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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### EL & LITS: Reply to Cohen

From: [DevereuxP@aol.com](mailto:DevereuxP@aol.com)  
Date: Tue, 22 Jul 1997 10:18:34 -0400 (EDT)  
Fwd Date: Tue, 22 Jul 1997 11:36:51 -0400  
Subject: EL & LITS: Reply to Cohen

>Date: Fri, 27 Jun 1997 08:47:04 -0400  
>To: UFO UpDates - Toronto <[updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)>  
>From: " Jerry Cohen" <[rjcohen@li.net](mailto:rjcohen@li.net)>  
>Subject: Re: EL/TST (Repost to correct links)

Dear Jerry, Dear List,

Thank you Jerry for your posting of 27 June - it saves me going back and sorting out our exchanges of a few months ago, and forces me to catch up a bit!

You claim that my earlier comments about LITS being the most common type of UFO report are "not exactly accurate" and quote Hynek's classifications and his revised analysis of Blue Book data. So we are dealing with an old review of even older data, but let that stand. So, we have:

>BRIEF SUMMARY of HYNEK CLASSIFICATIONS:  
>Nocturnal lights: Strangely behaving lights in the night sky  
>Daylight Discs: UFOs sighted in the daytime.  
>Radar & Radar/visual sightings: Radar sightings and those with  
>visual support

>CE 1: Detailed sighting but no observable interaction with  
> the witness or the environment.  
>CE 11: UFO is observed interacting with the environment and  
> frequently, the witness as well.  
>CE 111: Basically a CE 11 case where the UFO occupants make  
> themselves known.

>REVISED BLUE BOOK STATISTICS:

>The following quotes from: Hynek, J. Allen, \*The Hynek UFO Report\*,  
>Chapt. 11 "The Air Force Numbers Game", Dell Publishing Co, Inc.,  
>1977

>TABLE 11.5 -- Types of Revised Unknowns

>Type	Number	% of Unknowns
>Nocturnal Lights.....	243.....	38%
>Daylight Discs.....	271.....	42
>Radar-Visual.....	29.....	5
>Radar.....	10.....	2
>CEI.....	46.....	7
>CEII.....	33.....	5
>CEIII.....	8.....	1

>JC: What is extremely surprising here is the great number of

>Daylight Disc cases reported. These cases, from Blue Book files  
>alone, and neglecting the wealth of information from the civilian  
>UFO organizations around the world, involve many hundreds of  
>witnesses, the majority of them with Air Force or some other technical  
>background (sometimes scientific). It is rather surprising that  
>Nocturnal Lights do not lead the list, as they do in most other  
> studies... <snip>

Okay, let's take all this a step at a time.

#### KNOWING THE LITERATURE

First off, I took a look at Hynek's classification system vis-a-vis earth lights in my 1982 book, \*Earth Lights\* (Turnstone, UK). So I'm not so naive as you seem to think; rather, you haven't read the literature. It \*is\* difficult to find some of these books and papers in the States, I know, but I have already explained to you why that is so -- US publishers, viewing American ufologists as a market, see an almost total immersion in literalist beliefs (ie. versions of the ETH). From a commercial perspective, therefore, they simply do not publish books on earth lights or most alternative approaches. Even if something alternative, let alone critical, of the gawdalmighty ETH \*does\* get out, it is slammed as "debunking" by the ETH faithful, and the proponents come under a barrage of attacks, as we see time and again on this list. Wide-ranging discussion is not tolerated, it seems. (The irony is the ETHers act as if those with other views somehow have to disprove the ETH first, when in fact the ETH isn't proven in the first place!) There is simply the \*assumption\* that the ETH is the right answer, and anything else is incorrect, deliberately misleading, or concocted by nitwits. I have already pointed out to you that mainstream ufology everywhere, and nowhere more strongly than in the USA, lives in a cultural bubble - I have termed it a kind of Salem of the mind. But in an earlier posting, Jerry, you retorted with some irrelevant comment about the fact that you can indeed read - which I was not taking issue with. (Rather, I was trying to explain that if you are inside that conceptual, cultural Salem bubble, it is extraordinarily difficult for you to perceive it.) Anyway, that's the reason earth lights books aren't readily available in the States: like it or not, ufologists in America are censored in their reading by market forces.

