

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### The Development and Phenomena of a Circle for Physical Mediumship

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Submitted 1/21/2014, Accepted 5/15/2014, Pre-published 5/28/2014

**Abstract**—The present paper describes the development and the phenomena of a circle for physical mediumship, based predominantly on my own observations. Over the course of four and a half years, I have participated in 21 sittings. Typical phenomena include unusual movements of a table, raps on the room walls and the ceiling, various luminous and psychokinetic phenomena, the generation of supposed ectoplasm, and apports. I will describe the controls applied during the sittings and my personal involvement in accompanying the development of the phenomena, and explain why I finally arrived at the conclusion that considerable parts of the phenomena were produced by fraudulent means.

**Keywords:** Physical mediumship— raps— psychokinesis—ectoplasm—apports—circle—fraud

#### Introduction

The phenomena described in the context of physical mediumship belong to the most puzzling occurrences that can be studied. According to the vast literature on physical mediumship, typical phenomena include the following:<sup>1</sup>

- audible raps and knocks originating from a table, or from the walls and the ceiling of the séance room (Carrington 1909, Crawford 1919, Maxwell 1905, Owen & Sparrow 1976, Paul et al. 1963, Richards 1982, Schrenck-Notzing 1923:602–609, Schwab 1923)
- unusual movements and levitations of a table situated in the middle of the circle of sitters, but also unusual movements of various other objects and devices (Batcheldor 1966, 1979, 1984, Bottazzi 1907, Brookes-Smith 1973, 1975, Carrington 1909, Chengery Pap 1938, Crawford 1919, Courtier 1908, Edwards 1946, Gasparin 1857,

- Grunewald 1920, Hamilton 1942, Ochorowicz 1909, Osty & Osty 1931–1932, Reichenbach 1867, Richards 1982, Schrenck-Notzing 1920, 1924a, 1933, Tischner 1954, Zöllner 1922)
- various kinds of luminous phenomena (Chengery Pap 1938, Geley 1927, Gissurarson & Haraldsson 1989, Haraldsson 2012, Keen, Ellison, & Fontana 1999, McKenzie 1922, 1923)
  - materializations of a mostly white substance, usually named *ectoplasm*, *teleplasm*, or *metaplasm* (Blacher 1931, Crawford 1921, Edwards 1946, Geley 1927, Gerloff 1955, 1958, Hamilton 1942, McKenzie 1922, Schrenck-Notzing 1923, Schwab 1923, 1931)
  - materializations of shapes of human hands, sometimes full-fledged apparitions, often in combination with ectoplasm generation (Bottazzi 1907, Carrington 1909, Crookes 1874, Geley 1927, Gerloff 1955, 1958, 1960, Gissurarson & Haraldsson 1989, Haraldsson 2011, McKenzie 1923, Morselli 1908, Schrenck-Notzing 1923, 1924a, 1933)
  - apports and deports (the unexplained appearance and disappearance of physical objects other than ectoplasm; Blacher 1926, 1931–1932, 1933, Bozzano 1930, Button 1932, Chengery Pap 1938, Haraldsson 2013, Hasted 1981:165–187, Kindborg 1930, McKenzie 1929, Richards 1982, Schwab 1923, Simsa 1931, 1934, X 1904, Zöllner 1922)

In the present article, I describe the development and the phenomena of a circle for physical mediumship over a timespan of four and a half years, predominantly based on my own observations. The Circle is located in Hanau, Germany, and it is named the *Felix Experimental Group* (FEG). It was initiated in October 2005 by Kai Mügge (KM) who now serves as the group's medium. In recent years, the phenomena displayed by KM have received worldwide attention. He has become well known in the spiritualist scene in Europe, North America, and Australia, and is also frequently discussed in the parapsychological community. He also maintains a blog at <http://felixcircle.blogspot.de>. KM claims to have worked as a direct marketing project manager and as a sales trainer. He has also worked as a documentary film producer and has produced three documentary films about the heroin scene in Frankfurt, Germany (for their trailers, see [www.babylon-tv.de](http://www.babylon-tv.de)). According to KM, he witnessed large-scale poltergeist phenomena in the house of his best friends at the age of 11. Subsequently, he became interested in physical mediumship. At the age of 15, he had allegedly founded his first sitter group, which was intermittently followed

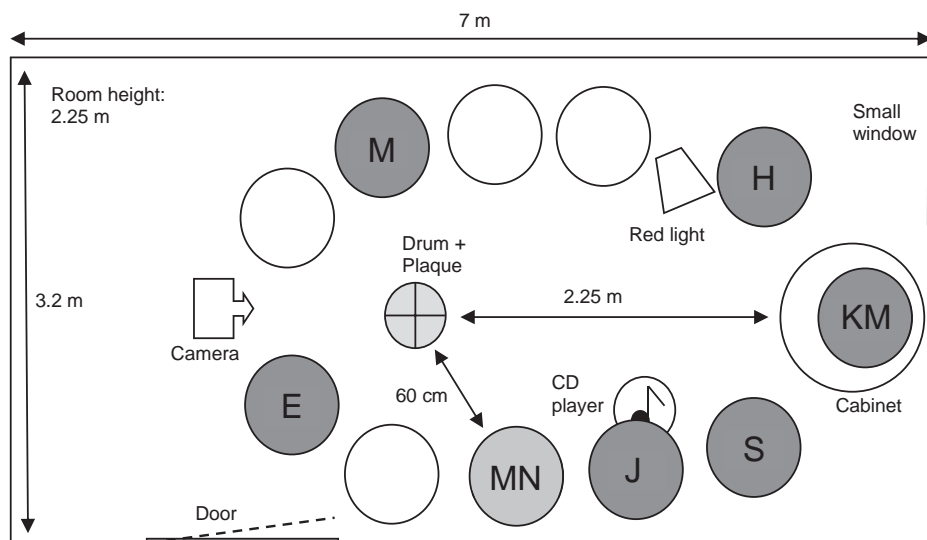
by several others. Apparently, unusual phenomena such as inexplicable table movements occurred occasionally with all of these groups. Similarly, after the FEG had met for six months on Tuesdays, the first seemingly inexplicable table movements and apports began to take place. I became aware of the existence of the FEG in summer 2008. Soon after I had posted a few general comments about physical mediumship to KM, he invited me to join one of their sittings. On November 11, 2008, I paid my first visit to the FEG. Although the phenomena of this sitting provided no clear evidence of a supposed paranormal origin, they were intriguing and got me hooked. The development of the FEG continued to interest me. Since then, I have sat with the Circle, or KM, 20 more times. The last four sittings took place during a week of experimentation spent in Austria from May 10–17, 2013 (see Braude 2014 in this issue).

The next section of this article, **The Development of the FEG and Background Information about the Sittings**, describes the most important steps of development in the FEG. It provides general background information about the setting of the sittings and about the controls applied. The third section, **The Sittings and Their Phenomena**, contains more detailed descriptions of specific sittings and of phenomena that I consider of greatest significance, largely excluding the last four sittings held in Austria which are described in detail by Braude (2014 in this issue). These descriptions of phenomena are based on notes I took later at night after each of the sittings I attended, and which I elaborated on in the days thereafter. The fourth section, **The Question of Genuineness of the Phenomena**, contains a brief description of my involvement in documenting the development of the phenomena. I describe by which occurrences and findings I finally arrived at the conclusion that crucial elements of the phenomena displays were produced in a fraudulent manner. Yet, the possibility of mixed mediumship remains feasible. Hence, I also describe in which ways the séance performance and the controls should be improved in future sittings.

### **The Development of the FEG and Background Information about the Sittings**

#### ***The Composition of the FEG***

The usual sittings in Hanau take place in the house of KM's parents in a cellar room, a former air-raid shelter (for a floor plan see Figure 1). At present, the Circle consists of 11 regular members including KM, although only seven members aim at attending each séance. Even this is not always feasible. For example, in addition to KM, only four Circle members were present on three of my visits. Usually, guest sitters attend the sittings. On the three occasions



**Figure 1. Floor plan and typical scenario of a cabinet sitting in the usual séance room of the Felix Experimental Group (FEG) in Hanau, Germany, held December 16, 2010.** Circles in dark grey represent members of the FEG, the letters indicate the first letter of their first name; *KM* symbolizes the medium inside the cabinet. White circles represent guest sitters. The lighter grey circle with *MN* indicates the author's location at this séance. At sittings held during that time, the order and number of the sitters was largely free and varied considerably from séance to séance. Many of the psychokinetic phenomena took place around or on the wooden hand drum on the floor.

just mentioned, there were three, six, and six guests, including myself. The present “core group” of the Circle includes Julia (a secretary), the wife of *KM*, his mother (a retired teacher), his sister-in-law (an event manager), Jochen Soederling (pseudonym, a cardiologist employed at a hospital and research institute), an environment technician, and a tax consultant. There is comparably little fluctuation in the composition of members of the Circle. From the 11 members who constituted the core group of the Circle during its first year, seven still belong to it. Two of them moved away from Hanau, one stopped participating because of health problems, and one left because she felt uncomfortable during the sittings when *KM* entered trance states.

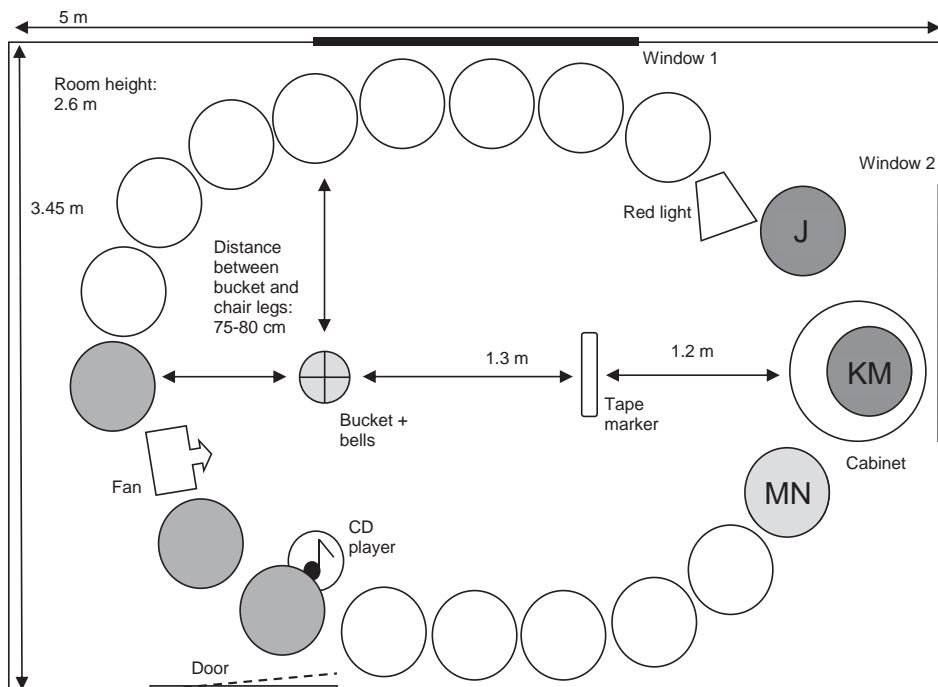
Since I started visiting the Circle I have been in regular contact with *KM* and Jochen. *KM* is a peculiar personality. Those who are sympathetic to him, however, can easily develop a cordial relationship with him. He has a good sense of humor, and engages others readily in interesting and entertaining conversations. I came to know all Circle members as very open,

friendly, and also quite humorous persons. The sittings and their aftermath are usually full of jokes and laughter. Nevertheless, Jochen in particular has remained a critical observer who pays much attention to minute details of the occurring phenomena, in order to find out which characteristics seem difficult or unable to fake, and which might be imitated by fakery under the prevailing circumstances. In the times between my visits to the Circle, I corresponded frequently with him and KM about particularly interesting developments and observations, at irregular intervals.

From 2010 on, KM has held sittings in different countries and cities outside Hanau. At first, he only went on a few trips to Koblenz, Germany, Switzerland, and Denmark, but in the recent past his travelling activities have strongly increased and include the US and Australia. According to KM, he and his wife don't gain noteworthy profit from their travelling and holding séances in different countries. Allegedly, they need to rely on additional sources of income to make their living. Usually, KM travels to these sittings with only one of the Circle members. In former times, he was accompanied by Jochen Soederling or by a temporary Circle member (H) who left the Circle again in 2011 after he concluded that KM must be a cheat. KM's wife Julia joined the Circle just before H left, and she now travels with him. On a few occasions, KM even travelled alone to hold public sittings in Basel, Switzerland. On all these occasions, the typical phenomena reported from the cellar room in Hanau occurred in practically identical ways. Hence, it can be inferred that the phenomena can be produced by KM alone. Personally, I have attended three sittings outside of Hanau before our meeting in Austria. They took place in Basel at the *Basler Psi-Verein [Basel Psi-Association]*, see <http://www.bpv.ch>. On the first occasion, KM was accompanied by H, on the other two occasions by Julia. As I will describe later, I was allowed control of the room, the cabinet, and KM during my last sitting in Basel (for a floor plan of this sitting, see Figure 2).<sup>2</sup>

### **The Location of the FEG in Hanau**

The cellar room in Hanau has one door and one small window (about  $0.5 \times 0.7$  m) below the ceiling (Figure 1). The dimensions of the room are  $7 \times 5$  m; the room height is 2.25 m. On one side of the room, an oblong space is separated from the sitting area with a curtain. This curtain forms one "wall" of the sitting area, which is thus only 3.2 m wide (Figure 1). The separate space contains a table with computing equipment, a chair, and a rack with a few objects. Anybody who is willing to search the séance room before a sitting is allowed to search the area behind this curtain as well. I have done so repeatedly, and have never found a suspicious device that might have been used for the production of the phenomena (such as sticks



**Figure 2. Floor plan and typical scenario of a public sitting held by KM in Basel, Switzerland, on October 17, 2012.** The two circles in darkest grey with the letters KM and J represent the places of the medium and his wife Julia. The three somewhat lighter circles in the vicinity of the door symbolize where the organizers of the séance sat. They operated the CD player and the fan, and took care of the locked door. White circles represent guest sitters. The lighter grey circle with MN indicates the author's location at this séance. I was allowed to control both KM and Julia during this sitting (see text).

or other oblong objects, pieces of cloth, threads, a shielded inaccessible area, etc.). The walls of the room are made of concrete that is covered with wood paneling. The shutter of the small window is covered with the same kind of paneling. It is usually closed and the gaps are sealed with black tape to prevent light from entering the room. It is not possible to open it without considerable preceding activity and noise. Occasional air exchange is solely mediated via the door, and sitters operate a fan to cool the medium's body during sittings. Other objects permanently present in the séance room include the chairs for the sitters, the séance table, a heater, an old broken wall clock, lamp holders, the red light lamp on a small table, a CD player, and an audio recording device.

