

The Critical Orb rev 1.1

By Russ Bennett

A colleague of mine asked me why I was so hard on orbs, and I'm sure the folks in my investigation group are a bit curious too. I guess it's time for me to fess up and tell what I know, but this might revolutionize paranormal research as we know it! Okay, perhaps not, but maybe...just maybe it will give someone in this great big green earth an extra bit of knowledge to show sound judgment when looking over and analyzing investigative images.

The cause of my strictness on orbs is quite simple. Orbs are so controversial that the controversy they have been inundated with is the bane of their inclusion in the paranormal realm of data collection. Let me explain - DUST, DUST, DUST...did I mention DUST? How about humidity? Snow? Rain? Bugs? Did I mention hair spray or even simple breathing? Orbs can be caused by all of these things and more. So, it is extremely important to know that not all orbs are paranormal. Let me repeat that - not all orbs are paranormal. Did you get it? One more time and in unison - not all orbs are paranormal. As a matter of fact, a paranormal orb is rare, hence the term paranormal (outside of normality). If you have a million pictures of orbs, and if you are lucky, one picture will be paranormal in nature while the others will be caused by something easily discernable.

It's completely understandable why orbs are too controversial to be used as hard evidence. I ask myself why we even study them, or present them as data to the paranormal community or to the generic nontoxic community at large? Data from other investigators and scientists suggest that there is a correlation between paranormal activity and orbs. Unfortunately, the correlations between the two are hard to substantiate. I find it funny though, that when I look over my images after a hunt or an investigation I have an abundance of orb images. So I ask myself, "why do we see more orbs in paranormal photos than regular day-to-day photos?" There are two reasons for this that I can surmise, 1) it's because we are looking for orbs where other times when looking at non-investigative photos we are not, and 2) usage of a camera in odd locations and odd times. Photography in a cemetery at midnight is pretty weird. I mean, no normal person would be trouncing around a graveyard or abandoned building in the middle of the night snapping pictures.

A colleague asked why dust orbs don't show up in all photos since dust is everywhere. My answer is pretty simple logic really. The environment is different in all places; it changes from place to place and time to time. A room with one person in it has a different environment than the same room with 10 people in it. One of the people in my investigation group asked me why some of her pictures from a recent investigation had orbs in them and the other pictures did not. It took me a bit to remember the environment we were in, but then I remembered that while we were investigating, the air conditioner of the place was off most of the time. I believe it was set to 89 degrees (or so) and completely miserable. When it got so unbearably hot the air conditioner kicked in, and guess what? There was an immediate environmental change that occurred that more than likely stirred up the dust. We went from a building that had no airflow to a building that

had tremendous airflow. Something else to consider, but not really pertinent to this article, on how things effect our environment is that while the AC was on our EMF meters went crazy. *The ambient mG went from .9mG to 2mG. It was quite obvious the air conditioner had a tremendous effect on our environment.

Even though orbs appear where there is suspected paranormal activity, dust will prevail to mess things up. Remember, the places we travel are old and dusty and we have a habit of shuffling our feet kicking up the dust. Our problem comes into classifying which type of orbs are paranormal and which is not. Images are typically left at each individual's own interpretation to draw a conclusion. Unfortunately every single paranormal group has their own way of doing things and ideas of what the paranormal is and since everyone has their own idea of what an orb is; the controversy about orbs will thrive. These differences of thought justify the need for a list of attributes to which all orbs should inherit in order to meet a strict guidance in a classification system. Is it possible to set parameters that an orb must fit in before it is considered paranormal? Some people have tried, but I personally do not think it is possible yet or possible at all.

Classifying orbs and setting parameters will be almost impossible but we can place them into some broad categories at least. It's important to have some broad terms that we all go by in order to gather a better understanding of what it is that we are trying to learn. Orbs can be broken down into two broad categories; Paranormal and Non-Paranormal. Each Category is followed by one or more subcategories for further definition and pinpointing. These should play a key role in a person's classification of an orb.

Non-Paranormal Orbs

- *Particle Orbs* – these type of orbs are any type of orb that is created by a human influence. They include dust, dirt, or even paper that might have been stirred up due to the clumsiness of the human body.



