

AERIAL PHENOMENON CLIPPING

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NEWS BULLETIN

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COLOMBIAN PILOT BLINDED BY A UFO

By: Joseph M. Brill

A young and inexperienced flying student of Bogota, Colombia accomplished a dramatic and spectacular landing of his airplane at the Eldorado Airport on May 5th, 1977. What made this particular landing different was that the pilot at the controls of the airplane was suffering from a temporary blindness caused by a direct encounter with a unidentified flying object.

After a nightmarish flight in a Cessna 150 light aircraft which lasted for fifty-five minutes, without instruments aboard the aircraft operational, over the plains of Bogota, the pilot, Manuel Jose Lopez Ojeda was guided by radio and four other airplanes, which furnished him with an escort up to the runway of the airport.

Lopez Ojeda was on the verge of crashing into the control tower on two occasions when attempting approaches to the central runway while suffering a partial and temporary blindness.

The pilot involved in the incredible experience with a UFO kept not only the personnel who work at the airport under constant stress, but also thousands of radio listeners in Bogota, who began to hear the broadcast of the experience as they were happening during the full duration of the flight.

For more than thirty minutes, four single engine aircraft from the two schools of flying, Aeroclub of Colombia and Aeroandes under the control of expert instructors, "led by the hand" in an unbelievable flight directing from airplane to airplane, Lopez Ojeda until guiding him down safe and sound on the main runway at Eldorado.

At 9:15 a.m. Manuel Jose Lopez Ojeda, climbed on board the Cessna 150 airplane, registry number HK 1164-L, of the Aeroclub of Colombia Flying School. After taxiing the plane to the head of the runway at the airport at Guaymaral, he decided to practice landing exercises before attempting some flight maneuvers.

The young pilot carried out two traffic pattern approaches and then flew to zone one, which is designated between the villages of Tabio-Chia and Coxa to the north of Bogota.

In this sector, marked out by the aeronautic authorities as a zone for maneuvers, Lopez Ojeda began to repeat one after another the maneuvers of slow flight, stalls with and without the power on and turns, both

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gentle and tight turns to the right and to the left.

It was approximately 10:00 a.m. In one of the tight turns towards the left the WK 1164-I began to vibrate with great intensity.

On coming out of the turn, the tachometer, air speed indicator and all the instruments on board were showing zero. The plane would not respond and it was shaking with great force. To the left side I saw an oval object the color of a dark cloud. Surrounding it were yellowish and red phosphorescent lights which were shimmering with a high intensity. This was the initial observation of the strange object as described by the young pilot, who was besieged by the press reporters minutes after being led to the clinic of the port health authority of Eldorado Airport where he was given emergency attention by Dr. Fernando Silva Noveno.

On continuing with his account the pilot said: "It was somewhat disconcerting, the aircraft was not responding to my movement of the controls. It was at that moment, I began to feel a strong pressure in my ears and head, My hands and body were itching. However, I was very conscious of all that I was doing and seeing."

"This was all happening in just a matter of seconds," added the pilot "since the UFO which initially was on the side of the aircraft had moved down, just below the landing gear of the plane. It was at this time that vibration got even worse for me and for the plane I was flying. It was shaking with even greater intensity and the controls were not working and the instruments continued to show zero, but the plane continued to fly in a circle at the same altitude. I did not notice or was unaware of any loss or gain in altitude," declared the pilot and repeated that he was fully conscious of everything that was taking place. "The radio did not function for several minutes and I lost all contact with the tower at Guayaquil."

"The diameter of the UFO was approximately 45 to 20 meters," stated the pilot on being asked about this detail. "It was like an aluminum mass" and he repeated that "it moved underneath the landing gear for some thirty to forty seconds but that at no time did it make direct contact with his aircraft. During that period of a few seconds the pilot managed to make contact with the control tower at Guayaquil and declared an emergency situation.

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"Later the UFO moved to the front of the plane and that was when I began to lose my sight. Everything looked cloudy. For just a moment it seemed I was recovering my visibility but I was thinking to myself that this was the end for me. It seemed to me as if I were flying over a desert and mountainous zone always in a circle. The strange object disappeared and I was left blind."