### **The Procedure of Typical Table Sittings**

During a typical table sitting, between 5 and 12 participants sit around an ordinary round plastic garden table with four legs and a diameter of 1.2 m. All sitters put their hands loosely onto the table surface. Familiar music from the 1960s is played, and the sitters are requested to sing along with it freely and loudly. In addition, the sitters chat and joke a lot—the funnier and easier the atmosphere, the better are the results of the sitting. A sincere, quiet, and meditative mood with a focus on table movements seems counterproductive (Batcheldor 1966, 1984, Owen & Sparrow 1976). Usually, the table starts to move and tilt almost immediately after the usual opening prayer. Phases of activity last for several minutes, and they often alternate with phases of relative calmness. Throughout the early years of the FEG, sittings were held on a regular basis each Tuesday evening. Since KM has started travelling frequently, they have become more irregular.

The table sittings usually took place in darkness. Regularly reported phenomena included full table levitations and ostensible apports falling onto the table or the floor (e.g., stones, metal objects, petals of roses, a large load of water, and balls of wax with enclosed written messages). Also, sitters have observed brief appearances of supposedly inexplicable lights in the séance room, and sometimes direct writings on sheets of paper placed in the vestibule outside the séance room were found after the sittings. The apports or lights would simply appear during the course of the table sitting without special preparation. Typical table sittings last 1.5 hr, sometimes longer.

Allegedly, KM has been practicing trance induction techniques privately since 1983. At the end of 2008, he started to employ a trance technique that involves holotropic breathing during the regular table sittings. When KM first entered states of supposed trance at the table in late 2008, a personality named “Rafael Gutmann,” or, for short, “Rafi,” came forward. Rafi spoke with a heavy Bavarian dialect, and claimed to have lived in Munich a few decades ago. After some time, he announced that a much stronger deceased entity would soon resume control over the trance sittings and would replace him. Indeed, a new trance personality took over the trance speech in spring of 2009. He claimed to be the deceased pioneer of academic parapsychology in postwar Germany and founder of the Institute of Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health (IGPP) in Freiburg, Germany, Professor Hans Bender (1907–1991; HB in the following).<sup>3</sup>

### ***The Establishment of Cabinet Sitzings***

Following suggestions of the trance personality HB to adopt a classical approach to physical mediumship, the FEG mounted a curtain cabinet inside the séance room (Figure 1).<sup>4</sup> This cabinet consisted of an orange-brown curtain draped around a hoop 1.1 m in diameter; the hoop is suspended from the ceiling. The curtain was dyed black after several months. In addition to the cabinet, several objects have been added to the regular equipment of the séance room since 2009, especially the target objects to be moved via ostensible psychokinesis (PK). These include a “trumpet” (an oblong cone made of cardboard with a phosphorescent strap around its thicker end), a phosphorescent plaque (13 × 13 cm) as well as a drum or an empty bucket on which the plaque is placed, a tambourine, two maracas, and a handkerchief with numerous bits of phosphorescent strap attached to both sides. These objects can be placed on the drum or bucket in the “action zone” at a distance of about 2.25 m from the chair inside the cabinet. There is also an empty bucket in or close to the cabinet that can be used in case KM needs to vomit, and also a towel and a bottle of iced tea to soothe KM’s sweating and thirst. The cabinet and all other objects inside the room can be examined before sittings, and I have repeatedly done so. Items that give rise to suspicion are six long black strips of tape attached to the inside of the cabinet curtain. Allegedly, they cover diaphanous strips of the curtain cloth to make it more lightproof. Moreover, a pencil is fixed with black adhesive tape to the floor in front of the cabinet. The tape and pencil are alleged to function as a marker that the medium is not supposed to transgress when he moves out of the cabinet during cabinet sittings. Apart from this, I have not detected unusual details in the setup and the objects, such as needles in the cabinet curtains, holes in objects to enable them being lifted up with a small hook, signs of threads, magnets, or miniature mechanics, or suspicious tapes attached to the target objects.

The FEG held their first cabinet sitting on October 20, 2009. The time during which KM retreated into the cabinet lasted only 30 min. Some psychokinetic phenomena were reported, namely ringing of a wind chime suspended from the ceiling, lights flying across the room, movements of the trumpet, and touches on the sitter’s bodies. I was invited to the second cabinet sitting on October 27, 2009, and was able to confirm these reports. From then on, the regular Tuesday sittings of the FEG were divided between regular table sittings without trance induction and cabinet sittings without the use of the table. The latter were held 1–2 times a month. At the beginning and during much of the time of the cabinet sittings, KM sits on an ordinary chair inside the cabinet and is completely veiled by the curtains.



***The Procedure of Typical Cabinet Sitzings***

After my first visit to a cabinet sitting of the FEG, I continued to follow their development in irregular intervals. Before each sitting, all sitters gather in the living room of the house on the second floor. In case there are guest sitters, KM provides information and instructions about the sitting, and all kinds of questions can be discussed. Then, he retreats to a private room to change clothes and to induce a pre-trance state. Meanwhile, the sitters enter the séance room with emptied pockets and take their seats in the room lighted by a red light. The order of seating is largely free. Only the sitters of the two chairs next to the cabinet are determined beforehand. However, the other sitters are asked to sit in a U in front of the cabinet so that female and male sitters are more or less equally distributed, if possible in an alternating sequence. Recently, Julia sits on the right side of the cabinet (seen from KM's perspective), and another person in KM's trust sits to the left. These two sitters are responsible for opening and closing the cabinet curtains when requested by HB. Julia additionally operates the red lamp on a small table. One of the sitters at the back is asked to operate the fan, another person the CD player. Finally, KM enters the room and sits down in the open cabinet.

KM opens the sitting with a short prayer. Then, soft music is played, and KM (from within the closed cabinet) begins the holotropic breathing technique to induce the trance state. Typically, the trance personality HB starts to speak after several minutes with a faint and coarse voice which slowly becomes stronger and more intelligible. After the initial greetings, HB requests a period of several minutes of loud singing to establish the "force field." For this purpose, the music is changed to more upbeat songs from the 1960s. At the initial stage of the trance induction via holotropic breathing, loud responsive raps can sometimes be heard on the ceiling and the walls of the séance room. Similarly, lights of whitish and greenish color can be seen moving quickly in or around the cabinet, either at the stage of trance induction or during the first signs of HB's appearance.

However, the main phenomena of an FEG sitting commence only after the force field is established by HB and the "Chemists." The Chemists are a group of five ostensibly deceased individuals, who, according to HB, produce the phenomena while HB uses KM's body to mediate the communication between "the beyond" and the physical world. Each time HB speaks, the music is turned down to understand him better. The phenomena are presented in a typical sequence. When the trance state is sufficiently established and the raps have ceased, HB announces what will be shown next, and Julia prepares the requested devices if necessary. Then the music is turned loud again, and all sitters are requested to sing freely

and loudly along with it. Sooner or later, phenomena appear, and HB begins to comment on them. While HB asks if the phenomena are sufficiently visible, or gives further instructions, the music is turned down. When he has stopped talking or finished his instructions, it is turned louder again. Sooner or later, the phenomena cease, either after notice from HB or by themselves. Thereafter, HB announces the next phenomenon, and asks the sitters to sing, etc. Sometimes, HB agrees that the pre-installed camera can be used to take photographs during the séances, especially of the ectoplasm.

A typical sequence of the main phenomena is listed below. In the third main section of this article, **The Sittings and Their Phenomena**, examples of each category are described in more detail.

- (1) Raps
- (2) Manipulations of the drum, hand bells, and maracas
- (3) Touches
- (4) Light phenomena
- (5) Handkerchief flight
- (6) Plaque phenomena
- (7) Manipulation of balls
- (8) Trumpet flight
- (9) Ectoplasm display
- (10) Apports

Not all of these phenomena are displayed at each sitting. On several occasions, HB has even asked the sitters which of the phenomena (5–8) they would like to see most. The request for choosing among the phenomena emerged when the duration of the sittings extended to up to 4 hr due to the increased variety of phenomena—an exhausting procedure for all involved. These days, typical cabinet sittings last no longer than 2.5–3.25 hr.

When the sitting comes to a close, HB bids farewell and announces that he will soon awaken KM from trance. After KM has awakened, all sitters except the two who sat at the left and right sides of the cabinet are requested to leave the séance room. The sitters gather in the living room again, discuss the events of the sitting, eat, and drink. Meanwhile, KM typically rests in a confused state with the two helpers in the cellar room. Generally, he needs several minutes to come fully to himself. He claims to feel uncomfortable and does not like being watched or listened to in this state. Also, he coughs, gargles, spits into the bucket, and utters vomiting-like sounds, and the FEG doesn't like the guests to experience KM in that state. After about 15 min, KM and his helpers join the others in the living room.

### **Controls Applied During the Sittings**

The degree of controls used to prevent the fraudulent production of the phenomena varies greatly. Often, especially at the ordinary private (table) sittings in Hanau, explicit controls are entirely absent. At sittings of peculiar significance, however, controls can be applied if explicitly agreed upon beforehand. These controls are only performed for cabinet sittings and include a complete search of the séance room before the sitting in bright white light. I have usually searched the room without KM or other sitters present, and took all the time I needed to check everything that might cause suspicion. When sitters enter the séance room, they empty their pockets and are patted down by assigned individuals. Also, KM is patted down, and he always wears his pocket-less séance clothes. When psychokinetic phenomena take place in darkness, all sitters are asked to join their hands in a chain, and HB as well as other sitters repeatedly ask for confirmation that all hands are joined. When the two sitters next to the cabinet don't use their hands for handling the cabinet curtains or the red lamp, they put both hands onto the hands of their neighbor. One idea behind forming this chain is that all hands of the sitters should be controlled mutually so that the Circle members are prevented from producing fraudulent phenomena. Although one can never be sure that all hands are indeed held in chain, this procedure diminishes the opportunities for cheating. As described, the order of the sitters is largely free, and sometimes there are more guest sitters than the regular Circle members who sit among them. Should a sitter simulate large-scale PK effects with the help of one hand it would take at least one or more sitters who had secretly agreed to breaking the chain. In any case, it is important to remember that KM has produced the typical phenomena of the FEG group alone, or with only one other Circle member sitting next to the cabinet.

After the sitting, when KM has joined the rest of the sitters with his two helpers in the living room, the séance room can be searched again if desired.

When more rigorous controls are desired and agreed upon, KM is strip-searched in a private room before he enters the séance room. During the strip search, he wears only his underpants, and he presses them all over from the outside to show that no solid objects are hidden within. Sometimes, the controller has even looked into them. His body, hair, mouth, and ears are thoroughly checked by the controller, who inspects clothes and shoes. Then, the controller carefully watches KM dress again, and follows KM closely, who walks with raised hands on his way to the séance room and into the cabinet. Stephen Braude has performed the strip search a few times (see Braude 2014 in this issue). I have not yet done so. Most often, he

was strip-searched by the organizers of the sittings in Basel (about a dozen times)—but it is understandable if readers prefer to suspend judgment about the adequacy of that control.

In 2010, the entranced KM began to move out and in front of the cabinet with his chair before some of the psychokinetic phenomena took place. For example, at the sitting on December 16, 2010, he moved out of the cabinet before the plaque phenomena began, and retreated back into the cabinet when they had ceased. The reason for moving out of the cabinet is that KM's limbs can be controlled by the sitters next to him while the phenomena take place. In fact, the so-called "four limb control" ("4LC" in the following) was introduced in summer 2010, and was soon established on a regular basis to control KM during the phenomena (i.e. 2–8 in the list above). During this control, the two sitters next to the cabinet hold the arm and the leg of KM on their side. In this position, the medium's legs are spread sideways, so that the knees are separated by a distance of about 0.5 m.<sup>5</sup> I was allowed to perform control of KM's left limbs during phases of all psychokinetic phenomena at two séances, one in Hanau on July 6, 2012, and one in Basel on October 17, 2012. In both cases I sat opposite Julia at the left side of the cabinet. Because I recorded the entire sitting in Basel with a private audio recorder, I was able to reconstruct how long the controls were in place (see the section **The Sittings and Their Phenomena**). In general, I conducted my part of the 4LC in the following manner:

Each time KM moved out of the cabinet toward the center of the room with his chair, he was sitting more or less directly in front of me. To control him, I left my chair and moved right next to him, thus breaking the chain with my left neighbor. I knelt on my right knee, but kept my lower left leg standing in an upright position, bent at its knee. The sitter to the left of me touched my left shoulder or my back with her right hand to remain in bodily contact with me.

For controlling KM's body, I put my left foot in contact with his left foot—at its side, in front of it, or even on top of it. I felt his foot very well because I wear only socks at sittings. I put my left hand onto KM's left thigh, and took his left hand in my right hand. On these occasions, Julia usually controls KM's right side of the body in an analogous way, and she comments loudly if she feels any movement from KM or not, for all sitters to hear.

However, I was often asked to control Julia's hands as well when the phenomena were in full action. Then, I leaned over KM's left thigh across to Julia and KM's right side. In this position, I was in bodily touch with KM and Julia at the following locations:

- My left foot touched KM's left foot.
- My hip and belly region touched his left thigh including his left lower arm which rested on his left thigh. Basically, I buried his left lower arm on his left thigh under my trunk.
- My right upper arm and shoulder touched KM's left upper arm and shoulder.
- My right lower arm, stretching across to Julia, touched KM's belly.
- My right hand clasped KM's right hand including Julia's left hand which rested on top of it. Both hands rested on KM's right thigh which I could also feel with the tips of my fingers.
- My left hand controlled Julia's right hand, and again, KM's right thigh/knee, on which Julia's right hand rested.

When I reached across to Julia and KM's other side to take both of Julia's hands, I made sure that I could distinctly touch Julia's two hands, KM's right hand, and KM's right thigh. This was readily possible, since I had often more than half a minute to control Julia and KM in this way (see the detailed description of the phenomena in the section **The Sittings and Their Phenomena**). In addition, Julia wiggled the fingers of her comparably small hands so that I could easily find and distinguish them from KM's large right hand below hers.

