

A
Billion
Deaths
Defied

A Billion Deaths Defied
An Adventure in Confronting
Human-Made Catastrophies
and

Eliminating Death on a Massive Scale

An autobiographical novel
based on actual events
where physical death is eliminated,
the planet is preserved, and
the human race is saved
from extinction
By M. Valentine

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A Billion Deaths Defied

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Chapter 1

Prelude to a Secret Mission

There is no greater achievement than to save a life. Most of us ordinary folk rarely have the opportunity to save even one life, let alone a large number. I have had the good fortune to save more than most: In the first instance, I saved around a hundred thousand; in the second over 250,000. As you will see, I went on to save millions. Currently, I have a goal of one billion deaths defied. This is not an arbitrary number, but one made from a realistic calculation. My journey toward this goal has brought me from a narrow, personal perspective to a universal, global point of view, resulting in a clearer understanding of life and death.

To understand the process of saving lives on a massive scale, I first had to experience how it is possible to destroy lives on a massive scale. This came about for me from a combination of decisions, opportunities and fate that resulted in an extraordinary adventure.

It is common nowadays to say that if I saved just one life, then I have accomplished a good thing. While this is admirable, it has always been my goal not to save the fewest, but the most. It is important to note that I am referring to

physical lives, not spiritual or emotional. This distinction becomes more important as my story unfolds.

Even at a young age I realized that I was born into in a privileged position. I am male, American, white, reasonably well-off, mentally and physically healthy. What am I to do with this status? I am living better than 98% of the people on earth. Should I devote my energies to living better than 99%?

The ordinary thing to do would be to first find a job that is secure, predictable and lucrative. Then common practice dictates that I marry and with my spouse create someone who is dependent on me to give me a sense of purpose and occupy my time. Or I could manufacture a crisis so as to relieve my boredom. Or I could indulge in artificial danger to simulate excitement. Or I could resort to drugs and drink to ease my pain.

Of the seven billion currently inhabiting the planet, the vast majority of people are struggling to survive. A relative few have attained some degree of prosperity. Those of us who are comfortable with our future must find some greater goal. Acquiring ever more security was not necessary for me. Amassing power and control over others did not appeal to me. Living an average, conventional and unremarkable existence was out of the question.

The US President during my high school years gave my generation some advice that was greatly admired, but which I found to be unwise. He said: "Do not look at things as they are and ask 'Why?' Rather, dream of things as they could be and ask: 'Why not?'" It was widely assumed that he was

encouraging civic participation. But it seems to me that he was discouraging skepticism and promoting passivity. A better aphorism is: "Look critically at things to find their cause. Think of alternatives and demand change."

I came to the conclusion that I should do something to make life better for others, on a scale as large as possible. I was able to pursue this goal even though I was brought up in a working-class community with limited resources to change history. Coming of age in America in the 60s, we were living in a high standard of living that allowed us to look at the larger world, to become engaged in it, and to have higher aspirations than living an ordinary life. This goal for me came to pass.

Freedom to me means freedom from social pressure as well as freedom from governmental interference. Some people fear freedom. They would rather be told what to do, follow generally accepted norms, and blend in with the crowd. Admittedly, there is some advantage to being popular and following societal expectations. The risks are great for deviating, but the rewards are also great.

As I was growing up, the world around me was changing drastically, shattering social and political norms. I desperately wanted to become involved. Looking back on it, I was developing something that would come to be known as global awareness and social consciousness. I asked myself what can an average person like myself do to advance humanity?

Human progress seems to have been markedly slow for a species with a highly developed intellect that has been evolving for thousands of years. A number of questions

arise for anyone who studies history and the human race. Why is more progress not being made? Why are billions of people still struggling? Why do poverty and disease continue to be rampant? Why are some groups bent on destroying others?

Those living in normal circumstances seem to have rather modest objectives. They are consumed with what I call the "immediacy" of human nature: immediate feelings, immediate family and immediate surroundings. At an early age I found these to be easily accommodated and lacking in challenge.

In part, this grew out of a sense of security. I did not have to worry where my next meal was coming from. I did not feel vulnerable or exposed to the unpredictability of life. As a result, I was able to be more concerned with bringing my standard of living to the world. What troubled me, and does to this day, was that there was no readily accessible way for improvements to be made beyond the individual. Beginning in high school, and throughout my life, I made it my objective to study the major social systems and the major religions hoping to find answers. I found all of them lacking. They all had something to contribute, but at the same time, did not deal with what I concluded was an existence founded on a number of fatal flaws, perpetuated by unthinking behaviors and habits, and changed little over millennia.

It seems that we were living in two worlds, each trying to destroy the other. Civil wars are common. The American Civil War pitted North against South. The civilizations of the East and West are in perpetual disagreement with the

nexus being Israel. As I was growing up, Korea was divided after a long, bloody conflict into north and south, as was Vietnam. Pakistan was amputated from India. Russia was fractured into pieces. Yugoslavia destroyed itself. Recently, Sudan was split into two distinct countries.

Why does this bifurcation happen and what can I do to prevent it in the future? This quest to find the cause of and eliminate mass murder made me examine the essence of life. The need to minimize and eliminate suffering and death led me to controversial conclusions half the world finds shocking and unacceptable.

It bears repeating that I am referring to the physical properties of living, not the emotional and spiritual. This distinction was to play a major role in my evolving investigation into human existence and my goal to understand life and defeat death.

I was born and grew up in a small town with parents who provided a stable and loving home environment. Neither of them had gone beyond college, but both worked outside the home, which brought me a sense of material security and well-being. Because I had no worries about my future, I was able and willing to focus on the trials and tribulations of the larger world. As I became more aware of the human condition, I needed to find a way to relieve pain and suffering for the greatest number possible. Where would I start?

My early life was focused on acceptance to college. Once there, I was surprised and disappointed. I had selected a large, rural university with over 20,000 kids. They seemed preoccupied with themselves and each other, isolated from

the rest of the world. Disappointed that there was apparently little interest in working on large and serious issues, I dropped out after only two weeks.

After leaving college, I was confused and frustrated for a number of months trying to decide what to do. Odd as it may seem in 1967, the concept of social activism was not widely practiced, at least in my social circle. I needed to get involved somehow. The only way I could think of was by joining the military. This turned out to be a fateful decision that would launch me into a prominent role in history.

My parents both enlisted in the military during the Second World War. My father was a Marine in the South Pacific and my mother served in the Women's Army Corp. in Europe. When I enlisted, the Vietnam war was raging and my parents were naturally wary for my safety, but nevertheless supported my decision. I was not happy to be part of a war, but I needed to see close up where human conflict comes from and why it persists. It is a lesson that set me on a path to discovery I could not have imagined.

I passed the five tests that the Air Force administers for enlistment. The recruiter asked me if I was interested in any particular field. Having an interest in most everything, I replied that I could not decide. So, since he had a quota and claimed that I needed a good future, he suggested the field of electronics. My answer: "Sure, why not?"

Chapter 2

Military Mysteries

Amarillo, Texas, is a small, flat, dusty town in the middle of the Texas Panhandle where, when I arrived, an Air Force base was located that provided basic training for recruits. After being bussed in from the airport, we assembled in the middle of the night, a group of disheveled, uncoordinated, and anxious young men from all over the country and every walk of life. We were assigned to old wooden barracks, issued ill-fitting uniforms, and had our heads shaved. We proceeded to learn the rules and traditions of the military way of life. We were roused early every morning to march in formation, spent afternoons in classrooms, and the rest of the day in various physical activities. One of my least favorite tasks was mopping the long, enclosed hallways that connected one building to another.

Eventually we learned to march as a unit under the command

of a drill instructor who was the stereotypical DI, ram-rod straight, wearing the flat-brimmed hat, barking orders, and enforcing discipline. He yelled cadence that sounded like: "Iuf, Iuf, Iuf, Right, Iuf." This was the Air Force so rigorous physical obstacles were not part of the drill. Lack of survival training was to put me at a life-threatening disadvantage in the future.

After six weeks my squad began to work as a unit, leaving our individuality behind. Those who had no stomach for the demands dropped out as time went on. On the final day of testing, I ended up being the last recruit to cross the finish line after running through an obstacle course. When I looked up, the group was cheering me on as I barely made it. I am no fan of running. I tend to move slow, think slow, react slow. This exercise taught me that I was capable to move at a quick pace and helped motivate me on at least two occasions when I would need to run for my life.

Having passed all my written and physical tests, I, along with everyone else, was waiting for my next assignment when I was ordered to report to the drill instructor. With some anxiety, I proceeded to the second floor of the barracks where the offices were located and saluted him. He informed me that I had done quite well and that I was outstanding recruit. Because of that, he said that I had been selected for special consideration. He ordered me to report to a side office where I found two fellows waiting for me. Oddly, they were not in uniform, and their longish hair and slumped posture suggested a non-military involvement. They told me to relax, repeated that I was an outstanding airman, and asked me if I would be willing to volunteer for a secret mission.

Being someone who likes to think things over, I tend to hesitate when something is sprung on me out of the blue. In addition to being slow walker and a slow learner, I am also slow to react. They demanded an immediate answer. All I could think of was the old admonition common to the military that you should never volunteer for anything. This, however, seemed to be a slightly different situation in that I was being asked to volunteer. More than that, I was being asked to volunteer for a mission whose objective was not being revealed.

They waited impatiently for my decision. Feeling somewhat annoyed and frustrated with the military and its attempt to eradicate my individuality, and having what might be called a rebellious nature, and not being adverse to doing something special, I made a decision and said "Sure, why not."

After expressing satisfaction at my response, they went on for some time emphasizing the need for secrecy and the grave consequences if I revealed anything about the mission. This was not only confusing, but a little troubling. Usually, I am good at keeping secrets, but this could have easily slipped out. And what exactly constitutes a "mission"? What could I say and not say? Years later a lawyer who specializes in these things would clarify the law for me. But, at that moment, I was uneasy with the vague nature of my responsibilities.

They went on to inform me that I would be contacted at my next assignment where I would be given specialized training. The last thing they told me was that I was to recognize a legitimate contact as someone who would ask me the question

"Do you know a Patricia Lynn?" I was to answer "Yes, she is an old friend of mine." The significance of Patricia Lynn would not become clear to me for many years.