However, if you are not Joe Bloggs, ufologist-in-the-street, but a \*researcher\*, as you and so many on this list claim to be, Jerry, then you make the effort to seek out the literature to expand your viewpoint, and to inform yourself of the knowledge base from which some outsider like me comes. Otherwise, you hold your peace. In an earlier posting, you asked if I could scan \*Earth Lights Revelation\* for you, presumably thinking it was merely an article. Well, it is in fact an 85K-word book, with pretty colour pictures of earth lights and other features, and so you really will have to stir your stumps and go down to a library. If they don't have it (unlikely they will) then you can order it on inter-library loan. They will be able to get it for you. The book's ISBN is 0-7137-2209-6. It was published by Blandford Press, an imprint of Cassell, in London in 1989 and 1990, and distributed by Sterling Publishing in NYC. The book is a little out of date now (as so much has happened in earth lights research in the last 8 years or so), but it nevertheless remains the most comprehensive single volume ever produced on the subject, and should be enough to make you understand that, whether you agree or disagree with my viewpoint, I do not come onto this list just shooting off loose opinions through the back of my head (or any other part of my anatomy).

An alternative would be to order the book through your local bookstore - I think New Leaf Distributors, Georgia, may still have some copies left.

In addition to this, I have a major article updating earth lights research coming out in \*Fortean Times\* in a month or two (issue 103, I think) - that you \*will\* be able to get easily at any major store like Barnes & Noble which carries a good range of magazines. Further, towards the end of this year, my book with Peter Brookesmith, \*UFOs and Ufology\* will be coming out. This is a large format work, with hundreds pictures, in full colour, and critically overviews many aspects of ufology. It includes a chapter on earth lights. It is being published, again, by Blandford in London, but I do not yet know who the US publisher will be -- maybe they won't want to handle it...

LITS, DISCS AND ELs

Right. So now you have ways and means to better inform yourself

on this topic. Interim, let's look at the matter you raise in your latest posting. I'll stand by my claim that most UFO reports relate to lights seen in the sky - I'll expand on that, if you like, to lights seen often but not always, in the night sky.

Naturally, the first thing in looking at a UFO report is to ensure that we are not dealing with some kind of confusion between an actual sighting (eg. a set of lights in the night sky) and witness \*interpretation\* of that sighting (eg. the lights are on a huge, dark craft). Reports can all too often be interpretations. How many "structured craft" fall into this category, I wonder? What people say they see, and more often \*think\* they see, is not always by any means what they \*do\* actually see. (As one minor example of this, I have seen people at the Marfa Lights lookout point in Texas run screaming back into their vehicles because they think a Marfa light is rushing towards them, when in fact it is simply a car's headlights flashing momentarily as it crests a particular rise on the Marfa-Presidio road about 20-30 miles away across Mitchell Flat...)

On the specific matter of the percentage of LITS in UFO reports, you yourself, Jerry, admit that most studies give the biggest percentage to LITS, and that is certainly what I see in ongoing UFO reports in the UFO small press literature. However, in the particular block of data you have selected, let us see just what we have:

Nocturnal Lights.....	243.....	38%
Daylight Discs.....	271.....	42
Radar-Visual.....	29.....	5
Radar.....	10.....	2

I would argue that, \*potentially\*, earth lights could account for \*any\* and all of these four categories, giving us 87 percent.

"How can this be?" I hear you you wail. Well, let us deal with the top two first. May I quote Hynek back to you? "It could be that Nocturnal Lights observed in the daytime would appear as Daylight Discs -- we don't know. But \*observationally\* the distinction is useful." (My emphasis.) So that could mean that LITS, therefore potentially ELs, could theoretically account for 80 percent in the data block you are citing.

But there's a more compelling reason than Hynek's old opinion for supposing daylight discs to be potentially the same phenomenon as nocturnal LITS - and, the beauty of it is, \*it is not anecdotal\*.

It revolves around the general assumption that ELs are some form of plasma. This has now been well supported by the 1994 work of You-Suo Zou (of the Institute of Atmospheric Physics in Beijing's Academy of Sciences, and an associate of the Department of Meteorology at the University of Utah). He made a close study of the original Project Hessdalen's collected data, and he noted photographs of light traces which revealed a corkscrew-like effect - a 7 Hz pulsation. (A visual example of this should appear in my forthcoming \*Fortean Times\* piece.) Zou recognised this helical structure as typical of a plasma vortex in motion. From work with laboratory plasmas (Zou cited Leibovich, 1983, and Ma, 1984), this structure is particularly visible in the tails of plasma vortices that are breaking down (as photos in Zou's paper confirmed). Under certain conditions, a plasma vortex can become a kind of solitary wave (soliton) and from the behaviour of some Hessdalen lights as recorded on the project's radar, Zou observed clear evidence of wave energy propagation. (Zou's reference should also appear in my \*Fortean Times\* article.)