Thus, during a properly performed "four-limb-plus-Julia" control ("4L+J control" in the following), I was in touch with practically all parts of KM's body except his back and head. In addition, the music is usually turned down during these controls because HB gives instructions and asks the sitters and the controllers repeatedly to describe what they perceive and if everyone is sitting in a chain. This talking by HB also serves the purpose to exclude the possibility that the ongoing phenomena are produced with the help of KM's mouth. During some of these controls, I have asked the whole group of sitters if they were all sitting in a chain with joined hands, and I have received unanimously affirmative feedback.

When the 4LC was first established in 2010 and early 2011, the movements of the objects in the séance room became immediately slower and smaller as soon as KM's body was touched by the sitters next to him. The objects also lowered their flight in the direction of the floor, and the light phenomena grew dimmer. As soon as KM would be released from control, they would pick up speed and brightness again. Moreover, KM would groan and sigh a lot during the times of control, as if he would suffer an immense drain of energy, or even pain. Since then, however, the phenomena have stabilized their movements during the times of control, and KM doesn't groan heavily anymore.

During the times I controlled KM at the sitting on July 6, 2012, the muscles in his limbs, most notably in his left leg, became tense, when the phenomena in the room were strong, or when a sudden movement occurred. This interesting correspondence between the tensing of the muscles of a medium during the occurrence of ostensible psychokinetic phenomena has been reported from previous mediums such as Kathleen Goligher (Crawford 1919, 1921) and Eusapia Palladino (e.g., Bottazzi 1907, Giuditta 2010). In another sitting on October 17, 2012, however, I could not detect a correspondence between the object movements and KM's bodily tension. Most of the time, he seemed completely relaxed.

One last aspect of the controls applied should be added here. On September 22, 2013, I participated in a private "séance" in Basel without members of the FEG. The Swiss stage magician Arthur Roscha (see <http://www.showtherapy.ch>) demonstrated to us how typical phenomena of physical mediumship can be imitated, and he explained some of the tricks afterward. Regarding the controls applied at this "fake séance," there were several differences compared with the FEG sittings. The most important differences were:

- 1) The magician didn't allow himself to be controlled while the phenomena took place. Instead, he permitted control only in the breaks in between. Nor did he speak aloud during phenomena. Hence, it was impossible to know whether he remained inside the cabinet or not during the phenomena.

- 2) The magician had instructed me and another sitter to tie him to his chair with cable binders. This type of control is common with other contemporary physical mediums who give public demonstration séances, but who do not allow personal controls during the phenomena themselves. Yet, KM never uses this type of control. He considers it useless by comparison to the personal body controls applied during the phenomena.

- 3) The magician had a suitcase next to the cabinet, which we were not allowed to search and control before the sittings. By contrast, KM allows and encourages controllers to search all objects present in the room before the sittings.

The explanation for the phenomena observed during the "fake séance" was simple. The magician could easily slip out of his bonds with certain tricks. Then, he walked freely around the room, and picked devices from his suitcase to produce the phenomena. When he had finished with a given phenomenon, he secretly returned to his chair and slipped back into the cable binders, then asking to be controlled. Obviously, the procedure applied by the magician would not be feasible under the control conditions prevailing at controlled FEG sittings. The magician himself visited two séances with

KM. He admitted that he had no idea about how the phenomena could have been produced without the help of others. Two other persons who claim to have experience with conjuring tricks have visited the séances of KM, and they have advanced analogous opinions. I have not talked with them and cannot tell how well these persons can reliably judge the techniques of fraud employed in physical mediumship. Nevertheless, it seems that KM's performance of psychokinetic phenomena differs from older and current techniques of stage magicians and earlier fraudulent mediums (e.g., Anonymous 1882, Abbott 1916, Carrington 1920, Keene 1976, Moore-Davis 1996). It also seems to differ from séances performed by other contemporary physical mediums. As mentioned, they usually follow the control procedures used by a stage magician. I visited séances with two of them, and they didn't impress me much.

### **The Sittings and Their Phenomena**

In this section of the article, I describe some of the typical phenomena that I have observed with the FEG, or with KM, respectively. Unless stated otherwise, the phenomena took place in complete darkness.

#### **Raps**

The first raps were heard during the second cabinet sitting of the FEG on October, 27, 2009, to which I was invited. They originated from the vicinity of the wooden ceiling, and varied greatly with regard to their sound quality. Mostly, they consisted of knocks, but they would also resemble rapid scuttling with fingertips, or little animal feet moving about. Sometimes, we heard clicks and snaps. In general, the sounds appeared erratic, moving quickly across the ceiling, with pronounced knocks in between. In later sittings, I noticed sounds of wiping, scraping, scurrying, clattering, clapping, and drum rolls. Sometimes, the raps followed the beat of the music, and they followed verbal commands. However, this variety of sound production declined during the sittings in 2010. Usually, only knocks and drum rolls are displayed. Throughout the months, their strength increased considerably. At times, the raps are so loud that they make it difficult to follow KM's trance speech. Moreover, they started to occur regularly during the stage of trance induction, when KM performs his breathing technique inside the cabinet. The raps are now not restricted to the ceiling, but occur in the walls of the room, and, rarely, on the floor. For example, at a sitting on December 16, 2011, very powerful blows were applied to the wall behind and between the head of my right neighbor and my own head. We could even hear the paneling on the wall rattle due to the effect of the applied force. I estimate



the distance of the location of the raps from my head was about 30 cm. On March 20, 2012, I was sitting in front of the curtain that separates the séance room from the computing areas of KM. As soon as strong raps occurred, I leaned the back of my head against it to be in touch with it. Then, I asked the raps to move to the curtain, speaking aloud. Immediately, I felt that the curtain was manipulated and apparently hit by something right above my head for about 10 sec. Not long afterward, I asked a second time for raps on the curtain, and again the curtain was hit and moved immediately. The next moment, loud raps were heard from the opposite side of the room.

The shuffling and wiping noises, but also the sounds of the raps themselves, seem to contain the full spectrum of typical sound frequencies, i.e. the high frequencies are not dimmed as one would expect if the raps were produced from outside the room (e.g., in an adjacent chamber or from above). That the raps are applied to the walls by a presumably physical structure from inside the room is further corroborated by the fact that they hit the curtain behind me, and that one can hear the paneling in front of the concrete wall rattle when particularly strong raps are produced.

Raps occur not only in the Hanau cellar, but at other locations as well. I have heard strong raps at my sittings with KM in Basel, forcefully striking the ceiling at 2.6 m height when KM sat in his chair, breathing loudly during the stage of trance induction.

It seems there is a gradual transition from these rap phenomena to the phenomena described in the following section, **Manipulations of the Drum, Hand Bells, and Maracas**. During the rap display of the sitting on the December 16, 2010, numerous raps were also applied to the drum on the floor, on which the bells and maracas were placed in later sittings. On this occasion, the raps on the drum appeared at the Circle for the first time.

### ***Manipulations of the Drum, Hand Bells, and Maracas***

During the following months, raps on the drum in the *action zone* occurred regularly when the raps moved quickly around from one side of the room to the other. Sometimes, these raps were hitting the drum rhythmically. On December 16, 2011, a tambourine was placed on the floor in front of the drum. At the beginning of the séance, the tambourine was hit frequently, and then moved toward the shoes of a guest sitter. Here, it tapped on one of his shoes a number of times with notable force. For a short time, 4LC was installed by Julia and another Circle member (who also controlled Julia at times), and HB was continuously speaking from inside the cabinet. Both controllers stated that KM's body was completely still. Nevertheless, during the time that 4LC was exerted, the tambourine was continuously manipulated. Sometimes, I was able to hear something moving across the



floor in the vicinity of the tambourine, resembling the sound of a stiff cloth or a reptile moving on the linoleum floor. On March 20, 2012, the drum was hit several times and the tambourine phenomenon was repeated. Both controllers who performed 4LC stated again that KM was not moving, and I heard something sneaking across the floor again. A few days before the sitting on the July 6, 2012, I asked KM if I would be allowed to perform the 4L+J control myself. KM readily agreed. The typical drum and tambourine phenomena occurred early in the sitting. When I controlled KM in the way described above, he didn't move his left limbs at all. However, he tensed the muscles of his leg when the phenomena in the room were strong, and he was groaning. In addition, he was of course talking. The situation didn't change when I reached across to Julia to hold her two hands and control KM's right side as well. Both KM and Julia didn't move, but the manipulations of the tambourine continued without interruption. On October 17, 2012, I was allowed to perform the 4L+J control again. This sitting took place in Basel, and KM was only accompanied by Julia. I recorded the entire sitting with an audio recorder. The hand bells and the maracas were placed into the tambourine, which had been placed upside down on a bucket in the *action zone*. Audible manipulations of the bells and maracas were noticed early in the sitting. They followed the rhythm of the music. According to my audio recording, I had KM's left limbs under control for 4:20 min, and I controlled KM plus Julia for another 55 sec. During these controls, the phenomena continued unimpaired.

In Austria, we had hoped to witness comparable psychokinetic phenomena, and, if possible, to film them. However, they were skipped at the cabinet sitting by HB to focus on the production of ectoplasm. Yet, we all heard one distinct hit on the hand bell during our first table sitting; it can clearly be heard on the audio recording. The hand bell had been placed onto the bucket along with other items about 1.5 m away from KM's back (for the floor plan see Braude 2014 in this issue), and he had constantly been under bodily control at the table, while talking and singing.

### **Touches**

When the FEG cabinet sittings got under way, the sitters—placed in a U-shape configuration in front of the cabinet—began reporting seemingly inexplicable touches on different parts of their bodies. I experienced touches for the first time on February 2, 2010. Most of them were very gentle and fleeting, but on one occasion something soft jumped and moved across both my thighs and crawled up my abdomen, up to my navel. The movements lasted for about 7 sec, felt quite lively, and I had the impression as if a very light hamster with unusually soft feet was running around on my

body. From that sitting on, I felt touches regularly at cabinet sittings. They gradually became more intense and frequent, and the structures touching my body felt more and more solid, comparable to plastic or wood. Particularly fascinating touches included finger-like touches moving around on my forehead, and then gently twitching and pulling my hairs at my hairline for about 5–7 sec. Later, something that felt like a solid finger scurried around the top of my head for about 10 sec, and then it distinctly pulled on the hairs on my head. During these touches, all sitters had allegedly formed a chain with their hands. I held the hands of both my neighbors. At the same time, HB was talking from out of the cabinet almost constantly; I sat about 2 m distance from the medium.

At a sitting on April 21, 2011, I was touched about 20 times. On one occasion, something approached the toes of my right foot and fumbled with them (I always take my shoes off during sittings). The structure moved slowly up my naked right shin (the trouser legs being rolled up), touched the back of my right hand which was resting on my right knee, moved gently up my bare forearm, then the upper arm up to my right shoulder, and then left my body. This event lasted for about 12 sec. Again, I sat about 2 m away from the talking and breathing medium.

The material causing the touches always seems to be dry and at room temperature. Most often, it feels like a stiff cloth, leather, or reptile skin, but occasionally it is quite hard and solid. Sometimes, it performs vivid and hectic hamster-like movements on one's body. On some sittings I have attended, sitters at different locations in the room have reported being touched at the same time, and at other occasions, some sitters claimed they were touched from behind. Often, distinct touches occur quite early in the séance—while KM induces his trance via rapid breathing.

### **Light Phenomena**

I have seen several different light phenomena in sittings with the FEG. Some occur in the early stages of cabinet sittings, others even occur during the regular table sittings. However, I will only present descriptions of two kinds of lights occurring during advanced stages of cabinet sittings. First, there are greenish phosphorescent lights which have appeared regularly since Spring 2010. Second, a bright light, white in the center and red toward the periphery, is sometimes displayed in the part of the séance in which ectoplasm is shown.

The first time I saw the *greenish phosphorescent light* was on May 20, 2010, in Hanau. Initially, we saw a dim luminous blotch on the ceiling in the middle of the room. From there, a phosphorescent light of about 1 cm diameter lowered and moved around the room for several minutes. Its quality

was similar to the light produced by fireflies. It was only visible from one side at a time. When it was visible for the sitters on the opposite side of the room, it was not visible from my side, and vice versa. It flew all across the space between the sitters, sometimes almost touching the floor, sometimes the ceiling. It came very close to some of the sitter's faces; two sitters have stated it had touched them. In later sittings, the light became brighter, and moved much faster around the room, e.g., performing horizontal circular movements with a diameter of 1.2 m with astonishing speed. Sometimes, the phosphorescent lights seem to move above and behind the cabinet. This small light must be enveloped by something larger, at least sometimes, because it can cause unusually strong air currents when it flies past above one's skin. On three occasions, I was even touched by something that seemed to surround the light when it moved above and close to my legs at a distance of about 15 cm. The touches felt dry and resembled the touch of a stiff handkerchief. On yet another occasion, the light hovered a few centimeters in front of my face, and it seemed to be reflected very dimly by the inside of a white cone-like structure. Indeed, a larger shrouding structure around the light would explain why it is only visible from particular angles and not from all around. We can exclude that it is KM's body or hand that shrouds the light, because he usually talks or breathes audibly inside the cabinet.

Often, the single light is joined by a second light during the sitting, and on two occasions I have seen three lights moving around the séance room simultaneously. For example, at a sitting in Basel on April 10, 2011, two lights performed slow and small movements, somewhat in concordance, whereas the third light flew rapidly across the room, zig-zagging, touching the floor, then immediately rushing straight up to the ceiling, etc. During this display, HB talked continuously inside the cabinet, and was very strict that 4LC be performed, and that all sitters form a chain with their hands. Still, the three lights moved around the room. In general, the displays of the phosphorescent lights last for several minutes. When I performed the 4L+J control at the sitting on October 17, 2012, in Basel, the light display lasted for 15 min. During this time, I controlled the left limbs of KM for 6 min without interruption, and all limbs of KM plus Julia's hands for an additional 37 sec. I saw only one light at a time, but many sitters reported seeing a second light. The movements of these lights continued seemingly unimpaired while I was performing the body controls.