I came away excited, scared and confused. But I had little time to contemplate what I had done, or had been done to me. In a matter of minutes, I learned of my next duty station. I was to report to Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, for basic and advanced training in electronics with a specialty in heavy ground radar. My future, at least for the next eight months, lay ahead.

Chapter 3

Training for the Mission

Keesler Air Force Base is a sprawling installation just outside of Biloxi, a small town on the Gulf coast, now known for weathering Hurricane Katrina. The living conditions were much better than at Amarillo. We were housed in modern concrete barracks, four airmen to a room. The barracks were actually referred to as "dormitories". The atmosphere was less strict than basic training, somewhat like a subdued (all-male) college campus. We still had to arise at an early hour, but we only had to endure inspection once a week.

A typical day consisted of classes in the morning, various duties in the afternoon and an occasional marching drill. One of the duties was kitchen patrol. Since I got lost and was the last to locate the dining hall where I was to work, I was assigned the least desirable task of washing the dishes, pots and pans. This taught me to plan ahead and be certain of my route, a lesson that would serve me well.

After attending daily classes and fulfilling other duties, we were free to leave the base, unlike Amarillo where we never had the opportunity to visit the local area. As is common of many towns hosting a military base, there were a number of bars just outside the gates. After a while, I gave in to temptation, and visited a few of the establishments. I was reluctant to drink heavily as I felt I was probably being watched to determine my ability to keep my secret mission a secret, even though I had no idea of the details.

While I was attempting to control my alcohol intake, I was still a nineteen-year-old away from home for the first time

(college really didn't count), so one evening I had a bit too much to drink. Staggering back to the room I shared with three others, I somehow managed to vomit on the so-called inspection tiles we were to keep spotless at the entrance to our room. Maybe there was some unconscious reason for me to do this, but it was quite embarrassing and not a little distressing, as I worried that it, like every other misstep, could possibly disqualify me from my future covert assignment. In my mind, my fellow airmen all had the potential to be monitoring my behavior.

Shortly after arriving, we were allowed to venture to downtown Biloxi where there wasn't much to see except for a few "Whites Only" signs still remaining. To continue my investigation into the human experience, I stopped at a bookstore and bought "Stranger in a Strange Land" by Robert Heinlein (Ace/Putnam 1961). The lead character is a Michael Valentine who comes to Earth after being raised by human parents on Mars. His perspective taught readers the value of objectivity and distance when contemplating the human race. This nurtured my natural desire to view the human condition in a holistic and global dimension without bias or provincialism. Understanding and seeing an extraterrestrial's viewpoint would serve me well in the future.

After a few months, the classes in electronics became routine and I was less apprehensive about strangers who might be "secret agents" approaching me. Just as I was becoming more at ease, a young man sat down next to me at a bar where I was waiting for some friends and asked me if I knew Patricia Lynn. After getting over my initial shock, with some hesitation, I gave the expected answer. He informed me that I was to report the next day after my normal class to a classroom he indicated to begin what he referred to as my

"specialized training". He then abruptly got up and exited, leaving me to contemplate my future.

The classroom was down the hall from those where I was taking my "public" classes. The next day I entered the room with some apprehension. A solitary fellow in civilian clothes instructed me to take a seat. He proceeded to repeat all the warnings that I had previously been given about not revealing anything to do with my mission. He informed me that my classes with him would take place one day a week for only thirty minutes so as to avoid any suspicion of where I was. This coincided with a free time period when no one would notice my absence.

I looked forward to the next class with great apprehension and an enormous amount of curiosity. For the next seven days, I started to feel like I was leading a double life. This schizophrenic mentality would be with me for many years to come, and actually inform a philosophy I was beginning to formulate.

When the time came, I reported as I was told. The instructor (it was always the same individual) began his presentation on the operation and use of a nuclear weapon.

He began the first lesson as if it was routine. I was shocked and amazed. To think that I was to become knowledgeable of one of the most destructive (and highly classified) weapons in human history! I could barely concentrate on what he was saying. He stated that I was to focus exclusively on just one model in the smaller mega-ton range. That particular model is no longer in the arsenal, but I have not and will never reveal its exact specifications.

That is not to say that I was briefed in all its technical details. I was only told what I needed to know. Which was enough for me! Although I must admit it was fascinating.

What I also found interesting was that the device in question was American. I concluded that it must have somehow gotten into unauthorized hands. But how was I to gain access? And where would this take place? Those and other questions were racing through my mind, but for now I simply tried to pay attention.

The instructor quickly gave me an overview of my objectives. They could be summarized in three words: "disarm", "disable" or "destroy." In the first instance, I was shown how to surreptitiously and covertly tamper with the device so that it would not function. If I was unable to do that without being noticed, I was then to proceed to disable the weapon even if that meant being obvious. If I did not have the opportunity to get my hands on the weapon, I was instructed on how to destroy its delivery system. This so-called delivery system would be a military aircraft.

I came to the tentative conclusion that this device had somehow fallen into enemy hands. It also became clear the device would be delivered by a fighter bomber normally found within the U.S. military fleet. The aircraft must have also been stolen by the enemy. That revelation led to a great deal of speculation as to the exact nature of this mission.

As the weeks passed, I became more comfortable with my instructor and began to ask questions. He refused to provide answers except for those of a technical nature pertaining to the mission.

After six months of this type of training, my last class

consisted of a repeat of the first class when I was told in the sternest manner to keep all of this information secret. Realizing the serious implications for national security, I kept to this promise until matters beyond my control intervened, even though I was, and am, acutely aware of the harm that could be caused if our enemies obtained this information. As you might expect, I was never allowed to take any written notes regarding the construction, operation and vulnerabilities of the device.

Occasionally, as I was entering the classroom, the instructor was erasing material from the chalkboard which led me to believe that there must have been at least one other person attending the classes. I never asked about any others, as I knew he would only tell me if I needed to know.

My "private" training was completed. At the same time that I was attending these classes, I was living in a parallel world where I would attend my "public" instruction in electronics. Those classes progressed to specialized training in heavy ground radar.

The next milestone that I especially looked forward to was my first duty assignment. More than most, I was eager to find out where I might be encountering nuclear weapons.

After completing eight months of training, my orders finally came through. I was assigned to the 750th Air Force Radar Station in Boron, California. On further investigation, it turned out that this was a isolated, remote and small radar facility in the Southern California desert. What it had to do

with nuclear weapons was not at all clear. But, as the common expression goes: "Ours is not to reason why, ours is to do or die."

Chapter 4

The Way to War

Having a month to report to Boron, I decided to hit the road. My father was an aircraft mechanic who taught me about things mechanical, so I was confident around used cars. With \$2,000 from my savings, I purchased my first car, a Chevy Malibu, from a used car lot just outside the main gate. The car turned out to be very reliable. After packing up my few belongings and bidding farewell to my buddies, I headed west with no thought of what the future might bring, only looking forward to an adventure.

My journey took me past New Orleans where some fellow airmen and I had spent a weekend exploring the French Quarter. Then there was Texas, huge, flat and not all that interesting a countryside from the highway. Next came New Mexico with wind swept desert and cacti. Arizona presented itself with much the same landscape. And then I made my way on through southern California.

Arriving at the Pacific Coast was a special moment. Having grown up on the Atlantic coast, I treasured my first view of the Pacific. The Pacific Coast Highway took me to Santa Clara where I visited some cousins of mine who I had not seen in years. After spending a few days with them, I took the inland route south to Los Angeles, turning due east to the upper Mojave Desert.

This was a world unto itself. Unlike the Lower Mohave which included the likes of Palm Springs, the Upper is far less glamorous, and sparsely settled. I found my way across miles of desolate landscape on Route 58. Halfway between Tehachepi and Barstow is the tiny settlement of Boron. The town is more like a crossroad with a few ramshackle houses, a pool hall and a gas station. The main occupation seemed to be at the borax mine that could be seen in the distance.

The station sat on a few hills off of Route 58. The site consisted of three barracks (or more accurately, "dormitories"), an administrative building, a dining hall, a non-commissioned officers club, a car repair shop, and a tennis court. The white domed radar tower loomed up the hill. This was to be my home for as long as the Air Force deemed necessary.

At first glance, there was no structure that would house a weapon of any type, let alone a highly classified weapon of mass destruction. And upon further investigation over time, I quickly determined that the installation held nothing out of the ordinary.

This radar site was part of the NORAD system, a string of sites along the continental United States borders built to protect the U.S. mainland against Soviet attack which, of course, never came. In fact, like landlocked sailors who never see a ship, it was very rare that we saw any aircraft. Occasionally, one might hear a sonic boom, or see a craft at a very high altitude, but most flights that we were aware of were represented by blips on a radar screen.

This was not a demanding work environment, with regular days off, so I would drive down to Los Angeles and its environs to explore. Among other things, I attended an antiwar rally where I joined other military personnel who were asked to step forward. The movie "Easy Rider" came out around that time which I viewed with delight at a Hollywood movie theater. Speaking of movies, a few of us went to Edwards Air Force Base located nearby to attend one of the first screenings of the classic M*A*S*H flick. Behind me was seated an old staff sergeant who repeatedly mumbled to himself "That's a bunch of bullshit!"

Daily life at this site quickly became routine with little to do monitoring a radar system that was hardly ever used. There was the NCO club (low ranking souls were allowed) where we spent our down time, but as usual, I was fearful that I would reveal classified material, so I tried to keep my

drinking to a minimum. This was a challenge since boredom was the enemy and socializing in the club was the only activity that passed the time.

Everyone on the base who worked on the equipment had to obtain a "confidential" security rating, supposedly so the enemy would not discover ways to jam the radar. No one to my knowledge was rated as I was with a "Top Secret" clearance that included nuclear components.

It turns out that the desert is not as lifeless as it first appears. Desert Tortuoses were routinely seen crossing the roads, as was the so-called "Road Runner" bird. Rattlesnakes were said to be around, although we were discouraged from walking off the roadways, so sightings were rare.

