

SB7 Experimentation: Are SB7 Responses Simply Auditory Pareidolia or PK Manifestations?

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A zener card was drawn from the deck; it had three wavy lines. Mary asks, “What card did Michael draw?” After six minutes, an unidentified male voice surfaces from the SB7 and asks, “Is it — a line?” Is this, in fact, an intelligent response from a sentient spirit, communicating through the means of the SB7? Is it auditory pareidolia derived from parts of spoken words from radio broadcasts? Or is the response a psychokinesis (PK) manifestation brought on by the present paranormal investigator?

The SB7, also known as a Spirit Box, is an electronic device that supposedly acts as a medium for a spirit to audibly communicate with the living. Popular to the field of paranormal investigating, the SB7 uses radio frequencies to aid a spirit to produce a voice, much like that of an Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) recorder, but in “real time.” (Real-time denotes the capability to hear the auditory response as it happens, as opposed to having to review data later, as with an EVP recorder.)

If EVPs are legitimately attributed to unseen/disembodied entities, scientific approach argues the possibility of an investigator consciously or unconsciously transferring thought into the electronic device himself as a PK manifestation of some sort. PK is the ability to manipulate the physical environment without the means of physical interaction, which ranges from moving objects with the mind to making psychic predictions. More specifically, PK is the control of mind over matter through invisible means, and in this case, the possibility of creating and/or manipulating a device to answer a question.

Pareidolia is a psychological phenomenon in which people perceive meaning through random external stimuli. Auditory pareidolia is the auditory equivalent of matrixing, where one hears and translates random information into something meaningful based on individualized and preconceived notions. If the SB7 is believed to be a functioning communication device for unseen entities, are investigators hearing snippets of standard radio broadcasts and “hearing” the answer that they want to hear because of auditory pareidolia?

SB7 Experimentation at the Walker-Ames House

To answer these questions, an SB7 experiment took place in the well-known Walker-Ames House of Port Gamble, WA, on August 6, 2014. The Walker-Ames House, built in 1888, has a multitude of reported paranormal activity, such as women being inappropriately touched in the basement, inconsistencies in lighting electronics, disembodied voices, and sightings of apparitions of playing children.

The overall experimental plan, using a modified SB7 with an external speaker (modified by removing the device's antenna to reduce the amount of received noise clutter) consisted of three paranormal researchers: Michael White of Paranormal Research & Investigations, and Mary Bethune and Pete Orbea, both of Olympic Peninsula Paranormal Society.

With an estimated experimental time of 30 minutes total, there were two phases: one 15-minute AM band forward sweep, and one 15-minute FM band forward sweep, both set at a 250 ms sweep rate.

Inside the Walker-Ames House, on August 6, 2014, at 7:38 p.m., the environment was moderately quiet and free of all other unnecessary devices (cell phones, TVs, and CFL bulbs). Mary, designated as the "Communicator," asks which zener card was drawn from the deck after Michael randomly selects one. Ensuring that no one had a visual on the selected card, Michael shows it only to the camera. Two cameras were used in this experiment: a full spectrum GO Pro Cam mounted atop a tripod and focused on the researchers and an IR camera focused on the SB7 frequency display.

The interior temperature of the house remained a constant $74.6^{\circ}\text{F} \pm 0.3$ for the duration of the experiment. The sun was still shining into the eve, and humidity was approximately 15%. No significant solar flares or other astronomical data was noted, nor were there any significant EMF spikes.

With phase one (AM), the SB7 was turned on and a card was drawn from the zener deck. The experimental team did not see the card, as it was turned away from them and toward the GOPRO Cam. It is here that Mary asks, "What card did Michael draw?" For this phase, the card drawn was three wavy lines, and several responses were broadcasted from the SB7. Where multiple response voices or partial words were detected, these responses were not considered valid for the purposes of the experiment because they were most likely received from broadcasting radio stations. This resulted in only three relevant responses during this first 15-minute segment. They were:

- "But use another sweep." Voice starts at 590–1070 AM, and lasts for 12 seconds;
- "Closer; come closer." 630–840 AM, five seconds; • And most notably, "Is it — a line?" 1410–1600 AM, five seconds.

All three responses were male and perceived as the same, singular voice throughout the entirety of phase one. Was the third response, albeit a semi-correct answer to the question asked, really an intelligent reply from a disembodied spirit present at the Walker-Ames House? Or was it an act of PK manifestation, where Michael consciously or subconsciously transferred his knowledge of what the selected card held (because the voice, like Michael, was male). Or was it auditory pareidolia, where Mary, Pete, and Michael fell victim to it in the wake of deciphering the documented audio? The answer to this would be no. The experiment protocols prevented anyone, including Michael, from seeing the card that was drawn.

The SB7 was switched to the FM band with phase two, and another card was drawn from the deck without the team looking at it. The same question was asked, "What card was drawn from the deck?" The card, this time, a five-pointed star, was shown to the static full spectrum camera. Like the first phase, multiple response voices were heard, but only during sweeps of active radio stations. The only exception was a female child's voice that sounded like it said, "Pete," more than once. This was fascinating because there was someone present at that moment named Pete, and because one of the claims of paranormal activity at the house is that of children. Interesting, but the specific reply of "Pete" was not relevant with this particular experiment.

Throughout the experiment, several responses unrelated to specific questions were heard. Even though the antenna of the device was disabled, active radio stations on the AM and FM bands were audible, which is why it is so important to record the frequency display when using this device. This allows the researcher/investigator to discount those responses received on active radio stations.

The crux of this experiment was to determine if a precise answer to a specific question could be received if the person asking the question did not know the answer. This would determine if received SB7 responses were attributed to auditory pareidolia, the result of PK from the researcher, or if spirit communication was indeed occurring, if communication with such entities was more than asking and hearing (in other words, involved some sort of telepathy).

Understanding paranormal equipment capabilities, limitations, and possible manipulations is commanding in paranormal research. It is quite likely that one clear-cut explanation for SB7 responses will never be discovered. The goal is to identify as many possibilities as to the nature and origin of responses to maintain objectivity during SB7 usage. In this case, because a specific and correct answer to the two questions posed in this experiment was not received, it definitely proved that more research is necessary.