**Whitish-red light.** After the last ectoplasm display on April 21, 2011, in Hanau, HB announced that the Chemists would try to condense a part of the ectoplasm into a pure mass of vital energy. H turned the red light on, and opened the cabinet curtains together with Julia, who had only joined the Circle a few weeks before. We saw that KM was holding something very

bright in his closed left hand, an intense reddish glow shone through the fissures of the fist. Then, he opened his hand. A little flame-like structure sat on the palm, took off, and flew around in the room, but always in front of the medium (not more than 1–2 m distance from him). Its core of almost one centimeter's size was shining in a very intense white-red light of fluttering nature. This core was surrounded by a halo of another centimeter with a less intense and more reddish glow. When it moved very fast, the perception of its movements resembled a blurred red line that was interrupted at regular intervals. The fluttering was thus revealed as being caused by a pulsation of the light, quickly turning on and off (Figure 3). The light also entered the cabinet (the curtains of which had been closed in the meantime), but we could see it moving around inside, shining through the curtains. It flew out into the room once more, and the curtains were opened again. After about 20 sec, the light slowly approached the entranced medium, his head resting with seemingly closed eyes on the left shoulder. He raised his left hand slowly toward the light which landed in the middle of the palm, the fingers closed, and the light disappeared immediately as if being switched off. All this took place in red light which was sufficient to see all the sitters close to the cabinet, the cabinet itself, and KM.

### ***Handkerchief Flight***

This phenomenon concerns a handkerchief with many phosphorescent straps sticking to both sides of it including its corners. Usually and at HB's request, Jochen or Julia charge these straps with a flashlight. Due to the many freshly illuminated pieces of phosphorescent strap, the entire handkerchief is then dimly visible, shining a very dull white. Then, one of the sitters is asked by HB to take a corner of the handkerchief between thumb and forefinger, and to hold it out into the U-shaped space between the sitters in darkness. At some point thereafter, something unseen manipulates the handkerchief, and the sitter is instructed to let go of it as soon as its lower end is lifted upward. If all works well, the handkerchief will then fly freely in the space between the sitters until it falls down. I have witnessed the handkerchief phenomenon on three occasions. Because the sitters sit so close in Hanau, its movements can be observed very carefully. On one occasion, the handkerchief was held by another sitter only about 40 cm in front of my face, and on the other two occasions, the distance was similar because I held the handkerchief in my own fingers while bending my head a little forward.

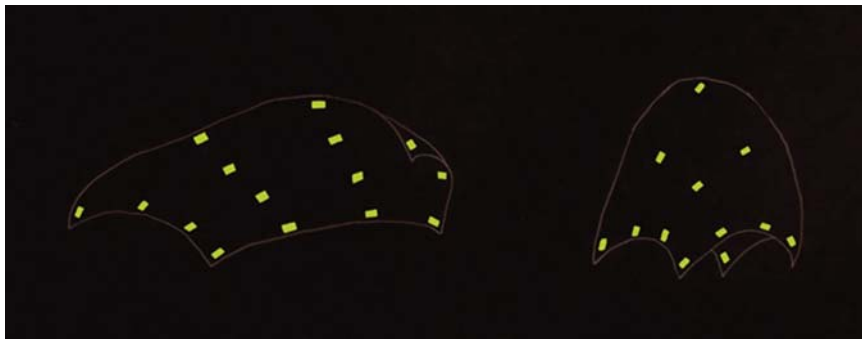
The mode of agitation and flying of the handkerchief is very peculiar. I could clearly see that the handkerchief is manipulated from all sides, being agitated and tossed in all directions. However, I was neither able to see



**Figure 3. Photograph of the flickering whitish-red flame in flight, taken during a sitting in March 2011 in Koblenz, Germany, with a shutter speed of 2 sec.** It shows that this light is moving rapidly around the space in front of KM; the interruptions of the line reveal its pulsating nature. KM rests motionless on the chair with his hands on his belly, whereas the hand of the sitter on the right of the cabinet is blurred by a movement. There is a heap of supposed ectoplasm and a drinking bottle between KM's feet, and a bucket with a towel behind his right leg. The picture was taken by Jochen Soederling and is reprinted with his kind permission. To enhance the visibility of the details, the photograph was slightly altered by the author.

a “dark swirl” or “fog” around it (as some sitters have reported at other sittings), nor something solid that might have grabbed and twitched it. Similarly, when the handkerchief is in flight, I have never seen dark shades or shapes which might have grabbed and carried it across the room. In fact, no sitter has ever reported seeing a structure that obscured the luminous stickers during flight. The handkerchief is always fully visible from all directions. Moreover, the handkerchief is not hanging down loosely from one point, but it is spread out laterally. The degree of spreading varies, but if it is beautifully developed, only its sides and tips are hanging down and they perform upward and downward movements. These strange-looking movements closely resemble the pulsating movements of a jellyfish swimming in water (Figure 4).

For example, at a sitting on April 21, 2011, the handkerchief rose



**Figure 4. Illustration of the handkerchief with pieces of luminous strap in flight, depicting the peculiar jellyfish-like mode of moving.**

into the air after I had released my grip, and floated across the room in the described manner, usually directly above the heads and bodies of the sitters. Finally, it landed on my lap. When I released the handkerchief on December 12, 2010, it floated gently further upward and continued with a flight around the room that lasted for about 2–3 min. It floated upward to the ceiling, sometimes lowered its flight height again, but most of the time it flew at about the height of the sitter’s faces, often gliding right in front of their faces and stopping immediately before them. Toward the end of this flight, it descended a bit, and dropped to the floor in the middle of the room. Immediately, HB asked the next guest to pick up the handkerchief, to hold it, and to let it fly. Subsequently, the three remaining guests present were also invited to let it fly by HB, who talked almost constantly from the chair inside the cabinet. The latter flights were comparably short. However, during one of these flights, the handkerchief floated toward the wall and the ceiling right above my head, even a little bit behind my head, and then slowly descended directly upon my upward-looking face, being fully spread. It covered my entire face and the top of my head. After lingering there for about 5 sec, the handkerchief was grabbed again from the *back* of my head with a distinct touch. My head rested only about 10 cm from the wall, if not less. Then, it floated for a short time across the room, until it dropped to the floor.

### ***Plaque Phenomena***

The term “plaque phenomena” refers to the display of mostly hand-like structures above or on a plastic plate that has been painted with phosphorescent color on one side. Such plaques have been used by several circles and

researchers for physical mediumship in the past to show the shape of the structures in the dark (e.g., Crawford 1921, Pap 1938, Schrenck-Notzing 1933). The plaque of the FEG has an edge length of 13 cm. When it is not used during the sittings, it is put away with the phosphorescent side facing down. Just before the plaque phenomena are supposed to be displayed, one of the sitters (recently, usually Julia) charges the phosphorescent side of the plaque with a flashlight, and then positions it onto the drum (or bucket) in the *action zone*. After a few minutes, the dark shapes usually enter the luminous plaque from both its sides, not from the direction of the cabinet. I saw dark shapes above the plaque at the first cabinet sitting with guests on October 27, 2009, and since then I've seen them eleven times. During the first sittings, the plaque was illuminated only very dimly, and the structures were barely visible above it. They also retreated from the plaque after a maximum of 5 sec before briefly appearing again a few times. Throughout the following months, the plaque was charged with more light, and the structures became considerably more visible, remaining on the plaque for up to 20 sec. The structures are most clearly seen from the chairs directly next to the drum in the *action zone*, and I have repeatedly sat there. The distance from the feet to the drum is at times only about 30–40 cm, so the sitters around the drum can look very closely at the plaque. The structures above the plaque vary greatly in size and shape. Even during the sequence of displays within the same sitting, I have observed four to five different shapes. They tend to be hand-like in most cases and possess three to five digits. Figure 5 gives examples of shapes that the structures can assume. But even when they look very hand-like, they differ from human hands in that their outline is rather rough, they don't have finger joints, and they are rather flat and not three-dimensional. They share many similarities with the hands shown during the ectoplasm display (see below). They are solid, because they can push a handkerchief from the plaque (Figure 5a and Figure 5b), and dislodge the plaque from the drum. However, I have also seen large shapes without discernible structure moving about the plaque, covering about one-quarter or one-third of it. Such imperfect forms of hands or other structures were reported from several earlier mediums, such as Eva C. and Stanislava P. (Schrenck-Notzing 1923), Rudi Schneider (e.g., Schrenck-Notzing 1933:25), and Kathleen Goligher (Crawford 1921). From December 16, 2010, on, the 4L+J control was always performed during the plaque phenomena at the sittings I attended. HB asks all sitters to join hands, and he talks continuously.

According to my audio recording from the sitting on October 17, 2012, in Basel, I had KM's left limbs under control for 1:03 min, and I controlled KM's four limbs plus Julia's two hands for another 1:05 min. Their bodies





**Figure 5. Six examples of different shapes that appeared above the phosphorescent plaque placed onto a hand drum or a bucket.**  
**(a, b)** Show shapes that move a handkerchief lying across the plaque.  
**(a–d)** Were observed at the sitting on March 30, 2010.  
**(e, f)** Appeared at a sitting on March 20, 2012.

were perfectly still, although the usual shapes of hands above the plaque were moving about.

### ***Manipulations of Balls***

During some of the sittings, a small wooden tray is placed on the drum (or bucket) by KM's assistants. Then, three little phosphorescent balls are illuminated with a torch and put on the tray. Subsequently, these luminous balls are manipulated by dark finger-like shapes, and are often knocked down from the tray. Also, the tray itself is knocked down sometimes. These items are then usually rearranged by a sitter, and the manipulations are repeatedly performed. In general, this type of display shares many similarities with the plaque phenomena. When the balls were manipulated at my sitting in Basel on October 17, 2012, I controlled KM's left limbs for 2:48 min, and additionally performed the 4L+J-control for 42 sec.



### **Trumpet Flights**

From the first cabinet sitting, sitters were treated to a familiar phenomenon from the heyday of spiritism—namely, the flight of a cone of cardboard called a “trumpet.” On October 27, 2009, Jochen used a flashlight to illuminate the strap around its large end, and then he placed the trumpet on the floor in front of the cabinet, between its curtains and the *action zone*. After sitters had sung for a while, the trumpet began to shuffle across the floor, fall over, and also rise into the air. Here, it moved toward the sitter’s faces in the dark, rose toward the ceiling, and performed swinging movements. When it fell to the floor, Jochen put it back in its place. In total, it rose from the floor four times—in my estimation, the longest flight took about 20–30 sec. Like all other phenomena occurring in the FEG, these flights worked better and better as time went by. The duration of the flights increased considerably, and the movements became more varied and faster. For example, now the trumpet frequently performs fast horizontal and vertical circles, or “nods” with fast upward and downward movements in front of the sitters’ faces, or touches and strokes the sitters’ bodies. On one occasion, I saw it pass above the heads of the sitters at the rear of the room flying behind them at a distance of about 3–3.5 m from the cabinet.

Frequently, sitters are asked to count from 5 to 0, and then firmly press their hands which are held in a chain. This is supposed to generate additional energy, and indeed, this pressing is usually followed by increased trumpet movements. One time, HB asked me from inside the cabinet to hold the trumpet in the space between the sitters by the large end with the luminous tape (for the order of sitters during this séance, see Figure 1). This I did, and rather soon I felt something pull the trumpet on the smaller, tapered end from the direction of the cabinet. I continued to hold the trumpet against the efforts to pull it out of my hands by the invisible actor, until at one point, the “puller” seemed to lose its grip and let go of it. At my last sitting with KM in Basel, Julia placed the trumpet in front of the cabinet on the floor. Shortly after, it rose into the air, seemingly touching the ceiling of 2.6 m height at least twice. Then, it performed various movements until it fell down on the floor right in front of me. This flight lasted for 7:25 min without interruption, and was followed by a few shorter flights after Julia had repositioned the trumpet on the floor in front of the cabinet. During the first long flight, I controlled KM’s left limbs for 1:35 min, and was able to implement the 4L+J control for 15 sec. As usual, their bodies didn’t move, and HB was talking or audibly breathing constantly, while the music was turned down or off. In general, I have frequently experienced silence (except for HB’s talking) in the séance room when the music was turned

off, or when the operator of the CD player had difficulties handling it in the dark. It seems that the trumpet flight (but also the other phenomena) is performed without the production of the slightest sound, even when rapid and large-scale movements of about 2 m magnitude are performed.

### ***Ectoplasm Display***

Ectoplasm is usually displayed in red light. KM typically displays ectoplasm after a phase of “preparation” of his body. It lasts for one or two songs from the CD player, during which KM rests inside the cabinet, and the sitters sing. When HB announces that KM’s body is ready to produce ectoplasm, he tests the amount of red light he considers appropriate for the upcoming display with open cabinet curtains. Then, he instructs the two sitters at the sides of the cabinet about how to open the curtains. For example, when ectoplasm is still protruding or hanging from KM’s mouth, HB signals the times for turning the red light on and off, and for opening and closing the curtain by stomping his right foot on the floor. After the ectoplasm has disconnected from the mouth, HB talks normally and gives verbal instructions. Sometimes, the entranced medium also opens and closes the curtain himself while he gives verbal commands regarding the red light.

Ectoplasm was first displayed on January 14, 2010, the curtain being opened only briefly for a few seconds in red light. I first saw the supposed ectoplasm on March 30, 2010, when Peter Mulacz and Stephen Braude were also present. The entranced medium opened the cabinet curtain with his hands three times. The first time, a white substance hung out of KM’s mouth, ending in a hand-like shape that lay on his chest. The second time this substance seemed considerably elongated. It reached down to the floor, the hand lying flat on the floor. The last time the hand rested on the medium’s left shoulder without connection to KM’s mouth. In these early ectoplasm displays, the expositions in the red light lasted no longer than about 5 sec. Subsequently, the duration and the number of the expositions per sitting increased. For example, at a sitting on October 17, 2012, the eight expositions had an average duration of 29 sec. The amount of the extruded substance increased as well. At times, it appeared to reach a length of at least 2 m, accumulating in a heap on the floor between and in front of KM’s feet. He usually bends his head forward and facilitates the ectoplasm’s outflow of the mouth by accompanying movements of his hands. Moreover, variations of the ectoplasm phenomena began to develop.