Around this time, I began reading the series of books on Zen Buddhism written by Alan Watts. ("This Is It and Other Essays on Zen and Spiritual Experience" [Pantheon Books 1960]) This continued my quest to investigate all the world's religions, although Zen does not refer to itself as a "religion" but "a way of life." I was especially intrigued by Taoism and the notion of Yin and Yang. Little did I realize at this time that these Buddhist concepts would play a major role in my life and propel me into a leadership position in the world of ideas directly relating to the meaning and purpose of human existence

A year came and went with major events occurring in the country and the world while we were passing our days in what seemed like a desolate, distant planet.

Then, with no warning, I received orders to proceed to Korat

Air Force Base in the Monarchy of Thailand. It appeared that my time had come!

Chapter 5

The Heat Is On

Stepping through the open airliner door was like stepping into a blast furnace. The temperature was well above 100° and the humidity in the 70s. This was the Don Muong Airport outside Bangkok. In those days there was no jet way, so we stepped down the stairway directly on to the roasting tarmac.

The flight had been long and uneventful, starting outside of Sacramento, proceeding through Hawaii and Guam, arriving in Thailand twenty-four hours later.

The only preparation I received to serve in what is referred to as the "combat theater" was M-16 training at the Edwards Air Force Base firing range where I shot off a few rounds and learned how to dismantle the weapon. That was about the extent of my combat training which I would come to regret.

Thailand and its people have a history of accommodating outsiders to the point of never being colonized as have other countries in the region. Even though over 48,000 American military personnel were occupying the country, we were informed that relations between the boots on the ground and the locals were pretty good, and we were ordered to keep it peaceful by observing local laws and customs. Personally, I was looking forward to experiencing the Asian culture as I thought this would be a good way to contrast their attitudes, values and beliefs with those shared by most Americans. It turned out to be a profound learning experience, as well as a dangerous one.

After being billeted temporarily in some cramped barracks overnight, we were bussed back to the airport, and loaded on a C-130 cargo plane for the final leg of the journey. A hundred of us were seated elbow to elbow down the length of the fuselage with our knees touching the guy across the way. Unfortunately, my knee buddy was an Air Force officer holding a barf bag. When the wheels pulled up he started to gag into the bag until the wheels touched down. Mercifully, the flight was not too long and I was able to hold it together, although the temperature in the fuselage probably exceeded

120° with the humidity thick as soup.

Dripping wet, I emerged from the transport to view what was to be my home for the next twelve months. Korat was a massive base, supporting jet fighters constantly taking off toward Vietnam. We were issued camouflage fatigues and driven to our barracks, referred to as a "houch". This was one large open bedroom with screening for exterior walls, each man having a twin bed and a metal locker between. The latrines and showers were located in an adjacent building.

The 483rd Electronics Installation Squadron to which I was assigned was responsible for all electronic installations in the country. This required travel to the six major bases, as well as the countryside. Our work ranged from computers (I saw some mag tapes labeled "Hanoi"), to microwave, radar, and at one point I found myself in a telephone manhole knee deep in mud pulling telephone cable. These projects were not scheduled back-to-back so there was a lot of downtime. We could easily get on the bus or taxi to go downtown. Some natives spoke enough English making communication not much of a problem. We would often end up in a club or restaurant killing time drinking and eating.

When I became eligible for time off, I purchased a ticket on the civilian airline and flew up to Chaing Mai, rented a hotel room and toured the city. To this day I have carved teak pieces and temple rubbings purchased at that time.

This life style suited me fine. It was too hot for a great deal of exertion. My easy going nature allowed me to relax, keep stress to a minimum, cut down on food intake, drink a lot of liquids, and generally soak in the Asian way of life. This

contrasted with most Americans, both military and civilian, who drank heavily, would eat only familiar food, frequented the sex workers, and generally behaved in an obnoxious manner.

After a few months, I became acquainted with a fellow my age and rank in the Thai Air Force. He introduced me to his girlfriend, his parents and his extended family. They lived across the river from Bangkok in a congested suburb of small wooden houses on stilts next to canals. He took me to the local temple to meet the monks, and introduced me to the customs and culture of his people.

In the course of working on various projects, I took a lot of pictures of temples, elephants, canal boats, water buffalo and other sights. One of these assignments was located just a few miles from the Cambodian border where we set up a radar station that consisted of a few corrugated buildings and a tower assembled of steel beams like an erector set.

One afternoon we were having lunch when a young American unknown to us appeared as if from nowhere. He was a Peace Corps volunteer who was teaching the locals to raise chickens. He was on his own and seemed like he enjoyed our company. Whether he was accomplishing anything of value is debatable. On the other hand, maybe he was offsetting some of the damage we were wrecking on Vietnam. It seemed like the U.S. was taking with one hand and giving with the other.

Overall the experience was interesting and pleasant, although every day I awoke thinking about my secret mission, knowing it was possible it was already over, completed by one of the

other fellows who had been volunteered.

My new life required a few adjustments in addition to the obvious cultural differences. For two weeks I could not keep any food down. The medics concluded that it was probably just a germ that my body was not accustomed to. It eventually cleared up, but I lost a lot of weight which in a tropical climate was not necessarily a bad thing.

One annoying encounter that I could never get used to was the constant soliciting by prostitutes. Around every base and in every bar frequented by the military, young women were offering their services. Venereal disease was common and drunkenness contributed to abusive behavior by the troops. There were a few guys who attempted long term relationships, but it never ended well.

The time between projects was beginning to lengthen and the daily ritual of reporting and being told to hang around was becoming routine, although we were warned never to let our guard down. Whenever we were in remote areas, especially near the border, we were always accompanied by our counterparts who were armed.

Having arrived in June, my twelve month tour was half over at Christmas. We decorated the hooch, shared the contents of our care packages from home, and wondered if we would ever see snow again. The temperature at the coolest time of the year never got below 60 degrees, and the only relief was during monsoon season when heavy rains would flood the streets.

After viewing the movie "Patton" at the base theater one

evening, I was walking alone down a remote unlit concrete path staring up at the night sky when I felt a lump under my foot. Luckily my momentum carried me a step farther. When I looked back, I saw a huge Boa Constrictor laying across the walkway. This was not the only brush with death that I would experience.

Just when I was thinking that a secret mission was less likely, I was in the PX store one morning when a fellow in civilian clothes appeared next to me and asked me if I knew Patricia Lynn. He informed me that I was to report the next day to the flight line at a specific hanger where I would be taking a helicopter ride. He instructed me to report in civilian clothes, take only a change of clothes and other overnight necessities, and ask no questions. The temperature of my life was about to get a whole lot hotter.

Chapter 6

The Mission

Early morning during March was still very hot and humid, and with the stress of the unknown enveloping me, my sweat ran like a river. Moving as quietly and quickly as possible, I made my way to the flight line where I found a Huey idling. Jumping on board, another passenger acknowledged me, but we could barely communicate because of the engine noise. We stared at each other trying to determine how much each of us knew.

I am not sure what direction we took, although I had a sense that it was to the Northeast. We were flying low over the trees at a rapid speed for over two hours with nothing but rice patties and jungle below.

Finally we descended on to a rudimentary landing site, the dust swirling around us. The other passenger and I parted ways. I was escorted to a makeshift barracks where I dropped off a few items I had in a backpack. Then I was brought to a Quonset hut where the radar equipment was set up. I was given a quick tour and told that I would be

working twelve hour shifts, alternating with the fellow who was showing me around. As casually as I could, I asked what had happened to my predecessor. He simply said that he had been taken ill. He ordered me to report in an hour and showed me where some K rations were stored for a meal.

There were only a few people around and they were not too friendly. I was unable to strike up a conversation with anyone. Everyone was in civilian clothes. Soon the start of my shift arrived, so I reported as instructed. During my trips between buildings, I could see most of the encampment. It seemed to consist of a few shacks and a steel tower holding a radar antenna. The building where I was stationed had a couple of windows, but the view was not that good.

On the walk over, I happened to notice a building at the end of what appeared to be a runway. That structure was at a critical spot to service an aircraft and definitely required more of my attention. There did not appear to be an aircraft on site that could deliver a bomb for which I was truly grateful. The radar building had some ventilation fans, but it was still uncomfortably hot and my nerves were on edge. Thankfully, the shift passed without incident. At this point, I was totally wiped out. I slept on a cot in a make shift barracks with one ear open waiting for the sound of aircraft. Since it could arrive at any time, I knew I had to gain access to the building at the end of the runway as quickly as possible.

After tossing and turning all night, I woke up tired and hungry. The K rations hardly provided any satisfaction. The shower facilities were Thai style, meaning a large cistern and a pot used to pour the water. Being an unfamiliar ritual,

there were a few times where I missed dousing myself. Even after the shower, the humidity was so high that I was immediately covered with sweat.

When my next shift ended, I casually strode over to the building by the end of the runway and walked in, as if I knew where I was going.

There is was: the atomic bomb that I trained on.

I stood there for a moment in shock only to be aroused by someone who had come up behind me. He asked me what I was doing there. As coolly as possible, I told him I was looking for radar supplies. He informed me that all the supplies I needed should be in a radar building. So my first opportunity to disarm the bomb was unsuccessful.

The shift change was starting. I would prefer to get this over with now, rather than have to try to leave the work area, but I had no choice. I reported as I was supposed to and waited for my replacement to get out of the building. Now all I had to do is get close enough to the bomb to disable it.

At that moment the sound of a jet aircraft permeated the sky. It appeared to be an F105 fighter bomber. After one flyover, it banked in and landed. Watching it taxi, I could only hope it would cut its engines and park for a while so I could have time to access the bomb.

Unfortunately, there was no time. As I gazed out the window, the bomb was being rolled out to the aircraft. This is when panic started to set in. The only alternative at this point was to go into destroy mode. The tool that I had been

given to destroy the bomb could also be used to malfunction the delivery vehicle. It required that I be within thirty yards of the aircraft. The problem was I needed to be facing the jet so that the device that I projected through the air would be sucked into the air intake. This was a very vulnerable position.

I had to make a move. The bomb was being loaded. I looked around to make sure I wasn't observed and walked as casually as I could toward the front of the aircraft. Everyone seemed focused on the bomb. All I knew was that the tool that I had been supplied was designed to be sucked into the air intake. That's as far as I will go in describing the device that was given to me because, as far as I know, it may still be in use by certain clandestine agencies.

