

UP CLOSE WITH BALL LIGHTNING

For those interested in the phenomena of ball lightning, I would like to relate to the readers a very close encounter with ball lightning.

Recently, on a research visit to Cuba, we made a stop over at the bustling Mexico City airport. I have to say, it was with great relief that we landed in Mexico at all.

Approximately thirty minutes outside of Mexico airport, we happened upon very dense thunder clouds. Towering cumulus clouds enveloped our plane. It was not long before I had camera at the ready and was taking pictures of the wondrous formations. Fortunately I had a window seat over the left wing of the craft. This position enabled me to take excellent photographs of the cloud formations.

I had briefly stopped taking pictures deciding to gaze through the window, when suddenly a very loud bang was heard though out the plane. This sound emanated from the window next to my seat. I would imagine the sound being similar to the aircraft being hit by a train.

A bolt of ball lightning traveled down the Left wing of the plane and into the cabin, right in front of my seat. It was so close that the ball of plasma seemed to be between myself and the seat in front of me. The ball of lightning then, briefly entered the aisle section of the cabin and disappeared.

There were many witnesses to this event. I, like many others, observed the ball of charged plasma (if indeed it was plasma) to be a bright, white light color. Interesting to note however, one person situated on the opposite side of the aisle observed a red ball of light.

All fell silent in the cabin. It was not long before the pilot announced we had indeed been hit by lightning but there was "nothing to worry about ".

A flight attendant then approached and enquired what I had seen, as she had not witnessed such an event in her twenty five years as an attendant.

The air in the cabin briefly seemed to be electrified but there was not an odor of ozone apparent, nor did the event have any effect on cameras, watches etcetera.

All in all that was a very brief but close encounter with the phenomenon of ball lightning.

On landing I intended to try and inspect the plane to see if there were any scorch marks on the outer casing of the craft. Alas, as we were traveling on a day of ' code red' I was not able to access the effected area. I doubt if I would be able to access the

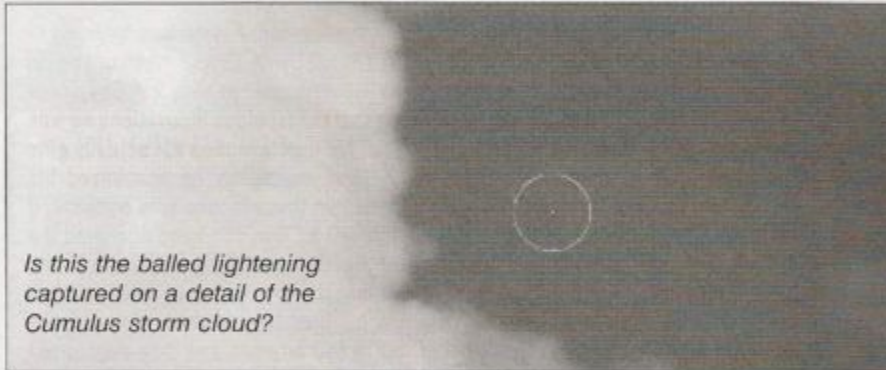
area of the aircraft in normal circumstance, but it was not for the want of trying however.

A close shave in the skies near Mexico City, one would say.

A close Encounter with balled lightning.

(By Omega)

A perennial subject in the field of ufology is the phenomena of ball lightning and its use as a universal sceptical prosaic explanation for UFO sightings. I would like to relate a recent event for our readers to ponder on - the closest encounter humanly possible with this rare occurrence. This happened en route to Mexico City airport where we made a stop over on my way to a research visit to Cuba. Approximately thirty minutes outside of Mexico airport, we happened upon very dense thunder clouds of towering cumulus which enveloped our plane. It was not long before I had camera at the ready and was taking pictures of the wonder formations. Fortunately I had a window seat over the left wing of the craft. This position enabled me to take excellent photographs.



Is this the balled lightning captured on a detail of the Cumulus storm cloud?

I had briefly stopped taking pictures deciding to gaze through the window when suddenly a bolt of ball lightning travelled down the Left wing of the plane and into the cabin, right in front of my seat. It was so close that the ball of plasma seemed to be between myself and the seat in front of me.

Then there was the most enormous loud bang which reverberated throughout the plane. This sound emanated from the window next to my seat. I would imagine the sound being similar to the aircraft being hit by a train.

The ball of lightning then, briefly entered the aisle section of the cabin and disappeared. There were very many witnesses to this event. Many others including

myself, observed the ball of charged plasma (if indeed it was plasma) to be a blinding bright, white light colour. Interesting to note however, one person situated on the opposite side of the aisle observed a red ball of light.

All fell silent in the cabin. It was not long before the pilot announced we had indeed been hit by lightning but there was "nothing to worry about." A flight attendant then approached and enquired what I had seen, as she had not witnessed such an event in her twenty five years as an attendant. The air in the cabin briefly seemed to be electrified but there was no odour of ozone apparent, nor did the event have any effect on cameras, watches or batteries. On landing I intended to try and inspect the plane to see if there were any scorch marks on the outer

casing of the craft. Alas, as we were travelling on a day of international terror alerts; a code red, so I was not able to access the affected area.

What is most important about this experience is its relationship to the recent proclamation by the official report Project Condign in the U.K. and also the earlier work of international sceptic Dr Susan Blackmore concerning the interaction of plasma and other high energy fields with the

temporal lobes of the brain causing hallucination. As quoted in the Condign report. "**Local fields of this type have been medically proven to cause responses in the temporal lobes of the human brain. These result in the observer sustaining (and later describing and retaining) his or her own vivid, but mainly incorrect, description of what is experienced.**" While I was seated with a bolt of balled lightning almost sitting on my lap; my mind retained absolute clarity. Can there be a stronger natural electromagnetic field than the white hot plasma of balled lightning at virtual point blank distance to the human brain? Perhaps, our scientific experts all ready know this, but cannot face the storm.

Reference:
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