For example, the mass extruded from KM’s mouth would bend forward and upward at the region of his belly like the neck of a swan, the hand at its end performing jerking upward and downward waving movements, and also turning to its sides. During recent years, the extruded ectoplasm

typically gathers in a heap on the floor and disconnects from KM's mouth. The substance frequently ends without the shape of a hand. A recurrently displayed phenomenon is a column with a diameter of 10–15 cm that rises from the floor up to a 1.7 m height. Similarly, a hand often rose from the heap on the floor, being connected to it by a finger-thick white cord or a flat "arm," and it performed waving movements. Sometimes, KM gathers the white mass also on his lap, and the hand rises from there. In general, KM seems to rest still on his chair during the rising or moving of the ectoplasmic structures. In more recent sittings, large strands of white substance are sometimes attached to the inside of the opened cabinet (Figure 6). Often, KM pulls these strands of ectoplasm slowly down from the curtains. Moreover, KM handles a part of the mass with his hands, tearing it widely apart and demonstrating its fine structure to the sitters with the bright red light shining directly onto it (Figure 6). Occasionally, KM works out crystals or other solid objects from it, and puts them into the hands of Julia. According to HB, these objects are materialized within the ectoplasm. On rare occasions, the ectoplasm contains miniature faces of alleged deceased persons which resemble black-and-white photographs. Similar faces have been reported from other mediums (e.g., Schrenck-Notzing 1923, Hamilton 1942, De Boni 1967, Gaunt 2013). The entranced KM also wraps the ectoplasmic veil around his entire body with his hands—allegedly to supply his body with new energy. Then, his body is covered all over by an extremely fine and very thin, almost fully transparent whitish shroud. From early 2013 on, the ectoplasm has obtained an apparent self-luminosity. If the red light is turned off, it shines with the same greenish phosphorescent glow as the greenish lights described above. We have seen this luminous ectoplasm at our sitting in Austria (Braude 2014 in this issue).

In general, the alleged ectoplasm is displayed in three different main conditions: The first resembles a very thin cloth of delicate texture, as if woven out of extremely fine threads (e.g., when the veil is wrapped around KM's body), the second roughly resembles irregularly arranged cotton wool or cobweb (e.g., the straps attached to the inside of the cabinet, the masses from which solid objects are worked out, and the luminous ectoplasm), and the third resembles a rubber-like compact mass (e.g., the hands performing waving movements). In all cases, its color is white.

### **Apports**

Apports, i.e. objects appearing from nowhere in a seemingly inexplicable manner, have a long tradition in the FEG. They belonged to the first anomalous phenomena reported in the Hanau cellar room, and allegedly occurred as early as 2006, long before KM began to enter a trance state.



**Figure 6. Photograph taken December 23, 2012, during an ectoplasm display in bright red light at the Basel Psi-Association.** The photograph illustrates the delicate fine structure of the supposed ectoplasm which appears to consist of thin threads and bundles of these threads, resembling thick cobweb. Behind KM's right leg, there are drinking bottles and the usual bucket with a towel. The photograph was taken by Pablo Sütterlin of the Basel Psi-Association with a shutter speed of .5 sec at 3200 ISO. It is reprinted with the kind permission of Lucius Werthmüller.

Reported apports comprise a wide range of objects, among them a variety of (semiprecious) stones, crystals, and metal objects, an old newspaper, loads of water spilled upon the table and the sitters, a shower of rose petals, an apparently spontaneously created replica of a piece of jewelry of one of the sitters, and wax balls containing slips of paper with personal messages written on them. The authors of these messages who could be identified are deceased, and in general, their handwriting seems to match their style of handwriting when they were alive.<sup>6</sup>

Personally, I have witnessed 12 apports during my sittings with the FEG. Most of them occurred in red light at the end of the séances.

### **The Question of Genuineness of the Phenomena**

The most important question concerning the manifold phenomena described in the preceding section is whether they are genuine, or whether they (could) have been produced by fraudulent means under the prevailing control conditions. Often, this is difficult to tell, and one even needs to consider the possibility of “mixed mediumship,” i.e. the possibility that a medium produces a mixture of both genuine and conjured phenomena. Hence, when performing research into physical mediumship, one needs to be very cautious before one forms a definitive opinion about a given phenomenon, or on the phenomenology displayed by a medium as a whole. In other words, one needs to be careful not to throw out the baby with the bath water. When a researcher forms a negative judgment about certain phenomena or a medium, he or she needs to have good reasons for it. In the following, I describe how I proceeded in documenting the development of the phenomena of the circle, and why I finally arrived at the conclusion that at least some of the phenomena displayed by KM are indeed not genuine.

### ***My Personal Involvement with the FEG and KM***

When I first met the Circle, the phenomena consisted mainly of table phenomena such as those routinely reported from early developmental stages of circles for physical mediumship. They were interesting, but it was clear that there was no possibility to document or to control them in a reliable way. This situation changed after the cabinet sittings were established. The psychokinetic phenomena took place in a space away from the cabinet and KM. Moreover, Jochen and other seemingly trustful sitters including myself were allowed to take photos of the ectoplasm phenomena in red light. In the early days, HB was not reluctant to introduce IR-filming and other contemporary documentation devices into the sittings. We all hoped that it would be possible to use such devices when the phenomena reached a certain degree of stability. Moreover, 4LC was soon introduced, and some of the psychokinetic phenomena such as the raps, the lights, and the flying handkerchief intrigued me. Still, I always wanted to sit next to KM, and when controls had been introduced, to control him at the cabinet to be able to form a better opinion about the true nature of the phenomena, and about certain aspects of their appearance.

After each sitting I attended, I sent reports of my observations to KM. These reports served a twofold function. First, I wanted to document my observations, and second, they were a reward for KM in which I stressed my positive impressions to improve our contact. It was clear that I needed to do something more than simply attend the sittings in irregular intervals

if I would ever be allowed to obtain a deeper insight into the circle's modus operandi, and to be allowed to sit next to the cabinet to perform controls one day. Indeed, KM was always very thankful for my reports, and a very friendly relationship developed. Several of these reports can still be found on KM's blog. Yet, I always kept a second version of these reports in which I added notes about critical observations and suggestions about how the controls could be improved. In the beginning, I related these suggestions to KM, but he never reacted to them. For example, after the first cabinet sitting I attended, I suggested that he should use a wicker chair that would creak audibly when he tried to leave it (like the Icelandic medium Indridi Indridason did, see Gissurarson & Haraldsson 1989), or that he should use small phosphorescent stickers on his clothes so that the sitters would be able to see where he was in the dark. After I had participated in 12 cabinet sittings (and 14 sittings in total), I asked KM if he would allow me to perform the sensitive act of controlling him at the cabinet. He readily agreed. In this sitting on July 6, 2012, the usual wealth of phenomena appeared. I was allowed to perform 4LC (and also 4L+J control during two of the phenomena), and I didn't notice anything suspicious. Yet, I wanted more security. I had not controlled the entire room before and after this séance, nor KM's body. Moreover, it was important for me to control him at a location outside of Hanau to limit the possibility that he had helpers among the sitters. Indeed, KM kindly allowed me to control him again at a sitting he was to give in Basel on October 17, 2012. This sitting, however, revealed several quite suspicious details. The most important were the following:

- We had agreed before the sitting that I would pat down KM's clothes when he entered the séance room. However, when he entered it, KM refused my attempt to do so, stating that this had been performed often enough by now. He simply walked on and sat down in the cabinet.

- Two minutes and 40 seconds after KM began with his rapid breathing, the red lamp fell down from its small table with considerable rumble. Julia seemed very surprised, and nobody could explain why the lamp had fallen down. Yet, it seemed as if somebody or something must have pushed the lamp over, or got caught in its cable in the dark. KM, however, continued to breathe in his cabinet.

- Sometimes, during the phase of preparation before the ectoplasm display, sparkling sounds can be heard from within the cabinet. They resemble tiny electrical discharges and according to HB they indicate the preparation of KM's body for the generation of ectoplasm. I distinctly heard them from my position next to the cabinet. I noticed, however, that these sparkling sounds didn't emerge from KM's entire body, but only from a single and very distinct location above his left thigh, about 0.6 m above the

floor. They sounded as if a crinkly plastic foil, an adhesive tape, or a hook-and-loop fastener was being opened slowly.

- Before the ectoplasm displays began, HB announced that he would later materialize a large object within the ectoplasm. He explained that this process would require a lot of time and energy. This materialization process began with the second ectoplasm display: KM's body bent forward and he began to fumble with the ectoplasm. However, only a few seconds after HB had begun to work on a dense white agglomeration within the ectoplasm, a large semi-precious stone dropped to the floor. It looked like an accident. Later, HB confessed that the stone appeared much earlier than expected. Moreover, I was intrigued by how HB moved KM's hands. Usually, HB seems to have difficulties operating the body of "the medium," but on this occasion the finger movements looked as if performed with almost waking consciousness (KM's eyes being open, gazing at the agglomeration HB fumbled with).

- When I opened the curtain during the ectoplasm display and an ectoplasmatic hand rose from the heap of white substance on his lap, I could clearly see that a very fine thread was fastened to the back of this hand, and that this thread lead directly upward to the loop of the cabinet to which the curtains are fastened. I did not see the last part of this thread due to the impaired red light conditions at that height. But I saw about three quarters of its supposed length, and it was clear that it led straight upward to the spot on the hoop where the two curtains parted. Both KM's arms hung down at the sides of his body inside the cabinet, with the hands not being visible.

- After KM awoke from trance, I remained with Julia and him at the cabinet. When we performed the control review of the cabinet, I found two pieces of black tape that looked heavily manipulated. They had a length of three to five centimeters. One was lying on the floor, the other one was sticking to the bottom of the chair, protruding into the air next to the edge of the seat. It seemed obvious that they originated from the long black vertical strips of tape that stick to the inside of the cabinet curtains. Both pieces of tape were not there when I checked the cabinet and the chair before the sitting. KM claimed that he did not know where they came from, and that HB is likely to perform all sorts of weird movements with KM's body in trance. However, it is clear that these tapes might well have been used to facilitate the display of certain phenomena, e.g., the attachment of the ectoplasm to the cabinet curtains. At this sitting, large strands of ectoplasm were attached to both sides of the cabinet interior (similar to the display shown in Figure 6).

- Consequently, I also searched the inside of the cabinet curtains for possible remnants of the ectoplasm, and I found several extremely thin



white (or transparent) fibers with a synthetic appearance. They were up to 3 cm long, and some of them stuck together in small bundles. KM stated that they must stem from his and Julia's clothes, because they transported their clothes and the cabinet curtains in the same suitcase. However, these fibers didn't look like typical fluff from clothes to me, especially not from the clothes I had seen of KM and Julia. They looked too thin, too long, and too synthetic.

All these observations indicated that the ectoplasm displays, at least, were manipulated. This assumption fits well with certain other suspicious observations I had made in the past. For example, it was obvious that, if KM intended to cheat, he could easily prepare the required props during his retreat to a private room to induce his "pre-trance" state. Moreover, I had never seen how the ectoplasmatic hand developed out of the previously extruded ectoplasm. Usually, the hand is already there in its entirety when the curtains are opened again at a given time. Hence, an artificial hand with a thread fixed to its back could simply have been put there in the darkness by KM between two curtain openings. The thread could be led across the cabinet hoop, and pulled with one of his hands to let the hand rise. Indeed, KM's right hand especially is never visible when ectoplasmatic structures move. At least four other sitters have on different occasions seen an extremely fine thread that lead upward from the rising hand or column. Its upper end is usually not perceptible, presumably due to the lower light conditions at the greater height (the cone of red light emitted by the lamp is always directed toward the floor). At a previous sitting, I also saw how an ectoplasmic column rose upward precisely to the area of the hoop where the two curtains parted, and almost touched it. Some sitters commented on that. HB offered an excuse for this occurrence and claimed that the column should have risen farther outward into the room, not below the cabinet hoop. HB then added that the Chemists would try to improve this phenomenon in the future. However, this never happened. Rather, the typical ectoplasm columns rise now farther inside the cabinet, seemingly crawling upward on KM's right body side to the rear of the cabinet.

I discussed all these findings with KM and Jochen. In the end, I decided to continue following the development of KM's phenomena because some of the psychokinetic phenomena such as the raps or the flying handkerchief fascinated me, especially when they were performed under 4L+J control. I had no explanation for them, just like all the parapsychologists I spoke to. One occurrence intrigued me in particular: While performing 4L+J control at the Basel sitting mentioned above, I moved my left hand accidentally *in front of* KM's left leg when I wanted to put it onto his knee, returning my hand from the control of Julia's right hand on KM's right hand and thigh.



At that moment, the trumpet, which was circling freely around the room, dropped to the floor. It seemed as if there was a connection between my accidental hand movement in front of KM's body, which he certainly wasn't aware of, and the dropping of the trumpet. Hence, I thought, my hand might have disturbed an assumed flow of psychokinetic force from KM's body to the trumpet, although I felt nothing.

Nevertheless, I remained skeptical toward the ectoplasm and the cabinet sittings as a whole. I participated in one more table sitting in February 2013. The table went wild, levitated a few times, we saw several sparking lights of unexplained origin, a dim greenish light hovered steadily over KM's head for about four seconds, and we heard faint raps on the ceiling. While these phenomena occurred, KM sat at the table and was allegedly in bodily contact with his neighboring sitters. Also, at that time, the plans for performing controlled experiments in Austria were already advanced. Filming the psychokinetic phenomena in action was one of our goals. KM even announced that the Chemists would try to show us the disintegration of ectoplasm. I was curious. Before the cabinet sitting in Austria, I inspected everything in the room, and I also measured and photographed the strips of black tape on the inside of the cabinet curtains. To my disappointment, HB skipped all psychokinetic phenomena during this cabinet sitting—allegedly, to save energy for letting the ectoplasm extrusion be filmed (see Braude 2014 in this issue). This we accomplished, but HB didn't show the disintegration of the ectoplasm. The ectoplasm also didn't stick to the interior of the cabinet curtains. After this comparably weak cabinet sitting, I expected that all the stripes of black tape would still be in place, and, indeed, they were.