I released the projectile in the direction of the intake. I was told it would simply interfere with the engines. Something went terribly wrong. The aircraft exploded. In an instant, a firebomb enveloped the plane and the two men inside. Everyone nearby, including myself, was thrown to the ground. As I staggered to my feet, one of the guards turned to me and pointed his weapon. Still unsteady from the blast, I staggered backwards just as he pulled the trigger. He must have missed me by inches. Others trained their weapons on me. I didn't know what to do. This had never been discussed in my classes.

Without thinking, I turned and ran for my life. Instinctively, I headed for a trail going into the jungle. I took off running faster than I had ever done before, grateful for the incident during basic training. I bolted as fast as I could. I had no idea if anyone was following me. I didn't take the time to

turn and look back. I simply tried to keep my footing as best I could and run as fast as I could.

After turning a corner, I decided to jump into a tangle of vines to my right. Still panting heavily, sweating profusely and shaking like a leaf, I tried to remain as still as possible. Sure enough, seconds later, footsteps were running past me. After a moment of relief, I realized that I was trapped. If I returned to the path and turned left, I would proceed back to the base. There I'd likely be executed. On the other hand, if I turned right, I would meet the returning search party, just as likely to gun me down. My situation seemed hopeless. I had no idea what to do. I was given no preparation whatsoever for a predicament like this. I sat there in the jungle anticipating the worst.

After hiding there for what seemed like hours, in total despair, I heard the search party returning. Unfortunately, I hadn't noticed how many of them were in the original party. And it occurred to me that they might be trying to flush me out while leaving a member of their group along the trail to ambush me. Paralyzed with fear, I couldn't move. The heat was suffocating, the insects were getting to me, and I had no idea what other natural or man-made dangers lurked in the area.

After a while, I carefully, slowly and with great trepidation, returned to the trail and decided to walk in a direction away from the encampment. Ready to plead for my life, I kept moving, expecting at any moment to face my executioner. With every step farther along the trail, some sense of relief set in. Was it possible that escape was mine?

By this time daylight was starting to dim, even more because

of the jungle canopy. Luckily, I had strapped to my waist a canteen of water which we were all advised to carry in a jungle environment. I was able to keep hydrated for the short term, but I needed to find a source of food and water and, most especially, a friendly and knowledgeable guide.

As the light failed, I had no choice but to find a sheltered place and try to get some sleep. I was exhausted, wiped out from hunger and stress. The next morning couldn't come fast enough. After a restless sleep, dawn did finally arrive. Using the most worn trail whenever it forked, I kept moving, hoping to come across a village. Not knowing how I would be received by them, I was so desperate, I really didn't care.

Even though I was exhausted, sleep had not come easily. The thought of my having possibly taken two lives was unbearable. Regardless of their intentions, those pilots did not deserve their fate at my hands. Nothing could justify what I had done. Did those who sent me on this mission know that an explosion would result? There was no way that I could put this behind me.

After plodding along for most of the day, I suddenly came face-to-face with a group of heavily armed young men. I had no idea of their ethnicity and all I could focus on were the weapons they were carrying. A few seconds elapsed before they overcame their shock at seeing me, raised their guns, and started yelling at me. Fearing for my life, I put my hands up in abject surrender.

There were 10 of them. None were in uniform. Each carried a rifle, loose-fitting clothing and a backpack. They appeared to be in their twenties, although I can't be sure. One particularly serious fellow was in charge, barking orders

and making menacing gestures toward me.

Fortunately, as they searched me, they found none of the devices that were still secreted on my person. I then motioned for water which I am sure must not be filtered in any way, but I was so thirsty I didn't care. They handed over a canteen. They motioned for me to continue with them. It did not really matter to me who they were as long as they kept me alive.

At the same time, I was determined not to reveal anything. What I had just experienced would be a huge propaganda victory for the Vietcong which I was beginning to assume they were. They kept me marching for days. I had no idea what I walked into. My fate was in their hands.

Chapter 7

Defying Death

After several days of marching through the jungle, we finally arrived at their camp. They shoved me into a outdoor bamboo cage that was in a shaded area where I actually had time to rest. Occasionally, someone would bring me food and water. This helped me to regain some of my strength and gave me time to decide what to do next.

Watching my captors' movements about camp, I concluded that there would be times when I was left alone. At any moment, someone higher up the command chain might begin interrogating me, and here was no way I was going to give up any information about what had just happened. Revealing the mission most definitely would have an adverse effect on the course of the war.

After a few hours sleep, I decided that I needed to make a break for it. Concealed on my person was a sharp implement (another of the mission "tools") that I used to cut through the reeds holding the bamboo stocks together. Early in the morning with no one around, I quietly slipped out of the cage and headed for the jungle again, running as quickly and as quietly as I could. The only compass I had was the rising sun over my shoulder.

Careful not to disturb the trail, I hoped that they would not be

able to track me. After I could run no longer, I dove off into the bush to try to regain some strength. Taking only a few minutes to catch my breath, I continued on in a more-or less westerly direction. Through sheer luck, I came across a stream where I took a long, slow drink. My captors had not bothered to confiscate my canteen, so I filled it up. This simple act raised my spirits and gave me a better attitude about my prospects for survival, especially since the food and water I had consumed thus far had not given me any digestive problems.

After days of wandering through the jungle (I really don't know for how long or how far I had traveled), I finally came across a village. The villagers appeared to be ethnic Thais. Even though they didn't speak any English, they did have a radio. I can only assume that they used it because at that point I was practically unconscious with fatigue, malnutrition and dehydration. I'll always be grateful for the care they took with me and the fact they probably saved my life.

I was roused by the sound of a chopper landing just outside the village. A couple of Americans helped me to the craft. The next thing I remember I was in hospital room, attended by a nurse. She had no questions for me. But I certainly had a few for her. She informed me that I was at the base hospital at Udorn Air Force Base and I had been there a couple of days. At this point I realized that seven days had passed since the mission commenced.

That afternoon two fellows in civilian clothes came into my room and asked me if I knew Patricia Lynn. They then proceeded to debrief me as far as everything that happened. They repeated the warnings I had been given over and over

again that none of these details of the mission were ever be revealed by me. They departed without any further comments.

Laying there gave me time to reflect on what had just happened to me. And what I had done. It was pretty clear that I was responsible for at least two deaths. At the same time, it was possible that I had saved countless others. (The estimate that came much later was at least 100,000.) That was some consolation.

On the other hand, I wish I could have done more. Over 58,000 Americans ultimately died in the war, and upwards of half a million Vietnamese perished. Countless others on both sides were wounded. Another example of mass annihilation. And no answers as to why this happens repeatedly throughout history, and what can be done to prevent it.

After a few days I was flown back to my unit. Even though I was bruised and scratched and looked like hell, no one really questioned me about my absence or condition. The last three months of my deployment were uneventful.

One year after leaving the states, I landed at Travis Air Force Base outside Sacramento where I had started. It was common for war protesters to harass the returning troops, but no one was there to greet us. To say it was anti-climactic is an understatement. I looked forward to returning to a normal life. That expectation was not to last for long.

Chapter 8

The Next Nuclear Disaster

My next and last assignment was at the Empire Air Force Station located on the coast of Lake Michigan, west of Traverse City, Michigan. Most of my time there was uneventful except for one incident that will forever be added to my list of regrets. One evening, after driving around the

state, I settled into a small hotel room. There was a knock on the door and a young woman asked if I could use her services. Without much thought and relying on my recently learned habit of dismissing prostitutes, I declined her invitation.

The stereotypical "woman of the night" is aged beyond her years, smokes, drinks, or is a drug addict. She may be covered with tattoos, dressed in provocative fashion and be in generally poor health. This young lady had none of those attributes. She looked like an average high school senior.

It often occurs to me that I could have handled this differently. What if I declined her invitation but asked if she could show me around town if I would pay her for her time? Perhaps I could have been of some assistance to her. Maybe not.

I learned three lessons from that incident. First, doing the right thing is sometimes the wrong thing to do. By this I mean that a creative response is often better than what is considered to be an appropriate reaction. Second, sometimes the most insignificant of decisions can have a major impact both on the things we do and the things we do not do. Finally, I learned that it is acceptable when an immediate decision is required to respond with a "maybe". This may appear to be insincere or indecisive, but it allows for alternatives to be considered.

I often wonder how my life would have changed for the better if I had taken the time to get to know her. Similarly, I

wonder if I could have had a positive impact on her. There was only six months remaining in my enlistment following the incident. It is not outside the realm of possibility that we could have formed a relationship. If that had happened, every person, place and activity I experienced from that moment on would have changed completely.

After putting in another stretch of pointless radar duty, I finally completed my enlistment, and with an honorable discharge, I headed back home thinking that my dealings with nuclear issues were over.

The first job I found was for a company manufacturing and testing Army mobile radar units. After eight months, I was laid off. Moving too quickly into another electronics plant that turned out to be a sweatshop, I gave that up after six months.

Without too much trouble, I found myself a position as a test technician in a small, privately owned electronics firm in the center of the city. Some of us younger workers did not like the way the older, mostly immigrant, workers were treated, so we tried to organize a union. It turned out that most of the workers were too frightened of losing their jobs and the effort failed.

After a short time, the company became what is referred to as a "run away shop" when it relocated to the suburbs. As it turned out, and with no encouragement on my part, the more educated women workers from that area organized themselves and demanded to be treated with respect by management. Thinking that my time there was no longer of any great consequence, I decided to return to the city.

After searching for a short time, I found myself a position as an engineering aide to chemical physicist at a company in Cambridge producing the second-generation of the so-called CAT scanner. It was a comfortable position with good working conditions. Then I received a postcard in the mail that was to have a major impact on my life.

The Union of Concerned Scientists was looking for volunteers. They were asking their supporters in the local area to provide volunteer clerical assistance. They expected students and retired folk who would be available during the day, not those working normal business hours. As fate would have it, their office was located just six short blocks from where I was employed. So I dropped in and asked them if they might accept me as a volunteer. Their office hours were 10 AM to 6 PM to accommodate the founder of the organization who came in from MIT after his teaching day there was over. My work day ended at 4 PM so I could walk to the office and put in two hours a day, two days a week. They said they were looking for someone who would fill a four hour shift, but made an exception for me.

