

## Offered Title: Report From The Shadow

It really happened today, August 21, 2017. The Moon's shadow raced across our country from Oregon through South Carolina.

It hit my eyes. It washed over and made a deep calm, a dark light.

My wife and I traveled to Nashville for the eclipse, along with thousands of our closest friends from here and there. We were fortunate to have Jim, a family friend living there who thought this called for a party. So, we had an eclipse party on the 20<sup>th</sup>.

As their invited friends arrived Jim's friend Sheila handed out eclipse kits...a booklet with everything you want to know about eclipses, eclipse glasses included. Jim, a master chef, prepared the meal, including eclipse cookies.

Jim had a plan. Since I am an amateur astronomer he hoped I might be open to making the party an educational occasion as well. I was happy to comply. So, before the party commenced we had an interactive session with me leading. I started with a few videos explaining some things about solar eclipses and how the shadow would traverse our country. The kids, its always the kids, came up with the best questions and added information. Then to the fun. Jim even had a birdhouse project set up for the kids. We enjoyed a wonderful meal of smoked whole chickens, sausages, corn bread from heaven, a lively coleslaw, veggies, and the eclipse cookies.

But today was the point of interest for our trip and it did not disappoint.

It was getting hot as I set up a small telescope for viewing, and my camera with long lens attached on another tracking mount. Then I waited, checking the scope and camera every few minutes to make sure their tracking was steady. As the Moon took its first bite from our Sun I started making exposures using a programmed remote trigger. Here we go. Our niece Alexa who just moved to Nashville, and a small group of neighborhood residents stopped by as the light started to look... different. Everyone had their eclipse glasses and were also checking the Sun out in the small scope. Slowly the light dimmed, and as totality approached everyone was commenting on how strange everything looked, kind of dreamy dim and edgy at the same time.

Then the dark light came, and we gasped as a dark hole appeared where the Sun had been. Really, everyone just gasped, and I heard OH MY GOSH! There it was, a dark hole surrounded by the Sun's glowing corona (crown). The surrounding sky darkened and beautiful Venus was shining in the west. Oh my gosh.

Two minutes and seventeen seconds later a brilliant flash told us it was over and the hole disappeared, consumed by the Sun's life-giving light.

Wait seven years. April 8, 2024...central Texas. Total Solar Eclipse!

## What's in the Sky?

The Aurigid meteor shower peaks on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Best time is 3 am on the 1<sup>st</sup>, looking east-northeast.