Two training planes were sent from Guaymaral to the zone indicated by Lopez Ojeda. They quickly made radio contact with him and began then the rescue flight. In addition to the first two airplanes, two others were added, under the control of expert flight instructors who skillfully began to direct the flight of the blinded pilot. From zone one close to the village of Tabio, where the HK 1164-J still remained flying about, the four instructors began operation "Laganillo". Meanwhile, at the control tower at Eldorado and the tower at Guaymaral panic reigned among the aeronautic authorities and the companions of the young pilot.

At the same time, suspension of all flight operations was ordered at Eldorado while the emergency existed.

The aerial odyssey involving the five aircraft began at 10,500 feet altitude not far from Guaymaral. The instructional phase, began by attempting to orient, in direction, pilot Lopez Ojeda, to whom at that moment everything looked the same and who appeared to be or sounded as if he were in a drunken stupor.

On four occasions over the airport of Eldorado, the group of instructors and the security chief of aeronautics, Major Jairo Garcia, attempted to begin about a landing of the HK 1164-J, which at the time was under the control of a blind aviator.

In two of those attempts, the light plane placed the nerves on edge for dozens of workers at the airport authority, who from the lower floors of the control tower were observing the approach maneuvers of the plane towards the runway.

It was believed, that on those two occasions that the aircraft would crash into the control tower, however those moments of anxiety were overcome when the aircraft passed by and continued its flight without a definite course.

The pilot instructors were making all kinds of attempts to orient and maintain on course in the traffic approach pattern the young

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pilot, who in these moments could not get away from the thought that he was going to die.

On the ground, there had been taken all necessary measures for security. At the head of runway one, and on each one of the taxi ways along the length of the runway a fire engine was ready to follow the trajectory of the plane upon landing.

The traffic pattern, which normally are made in order to land at this airport were exceeded in all their limits. In none of the aborted approaches was the trajectory of the plane normal. It was always off towards the right of the runway in order to pass close to the control tower.

The attitude was the principle objective of the instructors seeking to save Lopez Ojeda, since the approach trajectories never during the first four occasions were directed down the center line of the runway.

The momentary recovery of sight, although far from perfect by the pilot enabled him to focus on the runway and carry out a perfect landing. At each side and at a prudent distance, in case of emergency were flying the four angle engine planes with the instructions which were guiding him.

The landing maneuver was completely successful in front of the, by now hundreds of curiosity seekers who were concentrated at the airport terminal in order to observe close up the ending of the aerial odyssey.

The pilot was found frozen to the controls and with his body facing front. He still had his safety belt fastened. He was rescued from the interior of the Cessna 150 by two men from the fire department who led him to an ambulance which was stationed close to the place and where Dr. Silva Moreno from the Airport Health Clinic was located. The doctor gave him a complete examination and provided a tranquilizer for the nerves. Later the pilot was taken to the clinic where the flyer re-cooperated from his affliction which he states was produced in him by a UFO in accord with the characteristics with which this class of objects has been defined.

Dr. Silva Moreno said after examining the pilot Lopez Ojeda that the physical condition of the pilot was satisfactory.

The presence of the UFO was not detected by the radars at the airport but this has a very logical explanation in the ~~Ray~~ ~~Ray~~ ~~Ray~~ that Lopez Ojeda

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Lopez Ojeda was flying over a region of many hills which cause interferences and do not permit the radar coverage. Moreover since UFO's are usually of an oval form, according to most authorities and witnesses, they have a very small surface of reflection. Never-the-less the workers in the control tower at Eldorado are accustomed to observing unidentified flying objects especially on clear nights and in the majority of the occasions when they have been observed, their presence has not been recorded by the radar units. One of the Air Traffic Controllers, Danilo Zambrano, who has reportedly seen UFO's of five different occasions, on being interviewed by the press, related: "We are very accustomed to seeing UFO's on clear and cloudless nights. Twenty days ago (April 16th, 1977), I saw one of those craft, which was moving in a zig zag trajectory. That same UFO was observed by the pilot and crew of a jumbo jet airliner. I could clearly see that it moved about even with the control tower. I estimated that it was at an altitude of about 20,000 feet; then it gained altitude and disappeared towards the north. It had the luminosity of a orangish-green color."