In addition to volunteering at UCS, I had started college (this time at a small urban school), taking two courses of study two nights a week. It would take eight years, but I eventually graduated with a B.S. degree. Three years into this routine my life again took a radical turn that had implications for the future.

The Union of Concerned Scientists was founded as an informal group at MIT in 1969 to protest the Vietnam War and incorporated 1973 when they started a direct mail fund raising program. That's how I became aware of them in

1976. Their office was located on the second floor of a small, run-down building, just outside of Harvard Square, that still stands today. The office "suite" consisted of five rooms, with uneven, creaky floors. There was a bathtub full of boxes and the library was a collection of books on the fireplace mantel.

At that time main focus of the organization was nuclear energy. Their official position was that they would support safe nuclear energy which in their opinion had not yet been achieved in the private sector. (The Navy ran their program safely, but private industry did not follow the Navy model.)

UCS also promoted nuclear arms control, a position that did not include disarmament, something I had come to favor for obvious reasons. From surveys they had conducted, they found that the American public was skeptical and frightened of nuclear energy, but seemed reluctant to question the need for a massive nuclear arsenal. If only they had known my first-hand experience!

Being around physicists both at work and as a volunteer (including the first bomb makers George Kistiakowsky, Edward Teller and I. I. Rabi), I started to immerse myself in all things written on nuclear issues, both weapons and energy production. In this regard, I read a masterly written account of nuclear terrorism titled "The Fifth Horseman" by Collins and Lepierre (Simon and Schuster 1981). A novel showing how vulnerable U.S. cities are to a terrorist attack using a nuclear bomb, it has gained renewed attention after the 9/11 attacks.

On March 28, 1979, a problem developed at the nuclear

power plant at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania. This would lead to the first major nuclear accident in the United States. UCS had in effect predicted that this would happen. As the crisis unfolded, media outlets throughout the country and the world began to contact them. In addition, the general public was in a panic and felt that the only reliable information was coming from nonprofit groups like UCS. For weeks on end, at all hours of the day and night, the office was inundated with inquiries as to what was really happening, and what could be done to contain the disaster.

UCS had established itself since its inception as being a reliable, unbiased and objective scientific and engineering analyst of nuclear power production. The public and mass media considered them one of only a few trusted sources of information in a crisis. The organization had a reputation among some as providing the only accurate assessment of the actual conditions related to nuclear issues. Years later, I came to understand and explain why scientific facts are perceived differently by different people.

Once the meltdown subsided, the group was able to expand. As a result, they offered me a job keeping fund raising statistics. I happily accepted. This in a way continued my involvement in the nuclear arena and met my need to work on the overarching problems confronting the human race. They decided to put more emphasis in arms control which pleased me deeply because I had seen firsthand the possibility of mass death and destruction.

After six years on the staff, which included President Reagan's Star Wars Initiative, I took advantage of an opening in the publications department and was accepted as

Publications Coordinator. This put me in contact with UCS staff in Washington, DC. I found them to be heavily involved in national policy debates and less conservative than the Cambridge staff. This appealed to me. So I decided to move there after I graduated from college with a degree in sociology, with an emphasis on social change.

With a U-Haul van full of my possessions, I drove down to DC. Even though I had no job lined up, I still managed to rent a small basement apartment near Lincoln Park in the Southeast section of the city. As it happened, located just six blocks from there was The Committee for Sane Nuclear Policy where I would confront my next nuclear crisis.

Chapter 9

Promoting Sanity

The Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE for short) was established in the 50s as a result of the movement in the US in reaction to the atomic bombings in Japan during the war. In the 80s they were still struggling to convince the American people that nuclear war has no winners. The reception they received in general was not very positive. It almost appears that the American people believe that the only way the country can survive and prosper is to threaten not only our enemies, but our friends, with total annihilation. The organization built its member base on a neighborhood level canvass in many of the major US cities where young people would knock on doors and try to get the disinterested public involved in preventing a nuclear catastrophe. The names and addresses of anyone who donated a nominal amount would be sent to the DC office where a telephone campaign would follow up. Those who did not respond to the telephone would receive mailed appeals.

Much like the original UCS, SANE was surviving on a shoe string. Located in two rundown town houses on G Street in

Southeast DC, the cramped buildings were full of youthful, idealistic energy. The organization lived from hand to mouth with no extra funds allocated for better working conditions, but no one seemed to mind because they were all devoted to the cause.

At first, they accepted me as a volunteer, but with my background in direct mail fund raising, they put me in charge of the direct mail operation. They also gave me an extensive and sophisticated training in telephone fund raising, but I was not particularly effective. I am more comfortable communicating in writing, not in face-to-face dialogue, especially not in front of large groups. This preference was to be tested in the near future.

Shortly after I arrived, ongoing negotiations between SANE and the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign resulted in a merger of the two groups. The Rev. William Sloane Coffin was recruited as president and spokesperson for the new organization temporarily called Sane/Freeze. It is now known as Peace Action and continues in its mission to prevent nuclear war.

The whole operation was very labor intensive and not making much headway. Nevertheless, we would sponsor rallies, lobby days, petitions, anything to get the public focused on nuclear weapons. To the average citizen, however, the dangers of nuclear energy seemed to be more pressing.

This attitude confirmed my theory of "immediacy" where the relatively close location of a power plant is of more concern than the distant, remote possibility that nuclear war might break out. During this time, President Reagan proposed a

reduction in nuclear arms, while at the same time supporting an arms race in space. So the public was lead to believe the prospect of a nuclear war was under control.

As direct mail manager, I was part of the membership and development department that also handled public relations. SANE had no one individual responsible for answering public inquiries which came mostly in written form. Occasionally, we would get phone calls or visits from individuals who were upset by the prospect of nuclear annihilation, or from the opposite perspective, who thought we were capitulating to the forces of evil. These calls would be spread among any department staff who happened to be available. There was no set policy for dealing with them.

Truth be told, I was not very adept at handling telephone calls from the public, but as part of the department, I pitched in when I could. Even now, I find that I am more comfortable communicating in writing than conversation, a lack of ability that was to be severely tested in short order.

One warm summer day, a phone call was directed to me that would change the course of history. The caller in a calm and measured tone told me that he had helped design a nuclear bomb that was programmed to obliterate Washington DC the next day. As odd as it may sound, I was ready to hear this. I was certainly surprised that I was the one who got the call, but I wasn't particularly shocked about this development. After all, this scenario is considered a distinct possibility by those of us who study war making. Nevertheless, I felt obligated to question the caller to determine his credibility. Sounding to me to be lucid and believable, he claimed he had worked with a group designing the bomb and had come to

regret what he had done. Plans for nuclear weapons were not as accessible as they are today over the internet, so when he described in some detail the specifics on the device, I felt compelled to take him at his word.

Trying as best I could to concentrate amid the distractions around me, I encouraged him to relax and be more revealing about what he knew. He said he had developed grave misgivings (similar to those plaguing the designers of the first bombs). He explained that he would be shot dead if the others in his group suspected his defection. At that moment, he had no idea of the exact location of the device, and would have to get back to me.

Before he hung up, I told him my name and that I would be available at the office at whatever time he liked. (These were the days before cell phones.) He said he would try to call again before six o'clock that afternoon. As the call ended, I wondered whether he would follow up.

Struggling to keep my composure, I raced upstairs to the executive director's office. He agreed with me that this sounded like the real thing, so we placed a call to the FBI. Whether it was their training or prior knowledge regarding this threat, they didn't sound all that surprised to hear what I was telling them. Four agents arrived within an hour with a recording device that they attached to my phone and we were waited. Six o'clock came and went with no call.

We closed the main office (the telephone campaign stayed open until 10) and I returned to my apartment to consider what had just happened. After a restless sleep, I returned to the office the next day. We resumed our daily work as the

agents continued to stand guard over the phone.

At around noon the informant finally called. He told me he was about to find out the location of the device and it appeared to be in the northeast quadrant of the city. He suggested that I go to a particular public phone at Union Station and wait there for further instructions to come within minutes. The agents and I rushed over there in unmarked cars with sirens blaring. We located the pay phone and the agents attached a recording device. Then we anxiously waited again amidst the crowded station.

From my study of the subject, I knew the authorities would not issue any warnings to the public. It is standard policy on the part of law enforcement that the public not be alerted of a nuclear threat because the ensuing panic could cause injury and even death, and the vehicular traffic would eventually become unmovable. An alert to the population would be especially unnecessary if the threat were a hoax. Even if it were not, an evacuation could take days. We had only minutes.

An hour and hour and a half passed and nothing happened. The agents decided this was a hoax and called off their surveillance. For some reason, I decided to stick around. Actually, I was kind of disappointed that I would not be involved in another incident, and as I mentioned earlier, I'm rather slow to react to a quickly changing situation. So I hung around, more a captive on inertia than with any plan on how to proceed.

Within minutes of their departure, the phone rang. It was

the informant who proceeded to give me the location of the bomb and the steps I needed to take to disarm it. And he casually informed me that it was programmed to detonate in about sixteen minutes.

Chapter 10

Another Nuclear Dash

As I was writing down the instructions (thank God one of the agents suggested I take a pen and notepad), I couldn't help but consider all the possibilities. This lack of concentration may

seem foolhardy now, but at the time, my mind raced out of control.

Among other things, there was the possibility that he could be giving me faulty instructions as a way to either prevent me from interfering, or as a way to manually trigger the detonation. In either case, the wrong directions could be intentional or unintentional on his part, or by those who he worked with.

The other possibility is that I could be misunderstanding what I was being told. Demanding clarification whenever I could, I peppered him with every question I could think of. The ultimate question is: What am I not thinking of?

Time was running out. I desperately needed to know simple things, like what did the referenced components look like, and where exactly were they located. It's so typical that someone who has worked on a project gets to know it so well they assume things are obvious when they are not.