Now, let us turn to one of four often-asked critical questions concerning earth lights and UFOs (and here I excerpt directly from the forthcoming \*Fortean Times\* article):

Question: What have earth lights to do with "daylight disks"?  
 Answer: If earth lights are a form of plasma, then there is no problem with this, because a plasma seen in daylight does happen to look shiny and metallic, and is likely to have a spherical, ovoid or discoid form. Moreover, there are pitch black objects sometime seen by day (both Erling Strand - director of the new Project Hessdalen - and I have witnessed examples of these ourselves) which seem to be photon-absorbing instead of light-emitting. These bizarre phenomena - which can be round, square or irregular in form - may relate to earth lights in the way one pole of a magnet relates to the other. I have seen one of these appear, move along at treetop height, then disappear instantaneously in full sight,

then re-appear a distance further on, then shoot off into the sun glare.

#### RADAR VISUALS

Let's look at three other often-asked questions (usually delivered in terms of criticism), the answers to which I think you will see potentially account for the additional 7 percent of other sightings in Hynek's breakdown as well - radar visuals and radar observations. (Again, I excerpt for the forthcoming \*Fortean Times\* piece):

Question: What about the size usually ascribed to flying saucers? Small balls of plasma, seen as lights or even as apparent metallic forms can't account for those, surely?

Answer: Some earth lights are reported as being many yards across. A modest example of this was shown in the Quebec case (1988) - the size, height and duration of some of these phenomena were clearly "UFO standard". The lights at Hessdalen ranged up to even larger sizes. And lights seen at night, accounting for a huge percentage of all UFO reports, can look large if bright enough - their size is easy to overestimate.

Question: How do earth lights explain radar-visual cases?

Answer: It has in fact been proven that plasmas can return radar echoes. Indeed, even plasmas that have too low a temperature to emit visible light can still reflect radar waves just like a metal surface (Zou, 1994). During the first Project Hessdalen, radar echoes were repeatedly obtained from invisible objects hovering near ridges.

(During the earlier correspondence on this list, I was challenged to explain how a UFO - a green lightball - could 'ping', as reported by the pilot, when it apparently struck an airliner landing at Mexico City's international airport, if it was "only" an earth light. To which my answer is simple: the aircraft was made of metal - how do you know it was the lightball that pinged? A metallic object like a plane striking a charged object like a plasma might well give off an impact sound. As a footnote to this, I note that on 1 July, they had to close runways in Mexico City airport because of ash spewed out by the volcano Popocatepetl 45 miles away. The volcano grows increasingly more dangerous, and I have already linked the geological/tectonic upheavals occasioned by that to the upsurge of UFO reports in Mexico. I suggest the genuine phenomena observed - and possibly filmed in some cases - are earth light phenomena produced by the extraordinary energies churning in that part of the Earth's crust we call Mexico. [I have identified other purported UFOs on the Mexican videotapes as kites, car headlights descending the steep and solitary hills in the Valley of Mexico, helium balloons, etc. What is singularly lacking are co-ordinated twin video - or stills - shots of the Mexican phenomena, which would allow calculation of distance and size, and a surer idea of motion. Single-shot videocam images remain poor evidence of UFOs.] There is a major disaster pending in that region in my opinion.)

Question: What about markings on the ground and damage to foliage associated with some reported UFO landings?

Answer: These are quite consistent with localised damage caused by energetic lightballs. Singed foliage, ground burns and grooves have all been associated with ball lightning, for example.

(If you don't know some of the references I make in this extract, then the reading advice I've given you will fill those gaps in your knowledge of the matter.)

As for Hynek's close encounter categories, Types I and II present no problems as per the above, and both Persinger and I have elsewhere explained how the stranger cases, where genuine and the result of accurate perception, could be accounted for within an energy model rather than an ET model. (Even though Persinger's work is slammed a lot by some ufological critics, some of it is practical work in this particular area of concern and far less anecdotal than anything put forward in support of the ETH.)

#### OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

In the \*Fortean Times\* article, you will see that I go on to describe other intriguing characteristics of earth lights, and why we are now thinking they may be \*macro-quantal\* events. Some of this information is also non-anecdotal as you will see. IMO, this will be the paradigm to explore in future 'new ufology'. Otherwise, we can debate Roswell until the cows come home. For me, the Roswell

biz has become a metaphor for the ETH nose-diving into an intellectual desert! I strongly feel that at some point in the 1950s, we got the paradigm wrong concerning UFOs, and its time we did a serious stock take. If we are not bringing the right questions to the problem, how can we arrive at the correct answers?