But that was not the only occasion for Zambrano to see a UFO: "Approximately a month and a half ago (week of March 14 -19th, 1977), I saw a luminosity which was moving at a very high speed from north of the city to the south. That same night, almost at the moment of having seen it a lady called me by telephone and told me that from her house to the south of the city she had witnessed exactly what I had and that the UFO had disappeared toward the south. Only on one occasion, has one of these strange craft been registered on the radar here. The screen showed us a blip which in our language indicates the presence of a machine, but it was not a normal aircraft of that we are sure. It was a flying disc which disappeared at a fantastic speed in the direction of ~~the~~ Girardot."

End of this Article

See the transcript of the communication that took place between the pilot Manuel Lopez and the four instructors also enclosed.

Joseph M. Brill

Even though this story was the headline front page story of May 6, 1977 in Bogota, only one international news agency (Agency France Presse) released anything on this incident, and it was a very brief account of it. Why U.P.I., nor A.P. nor Reuters carried any mention of the sighting is beyond my understanding. If this isn't news than what is?

Dialogue Of Lopez With The Tower

The following is the transcription of the most dramatic parts of the dialogue which unfolded on May 5th, 1977 over Bogota, Colombia during more than fifty minutes between the young pilot Manuel Jose Lopez Ojeda and one of his flying instructors who was guiding him from another aircraft and with the control tower at the Eldorado Airport.

The dialogue which was taking place at a dramatic pitch impossible to describe was colored by the calm voice of the control tower operator at the airport and the voice of the flying instructor on the one hand and by the anxiety of the young pilot who through his voice seemed many times on the point of breaking into weeping.

Instructor: Good, continue turning to the left. Not so tight. Come out of the turn. Not so much. Not so much. Bring it out. Bring it out. Bring it out.

Pilot: Speak louder, louder, louder. I'm not hearing anything.

Instructor: Good. Take it easy, calmly. Don't you worry. Keep the aircraft like that. Fly straight. Keep it like that. We're going to try another approach. Turn gently' toward the right.

Pilot: Luis, I am leaving you for a moment. I am going to talk to Eldorado.

Instructor: Bring up the nose. Bring up the nose. 164 Bring up the nose Gently' bring up the nose.

Control Tower: O.K. we have everything ready here.

Instructor: Bring up the nose. Put the accelerator ahead. All the way. O.K. perfect. Continue turning toward the right gently. You're doing very well. Take it easy.

Control Tower: Correct. Correct.

Instructor: Perfect. You are doing it like a champ. Take it easy and calmly. Keep the aircraft on this course. We're going to attempt to make a broad base line in order to land at Eldorado.

Don't you worry. Don't talk to us if you don't want to talk but stay on this course. Take it easy and stay calm if at all possible.

Instructor: O.K. Now tell me something please. 164? Say something please. Don't climb. Don't climb. Don't climb. That will get you in trouble. Drop the nose. Drop the nose. Drop the nose

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gently. That's it. Like that. Just like that. Like so. Just like so. Not so much. Not so much. Pull up the plane. Pull up the aircraft. Pull it up. That's perfect. Gently. Handle those controls gently. Don't worry. Don't bring up the nose so much. Drop it a wee bit. Drop the nose just a bit. Perfect. You're going divinely. You are doing it perfectly. Keep the airplane on a straight course and level. Don't bring up or drop the nose.

Instructor: Take it easy. Calmly. Move the rudder very gently. Gently. Take it easy.

Instructor: O.K. 164 Now begin gently a turn to the left. Gently. Gently. Drop it a wee bit but just a tiny motion of the control wheel. Turn to the left. Turn to the other side. You are going to the right. Turn to the left. Turn to the other side. You are turning to the right. Turn to the other side. Turn toward the side of your door.