Another concern of mine was the conditions surrounding the device. Would it be guarded? Would there be any booby traps? What could go wrong? He said he was under pressure to end the call, wished me luck, and hung up.

The first thing I did was to take out the business card the lead agent had given me and placed a call to the number. Trying to modulate my tone as much as possible, I gave the receptionist my name, the location of the device and tried to convey the urgency of getting this message to anyone who would listen.

Now I was at a critical decision point. Should I wait for them to arrive or should I take matters into my own hands? The address he gave me was in the 200 block of G Street, Northeast, which, if I was not mistaken, was fairly close. Although I wasn't exactly sure which direction to take, I decided to go for it. After all, what other option was there? Running toward danger may seem heroic, but I was out to save myself!

The main reception hall of the building is huge under the best of circumstances, but it looked even more vast as I pushed my way through the slow moving crowd and headed for the main entrance. My sense was that the 200 block was to the left. If I was wrong, and it was on the opposite side of the building, it would be impossible for me to get across the train tracks.

Turning left around the corner of the station, I found F street. G street will be the next one heading north. Running as fast as I could (which was much easier in this concrete jungle than the natural one), I came upon G Street and quickly realized with great relief that the 200 block is the first block down the street.

There are residences on the left side only. Halfway down the block was the address the informant had given to me. Stopping to catch my breath, I looked up at a small brick townhouse. The first level had garage door on the left and a house door to the right. I sprinted up to the garage door and was about to open it when I had a thought: Could it possibly be a trap? The same possibility applied to the house door. Unsure as how to proceed, I stepped back to consider any

other options.

To the left of the building was a space between it and next townhouse, but cut off by a fence. To right was another townhouse that shared a common wall. That townhouse had a stairway leading up to a porch. It may just be possible that I could step up on to the railing of that porch and reach the second floor window.

Too much time had passed. I had to make a decision. Dashing up the stairs I jumped up onto the railing which didn't look all that strong, but seem to support my weight, and I was able to reach the window. Leaning as far forward as possible, I was able to get the window screen up. I couldn't tell from this position if the window was locked. Pushing and prying, I managed to move it and to lift it open.

Suddenly a few things occurred to me. This better be the right address. And my behavior must look awfully suspicious. Would I welcome the police arriving, or would they be a problem? In my current position, I really couldn't stop to consider these things. What I did consider was the fact that window was on the small size. There was a good possibility that I won't fit. Talk about taking a leap of faith!

Ignoring the bruising and bleeding that were inevitable, I jumped off the railing. My elbows just made it through to the sill, as the rest of me jammed against the brick wall. Pushing and pulling, I slowly found that my hips would just fit. Somehow managing to shimmy my way through the window, I landed with a thud on the floor.

Quickly looking around, there was nothing (and no one) for

me to see. With only minor discomfort, I staggered across the room into the hall and down the stairway, expecting to be confronted by fanatics at every turn. A door presented itself on the left. Here again I hesitated, not knowing who or what might explode on the other side. I had come too far to stop now.

Suddenly, a flashback came to mind. It was some article I had read where it was said that if you are anywhere near a nuclear device when it detonates, you will not be conscious of it since you will be instantly vaporized. No pain, no sound, just nothingness (for those of us who find an afterlife unlikely).

The other possibility that flashed through my mind was that of a conventional explosion. Most people do not realize that a nuclear bomb chain reaction is set off by what are referred to as conventional explosives like dynamite. The explosives are precisely arranged to instantly compress the radioactive material which reacts in a violent manner. It is possible in a situation like this where the device is not fabricated, tested or assembled under the best of conditions that the conventional explosion would not trigger a nuclear reaction. In that case, it would just blow up as any explosion with sufficient force to destroy or damage everything (and everyone) within the immediate area,

If nuclear substances are present, they would be spewed for

miles around, following the prevailing wind patterns. This is referred to as a dirty bomb. If the explosion did not get you, then the blast would cause injury, and over time, radiation poisoning is a distinct possibility. With these pleasant thoughts in mind, I opened the door.

Chapter 11

DC On The Brink

Not only was I not vaporized, but there was no one pointing a

gun at me, in yet another flashback to the last nuclear incident I was involved in. The device in that garage looked nothing like a typical bomb, but rather a collection of cables and instruments assembled around a container the size of a refrigerator lying on its side.

Shaking myself from momentary brain lock, I realized here was no time to contemplate any more incidents from my past. Frantically, I rummaged around in my pocket for the scrap of paper where I had scribbled the directions the informant had given me.

The instructions essentially said that I needed to cut off the power to the device. The only complication was there were two sources of power: electricity from the building and a battery backup. These needed to be simultaneously disconnected. If I pulled the battery too soon, the electric circuit would sense it and trigger a detonation. Conversely, if I turned off the electricity too soon, the battery would ignite the end of the world as we have come to know it.

Confronted with the actual situation, it was not exactly clear to me how I would to achieve this. And how few microseconds were permitted before either circuit would sense a disconnect and proceed with detonation.

It might have been my desperation or a shot of adrenaline, but I was able to locate what looked like a switch for the batteries and a plug for the external power supply that the informant had referenced. By spreading my arms, I was just able to

reach both. Expecting to be either vaporized or pulverized, I turned the switch and pulled the plug as simultaneously as I could and held my breath and shut my eyes.

The digital counter (that had been counting down from "32 seconds") and all the indicator lights and gauges went dead, unlike me who was very much alive, and was able to collapse on the floor and breathe deep gulps of relief.

Approaching sirens reminded me of the outside world. Prior to leaving that morning, I put a small camera in my pocket thinking it might be valuable later on. Still shaking, I managed to hold steady long enough to take pictures from four different angles for my own records, in case the authorities were less than forthcoming with photographs of their own.

There was a shout through the garage door. Just then, I noticed a pair wires leading to the door from the device. Thinking there might still be traps lurking, I advised them to enter through the front door where I found no wires to be visible. They proceeded to knock down that door. After checking that the wires were dead, they raised the garage door with no effort. It was unlocked! The crazy fanatics had created a situation where anyone who is up to no good, or anyone who innocently opened the door, could have blown up the city!

In walked a group of guys with guns dressed in black that I presume is the Nuclear Emergency Search Team of the Department of Energy that is tasked to deal with crises like this. By this time I had leaned against the wall and slid down to the floor not feeling very well and certainly not

looking very well. They were kind enough to ask how I was doing. Words could not describe my sense of relief.

One of the fellows had a radiation detector that he pointed in direction of the chamber. The needle deflected. This indicated that radioactive material was present. This was no hoax. Whether the bomb would have actually functioned is another story, but the pieces were all there. We almost lost our capital city and with it our country would have been thrown into unimaginable crisis.

One of the FBI agents I've been working with helped me to my feet, escorted me to his vehicle, and proceeded to debrief me. He then offered to drive me home. I gratefully accepted. On the way there, he advised me in all seriousness not to reveal this incident to anyone. There was absolutely no chance that I was going to follow that advice.

When I got to my apartment, I called the office right away and suggested we get a group together to decide how to proceed. By this time I began to settle down and I looked forward to decompressing during the short walk through the Eastern Market neighborhood to the office. Along the way I appreciated as never before the flowers blooming, the birds singing, and people going about their daily lives with no indication whatsoever they almost lost it all.

Walking along, I became consumed with the overwhelming realization of how perilously close we came to disaster, even extinction. More important, I promised myself I will face the truth, no matter how distressing, as to why this happens, and do all in my power to prevent it from happening again. Reflecting on my time in Asia, I wondered if a new

overarching perspective might explain why human beings are driven to behave in such destructive ways toward others. There is a school of thought that advises concentrating on the symptom is counterproductive if the cause is ignored and becomes stronger. Maybe this incident would be enough for some people to want to discover the genesis of such things if they would only forget the immediate issues in their lives and devote deep thought to the origins of life and death.

There is a saying that we can't see the forest for the trees. My take on that is that we can't see the forest for the leaves. The leaves may be beautiful and delicate, but focusing on them allows the forest to burn. It has been said many times that humanity needs to expand our vision to prevent wholesale disaster. We need a fresh perspective.

Hoping that this incident would stir up a new consciousness, I became determined to publicize this event as far and as wide as possible and challenge reflective people to use their intelligence to come up with a solution. Not to rely on the same old platitudes about human nature, or the devil, or evil that causes us to destroy each other and ultimately ourselves. With this new determination, I resolved to be a spokesperson for the future of the planet. As it turned out, another earth-shattering event in my life would fit this description.

Chapter 12

In the Eye Of A Storm

The movement for peace and nuclear disarmament had never really had a spokesperson. Dr. Benjamin Spock helped to found the movement back in the 50s, but was better known for his work in child development than for his involvement in the peace movement. The Rev. William Sloane Coffin, the latest public figure to get involved, attracted some attention for the cause, but mostly among a fringe group of religiously minded people.

For the movement to make some headway, the mass media needed someone to focus on, and the general public required a person to identify with and relate to. I was to be thrust into that position. As we met in the office, I slowly became conscious of the historic importance of what we were doing. This incident could be the catalyst to get the public's attention to realize the dangers that were involved and to demand sweeping changes.

We decided to hold a press conference at three o'clock the next afternoon. It would be conducted just down G Street SE at a former church sanctuary (where the pews had

been removed) that we had used for large gatherings. The Executive Director would give an overview of the organization and I would describe what had happened. The pictures that I had taken would be enlarged and placed on poster board to be revealed at the end of the presentation. This would give the media a visual graphic, as well as corroborating evidence backing up my descriptions.

We agreed that it was absolutely essential that we anticipate and counter the arguments the government would make regarding what had transpired. For example, they would surely claim that the device would not function. This was probably true, since it had been designed, fabricated, tested and assembled under less than ideal conditions. A nuclear bomb is very complex and sensitive instrument designed to high tolerances, so it is not surprising that an ad hoc effort would result in a defective product. That is not the point. This particular device had all the necessary components including the fissionable material and, most important, the intention was there by the builders to go through with the action.

We had been very close to losing the capital city. That should be the focus of our concerns. Furthermore, the knee-jerk reaction of the government would most surely be to increase repressive security measures, clamp down on suspicious activity, maximize surveillance and expand the police state. These actions were not ones that Americans should accept. And they were not necessary. This predictable response on the part of the authorities points to a natural human tendency to focus on the end result of a problem, rather than the underlying cause.