As a consequence, I told KM that it would be important to me to control him at least once more at the cabinet before I'd go public with my report about his mediumship. For performing these controls, I suggested a sitting in Basel again. Once more, KM readily agreed. Yet, about two weeks before the appointed sitting, I received an email in which KM warned me that I was not allowed to perform a "one-man investigation." He added that if I exhibited distrust of him, HB would immediately replace me at the cabinet with somebody else. I replied that I was only concerned with performing the usual and routinely applied 4L+J controls, and that I would like to inspect the séance room before and after the sitting. KM seemed satisfied. One day before the appointed sitting, however, KM informed me in drastic words that his "spirits" told him that they would not regard me as a normal sitter, and that I would block the phenomena in this public sitting if I came (which would, of course, imply being removed from my place near the cabinet by HB). KM suggested that I'd better wait to control him until our next

experimental sessions in October 2014 in Austria (in the meantime, KM has postponed these sittings to February 2015). Consequently, I desisted from travelling to Basel for an expensive sitting. KM replied with a greatly relieved message, stressing that he knew I was doubting the phenomena, and that this put too much psychological stress on him. He simply wouldn't like to be controlled by me during public sittings. Needless to say, the behavior of KM alarmed me, and I decided it was high time to subject his mediumship to a thorough re-evaluation.

### **Gathering Evidence for Fraud**

First, I spoke with Jochen about my disappointment regarding the recent behaviour of KM, and he agreed with my complaints. He sent me two series of photographs he took during cabinet sittings in 2011 for my inspection (in total, 179 photographs). Around the same time, I was informed by Eberhard Bauer, one of Hans Bender's former assistants at the Institute for Frontier Areas of Psychology and Mental Health in Freiburg that the luminous ectoplasm we saw in Austria might well have been artificial phosphorescent spider web that one can buy as a Halloween gimmick, and that there are indications that KM had bought such material on the Internet. Of course, I bought the artificial cobweb myself—both in its normal and in its luminous form. Moreover, I contacted sitters who had sat with KM earlier and asked them if they had observed suspicious occurrences. In the following, I first describe my findings regarding the cobweb. Thereafter, I turn to several discoveries revealed by the two picture series, and other lines of investigation.

**Artificial cobweb, part I.** After I heard that KM might have used artificial luminous cobweb, I asked him on the telephone if he knew of this substance, and if he ever used it. He denied it. Two days later, my phosphorescent cobweb arrived. I was immediately struck by the close resemblance, if not identicalness, of its look and the appearance of the luminous ectoplasm KM showed us in Austria. Also, the very fine filaments of this cobweb look very much like the extremely fine fibers I had spotted on the inside of the cabinet curtains in Basel. Moreover, both the luminous and the non-luminous cobweb looked practically identical to the ectoplasm shown on several photographs of KM (e.g., Figure 6). Most importantly, KM had put a post on his blog in February 2012 that was said to describe the generation of ectoplasm in daylight at home. A series of pictures illustrated how the ectoplasm developed from mucosa around KM's tongue (side note: an apparent contradiction to his usual assertion that the ectoplasm streams down from a "gate" in the roof of his mouth). The photographs included two closeups of his mouth and tongue, and three pictures of his head and

trunk with a long and torn veil of ectoplasm that seemed to emanate from his protruding tongue. I was able to reproduce such photographs quite easily with my cobweb. Interestingly, when I wanted to compare my photographs with his photographs on the blog, I found that KM had deleted this posting. Four days earlier, when I had spoken to KM, the posting had still been there, and I had not mentioned it in our conversation.

Luckily, I had already copied this posting to my computer. On close examination, I found that the last of three pictures that showed his head and trunk differed from the first two in an odd way. Allegedly, these three pictures demonstrate how the ectoplasm emanated from his tongue, protruding downward across his chest and abdomen, and the last picture was supposed to show the detachment of the ectoplasm from the tongue and its partial disintegration. Indeed, the ectoplasm looks somewhat different on picture three. However, KM must have worn a different t-shirt when he took the last picture, or he must have rearranged the neckline of his t-shirt in a conspicuous way while the ectoplasm was flowing downward from his tongue across his chest, while it disintegrated, and while he took photographs of this process in a semi-trance state within several seconds. In the first two pictures, KM wears a black t-shirt with a plunging neckline, but in the third picture, the neckline of his shirt runs tightly around his neck. Because the background of this picture is different as well, it seems likely that the last photograph was taken on a different occasion. Indeed, the numbering of the photographs in this posting does not fit KM's description of the order in which they were taken to document the events. For example, the photo with the name IMG\_0252 is followed by photo IMG\_0246, which is supposed to show a later stage of the ectoplasm development. In sum, there were several indications that the story about how KM produced ectoplasm in daylight at home was arranged with the help of Halloween cobweb. Knowing that I had ordered such cobweb in the meantime, KM might have had a good reason to quickly remove this posting from the blog.

**2011 photo series, part I: The whitish-red light.** I have seen this red light only once in April 2011, and, although its peculiar pulsating nature looked somewhat inorganic, I was quite intrigued by its appearance (Figure 3). According to information I have collected now, it appeared at least two times in Basel, two times in Koblenz, and one time in Hanau between 2011 and 2013. Moreover, according to a blog posting from March 27, 2013, it appeared at "different private séances." Pursuant to information from FEG members, related in particular in an email sent from Julia to me and Jochen on July 30, 2012 (which was also known to KM), one of these private séances was held a few days earlier for a Swiss guest. On this occasion, up to three of these red lights appeared, and they seemed to emerge from KM's

mouth. According to the just-mentioned blog posting, the red light also flew (in and) out of KM's mouth repeatedly at a sitting held in Basel in March 2013. Jochen indicated that this light looked similar to a prop called D'Lite Flight, an LED that is mounted to the top of a thin wire. The other end of the wire is fastened with an artificial rubber fingertip that is usually worn on a thumb. Equipped with this information, I started to subject the photographs of Jochen to a detailed scrutiny. The first series of pictures was taken at a sitting on March 18, 2011, in the living room of H in Koblenz. It contains 19 photographs that show the whitish-red light in action in the red light of the floor lamp. Both KM's hands are well visible in this series. Figure 3 is the 9th photograph of the series. The fingers are widely spread, and both hands rest upon his belly—a rather untypical position for KM during cabinet sittings. He never holds his hands on his belly during the usual ectoplasm displays. In Figure 3, the light is moving fast, thus revealing its characteristic pulsating nature that is also displayed by the D'Lite Flight. The light moves in an arch, almost describing a quarter of a circle centering on KM's right thumb.

The first five photographs of this picture series show how the light leaves KM's left hand in an upward direction slowly and steadily, while his right thumb, looking strangely elongated, moves upward in perfect concordance with the light. According to the Exif metadata of these photos, they were taken in intervals from three to seven seconds. A dozen other photographs show the same concordance of the thumb movement while the red light is moving faster as in Figure 3, presumably dangling on the wire. When the light moves upward the thumb moves upward, when it moves downward the thumb moves downward. In all these pictures, the thumb is the only body part of KM that moves. In eight of the photographs, the light describes an arching movement that seems to pivot around his right thumb as in Figure 3, but there is no photograph in which the light performs comparable arching movements with a different orientation. The latter should be expected, though, if the light moved independently from the right hand or thumb. Finally, the light appears to hover around KM's right hand at more or less the same distance.

All these observations are compellingly complemented and confirmed by the second photo series. This series was also taken in the living room of H, on April 15, 2011. It contains 90 photographs of the whitish-red light in action. Apart from intervals in which no pictures were taken, the pictures of the moving light were mostly taken in intervals from one to two seconds. Yet, these pictures must be edited before one can see the crucial details such as KM's right hand (e.g., using the "Shadow/Highlight" function of Adobe Photoshop CS2), because KM has turned his body slightly away from the

light emitted by the red lamp, and holds his right hand further to the back of his right side. Hence, it is almost hidden in the shadow of his body and not visible on the 41 original photographs taken when the red lamp was switched on. It seems KM has tried to avoid revealing his right hand in the light of the red lamp, as he did in the first picture series from March 2011. The 49 other photographs of the second photo series were taken in darkness, 33 of them with closed cabinet curtains, and 16 with open curtains. This is easy to tell because the light emitted by the whitish-red light itself is sufficient to see the closed curtains or KM inside the cabinet after appropriate editing with Photoshop. For example, it is plain to see in the pictures taken in darkness with open cabinet curtains that when the light moves upward into the open cabinet, shining onto KM's face, or when it hovers above his outstretched left hand, his right hand has also moved upward. Sometimes, one can even see the right thumb pointing toward the light. If the light moves closely above the ground, the right hand does the same, and KM bends down. When the light performs frontal full circles into the camera, KM's right hand can be seen exactly in the middle of these circles, his thumb seemingly pointing straight toward the camera. In the photographs that are said to show the whitish-red light moving in front of the closed cabinet curtains, it is obvious that KM simply stuck the light through the gap between the two closed curtains. This can readily be determined by the drapery of the two curtains on the floor. Moreover, all 33 photos taken in darkness in front of the cabinet with closed curtains show the light moving a) in the central area in front of the gap, b) in this central area but also in front of the left cabinet curtain, and c) solely in front of the left curtain (seen from KM's perspective). Not one photo shows the light moving in the central area and also in front of the right curtain, or solely in front of the right curtain. This is exactly what one would expect if the light was moved by the medium, sticking a device like the D'Lite Flight through the curtain gap with his right hand. Sometimes, one can even see a dim bright blotch between the two cabinet curtains, and that can be interpreted as KM's hand.

When I confronted KM with my findings about the pulsating LED device on the telephone, he swore that he had never possessed or used such a device, that he had never seen it, not even a video clip or a picture of it, and that he had not known that these devices existed at all. Yet, when I casually introduced the name D'Lite Flight into the conversation some time later, he seemed to understand quite well what I meant by it. In conversation with Stephen Braude, KM tried to play down the significance of the suspicious whitish-red light, and stated that it had only appeared two times in public some three years ago. When Braude asked KM whether it appeared at the private séance for the Swiss sitter in 2012, KM denied it, and stated that the

light at this sitting had been blue, and thus must have been of a different nature. Yet, this is clearly not what Julia wrote to me when she described the phenomena of this séance to me shortly after it was held. In an email to me dating from April 1, 2014, KM claimed that the whitish-red light had not appeared for a long time, and that it most likely appeared for the last time in April 2011 when I saw it. Yet, as I have described above, this is wrong. According to KM's blog, it continued to appear until at least March 2013. In addition to these inconsistencies, Jochen behaved in a manner that I can only interpret as an indirect confession that KM admitted having used something like the D'Lite Flight. Jochen wanted to confront KM with my findings and with suspicions of his own, and then inform me about KM's reaction. Later, however, he didn't give me an explicit answer when I asked him for the result of this conversation, but merely advanced evasive and ambiguous statements. When I asked Jochen whether this kind of answer could be regarded as a confession of KM, he didn't deny it. And, when I told him that, consequently, I would interpret this behaviour as a confirmation, he again offered no protest (see Braude 2014 in this issue for a comparable behavior of Jochen towards Braude). In the light of these conspicuous subterfuges and the findings described above, there can in my opinion be no doubt that KM has used the D'Lite Flight (or an almost identical device) to produce the "spectacular spirit lights" he had promoted in a blog posting from August 2, 2011. Interestingly, KM deleted this posting from his blog only a few days after I had confronted him with my supposition that he must have used the D'Lite Flight. I had not mentioned this posting during our conversation.<sup>7</sup>

**2011 photo series, part II: The rising hand of "Hans Bender".**

The second photo series includes a sequence of 10 pictures that show how the ectoplasm hand of HB rises into the air from a heap of previously extruded ectoplasm in red light. After simple editing with the Shadow/Highlight function of Photoshop, one can see that the right naked forearm of KM hangs down at his right body side. During the first five pictures, the ectoplasm hand hovers closely above the floor in front of the heap of previously extruded ectoplasm, and the arm of KM doesn't seem to move. During the last five photos, the ectoplasm hand moves upward, and KM seems to move his right arm backward into the cabinet. At least, the sight of his forearm decreases continuously, and it is finally not visible any more on the last photograph, having moved into the full shadow of his body. The ectoplasm hand rises between KM's feet under the cabinet hoop, and drags a flat white arm behind it that appears to be draped and folded behind and beneath it. This arm bears a strong resemblance to the typically flat strands of ordinary cotton batting used for household and cosmetic purposes.

The first photo series from March 2011 contains five photos that show how an ectoplasm column rises upward for about 15 cm, and one can faintly see exactly the same suspicious movement of KM's right arm. While these observations prove nothing by themselves, it is obvious that such a movement of KM's arm would perfectly explain how the ectoplasm moves upward, given it was tied to a thin thread that led upward to the cabinet hoop. As described earlier, at least five sitters including myself have seen such a thread already.

**2011 photo series, part III: The rising ectoplasm column.** The second photo series from April 2011 contains other photos that show how an ectoplasm column is rising upward from a heap of ectoplasm on the floor between KM's feet. This series contains 20 pictures that were taken at intervals of about one second. This time, the column rises inside the cabinet, its top moves upward on KM's right body side. The first picture shows its top in a position slightly above his right thigh, and it moves upward to the level of his right shoulder in the subsequent photos. These pictures strongly confirm earlier visual impressions from the sittings I had attended: The column is clearly being pulled upward, it doesn't rise by itself due to its inherent and autonomous living quality and self-motivity as stated by HB. In the first photo, its top bends around Kai's thigh rising in the exact direction it will stick to throughout the rest of the picture series. It rises upward only on one particular and extremely linear line—one can add a line with a ruler following the path it travels. It leads straight upward to the area at the rear of the cabinet where the hoop is located. This is not what I'd expect from something that moves by itself. Rather, I'd expect at least a minimal degree of mobility in vertical and lateral directions. In the last pictures, the column's basal area consists of very fine and almost transparent material that is obviously drawn upward by the rising top of the column; the basal area clearly doesn't support or cause the upward movement, pushing the column upward.

In addition, KM performs very strange movements with his head, bending it from the far left to the far right several times in a row. Yet, during other ectoplasm displays, the head of the entranced KM rests usually more or less unmoved. KM's right arm hangs down at his right body side in the present photo series, just as it usually does when ectoplasmic structures rise. However, he seems to hold it constantly in a position close to the rear of the cabinet, perhaps even behind his back, because it is not visible on any of the edited photographs. Concordantly, one sitter has noticed with suspicion how KM held his right arm toward his back during ectoplasm phenomena, and several others noted that it was usually hidden beneath his right body side.

Taking the observations from the column photo series and from other



series together, it seems likely to me that the ectoplasmic column is pulled upward by a thread that (in this case) runs to the back of the cabinet hoop. The constant rising of the column might well be accomplished by a combined and alternating effort of KM's hidden right hand and his mouth.

