 5 miles back to their car.

Molly Schroer, a spokeswoman for Mammoth Cave National Park, confirmed that law enforcement "responded to an incident involving an individual with a firearm" about 2 a.m. Sunday and said that no injuries occurred. She added that the incident is still being investigated by park officials.

Though possession of firearms within the park is legal as long as individuals follow Kentucky state laws and do not take them into any federal facility, cave tour, tour buses or in any concessions, discharging a firearm in the park is "strictly prohibited," she said.

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More Bigfoot sightings?

Kentucky and Mammoth Cave have had their share of Bigfoot reports over the years.

There have been close to 400 Bigfoot reports in Kentucky, according to [kentuckybigfoot.com](http://www.kybigfoot.com/) (<http://www.kybigfoot.com/>), a website run by the Kentucky Bigfoot Research Organization.

Charlie Raymond, listed on the website as the organization's founder and lead investigator, did not respond to an email from the Courier Journal. According to the website, the Kentucky Bigfoot Research Organization was founded in 1997 to document all "credible Bigfoot encounters in Kentucky."

Four people have reported Bigfoot sightings at the park, according to the site.

In one, a man said his dad was working for Mammoth Cave National Park one summer in the early 1990s and saw "a large hairy creature down on what he thought to be all fours walking."

"Fearing that he may have ran into a bear he began to slow down, when the creature raised up on two legs standing somewhere around (the) 8 foot mark looked at him on the four wheeler and turned and ran into the darkness on two legs," the man wrote.

In a footnote, a site administrator wrote: "This account was brought to us by a friend, we spoke with the witness and he verified the account. We believe this account to be true."

Another user named Brent (no last name was shared) said he and his daughter were camping at Mammoth Cave National Park in August of 2015 when they encountered Bigfoot. He said the activity began around 1 a.m. when something stepped on their camper and continually hit and pulled at it.

"There were also many and different and strange vocalizations experienced," Brent wrote. "Some sounded possibly feline; others were possible sasquatch with some close growls/howls and extended distant screams."

Brent also posted an [audio clip](http://kentuckybigfoot.com/sounds/Camper_Attack_8-17-15.mp3) (http://kentuckybigfoot.com/sounds/Camper_Attack_8-17-15.mp3) of his encounter. In a follow-up note on the website, Raymond said the area has been "very active" with Bigfoot interactions, but after listening to the audio "we do believe the moans were feline in nature."

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Explanations for Bigfoot encounters

Seth Breedlove, an Ohio filmmaker who has extensively researched the Bigfoot legend, said the rural and isolated nature of many portions of Kentucky might help to explain why the commonwealth has so many reported sightings.

"If you believe that Bigfoot is some sort of undiscovered animal, then that would be the places where they would go – places where there aren't a lot of people," said Breedlove, who has made several documentaries about legendary creatures. (His latest project, "MOMO: The Missouri Monster," will premiere at the Kentucky Theater in Lexington in September.)

Breedlove said Bigfoot sightings occur more often in the present day, but sightings in Kentucky go back to the 1800s. "It's not a new phenomenon," he said.

"We either have an unidentified primate species living in our own backyard, or we have a myth on a national scale," he said.

He also rebuked stereotypes of people who report encountering the beast, stating: "The idea that all Bigfoot witnesses are backwoods hillbillies drinking moonshine is preposterous once you've looked into the subject."

As for Ginn and Durand, they said their bizarre encounter over the weekend won't deter them from going back to the woods near Mammoth Cave.

"We love hiking and the outdoors too much to not return," Durand said. "We'll be back, but we'll definitely be better prepared for an emergency next time."

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