

Key Witness in Oil Case Says He's Regularly Visited by Aliens

By Ryan Oliver

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LOS ANGELES - Extraterrestrials have replaced Michael Jackson as the latest oddity afflicting the Santa Barbara County district attorney's office.

The office's key witness in its suit against the county's largest onshore oil refinery has testified in a deposition that he regularly is visited by horned, alien-like creatures that emerge from his closet.

But rather than flee these credibility killers from beyond, Deputy District Attorney Jerry Lulejian is embracing them. He said he has watched a videotape shot by the witness, Gary Lowrey, that proves Lowrey's house is the target of a "phenomenon."

Lulejian said he intends to play the video for the jury to demonstrate Lowrey is not insane if the case goes to trial.

"I'm going to argue in court that there is something going on in these videos that substantiates what Gary Lowrey is talking about," Lulejian said in an interview. "But I can't tell you what that is. I can't give away the juicy part."

Lulejian explained that Lowrey believes the tapes have marketability and wants to keep them from being made public. Greka Energy Corp., the target of the district attorney's code violation lawsuit, has been given a copy.

In a deposition of the deputy district attorney taken in August, Lulejian described the tape only by saying: "There are things that look really, really strange. It sort of put the hair on the back of my neck up when I saw them."

Lulejian was initially deposed by Greka lawyers because he had filed a declaration that made it appear he was a witness to the code violations. Defense lawyers later learned about the monsters in Lowrey's closet, and months later used the second phase of Lulejian's deposition as an opportunity to question him about it.

"I was quite surprised," said Santa Monica attorney Jeffrey Valle, who took Lulejian's deposition. "He seemed to be not nearly as troubled as one would expect of someone whose witness makes claims of alien visitations."

During both phases of the deposition, Lulejian was not represented by an attorney. Lowrey is the former safety officer for Greka, which the district attorney is suing for code violations. Lowrey claims he warned the company about safety problems at the refinery, but company brass ignored him. Among the allegations in the lawsuit are that Greka did not acquire air-pollution permits and repeatedly failed to clean up hazardous waste at its facilities despite being told to do so by county and state authorities.

The company has settled most of the lawsuit for \$600,000, but it is disputing about a half-dozen counts in which Lowrey's testimony is relevant.

In June, company attorney Bela Lugosi Jr. (son of the classic horror film actor) deposed Lowrey, weaving questions about the alleged safety violations at the refinery with questions about Lowrey's unusual encounters. At the end of one sequence of questions, Lugosi asked: "Are you still visited by aliens?"

"On occasions I am, yeah," Lowrey replied. He qualified his response: "I'm not sure that they're - you know, you'd call them aliens. I know they're not human-looking."

Lowrey, a former fire inspector for the city of Bakersfield, said the creatures would prick pin-size holes in his body and those of his wife and children, often forming diamond-shaped patterns.

"I don't remember a lot of it because, you know, you're asleep when it's happening to you," he testified.

Lowrey also believed he had found an alien claw in his closet, according to his testimony. Lowrey said he enlisted the aid of Dr. Roger Leir, a Thousands Oaks alien hunter and podiatrist who claims he removes alien surgical implantations, to study the phenomenon. He also installed video recording equipment in his house.

Lowrey testified that DNA analysis showed the claw to likely be a snail shell. But Leir has since claimed he also has encountered a strange phenomenon at Lowrey's house in which his perception is momentarily distorted. Leir has publicized the matter on talk radio and on his Internet site at www.alienscalpel.com.

Lulejian said he is considering having Leir testify at the trial to shore up the credibility of his witness.

The case comes at a time when the Santa Barbara County district attorney's office has been hit with a string of embarrassments.

Last year, District Attorney Tom Sneddon Jr. failed to convict pop star Jackson for child sexual abuse in what many observers considered to be a bungled prosecution.

And last week, the 2nd District Court of Appeal tossed two prosecutors off their cases, including Deputy District Attorney Robert Zonen, who shared his confidential files on the sensational teen murder of Nicholas Markowitz with producers making a movie based on the crime.

Separately, Deputy District Attorney Joyce Dudley was removed from a rape case that the court concluded was too similar to a fictional novel she wrote and self-published.

Valle, during his deposition of Lulejian, continued to push the deputy district attorney to acknowledge his witness had credibility problems.

"Don't you find a witness who claims that he's being visited by aliens at night and getting punctured at night rather a whacky thing to be claiming?" he asked.

Lulejian responded by defending Lowrey's claims.

"He's showed me he's rational, he's showed me that there are things going on outside of him, and he's showed me proof that they're there," Lulejian testified. "Everything he's said in his deposition so far checked to be true based on what he's said in his - or what I've see on videos and what's in the reports."

In an interview, Lugosi said he was surprised the county would attempt to bring Lowrey as a witness against Geka.

"Obviously, credibility is important," Lugosi said. "It's not every day you have a code enforcement matter which involves aliens in the closet, mysterious claws and a podiatrist who removes alien implants."

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