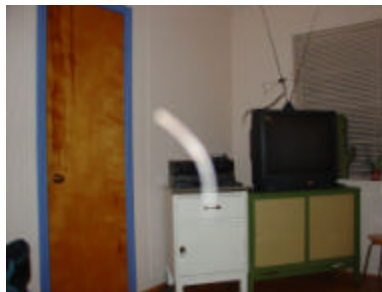
Dust Orbs

- *Elemental Orbs* – these type of orbs are any type of orb caused by elements of the earth. This includes humidity, rain, snow, and even ice.



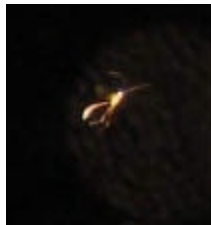
Orbs created by snow

- *Physical Orbs* – the human body causes these type of orbs. They can be caused by an individual's respiration on a very hot muggy night where the respiration is cooler than the ambient air creating humid droplets. Another example is dandruff where the wind blows the dandruff out of a person's hair.



Orb created by a strand of hair

- *Entomological Orbs* – created by bugs. Typically very bright when a flash is used. Could have shape or appear as a circular object with cyclic haze to each side caused by the wings.



Bug caught late at night

- *Reflective Orbs* – these type of orbs are caused by light bouncing off a reflective item such as a piece of glass or mirror. They are also known as lens flare.



Sun flare created orb.

Paranormal Orbs

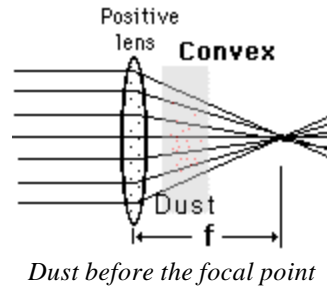
- *Energy Orbs* – **these type of orbs are manifestations created by ghosts whether on purpose or not. They might also be part of a ghost. Some suspect that these type of orbs are a byproduct from the ghosts. A ghost uses energy and we know that energy does not fade but rather transfers to something else...the result in this case being an orb or globule.

We can spot dust, we can spot snow, we can even spot some hair and a bright light, but can we spot a ghost orb? What are the defining characteristics? Self-luminating? Moving? Obstructed? Solid? Rare? Who the heck knows? Since orbs are that questionable, how in the heck can we consider them data and proof of paranormal activity? Still, there is nothing like plastering a barrage of orb pictures across the net.

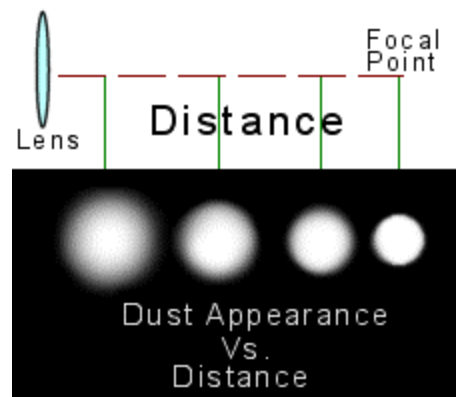
Pictures in general are very deceiving since they are a 2D representation of a 3D environment. This causes dust orbs, or anything that is suspended in mid-air for that matter, to have an illusion of being far away when in fact the orb might only be millimeters away from the camera lens. An interesting example I read a while ago goes like this. Place your finger just a few millimeters from your eye without poking your eye out. Can you see how big it is? Can you see the hard shell outline? Can you see it kind of glowing around the outline? Dust, about 2 inches from the lens does the same exact thing. If you took a picture of your finger in this manner, you would be unable to gauge the distance of it. The fingertip would look as if it were floating in mid air probably a few feet away.

To get an understanding how small particles like dust, dandruff, hair, humidity become orbs we must understand how a camera lens works. A camera lens is a spherical apparatus that has a concave shape to it. The size of the lens, the curvature of the lens surface, and the thickness of the lens make up the Principle Focal Length. This is the distance from the at which something is clear to see when the camera is focused to infinity.

As dust moves about the camera lens, some dust will undoubtedly fly within the focal point of the camera. As the image below represents.