#### PHANTOMS OF THE SKIES

Now, I do want to make it clear, as I have earlier in a posting to this list, that I \*do\* think there are other mystery phenomena in the skies that are neither earth lights nor ET craft. True phantoms of the skies. I gave an account of my 1953/4 sighting of a huge dirigible airship, seen in full daylight and in full detail. It appeared and disappeared within minutes, but was co-witnessed. Quite apart from its anomalous appearance/ disappearance, there could not have been such a vehicle flying in Britain at that time. If there are genuine sightings of UFO "craft", and if they are to be viewed as ET vehicles, then what was this airship? An early-model ET spaceship?

I prefer to think that what I saw, and what others might see, are not alien space machines, but future/past time slips, or archetypal images somehow made objectively if transiently visible, or...

In short, I feel that such aerial phantoms occur for reasons we cannot even begin to formulate as yet. Unfathomable phantoms. I suspect, however, they may come through the same quantum doorway as might earth lights, and I discuss this a bit further in the \*Fortean Times\* article too, and will hopefully be doing so in future writings. But whatever they are, they are but a tiny fraction of what is dealt with in UFO reports. They are so rare it would be unwise to base the ufological phenomenon on these events, even if we think they are the most important ones. Prattling on forever about abductions out of New York apartment blocks, alien autopsies, and multiple versions of a New Mexico UFO crash 50 years ago will get us nowhere with them in any case...

#### HYNEK

A word about Hynek and ELs. He heard my early case for earth lights in 1983, and found it interesting. Then, in 1985, he visited Hessdalen, and came away convinced that "we have something very important for ufology here". Alas, he was a only a year away from his death. Had he lived, and therefore been acquainted with the recent research, I think he may have been able to persuade at least some strands of American ufology away from its increasing rush into the ETH-and-nothing-but-the-ETH abyss.

JERRY'S FAVE RAVE CASES  
(HAVE MERCY ON MY SOUL...)  
Finally, Jerry, you say:

>Looking forward to your eventual comments on SKYTHING 1960 &  
>Exeter and how they relate to your theories. You mentioned in  
>a note to me that you don't have the time to comment on these  
>specific cases and how your theories relate to them. This is  
>certainly unfortunate for the reasons mentioned above.

>Again, those addresses are:  
>Exeter 1/2 <http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/updates/1997/jan/m26-010.shtml>  
>Exeter 2/2 <http://www.ufomind.com/ufo/updates/1997/jan/m26-008.shtml>  
>SKYTHING 1960 is archived at:  
><http://www.li.net/~rjcohen/ocr.2.html>

Jerry, I do assure you that my lack of time is no empty excuse - I write at least two books a year (just try it, babe), prepare TV shows, write articles and columns, lecture internationally, conduct practical, serious studies on topics like lucid dreaming, and do weeks and even months of fieldwork research concerning earth lights and, wearing my other hat, ancient sites. I commute transatlantically. Yet even so, I do manage to keep abreast of this list, contribute to it occasionally, and, as now, sometimes take a great deal of time answering your postings, Jerry. So do please show a little mercy.

As for the Exter thingy, yes <wearily> I'll try to get to read it sometime. But let us say I take it on, let's say I spend time and money researching it in depth (just reading it won't do much good, will it?), let's just say I find an answer that is not supportive of whatever your beliefs in it are (you are clearly touting it as you think it will scupper the earth lights approach), what then? Won't someone else, if not you, come up with another reported case and say, to the effect, "OK, try this one for size, then."? H'mm? And wouldn't that just go on and on? Be honest now.

This belief that there is \*the\* case that will prove the ETH case once and for all if only, if only, if only... (and everyone has their pet candidate, it seems) is not well founded, in my opinion. After 50 years of it not happening, I think the chances are that it won't. For my money, we have to do a lot more \*strategic\* thinking than we currently are, to complement individual case studies. We spend so much of our time so close to the trees that we spend too little time standing back to look at the state of the forest it is in. And that brings me on to....

LET'S MEND IT -- IT \*IS\* BROKEN

My suggestion is that we have to \*re-invent ufology\* altogether. We need to swallow hard, accept much of ETHism is what we emotionally want to be true, and start looking at and thinking about the UFO enigma anew. Whatever you feel, say or believe, Jerry, the last 50 years in ufology have not been a very inspiring overall display of human intellectual achievement (which is not to denigrate some excellent work by a lot of people). EThers all the time feel they are just on the verge of making the breakthrough, but it never, ever, happens. So they keep tugging themselves on and on, down the years, down the decades.

Hey, you know -- it \*is\* time to leave Salem.

Kind regards,  
Paul

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