

## Global Blinking

The Survival Files — Case 51 — ESS = 205.5

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Few physical events are more closely associated with the presence of spirits than the blinking, dimming, and turning on and off of electric lights. By themselves, however, such phenomena provide rather weak evidence for Survival because they have so many possible causes other than ghosts. There are several factors, however, that can increase the evidential strength of such occurrences. One of these is meaningful timing; that is, did the lights flicker at a particularly significant moment? Another affecting factor is the existence of a historical pattern; that is, are blinking lights traditionally associated with a specific presence? Multiple occurrences will also boost the evidential value. Even more impressive would be different lights blinking simultaneously in two separate places.

The following case possesses all these factors, and goes beyond them. Researcher Sylvia Hart Wright includes this testimony in her book *When Spirits Come Calling*.<sup>1</sup> A woman named Barbara is recounting incidents apparently involving the spirit of her deceased mother.

“Something that [my deceased] Mother has done has affected lots of people. When something was going to happen in the family, she would start blinking the lights. It would usually be no more than a week before. One I remember that was really pretty dramatic was when our youngest daughter was in Saudi Arabia with our son-in-law. They were working for Lockheed, next door to Iran. And the Saudis closed the whole country down for three weeks when somebody went in there and shot up the mosque at Mecca.<sup>2</sup>

“Well, at the time my husband had just installed brand new fluorescent lights overhead in our kitchen. Being an engineer, he freaked because they started blinking. With Mother there are different kinds of blinks. There are frantic blinks and then there are the soft, slow blink ... blink ... blink. This was the frantic blink. It went on for one whole evening from, say, 7:00 until we went to bed around 10:30. Every time I would walk into the kitchen and turn on the lights, they'd do this. My husband was so disgusted with the whole thing that he took all the tubes down and had 'em checked and they were all fine. That was what made him a believer. Now when lights blink, he'll just say, ‘Hi, Barbara.’<sup>3</sup>

“I was living in Tucson, Arizona when this was happening. Our oldest daughter was attending the university there and had her own apartment. That same evening we compared notes. At precisely the same time my lights started blinking, the lights in the whole library [where she was studying] at the university started blinking!

“Our daughter in Saudi Arabia had her own craziness to deal with. They were ten hours ahead of us so when it was evening for us, for her it was early in the morning the next day. When they woke up they were in their house for about an hour and a half while they were getting ready to go to work and the lights did not stop blinking that whole time.

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, Sylvia Hart, *When Spirits Come Calling: The Open-Minded Skeptics Guide to After-Death Contacts*, Blue Dolphin Publishing, 2002, pp. 120-121. Excerpt used by permission.

<sup>2</sup> The date is not provided, but this likely refers to events of November 1979.

<sup>3</sup> Both daughter and mother were named Barbara.

But we didn't find this out until quite a while later. The Saudis closed the country down and for three weeks we could not be in touch.

“But here's the topper. I was telling this story in 1983 or '84, at a week-long super-seminar in this giant auditorium. So what do you think Mother did? She dimmed all the lights in the auditorium and blinked them. She really freaked the folks. I mean, there were like 450 people there. And what I heard was, 'Ohhhh.' But she was just saying, 'Hi there.' And then when I was done talking about her, it was like she took a bow. Blink, blink. So what I said into the mike was, 'Showoff!'"

### ESS Score

With a bonus for the third locale halfway around the world, the CS rating is “z+”, CS = 148.

The WR rating is “h”, WR = 57.

The Information-Complexity rating is “g.” IC = 0.5

$$ESS = 148 + 57 + .5 = 205.5$$

END CASE 51

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