

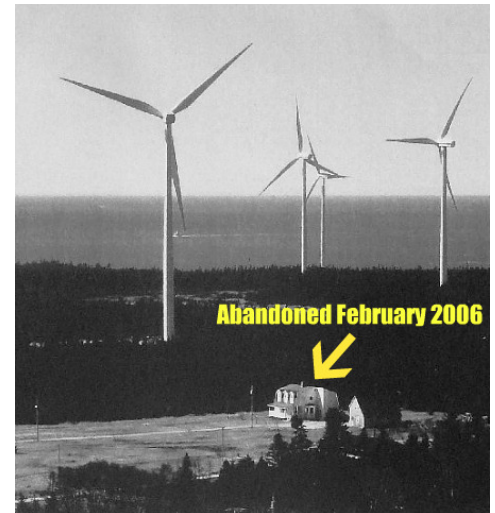
G. Leventhall, PhD

## The Strange Case of Dr. Geoff Leventhall

by

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There is a man named Dr. Geoff Leventhall from the United Kingdom who hires himself out to wind energy companies as a noise consultant—the noise being from industrial wind turbines.

The interesting thing about this Leventhall is that he insists, in the face of clear evidence to the contrary, that industrial wind turbines produce no low frequency noise (basically, infrasound) of consequence. So he wrote in the *Malone (New York, USA) Telegram* this past autumn, "I have always said . . . there is no problem of infrasound from wind turbines" (p. 4). Earlier this month (February 2006) he was quoted in the *Hawke's Bay Today (New Zealand)* newspaper as saying, "'I can state quite categorically that there is no significant infrasound from current designs of wind turbines.'"

Dr. Leventhall doesn't seem to know what he thinks. For when we turn to his May 2003 DEFRA (UK) "Review of Published Research on Low Frequency Noise and Its Effects," he writes: "Infrasound . . . is common in urban environments, and as an emission from many artificial sources . . . including wind turbines." Oops! Leventhall goes on: "*The effects of infrasound or low frequency noise are of particular concern because of its pervasiveness due to numerous sources, efficient propagation, and reduced efficiency of many structures (dwellings, walls, and hearing protection) in attenuating low frequency noise compared with other noise*" (p. 54, emphasis added). (Turn to the footnote back on p. 53 of the "Review" and we're told this section was "contributed by" Dr. P.L. Pelmear. This does not let Leventhall off the authorial or ethical hook, however; as lead author he must take full responsibility for everything in his report.)

Like I say, Leventhall doesn't seem to know what he thinks. For that matter, it's not clear he and his co-authors do the thinking they take credit for. When we turn to Dr. Birgitta Berglund's "Sources and Effects of Low-Frequency Noise" in the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* (May 1996), we find that the entire paragraph, above, appears to be lifted virtually verbatim from Berglund's article (compare the two paragraphs, below).



Hmmmm. Pelmear/Leventhall fail to acknowledge Berglund as their (apparent) source, nor do they put quotation marks around their text. A double infraction. (When I was a university professor, I gave students a failing grade for copying someone else's material without credit; indeed I had a colleague who was de-tenured and fired for publishing other people's text without credit.)

At a minimum, Leventhall appears to be careless. He also appears to be indecisive. Mostly, however, given the growing body of research on low frequency noise from industrial wind turbines (see GP van den Berg's scholarly articles, along with Dr. O. Soysal's noise measurements at the Meyersdale, PA, USA, windplant, and Dr. DMJP Manley's research), Leventhall seems to be a man representing, above all, the agenda of the wind energy companies (like Noble Environmental, LLC) that employ his services.

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**I have always said**, and am now backed up by recent work from others, **that there is no problem of infrasound from wind turbines.**

— Geoffrey Leventhall, *Malone (New York, USA) Telegram*, **9-12-05**, p. 4

**Dr Geoff Leventhall, a noise vibration and acoustics expert from the UK who looked into infrasound at the request of Genesis Power, says "I can state quite categorically that there is no significant infrasound from current designs of wind turbines".**

— Geoffrey Leventhall, *Hawke's Bay Today (New Zealand)*, **2-18-06**

Infrasound exposure is ubiquitous in modern life. It is generated by natural sources such as earthquakes and wind. It is common **in urban environments, and as an emission from many artificial sources: automobiles, ... aircraft, industrial machinery, artillery and mining explosions, air movement machinery including wind turbines, compressors, and ventilation or air-conditioning**



**units.... The effects of infrasound or low frequency noise are of particular concern because of its pervasiveness due to numerous sources, efficient propagation, and reduced efficiency of many structures (dwellings, walls, and hearing protection) in attenuating low frequency noise compared with other noise.**

- Geoffrey Leventhall, "A Review of Published Research on Low Frequency Noise and Its Effects," Report for DEFRA (United Kingdom) by Dr. Geoff Leventhall, Assisted by Dr. Peter Pelmeare and Dr. Stephen Benton, **May 2003**, p. 54.

Low-frequency noise is common as background noise **in urban environments, and as an emission from many artificial sources: road vehicles, aircraft, industrial machinery, artillery and mining explosions, and air movement machinery including wind turbines, compressors, and ventilation or air-conditioning units. The effects of low-frequency noise are of particular concern because of its pervasiveness due to numerous sources, efficient propagation, and reduced efficacy of many structures (dwellings, walls, and hearing protection) in attenuating low-frequency noise compared with other noise.**

- B. Berglund, P. Hassmen, and RF Job, "Sources and Effects of Low-Frequency Noise," Journal of the Acoustical Society of America, vol. 99, no. 5 (**May 1996**):2985-3002, Abstract.