What we need to do in the immediate future, as the arms control community had concluded long ago, is to eliminate the source of the weapons grade uranium and plutonium. These materials are being produced in only a few locations around the world in very large and easily detectable facilities. These plants need to be shut down and all the weapons grade material needs to be secured and monitored.

In addition, spent fuel from nuclear power plants must be guarded as it can be reprocessed into weapons grade material. And the reprocessing plants that convert the spent fuel need to be permanently closed.

Beyond these immediate actions lies the fundamental question as to why any group would want to destroy life on a wholesale basis. This troubles me as it should any clear thinking person. There must be something deeper going on here. For the second time in my life, I went beyond preventing mass death to ask troubling questions. I was beginning to come to some conclusions that would change everything in my understanding of this problem.

A book titled "The Tao of Physics" by Fritzjof Capra (Wildwood House Ltd. 1975) goes to the heart of the matter. The ancient Taoist view in combination with modern science concludes that all life, including human, is composed of matter and energy. Understanding this combination is, ironically, the basis for creating nuclear fission. Moreover, this basic insight can be expanded to explain the two different perspectives that permeate all human existence. Just as there is a distinction to be made between energy and matter, there is a difference between the realities that humans experience. These realities are different manifestations of

the same thing, and they are in conflict much like the north and south poles of the planet that depend on each other for existence, and yet are in an adversarial relationship.

As I was formulating this philosophical understanding, the latest incident gave me an opportunity to bring my observations to a wide and attentive audience. The nexus of solving this age-old problem was presenting itself. First, I would use the present crisis as an opportunity to raise the consciousness of humanity toward finding a solution.

On the immediate crisis, we composed a statement that I would read to the press. The photos were sent out to be developed into poster-sized prints. Media outlets were notified that we had information about a major terrorist event. After many hours of planning, fatigue suddenly overcame me. After stumbling home to try to get some sleep, I only managed to nod off.

When I'm exhausted I really don't perform very well, and this would require the performance of my life. Deep sleep eluded me. My presentation at the press conference would begin a public life that I was not ready to assume. My basic nature is really not comfortable in a leadership role, but I had to keep my eye on the larger goal. There was no turning back. This would be the start of something monumental.

In an effort to avoid the limelight, I prefer to work in the background. Public speaking is not my forte. In college a voice and articulation professor tried to be encouraging when she told me I was a "body resonator" which essentially means that I have a loud voice. I suppose it also means that I tend to speak clearly. She did not confront the fact that I feel

self-conscious speaking before a large group. I would prefer to hang back, listen and observe. Nevertheless, I had no choice but to prepare for the performance of my life.

Another walk from my apartment to the office didn't help calm my nerves. After reviewing the preparations one last time, a group of us walked to the church. Awaiting us was throng of reporters and cameramen. Most of the attention was directed at Rev. Coffin, for which I was grateful. Bypassing the crowd, I slipped unnoticed into the building. We assembled on the stage behind a couple of tables. Against the front sides of the tables the mounted photos had been placed with the blank side toward the crowd. An air of anticipation hung in the humid air.

The staff member acting as media liaison settled everyone down and introduced the Executive Director. He gave a brief history of the nuclear issue. Rev. Coffin got up and, as was typical for him, energized the audience.

The Executive Director introduced me. I don't know which is worse: having all the attention of the world focused on me, or lying the middle of the jungle totally alone. Either of these two extremes I would not wish on anyone, but they were my fate, and I accepted them. This would not be the last time that I would be the focus of an intense moment like this.

Trying to keep my voice is steady as possible, I read the prepared statement. Flashbulbs started to explode. Before I finished, it appeared that everyone in the audience started to yell questions. As we agreed beforehand, the media liaison announced that I would not be taking questions. This was

my preference as I had absolutely no confidence that I could respond quickly and accurately in a moment's notice to any question that was presented to me. We tried to make it clear that we would accept questions in writing, but of course, the press was not satisfied,. Nevertheless, we decided to defer questions for now.

It turns out that the government anticipated our press conference and came out with their own press release. As we had predicted, they declared that there was no danger. After testing, they concluded that the device would not have worked as intended. Furthermore, they claimed to have everything under control while pursuing the terrorists with vigor.

Congress immediately jumped on the incident demanding answers, including a full review of national security procedures. I was called to testify before various committees on Congress within a few short weeks. By that time, I had grown a little more comfortable reciting the standard speech. As is their tradition, each congressperson had to present certain questions. I answered these as best I could. Thus began the increased visibility that set me up for even more demanding tests in the future.

Chapter 13

The Past Returns

It felt like the eyes of the world were upon me. Everything I said, every move I made, was scrutinized and reported. In short order, I had no choice but to unlist my phone number, move to a different address on Capitol Hill, and try to live a normal life which turned out to be impossible. The peace movement needed a spokesperson and I was in the cross hairs. To say my life is completely different is accurate, but I did not regret this change. Someone had to do it. Someone needed to point out that we had created the tools of

our own destruction, and that these tools were now accessible to unauthorized and dangerous individuals, not to mention nation states.

My time was in great demand. Besides congressional hearings, the talk shows wanted me and reporters hounded me at every stop. Travel was constant and became a constant source of the irritation.

The Union of Concerned Scientists estimated that had the device detonated it could easily and instantly wiped out at least 250,000 people. This would have included those in the Capitol, the White House and the Supreme Court and the surrounding neighborhoods. Beyond that, millions would have suffered burns, injuries and radiation poisoning. The radioactive contamination would have spread not only in the U. S., but also across the world.

Most people don't realize that radioactivity released into the atmosphere anywhere on earth will eventually be detected everywhere. Radiation from the Fukushima Plant was detected on the West Coast. It was said to be in miniscule quantities, but that is after traveling thousands of miles from the coast of Japan. Another feature of radioactivity is that it is cumulative, meaning that it builds up over time in human tissue and takes thousands of years to degrade. So the incidences of cancer and birth defects resulting from a blast would be astronomical. Even more troubling, a direct causal relation to nuclear contamination is impossible to establish. Even now, science can not prove how many cancer cases are caused by radioactivity.

Beyond all the biological results, the psychological effects would be easily measured and devastating. The country as a whole would be traumatized. There would be calls for retaliation. The government, or what was left of it, would be under enormous pressure to take a military response. Panic would have spread far and wide. The act of retaliation would be more important than its accuracy. Calls to attack our perceived enemies using nuclear weapons would be overwhelming. The results are unimaginable, unprecedented and beyond comprehension.

The message I was attempting to convey, that in the short run we need to stop producing weapons grade fuel, seems to have gotten lost. And the long term solution I was constructing would probably be ignored as well. Americans demanded a response of an intensity equal to that which had almost been exacted on them. Nothing less was even considered. Pressure built on our political and military leaders to find someone, group or country to blame. As is common throughout history, they refused to address the heart of the problem.

A consensus formed among the cool heads to work with all the other nuclear powers to come to an agreement to eliminate fuel production. This effort started to make some headway in the form of international cooperation, but as time went on, the initiative slowed.

An international agreement was constructed to phase out production of weapons grade uranium, but it was not ratified by our Congress. The international community decided in theory that reductions in nuclear stockpiles were necessary, but it was not to be.

Troubled as to why humanity could not solve this problem, I reflected on my experiences and finally, much like a stranger in a strange land, I stepped back and looked at the planet from a distance. (This perspective was to become even more relevant for me in the future.)

My thinking was evolving, with some startling conclusions about the human experience. Nothing focuses one's mind on human history like the prospect that history would be lost forever.

While most thinking on the nuclear problem dealt with the immediate threat, I continued to believe it was merely a symptom of an underlying problem. I began to put together my observations and conclusions into an essay that I was hoping to present to the world at large, on a personal website that I was designing.

Whenever I began a philosophical discussion, some would say that it detracts attention from the nuclear nightmare, but there remains the unthinkable possibility that mass destruction by one group against another could return at any time to destroy us. History will be endlessly repeated. Human beings needed to face the truth and admit what most of us know to be at the root of the problem, and I was about to take a momentous step in that direction. What the world needs is an innovative way of thinking, a new consciousness, that would change the course of destructive history and ensure the survival of the human race.

The pace of my life was as fast and frenetic as ever. Consequently, I did not have the time or energy to ponder my next move, and I was not quite sure when and how to reveal

my thoughts and observations to the world. Once again circumstances would present themselves to me where I was forced to take action.

Returning from one of my many trips ending at National Airport in DC, I was approached by yet another a reporter. While this is not unusual, it had become less common in recent days. Usually I was able to sneak through the terminal in relative anonymity, but this time the reporter seemed to be waiting for me. He approached me, introduced himself and indicated that he was with the Denver Post. He said that he had a question. As is my custom, I continued walking along thinking that this would be another routine inquiry. Instead he asked me to stop.

He looked me in the eye and asked me whether I had been involved in a nuclear incident in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

This is a question I had long ago assumed I would never be asked, so he caught me off guard. As we stood face-to-face, I replied to him in a calm voice saying "No comment." His eyes flashed in the recognition that he had the story of lifetime. At the same time, I was struck with the realization that the next chapter of my life had just begun, or had returned to completion.

Chapter 14

Nuclear Misdirection

A diagnosis of cancer can make a man reflect on his life. The prognosis for pancreatic cancer is especially provocative because of its quick and terminal nature. This was true for a Coloradoan living in mountainous Estes Park, 30 miles northwest of Denver, who has been given six months to live. As anyone would, he started to put his affairs in order. Reflecting over his long military career, he was unable to forget an incident a long time ago that troubled him and he

was determined to make it right. As fate would have it, he had seen my picture in the news on the DC incident and he thought he might have recognized me as the fellow who sat across from him on a helicopter ride he took in Thailand twenty-five years earlier.

After getting out of the service, I had grown a beard and mustache, but recently shaved them off, so my appearance hadn't changed too much. Also, my widely distributed biography revealed that I had served in the Air Force in Southeast Asia during the war. As a result, he became more confident that we had taken that unforgettable chopper ride together.

