

Spontaneous Invisibility - The Mystery We Can Not See
(c) June 2000 by Craig R. Lang - MN MUFON FI Coordinator

The close encounter phenomenon has many truly strange aspects to it. Many strange phenomena, such as psychic abilities and paranormal fallout, are frequently described by experiencers. Even stranger are the Oz factor - in which the very fabric of reality appears to change in the moments before or after an encounter; and the apparent ability of both entities and experiencers to pass directly through walls. These are just some of the mind bending phenomena that defy our conventional notions of reason and logic, and appear to challenge our very concept of reality.

One of the strangest effects noted by investigators of the close encounter phenomenon is that in which the experiencer finds him/herself seeming to shift out of reality itself, becoming invisible to their fellow humans. Several researchers, notable among them Budd Hopkins and Donna Higbee, have taken note of this effect and dubbed it "Spontaneous Invisibility" [Donna Higbee describes this phenomenon on web site: members.aol.com/rapunz1/invisibility.html].

Local Cases

After reading through several web postings regarding this, and listening to Budd Hopkins describe some cases similar to this on an episode of Dreamland, my interest in this as a potentially distinct phenomenon was enhanced. I had earlier interviewed several close encounter witnesses who had described similar events to those described by Hopkins and Higbee. Thus my next step was to review some of these, and begin to catalog them.

One fascinating case involves a UFO sighting which occurred in south Minneapolis, approximately five years ago. During a power failure, the witness as well as several of her neighbors had stepped out into the hallway. The witness then stepped less than twenty feet to the front window of the building, which looked out onto the building block across the street. When she did, she observed a large UFO hovering across the building block. Startled for a moment, she turned to her neighbors to point it out to them. However, she found that she was unable to get their attention. This state of affairs continued for several moments, during which they appeared to be completely unaware of her presence. She then turned to the window and saw that the UFO had vanished.

The events as described by the witness suggest that this case might involve missing time, although it may also simply be a momentary, up-close sighting of a very spectacular UFO. However, at least one of the witness's neighbors indicates that although they were aware that she had gone to the window, they were unaware of her presence there. Neither had the slightest idea that she was trying to attract their attention.

Additionally, this sighting occurred on a warm evening. Due to the power outage, A large number of people were outside on the street. These people should have been able to see the UFO. However, apparently no one except the witness (and possibly one or two others) observed it. Thus, if we are to take these witness descriptions at face value, we are faced with dual phenomenon: Selective invisibility by the phenomenon, and corresponding invisibility of the witness who, by some means, seems to be able to penetrate the UFO's "cloak of invisibility". Another case, also fascinating, involves an abductee in western Minnesota. This person was

outdoors, engaged in a sports activity with several friends of similar age. Several of them had taken a break from the game when the witness looked up to see a large silver disk hovering over a nearby building. Startled, he called out to his friends to bring the object to their attention. However, they did not respond to his shouts. He later told me that he was just about "in their faces" attempting to get their attention, but that they seemed simply unaware of his existence at that moment.

At that moment, it appears that a period missing time begins, as the witness underwent a close encounter of the fourth kind. It is not clear whether the episode of spontaneous invisibility occurred before or after the abduction, or perhaps both. Whichever is true, it is clear that all of the people on the field ought to have clearly seen both the object and the witness. However, neither were visible to them, during the time of the encounter.

In yet another fascinating case of the relationship between the close encounter phenomenon and that of spontaneous invisibility, an experiencer has described to me several instances in which she experienced this phenomenon. For her, this was part of a chain of events which began with a tremendous close encounter, and continued with a powerful sequence of psychic episodes. This time in her life was characterized by a sudden and profound parapsychological awakening - what she describes as a powerful shift in consciousness. For her, the phenomenon became completely life altering.

One day, at the time when these changes were at their peak, she found herself in an experience in which she was driving her car, and was stopped at a traffic light at a busy intersection. Her car was approximately the third in line at the red light. Also present were a number of pedestrians on the nearby sidewalk. She suddenly noticed that several of the pedestrians were staring curiously into her car window. She heard exclamations such as "there's no one in that car!", and "...who's driving?". This continued for several more seconds, until the light changed, and she accelerated through and past the intersection. She has indicated that this was just one of several incidents that occurred during that time frame. Like the others mentioned, her apparent invisibility experiences were somehow associated with a period of close encounters, and of tremendously heightened PSI experiences.

Implications and Hypotheses:

Scientific mysteries are both a challenge and a blessing. They wreak havoc with our tidy notions of reality, but they also offer the potential to form an even deeper understanding of that same reality. The many extraordinary effects associated with close encounters, including spontaneous invisibility, offer us just such a challenge. By stretching our models of reality to encompass these new phenomena we can learn volumes about what we never even realized was there.

One paradigm which seems to offer a hope of understanding the phenomenon of spontaneous invisibility is described in Michael Talbot's book "The Holographic Universe". In this book Talbot describes an underlying structure to reality based upon the relatively recently described "Quantum Holographic Model". His work borrows heavily on the concepts of both holography and quantum nonlocality. He uses these to build the notion that reality is in effect a holographic "projection" derived from what is referred to as the Implicate Order, the nonlocal fabric of the universe (see David Bohm's book "Wholeness and the Implicate Order" for a detailed description of this concept). An object's quantum hologram contains, encoded within it, the entire state, nature and history of that object, and exists in the implicate order, encoded within the nonlocal zero-point field.

Edgar Mitchell, in an excellent paper entitled "Nature's Mind, the Quantum Hologram", further describes how the holographic model can help us understand conscious perception and PSI phenomena. In this paper, Mitchell develops the idea that perception of an object by a conscious being is actually a bidirectional process, with perception flowing in one direction, and attention flowing in the other, and that these can be understood in terms of quantum holography. He builds on the idea that the brain is a quantum system (citing Penrose and Hammeroff's work - see Penrose, "Shadows of the Mind", or the quantum mind website at www.consciousness.arizona.edu/quantum), to postulate a nonlocal link, or resonance (referred to

as phase conjugate adaptive resonance, or PCAR), between the observer's mind and the object being observed. This resonance is required for the mind to consciously perceive an object. Without PCAR, even if the eye is actually able to see an object, the quantum mind can not actually perceive it.

Perhaps, then, the holographic model and the PCAR concept might offer us a framework for understanding anomalies such as spontaneous invisibility. It does not yet suggest a mechanism by which PCAR might be disrupted to prevent consciousness of others from registering the invisible experiencer. But with this model we see a framework of understanding beginning to emerge, a hint such a mechanism might just be possible. While not the answer in itself, the holographic model does suggest some fruitful areas for research. It hints that perhaps, there is an answer to the question - a light at the end of a long tunnel of mystery.