I suppose that it is quite unsatisfactory for the reader that I wrote at length about evidence for fraud gathered from photo series without showing the actual photographs. Perhaps KM supporters or KM himself may criticize me for this line of action. In this case, I hasten to add that I'd love to publicize the entire photo series—ideally, both the original and the edited photographs. At present, however, KM has forbidden me to publish any photo that shows him in a sitting. I doubt that he has a legitimate entitlement to do so, but I prefer to play it safe, and have only included two photos of his in this article for which he had given me explicit approval for publication earlier. Nevertheless, I'll discuss another interesting photograph in the next section.

**Two (almost) identical ectoplasm structures.** Figure 7 displays a photo that I took at a sitting in Hanau on August 30, 2011. It shows a complex mass of alleged ectoplasm that had materialized at a sitting in a "direct" manner, i.e. it was not extruded from KM's mouth. It was attached to the outside of the closed cabinet curtains. When I screened KM's blog for dubious postings, I was struck when I came across a conspicuously similar mass that KM had allegedly extruded from his mouth in March 2011 (compare especially picture 4 in his posting from March 15, 2011).<sup>8</sup> Interestingly, a close examination of both photographs showed that all characteristic features of the mass displayed on the photo from the blog can also be identified on my photograph, although the latter is somewhat blurred. In total, I counted 23 common characteristic features, but only one apparent difference that concerns the shape of the upper right corner of both structures. This difference may simply be due to different draping of this seemingly soft material. By contrast, all major and most peculiar features, including the large dark Y-shaped depression and the human face with its characteristic ectoplasm frame (see the white circle in Figure 7), are exactly in their place on both photos. Moreover, the overall shape and size of the two masses appear to be identical.

I am aware that several mediums produced similar structures with embedded faces during their sittings, for example Eva C. or Mary Marshal. However, I know of no supposedly genuine medium that has produced an (almost) exact replica of such a large and seemingly erratic conglomerate of ectoplasm months later, with all peculiar features being present again. This occurrence appears especially remarkable when considering that the structures were allegedly produced in two different ways: the first via extrusion from KM's mouth, the second via direct materialization. For sure,

**Figure 7. Photograph taken by myself at a sitting on August 30, 2011.** It shows a complex mass of alleged ectoplasm that is attached to the outside of the closed cabinet curtains.



HB would have pointed to this kind of unique occurrence in the history of physical mediumship if such a case had been genuine. It seems inconceivable that HB was not aware of the striking similarity, if not identity, of the two masses he and the Chemists generated. Personally, I think it is much more likely that KM had constructed and displayed an artificial ectoplasm mass in early 2011, and that he simply used it again a few months later in a different setting and context.

**The extrusion of ectoplasm.** Another peculiar aspect of KM's ectoplasm display concerns the extrusion of it via his mouth. On each occasion I saw KM extrude this white substance, he bent forward so that his mouth faced the floor, and he held his left hand tightly to his mouth (e.g., see the series of stills included in Braude 2014 in this issue). Allegedly, this strange gesture is supposed to help to keep KM's mouth open, and to facilitate the outflow of ectoplasm. Yet, the ectoplasm doesn't seem to flow out by itself during the extrusion. Rather, KM seems to pull it out with his right hand. Only when the extrusion is as good as finished does KM use both hands to manipulate the white veil. When I tried to extrude ectoplasm at home with my cobweb, I soon found out that I was only able to do so in the way that KM seems to do it. One needs to control the pulling on the packed material in the mouth with one hand, ideally with one finger,

because otherwise one runs the risk that the whole lump of ectoplasm will fall out of the mouth at once. The easiest way to prevent the sitters from seeing why the hand is held at the mouth is, of course, bending forward. Although this finding is no proof for fraud, it is bewildering that KM claims to produce genuine ectoplasm in precisely this way.

**What happens inside the closed cabinet?** When I controlled KM at the cabinet, I sometimes noticed that he moved inside it during the periods that are said to allow for the reinforcement of the psychokinetic force between the different PK phenomena. Several other sitters who controlled KM at the cabinet have noticed considerable activity inside the cabinet as well, and one may wonder why HB needs to putter around so much during the intervals between the phenomena. That something is going on inside the cabinet is also revealed by the first photo series from March 2011. After the last picture that shows a column rising from a large heap of ectoplasm on the floor (see above), there was, apparently, a period of 12 minutes spent in darkness. This break is followed by the picture series of the whitish-red light (see above), which is said to represent a pure essence of ectoplasm. Interestingly, the towel on the bucket inside the cabinet has evidently been manipulated, and the water bottle has changed its place during these 12 minutes. The bottle stood close to KM's left foot during the display of the column, and it has now moved to the right. It stands directly next to a heap of ectoplasm—a very delicate and inappropriate position, given that the ectoplasm is an extremely sensible substance (see Figure 3). The sitter at KM's left side doesn't remember having put the bottle there, and it would not be a very likely action, anyway, to put this bottle right in front of the ectoplasm. HB never fetches the bottle and drinks a bit on his own. He always asks the sitters next to him to pass him the bottle and to put it away again—but all this happens before the ectoplasm displays begin, not during the breaks in between, and it always happens when the red light is turned on, not in darkness. Nevertheless, it is clear that something was going on inside the cabinet during these 12 minutes. One can only speculate if KM permitted himself to have a mouthful of water on his own this time, and if he fumbled with the bucket to fetch the D'Lite Flight.

In any case, the continued presence of the ectoplasm is highly remarkable by itself. All sitters who have attended a sitting with KM are told how sensitive this substance is, and how susceptible to light it is. KM informs them that its ephemeral and short-lived existence suffers from the constant threat of being damaged or destroyed by even the slightest amounts of light that may hit it, and the ectoplasm was much more vulnerable in early 2011 than it is today. Yet, a considerable amount is still there after the 12 minute break, and it continues to exist during the display of the whitish-

red light—being fully exposed to the red light emitted by the floor lamp. According to my séance reports from late 2010 to April 2011, I considered at that time an uninterrupted display of ectoplasm that lasted for only 15 seconds as a comparably long exposition. This is confirmed by the Exif data of the two photo series. Only the rising column in April 2011 was displayed for a longer time span, namely for 24 seconds. Yet, the seemingly unattended ectoplasm between KM's feet existed unaffected for one and a half minutes in red light, albeit, admittedly, the cabinet curtains were briefly closed at one point (for 20 seconds at best). In any case, the sustained presence of the ectoplasm at this sitting appears highly suspicious and, just like the water bottle, out of place. Perhaps it was nothing but an accident in KM's performance. At least the second photo series from April 2011 shows that there was a similar break of 11 minutes before the whitish-red light was displayed, but that time the ectoplasm had vanished.

**Artificial cobweb, part II.** While I pursued the different lines of investigation described above, I also tried to verify the claim that KM had bought cobweb on the Internet. At one point, I found out that KM had ordered one kilogram of non-luminous cobweb, and 125 grams of luminous cobweb, to be shipped to his postal address in Hanau.<sup>9</sup> Curiously, he ordered this material via eBay from somebody who had been a critical guest sitter at one of KM's séances earlier, and who knew the blog maintained by KM quite well. Needless to say, this person became alarmed by this order from KM, and he informed German parapsychologists about it. Later, I was shown the original transaction documents of two orders that KM had placed in October 2013 via eBay. Clearly, this buying of the cobweb contradicts KM's initial claim that he had never heard of such a substance, to say the least.

In recent communications with Stephen Braude, KM has even admitted that he bought artificial spider web. However, he claims that he bought it only to see what it looks like, and that he found that it is quite unlike the ectoplasm he produces. He tried to show these differences on a video that he sent to Braude (see Braude 2014 in this issue). Yet, the cobweb he showed on this video and that he bought in October 2013 (and that I bought in March 2014) looks identical to some of the pictures shown on his blog, and to some displays I have seen in person, including the one in Austria.<sup>10</sup> In two emails to Braude (5/6/2014 and 5/7/2014), KM even claimed that the cobweb wouldn't stick to the cabinet curtains—but according to my own experience, one can press small and also large strands of my Halloween spider web to any curtain with a surface of ordinary cloth, and it will just stick there until one removes it again. The way it detaches from my curtains reminds me strongly of the way I have seen supposed ectoplasm detach

from KM's cabinet curtains. In addition, the cobweb brand KM showed in the video is not sold by the shop that he placed his order at in late 2013. Hence, one must assume that KM bought luminous spider web on at least two different occasions from two different stores.

### Summing Up

In the preceding sections, I have described personal observations and findings derived from analyses of photographic material and other lines of investigation. It is obvious that the latter have confirmed my earlier personal observations. However, the crucial question is: Can all these findings be regarded as convincing evidence for fraud, or even as proof? Different people may have different answers to this question, but my personal opinion is this: There can be no doubt that KM has faked the whitish-red light with the D'Lite Flight or a similar device. The photo series alone constitute very strong evidence. The second series consists of photos that were taken in intervals of one to two seconds, and can almost be regarded as a series of stills from a video. KM's suspicious behavior and Jochen's reluctance to answer my query directly (see also Braude 2014 in this issue) add weight to the evidence provided by the photo series. In my opinion, the combination of these findings amounts to a quality of evidence that must be regarded as proof. The collected findings concerning the artificial cobweb, beginning with my observations in October 2012 in Basel, reach a similar level of significance. Acting on these central assumptions, all other findings including suspicious aspects of KM's behavior toward me contribute in a cumulative manner to forming a logical, coherent, and compelling argument for fraud. Personally, I think that KM's trance including the presence of HB must be faked when he used the D'Lite Flight, and that there is good reason now to wonder whether the trance is faked each time he produced ectoplasm. Or, should we rather assume that KM can produce genuine ectoplasm under favorable circumstances, and that he only resorts to fraud when he has difficulties maintaining his trance, then purposefully mimicking his genuine trance speech in a manner that is indistinguishable from the real HB? Although KM claims that he has total amnesia after awakening from trance, he might well practice imitating the real HB at home using the recordings of the sittings. In fact, imitating HB is very easy to accomplish. I maintain that I can speak just like HB without a problem, and several other men I know can do so as well. I leave it to the reader to decide whether KM might be able to induce a genuine deep trance state and to produce genuine ectoplasm on occasion, or if his trance is always faked. I will not withhold my personal opinion: I think it is more likely that the trance and HB are entirely faked at each sitting. Assuming this is true, it would have consequences for other phenomena

that I have not discussed in the preceding sections. For example, HB has allegedly spat out dozens of apports from KM's mouth at the end of cabinet sittings in red light. Supposing that KM is not in trance but fully conscious during these activities, and thus is most likely producing fraudulent apports, I now think it is very likely that the two apports he produced in Austria during our first table session also were produced in a fraudulent way (a crystal and a piece of copper, see Braude 2014 in this issue). Indeed, some inconsistencies in KM's descriptions of how he allegedly received or created these two apports support these concerns—especially as he related these descriptions in apparent states of waking consciousness.<sup>11</sup> The way he attracted attention to his mouth and hand may be nothing more than a trick to focus the concentration of the sitters on these body parts, and the apports might well have come from a different source.

Concerning the PK phenomena, it seems difficult (albeit not impossible) to find an explanation for them at present, especially when they are performed under 4L+J control that, as I have heard, also includes the control of KM's head at the same time. One may also wonder how KM can produce ectoplasm after strip searches such as the one performed in Austria (for ordinary sittings without controls, he might simply hide it under his clothes). Skeptical explanations must account for the fact that KM seems to use more than one kind of ectoplasm within the same sitting—some that look like chiffon, and some that look like (luminous) cobweb. Basically, there are two hypothetical scenarios. The first implies an accomplice who, apart from helping to produce the apport or PK phenomena (including those performed under 4L+J control), would simply pass this material to KM in the cabinet, and who takes it back again at the end. This would easily be feasible in cabinet sittings held without preceding strict controls.<sup>12</sup> The second is that KM hides it either in his stomach and/or in his rectum (see Braude 2014 in this issue). He would have plenty of preparation time during his obligatory seclusion in a private room before each cabinet sitting and before any strip search that was agreed upon. Yet, so far, KM has not been caught red-handed, and I abstain from pursuing speculations about how he might have faked which phenomenon.

Moreover, I admit that the considerations presented above might be wrong, or that KM might be a mixed medium who produces both genuine and faked phenomena. Yet, it is useless to continue speculating. Hence, I propose suggestions with a focus on practical implementation in the following. When Hans Bender walked on this planet in human flesh, he performed scientific investigations that included the search for evidence or proof regarding psychic phenomena. I am convinced that if he should indeed be KM's main trance control, he will eagerly strive to prove that

the phenomena produced by him are genuine and that my allegation of fraud is shamefully wrong. Hence, to advance the control conditions of the sittings and the controls themselves, KM, or HB, should adopt the following suggestions in future cabinet sittings. These suggestions don't interfere much with the usual procedure of these sittings, and, apart from the suggested developments of future phenomena, they could be implemented quite easily. Most of them don't even imply a noteworthy change in the presently applied standards of control during usual cabinet sittings.

- Abstain from inducing a "pre-trance" state alone in a private room prior to sittings. Stay in the company of others during the day prior to a sitting, just like other mediums do. Somebody who can enter a deep trance state with total amnesia in front of an audience several times a month for years should also be able to enter a shallow "pre-trance" state in supportive company with one or more persons.
- Remove the strips of tape on the inside of the cabinet curtains.
- Remove the empty bucket with the towel and the drinking bottles from the cabinet and place them behind the neighboring sitters.
- Remove the pencil and the strips of tape from the floor of the sitting room.
- Let all four limbs, but also the head and the back of KM be controlled during all PK phenomena.
- Develop the practice of showing PK phenomena in dim red light.
- Show the outflow of ectoplasm from the mouth. Don't bend forward, and keep the hands away from the mouth.
- Don't hide arms and hands when ectoplasm structures rise in red light. Show arms and hands.
- Develop the rising of the ectoplasm column outside the cabinet in red light.
- As I have heard, sitters are now allowed to have a very close look at the ectoplasm, and to touch it. This development fits perfectly with my list of suggestions, and it should be pursued. Let the sitters have a very close look at HB's hand or the rising column, and also the thread attached to them. Ideally, let the sitters touch these structures.
- Develop the practice of showing the disintegration of the ectoplasm in red light.
- Wear tiny phosphorescent stickers or straps on the séance clothes.