Instructor: Do you hear me?

Pilot: I hear you but it sounds like you are very far away.

Instructor: Good. But turn to the left. Not to your right but to your left. That's it. That's it. Turn more. That's it. Gently. Continue turning gently, gently.

That's it. Very good. Very good. Don't climb. Drop it a bit. Down. Drop it. Drop. Drop. Drop gently. Just a bit. Push the control wheel forward. Push it forward. Gently. Gently. Take it easy. Take it easy. O.K. Turn toward the left a bit. Drop it. Drop it. Drop it. Drop it. Drop it. Drop it. Straighten out the plane toward the right. The right. Straighten it and down. Drop it down. Down strongly. Down. Down. Down strongly. Throttle back the engine. Throttle back and drop to the right. Drop it. Drop it. Drop it. Take it easy. Gently. Push the control wheel forward. Cut the throttle all the way. Bring back the throttle towards you from forward towards you. Towards your seat and turn to the right. Make a stronger turn to the right. A bit stronger. You're going along divinely. Make a little turn stronger toward the right. Perfect. A bit more. A bit more. A bit more to the right. Don't turn to the left. Keep on. That's it. Very good. Now, you're doing it perfect. Continue in a straight line and level. Perfect.

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Instructor: Drop the nose a bit. Just a bit. Drop the nose down a bit.
Keep the wings level. Drop the nose a bit.
Perfect. You're doing it perfectly. Very well. Very well.
Drop the nose more. A bit more. Very good. You are doing it
very well. You are doing divinely.

Pilot: How are we coming?

Instructor: We are going along perfectly. You are doing it all like I am
telling you. I believe you are going to land divinely. O.K.

Lopez, Lopez, instructor Rojas speaks to him. Listen to me Rojas says to
him, Do you hear me?

Pilot: I am listening to you. Louder, louder, I am confused. I can't
understand anything. Speak louder, louder, louder.

Instructor: O.K. I am going to speak louder to you and slower to see if
you understand better. How are you hearing me now?

Pilot: I can hear you.

Instructor: Take it easy, very easy. We're going divinely. You are in
good shape. We are going to continue on this course. You
are going along very well. Now I am going to tell you what
we are going to do. Take it easy. Take it easy. When we tell
you, you are going to turn toward the left. The left is where
you have your watch. Take it easy. O.K.

Control Tower: Don't talk to him all the time.

Instructor: Very well, Continue turning. That's it. That's it. Turn a bit
more. You're doing very well.

Doctor:telling the pilot to try moving the head rapidly toward the
left or toward the right in order on so as to make a rapid
turn of the head....

Control Tower: Luis, Luis, Luis, turn the aircraft.

Instructor: O.K. Drop the nose. Turn sharply to the left. To the left
and don't drop it. To the left and don't drop it. To the
other side. To the other side. To the other side. That's it.
That way. That's the way. Bring up the nose. Pull up the
plane. Pull it up. Climb. Climb. Climb.
O.K. You're going in a straight line. A bit to the right
To the right, Now to the right. Down. Down sharply.
Cut the motor. Cut all the power and down to the ground
Drop it. Drop it sharply. To the left. Down. Climb up.

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Climb up. Climb up. (The first attempted landing is aborted)

Second Attempt

Instructor: Climb up. Climb up. Impossible. Climb. Climb. Pull it up. Pull it up.

Control Tower: Could he land it in the green zone?

No, I believe that's a difficult area. I don't know about this case where it is. I see it as difficult.

Instructor: How are you hearing me?

Pilot: I am hearing you a bit better. A little better. I am getting myself pulled together. I will try to recover a little.

Instructor: Perfect. Continue flying.

Instructor: You are speaking normally. We are going to make a small turn toward the right. A small turn toward the right. Perfect. You are doing very well. Very well. Continue turning to the right keeping this altitude. Keep the nose of the plane level. Perfect. Continue turning to the right.