As the dust particle moves toward the focal point it will tend to disappear or become more dust like in nature due to it coming in focus but as it becomes closer to the camera lens the dust particle will tend to grow out of focus and the illusion will be that it is getting bigger and more transparent.



An example of how dust might appear as it gets closer to a camera lens

Here are some examples of what happens when objects are placed close to the lens of a camera.



Vortex created by placing a black Uni-ball pen an inch in front of the camera lens.



Ecto form created by using a piece of cotton held an inch from the lens. Notice its translucency.

What do we do about it? How can we ensure that the orbs we are capturing are paranormal ghost orbs (providing they exist) and not non-paranormal dust orbs? The only thing I see that we can do is to create some sort of device for a camera that would

minimize or stop all together the amount of dust that gets between the lens and the focal length of that lens. The Oklahoma City Ghost Club (OKCGC) has developed such an apparatus for their video camera's but for a regular digital or film camera it seems to be a bit more difficult. My experiments, while interesting, were not very successful as light from the flash fall off would reflect off the device and cause the image to become shadowed and off color. OKCGC has had tremendous success with their device called the DEVA or Dust Eliminating Video Apparatus. They say it has eliminated 99% of their out of focus dust contamination from their night-shot video. That alone is outstanding.

Now you know why I am strict on orbs. It isn't because I don't want the little buggers in our data, but it's because we cannot, without a shadow of doubt, prove they are really paranormal in nature. There are just too many erroneous variables in the mix that make them unreliable. Until we can have some tangible, substantiated proof that orbs are of a paranormal nature I will continue being strict on orbs and eliminating them from the data that I present.

*the high ambient emf was caused from old, non-shielded wiring throughout the building.

**the definition for an energy orb is that of many investigators and not the writer of this article.

Addendum:

Since writing this article I have been thinking more and more about the concept of orbs. I firmly believe they are of a natural origin and not some form of energy released by ghosts. I do not deny the fact that orbs, albeit dust or some other particulate, do tend to occur more often in locations suspected of having ghostly activity, but I ask why. A theory worked on by other ghost investigators suggest that ghosts cause an ionization of the air. Data captured from ion counters furthermore suggest the same. Our senses also have told us this with such catch phrases as, "the hair stood up on my neck" and "my arms are goose bumpy" and even "It feels cold." All these sensations could be a result from heavy ionization.

By doing a simple experiment taught in high school science we can see the effects of ionization. You can do this experiment your self. Rip up some paper or cotton balls into very small pieces and place them on the ground. Now take a balloon that has been blown up. Rub the balloon with a silk, or nylon cloth. Now place the balloon about 2" over the torn up paper or cotton. What happened? Did the small pieces rise to the balloon? Now what would happen if we had an amorphous heavily ionized cloud loom over our particles? The particles would probably rise in the cloud and swirl around in it. Of course this is mere theory and conjecture but if you take what we do know, it sure sounds more plausible than some entity passing energy pellets.

The argument about orbs showing movement and orbs being occluded by other objects is explainable and has been explained many times.

First, the movement issue. Pluck an eyelash out and place it directly on your camera lens. Take a picture - wala, moving orb/rod. Also, dust tends to cling to itself which can cause chains of dust. These chains would look like movement.

Second, the occlusion issue - Due to the out of focus nature of the dust particle it is very translucent. This translucency is in such a way that when paired up with an opaque object the light reflection of the opaque object will be stronger than the out of focus nature of the particle. The effect is that of part of the particle disappearing. We are talking light strengths. If there is more light on an object than the dust particle then the particle will appear to disappear behind the object. Test this yourself. Place a sheet up - this will be your man mad orb. Put an object behind the sheet. Do not move. Look at the sheet head on. Now take a flashlight and shine it on the sheet. The sheet is bright. Now move the flashlight, keeping the light on the sheet, bring it around and shine it on the object ensuring the object is between the light and the sheet. You will see that the sheet disappeared and you have an outline of the object. The sheet is still the same luminancy. If you took a picture of this, the object would appear on the same plane as the sheet due to the 2D representation of the picture. This is kind of simplistic, but still the same idea of what happens when a dust particle appears to be behind an object. There is no depth in photographs so you cannot judge distance.