In case tighter controls such as those applied in Austria are desired, I'd recommend further control methods that were traditionally applied in physical mediumship, such as drinking a heavily stained liquid before the



sitting, or wearing a one-piece suit. However, one of my favorite methods of control is letting the medium wear sealed boxing gloves. In this way, a medium retains full mobility; he or she is only deprived of using the fingers. This method was applied with apport medium Charles Bailey, who was additionally locked inside a cage. Still, it is reported that he had produced two apports (X, 1904). Moreover, as we have entered the age of highly sensitive electronic instruments and digital recording devices, it is desirable to introduce the use of some of them—for example, thermographic cameras or similar devices.

### **Concluding Remarks**

That KM might produce fraudulent phenomena has been discussed for some time in the parapsychological community. For example, Peter Mulacz became suspicious after certain observations during his first sitting in Hanau in 2010, and Eberhard Bauer has likewise been suspicious of KM's claims for some time, based solely on KM's presentations on his blog and due to his personal experiences with paranormal claimants over many years. H had even left the circle in April 2011 because he concluded that KM must be a fake, and the news spread among the spiritualistic community. I was well aware of all this, and also stayed in contact with H after he quit. Nevertheless, nobody ever came forward with a sound and consistent hypotheses about how KM faked certain phenomena, not even H. Still, most of these allegations or suspicious observations could likewise be explained as innocuous or "normal" in terms of typical proceedings in physical mediumship. Moreover, due to my personal experience with the circle, I considered (and I still do) most of the more detailed allegations of fraud too simplistic, given that the PK phenomena are performed under 4L+J control (e.g., that Julia helped KM to fake the phenomena, that KM simply moved the greenish lights, etc., with sticks in his hands, that KM used a drinking bottle to introduce props into the séance room, that he hid something in the cabinet hoop, or that the tape on the floor was a marker for his feet when he moved out of the cabinet to perform PK phenomena). Rather, I kept being intrigued mainly by the PK phenomena, especially the sittings that KM held alone, or in many different foreign countries in the company of H or Julia alone.

Hence, I visited Hanau in irregular intervals, and the phenomena of the cabinet sittings seemed to progress slowly but steadily, and in a manner that perfectly matched the traditional reports of the development of circles for physical mediumship. In addition, Jochen kept me informed about all kinds of interesting developments, and he frequently explained to me why many of them seemed genuine to him. But, after all, I lived too far away from

Hanau to stay in close contact with its members. As soon as I was allowed to control KM at the cabinet, however, it didn't take long until I noticed that something very fishy was going on inside it. Yet, as it happened, I was not able to control KM at the cabinet again after October 2012 in Basel. Still, looking back, this was the crucial turning point in my dealings with the FEG. Now, it seems clear that in one way or the other, I would have caught KM cheating sooner or later. He knew it, and curiously it was his attempt to save himself by not letting me control him again that finally led to the exposure of his fraud. Yet, I was not yet prepared to break with KM after my observations in October 2012. I decided that I would not terminate my relationship with the FEG until I had obtained either 1) a well-documented case of controlled macro-PK, or 2) well documented evidence for fraud. It was a pity that I didn't know of the photo series back in 2012. At present, I should add, I have no firm opinion about who or how many of the other FEG sitters are involved in faking, or if they are at all.

Finally, I'd like to share the main lessons I learned from this case. They are neither new nor original, but it might still be important for somebody who is involved in investigating mediums, especially physical mediums, to be reminded of them from time to time.

- 1) Never trust a medium—no matter how open, friendly, and kind she or he appears to be.
- 2) Still, if you seem to become friends with a medium you want to investigate, and with other circle members, be aware that this is a two-edged sword. On one hand, you might become blind to critical aspects of the supposed mediumship, but on the other hand there is no better way to obtain valuable detail information from “behind the curtain.”

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This list of selected publications out of a vast but largely unknown field of literature introduces serious attempts to investigate the phenomena of physical mediumship. Although many treatises may be difficult to obtain, others are readily available online via Internet search engines. Not surprisingly, many of these studies have been criticized, and these criticisms were criticized in return. I refrain from engaging in these discussions (see, e.g., Braude 1997, Schrenck-Notzing 1926). A must-read and one of the best introductions into the problems associated with performing investigations of physical mediums is Anita Gregory's (1985) book about Austrian medium Rudi Schneider.

- <sup>2</sup> Some readers might be interested in how KM became involved in holding sittings in Basel. He first met Lucius Werthmüller, Sabin Sütterlin, and other members of the *Basel Psi-Association* at a séance with physical medium Stuart Alexander in 2008. A friendly contact developed, and KM invited Lucius and Sabin to visit a sitting of the FEG in Hanau in January 2009. Being impressed by what they experienced, Lucius and Sabin continued to visit sittings with the FEG. After their sixth sitting in August 2010, they invited KM to hold sittings in Basel in 2011, and KM agreed (Sütterlin 2011, 2013). The sitters who attend the sittings in Basel are usually members or friends of the *Basel Psi-Association*, and have visited other events organized by its team before.
- <sup>3</sup> The question of whether the trance personality Hans Bender is indeed the deceased professor or a form of dissociative sub-personality of KM has so far not been explicitly addressed by members of the FEG or by investigators, and this question is regarded as of subordinate importance. KM is well aware that HB might not be the deceased professor after all, but for the sake of obtaining the best phenomena possible, HB is always treated as the personality he claims to be. No examinations or tests are performed that might result in feelings of distrust between HB and the sitters. For various reasons, however, I have personally regarded HB as a dissociative construct of KM.
- <sup>4</sup> According to KM, he can only *receive* suggestions or instructions from HB in states of meditation or trance. He states that he cannot initiate conscious discussions with HB about the possibility of conducting specific experiments, or, e.g., to film the phenomena of the sittings in good light. Apparently, KM can only be concerned with such questions, and he will sooner or later receive a reply to his concerns from HB in meditation. For example, KM declares that he would like to document the phenomena of the FEG in good light, but that HB is not willing to allow this at present.
- <sup>5</sup> Illustrative pictures of the four-limb control (4LC) can be seen in the blog postings of August 20, 2010, and March 27, 2013. It can be asserted that the foot is not secretly removed from the shoe to produce phenomena in the dark because the controller of a given foot remains also in contact with the same leg's thigh during the phenomena.
- <sup>6</sup> Examples of such handwritten texts include a message from the discoverer of LSD, Albert Hofmann (1906–2008), to Lucius Wertmüller (see the posting of January 29, 2009, on KM's blog), a message from former physical medium Einer Nielsen (1894–1965) to a guest sitter (see the posting of December 10, 2010), and a message from Swiss psychiatrist and parapsychologist Hans Naegeli-Osjord (1909–1997) to KM (see the

postings of August 11 and 31, 2011). I was not present at the arrival of such kinds of apports. Although they are intriguing, it is obvious that they were not received under controlled conditions.

<sup>7</sup> There are many video clips on the Internet that illustrate the close resemblance, if not identity, of the whitish-red light displayed by KM, and the D'Lite Flight in action. For examples, see

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84B2QWlqD0U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30Le62OMR6c>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VQZI\\_DOfw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VQZI_DOfw)

Like the “spirit light” of KM, the D'Lite Flight can also enter and leave the mouth of the performer. For the link where KM described how the red light appeared in March 2013 in Basel (including three photographs), see <http://felixcircle.blogspot.de/2013/03/special-seances-in-switzerland-feg.html>

<sup>8</sup> For the precise link of this posting, see

<http://felixcircle.blogspot.de/2011/03/upcoming-soon-bizarreness-of-western.html>

<sup>9</sup> The package quantity of one kilogram appears to be the largest one can order on the Internet from Germany via ordinary distribution pathways. Offered package quantities of artificial spider web begin with amounts of 15 to 20 grams.

<sup>10</sup> Both non-luminous and luminous cobweb are a fascinating and cheap material, and I can thoroughly commend buying a few different kinds of it. In case one likes to experiment a little and to compare its appearance with some of KM's ectoplasm displays, the following links can be recommended most:

<http://felixcircle.blogspot.de/2013/12/study-from-filmed-ectoplasm-2013.html>

<http://felixcircle.blogspot.de/2013/08/photographer-shannon-taggart-shoots.html>

<http://felixcircle.blogspot.de/2012/02/survival-evidence-ectoplasm-strikingly.html>

<sup>11</sup> Regarding the crystal apport, KM stated afterward that he felt the taste of blood in his mouth, and that during the apport, he had the feeling that the crystal glided down into his mouth through a gap in his palate. He would still feel a depression in his palate that had never in his life been there before. After the sitting, however, he only reluctantly allowed me to inspect the interior of his mouth and only after I insisted a number of times that it would be important to document this unusual concomitant phenomenon of his mediumship. Indeed, I saw a small oblong irregular depression in the middle of his palate along the central sinus that links the two bone plates. It was about 2 cm long and 1 mm wide. Yet, this depression didn't look like a fresh wound, and I couldn't see traces of blood. When I met KM again at a conference in October 2013, I asked him if he would allow me to inspect the potential healing process of this gap. He refused. When I met him again later that day, I asked him again, and

he refused again. Only when I explained to him on a third occasion that it would be important for me and my documentation of his mediumship to inspect the development of this gap, and that it would not be a big deal to simply open one's mouth, did he permit a brief look into it. The small gap was still there. Judging on the curiously reluctant behavior of KM and the continued presence of the gap in his palate, I can well imagine that the gap had always been there, that it will always be there, and that it had absolutely nothing to do with the crystal apport. As for the copper apport: The tenability of KM's claim that he had "materialized" the strange-looking piece of copper out of thin air suffered considerably when I bought a similar piece of copper in Salzburg two days later. Braude (in this issue) has described how this affected the mood of KM. In fact, all of us agreed that the received copper nugget was more likely to be an "ordinary" apport that had been transported to our farmhouse from somewhere else, rather than constituting a *de novo* creation as stated by KM. Not only was the overall appearance of the two pieces of copper very similar, but in addition, the surface of the supposed materialization looked older, dirtier, and duller than the surface of the new copper nugget I bought in Salzburg. In retrospect, the inconsistencies in the descriptions about how KM received the two apports evoke my impression that their accompanying information was designed to enhance the effect that the two apports were to make on KM's audience.

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps it was such an accomplice who accidentally pushed the red light lamp from its table at the beginning of the sitting in Basel in October 2012 while KM continued to breathe audibly inside the cabinet. The history of physical mediumship contains numerous cases in which confederates helped a fraudulent medium. One of the most infamous examples is represented by the affair around the Hungarian pseudo-medium Ladislaus Laszlo (Schrenck-Notzing 1924b). While the Hungarian chief investigator relied on supposed friends and research assistants, they turned out to be confederates of Laszlo. In particular, one of them prepared ostensible ectoplasm together with the medium, and helped him also in other ways (e.g., by introducing alleged apports into the séance room). Yet, Laszlo also smuggled props and supposed ectoplasm into the seance room that were hidden in his own clothes or in his rectum. In the seance room, he entered a faked trance state in which a fictitious operator communicated. He produced a variety of phenomena that included ostensibly paranormal lights of greenish colour, ectoplasmatic handforms, and also ectoplasm that contained faces. Laszlo used threads and thin wires to move the supposed ectoplasm (for a brief overview on the case, see KM's blog <http://felixcircle.blogspot.de/2009/05/laszlo-scandal-german-famous-researcher.html>)

### Postscript

As it seems, KM continues to delete postings from his blog that contain photographs and contents that might be regarded as a support of my claims of fraud by their readers. For example, he has just recently deleted the posting from March 27, 2013, that I have referred to repeatedly in this paper's section about the whitish-red light as well as in footnotes 5 (photographs illustrating the body controls exerted during PK-phenomena) and 7 (the use of the D'Lite Flight-like device during a sitting in Basel in March 2013). Luckily, this posting is preserved in an Internet archive beyond the control of KM; scroll down to read the second posting on <https://web.archive.org/web/20130414135033/http://felixcircle.blogspot.de>. Actually, it seems appropriate for me to now add a few comments to this posting and the three embedded photographs showing the whitish-red light in action.

These three photos were not taken in 2010 as stated by KM. They belong to the second photo series discussed in this paper and were taken on April 15, 2011. These pictures were, among others, also included in the posting about the "spectacular spirit lights" of August 2, 2011, that KM deleted from his blog in early April 2014. The three photographs were taken with a shutter speed of 0.8 seconds at 6400 ISO. The first two pictures show the light moving in dim red light, the curtains held open by neighboring sitters. A part of KM's left hand is faintly visible above his thigh, whereas the right hand seems to be completely hidden in the shadow of his body. With these pictures, one can easily reconstruct how I have edited dark original photographs like these to enhance the visibility of hidden details. Click on the photos in the blog to show them in their enlarged versions, and copy these into Photoshop. After adding "Shadow" with the "Shadow/Highlight" function of "Adjustments," the entire picture becomes much brighter and richer in details. One can even faintly see the front of KM's right hand above his right thigh at the side of his body. These two pictures don't show significant details after this editing, but many others of this photo series do—especially the pictures in which KM's right hand becomes fully visible, and when many subsequent pictures are examined one after the other.

According to the preserved blog posting of KM, the third photograph shows how the light "danced around in front of the closed curtains." Yet, note the two ends of the trace created by the moving light on the left side. They are in perfect alignment with the right side of the lowest curtain drape, which (this is evident on other pictures of this series) represents the edge of the right cabinet curtain (seen from KM's perspective). It is obvious that KM simply stuck the LED-device through the gap between the curtains, and let the LED dangle in front of the left curtain. Moreover, the elongate reflection of the whitish-red light on the floor doesn't represent the distance

of the light from the curtains, as KM asserted in the posting from August 02, 2011. Rather, according to trials that I have re-enacted with a light source above a glossy floor surface in the dark, such reflections appear at a distance from their source in relation to the position of the observer, and, in this case, also the camera. Similarly, the sun's reflection on a plain water surface in the evening doesn't tell us that the sun is located vertically above its reflection. Evidently, the reflection is closer to the observer than the light source causing it.

### Acknowledgements

I thank Eberhard Bauer, Stephen Braude, Hermann Haushahn, Peter Mulacz, Robert Narholz, and Jochen Soederling for many interesting discussions and for their support during my investigations. Likewise, I thank Lucius Werthmüller and the team of the Basel Psi-Association for their help and support. Last but not least, they allowed me to control KM at a public sitting, invited me to the fake séance, and gave permission for inclusion of one photograph in this paper.

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