Control Tower: We are going to attempt another approach and try to see how we will manage to coordinate. By all means we are going to make another approach.

Instructor: O.K.

Pilot: Now, I can see the instruments.

Instructor: O.K. You seem to me very good. What is your name? Do you remember what your name is?

Pilot: No. No. No. I don't remember my name.

Instructor: O.K. It doesn't matter, what your name is. Continue on this course. Perfect. Very good. The wings level and the nose at this height. We are going to land at Eldorado. Don't worry.

Instructor: Do you see the gasoline gauges?

Pilot: A little. A little.

Instructor: Do you have gasoline left?

Pilot: Yes, they are showing all of them over to the right.

Instructor: O.K. marvelous. Now indeed you are understanding perfectly. I am going to ask you. I am going to speak very slowly, softly and slowly in order that you hear me and understand me. I am going to ask you to follow instructions which I will give you, to the letter. What I tell you to do. You do it. You are going to make a gentle turn to the left. To the left. To the other side. That is the right. Towards the left. Turn toward the left more. A

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little bit more. Perfect. You are doing very well but do not raise the nose. Drop it. Drop the nose of the plane a bit. Perfect. Very good. Continue on that course. You are going very well. Keep the wings level. To the right. To the right. Perfect. You are understanding perfectly. Very well. Very well.

Pilot: Now, I can see the instruments with greater clarity.

Instructor: O.K. Now we are going to try and make a maneuver. Can you take hold of the airplane throttle with your hands?

Pilot: Yes, Yes. I can do it. I can try to do it.

Instructor: O.K. Perfect. Now continue on that course. Continue so with the wings straight and level. Very good. You are getting better. Perfect.

Control Tower: O.K. Luis, Let's talk more briefly so that we can coordinate. O.K.?

Instructor: Affirmative. Now, the young man is doing O.K. How are you hearing me now?

Pilot: I am hearing a little bit better. I am seeing the flight instruments with greater clarity.

Instructor: O.K. Would you be able to see another airplane in front of you? I'm going to move ahead of you to see if you can see me. O.K.?

Pilot: Practically. I can't see the ground but yes I can see with some clarity in front of me. I want to land quickly. I don't want to kill myself.

Instructor: Just take it easy. Don't worry. Take it easy. Nothing. Absolutely nothing is going to happen to you. Nothing. Nothing at all. We are going to try to land. Don't worry and take it easy.

Control Tower: Luis, keep the conversation more brief.

Instructor: O.K. I am going to park myself in front of you and tell me if you can see me. Continue on this course. I am going to get in front of you if you can see me so that you can follow me to the runway O.K.?

Don't drop down. Don't go down. Not down. I am coming by the left side and now I am in front of you. Do you see me or not?

Pilot: I am trying to see a shadow which is passing in front of me.

Instructor: Follow it. Follow it. Follow it. Turn toward your left. To your right. To your right and follow the shadow. Follow the shadow.

Pilot: Can't you stay closer to me?

Instructor: Yes. I am going to be closer to you. You are going to follow the shadow in all its movements until it leaves you on the runway. On the airstrip O.K.?

Pilot: Correct. Correct. Correct.

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- Instructor: Do you have the shadow in sight?
Pilot: Yes. Yes. Indeed, I am seeing it with greater clarity.
Instructor: Good. O.K. Then follow me.
Control Tower: To the right Alberto.
Instructor: Follow the shadow. I am turning toward the right. Follow the shadow. Follow the shadow. Follow it. Follow turning to the right. Do you have the shadow in sight?
Pilot: Yes. Yes. I am seeing it a bit above me. It is getting away from me. I have lost sight of it.
Instructor: Take it easy. Take it easy. Continue turning so as you were going. very well.
Instructor: O.K. Now cut the motor completely. Cut the motor off. Cut it. Cut it. Cut it. That's it. That's it. Cut it. Cut it. Cut it. Cut the mixture. Cut the mixture. You're on the ground.

End of radio communication as Lopez had made a safe landing at Eldorado Airport in Bogota, Colombia.

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