He was well aware that if he went to the mass media with this unlikely story there was no way to corroborate it. Now, there was the possibility that I could backup his account. Consequently, he decided to contact the Denver Post. The reporter he was referred to found the story interesting, but unsubstantiated through public records. On the other hand, this could possibly be an opportunity for a ground-breaking scoop, so he flew to Washington. He obtained my public schedule and knew when he would find me at the airport.

While I did not exactly give him confirmation of the story, I didn't deny it, so he informed me that the story would be printed in the coming days as an unconfirmed claim.

Once again I was racing. This time not through the jungle or across city blocks, but mentally. What should I do when this

revelation went public? Probably in preparation for a day like this, I had noted long ago the name of a lawyer who helped others who were accused of revealing government secrets. After I got home, I gave him a call. To my surprise, he recognized my name and made room on his schedule to meet with me that afternoon. My public exposure often opened certain doors like this. I advised him to keep an eye on the news.

The arcane laws prohibiting the disclosure of classified information are not generally well known. There was one factor that I was aware of: If I disclosed classified information to someone, that person is technically in violation of the law, even if it was delivered to them without their participation or agreement.

Therefore, in the meeting I did not give the lawyer any specifics, asking him how I should proceed. He advised me in general terms that I was still subject to criminal prosecution if I revealed anything to do with a classified event, even 25 years in the past. On the other hand, once he read the story in the papers (it was published a few days later) and concluded that I had not revealed anything to the public. He advised me that the safest thing I could do was to wait for an official inquiry to take place. Sure enough, in a matter of days, I was subpoenaed to appear before the Senate Armed Services Committee in executive session.

My notoriety had instantly gone from a nuclear event with national implications to an international event which for all intents and purposes looked as if a nuclear weapon could possibly have been obtained in an unauthorized manner.

If the bomb I destroyed had been dropped in North Vietnam, the Russians and the Chinese would have been under pressure to retaliate against United States and our allies in turn would be treaty bound to come to our defense. The situation could easily have escalated into a Third World War.

When the story hit the media, I was bombarded at every turn by reporters and the general public, not to mention family and friends. The days before my testimony were frenzied and tense. It crossed my mind that there may be certain parties that did not want me to testify. Luckily my paranoia was not justified.

My short trip to the Capitol was chaotic with hoards of reporters demanding a response. Entering the committee hearing room was like the calm in the center of a hurricane. The committee chair put me under oath and asked me to recall the events leading up to, and including, the clandestine mission. Beginning with the initial contact in basic training, I recounted the training I went through and the various posts I stood, including the incident itself.

If it had not been for the gentleman in Colorado, I would never have revealed this information. It turned out that his account and mine regarding the nuclear component matched perfectly, according to a deposition he gave in Colorado before he passed away.

The committee members asked for every detail of the mission before, during and after the main event. A Republican Senator noted the time between the destruction of the device and my debriefing after the fact. Upon his further questioning, I related my time in captivity. While I did not

think it was particularly relevant, he concluded that I should be classified as a prisoner of war for the time I spent as a captive. The committee agreed that I was to receive recognition of that fact.

There were a lot of questions from the committee members about my understanding of who authorized my mission. My assumption from the beginning was that I was under the direction of duly authorized individuals in the military chain of command with the knowledge and approval of the president. Later I realized that I might be working for a rogue operation that was attempting to subvert the intentions of the commander-in-chief.

Could it be possible that a group of individuals, perhaps associated with the CIA or another agency, who disagreed with dropping the bomb on North Vietnam, was behind my mission? The implications were troubling. Either the president had authorized the drop and an unauthorized group stepped in to prevent it. Or the drop was not authorized by the president and a covert agency of the government had to intervene. In either case, the Congress was apparently excluded.

After my testimony, I was under increasing pressure to reveal to the public what I knew of the incident. Assuming I was still working for a legitimate agency, I resisted disclosing anything. It did not take long for a member of the committee to reveal my testimony to the world.

The international community reacted in horror as did the American people. There were extensive investigations of the Department of Defense and the CIA. Both agencies

claim that they could find nothing in their records concerning the incident. To this day, there is still no evidence as to who authorized the dropping of the bomb, nor who authorized its interception.

Something had obviously gone terribly wrong in the chain of custody of the device. Major changes had to be made so that this did not happen again. As relieved as I was that the authorities agreed to the need to tighten access to weapons of mass destruction, the military continued to express skepticism about the facts I had revealed. They claimed that everything is under control.

Once again, mass murder was attempted, only to be averted at the last moment.

The Union of Concerned Scientists stepped up once again with an analysis that estimated 100,000 could have easily been killed, with tens of thousands more injured. Incidentally, this number included some American prisoners of war held by the Vietnamese assuming that the intended target was Hanoi.

My question remains: Why?

Chapter 15

Two Realities

The revelation of this incident projected me into the public spotlight again, enhanced my credibility and projected an image of me as heroic. An image that I in no way felt I deserved. The message is more important than the messenger. In other words, the content of my message is more important than the form it takes. Nevertheless, I am now well-known as working to preserve the future of humanity and the Earth itself. This seemed like the right time to reveal the observations that I had made over the years in private.

Those working to reduce the possibility of nuclear war disagreed with my proposed action as a distraction from the immediate threat. But my personal mission was larger than addressing the impulse to resist nuclear Armageddon which, admittedly, was so close. I needed to explain why the human race is in this predicament, and what could be done to eliminate the threat, rather than simply reduce it or bring it under control. Consequently, I published my thoughts and observations in the form of an essay on a website. It caused

a negative reaction among some people. This is what I expected.

I need to begin by explaining that half the human race will disagree with my observations and why their point of view is correct even though it is the opposite of mine. This seeming contradiction arises from the idea that human beings exist in two realities. This insight is based on the Taoist concept of Yin and Yang established thousands of years ago. (Sometimes misinterpreted as referring to male and female, these symbols relate to traits, not gender.)

In more scientific terms, it has been postulated that life was formed millions of years ago when light energy impacted inorganic material and evolved into life as we know it. Why these two realities of energy and matter conflict is still not clear. Perhaps they are related to the north and south poles of the planet in which each pole is in opposition to the other, yet relying on the other for existence.

When humans understand and appreciate that we all exist in two different worlds then we might be able to know ourselves better and tolerate our disagreements with one another with more equanimity.

My personal point of view is based on my nature which tends to be more focused on substance and science. I understand that the other reality of energy and light exists, and I can experience it to a certain extent, even though I see the world from a more substantive perspective.

My observation of the existence of two realities originates with my experience of life in the Far East where spiritualism

is the predominant reality. This is in contrast with the West where materialism is favored. My thinking expanded to a more planetary perspective when confronting the differences across cultures. Further insight was based on my work in physics with a realization that brings matter and energy together. Ironically, this is the key to nuclear fission. While this knowledge has the potential to destroy all life, it also has the potential to explain all life.

What I am saying is that each human being is composed of two realities. These realities can vary by degree and can shift over time. Some individuals have an equal distribution. Most tend to prefer one over the other. This bifurcated nature is on display every day in every way humans conduct themselves, and can be described in the following examples:

Heart-head; energy-matter; intangible-tangible;
mental-physical; soul-body; subjective-objective;
spiritual-material; instinctual-intellectual; form-substance;
qualitative-quantitative; religion-science; individual-group;
goal-process; analytical-creative, left brain-right brain, and many others.

This dichotomy may even explain the differences between the world views held by such groups as Republicans and Democrats. One reality tends to feel threatened by the substantive world, and takes comfort in connecting with those who express familiar feelings. The other finds the world of energy to be confusing and unpredictable while relying on material knowledge. One is based on fear of the unknown, while the other embraces it. One is uncomfortable with individual actions while the other disavows group actions. One of the most extreme examples between these two

realities is the attack on New York City on September 11, 2001, where extreme spiritualism collided with extreme materialism. Both of these extremes represent the two realities in which humans live and relate. They reflect an internal conflict within each of us and between us.

The dilemma I struggle with as a result of my nature is what can we do as individuals to reduce and even eliminate physical pain and physical suffering, and the prospect of death. That concern is important to me because my world view is based on the reality I favor, which is materially oriented.

Those whose nature favors faith rather than science will disagree with my approach. This is to be expected. Both realities are correct even though they come from different places, since each reality is real to the person who inhabits it. Those who live in the ephemeral, visceral, world of light are conscious of the fact we live in the material world which they find threatening. Those who relate more to the world of substance can find the intangible world confusing and unpredictable, while acknowledging its place in human existence.

My experiences dealing with the prospect of death on a massive scale, especially that caused by intentional human activity, put me in a good position to contemplate a way to preserve life and eliminate death on a macro level. On too many occasions individual actions have come very close to destroying lives on a grand scale and contaminating the entire physical world in the process. Here again, I am focusing on the physical. Those in the spiritual realm will have other priorities.

The two entities are not exactly equal because the world of spirit/emotion/energy depends on the physical world to express itself. This puts the spiritual at some disadvantage, because, according to the major faiths, a soul cannot proceed to heaven without first existing in the material world. As a result, there is some preference given to the material. In addition, those who possess a more ephemeral nature have a more tenuous grasp of the material world and so feel less secure in dealing with it. This may explain my sense of security which comes from a strong connection with physical reality.

Heaven is misinterpreted by some religions to mean one of two results of physical death, the other being hell. An alternative explanation is that we are experiencing hell as sentient beings, and death will bring a state of bliss where pain and the anxiety of death will be non-existent.

This explanation serves as a preface to my further observations which will cause consternation, but at least now we know where the disagreement originates, and why it exists. This insight where two realities are in opposition gives humans the prospect of improving communication in the future, and maybe not rejecting my thesis without giving it some thought.

Humans have the capacity for thought. This does not negate the science that shows how we evolved from animals. It does demonstrate that we can acknowledge our instinctual basis and still use our mental capacities which distinguish humans from our animal ancestors.

In order to share my observations on a wider scale, I had to

gain greater notoriety than I had up to this point. The internet helped to spread my message, but there are still large numbers of people who have not heard of me, nor did they give me much credence in discussing the human condition. There was another incident that would propel me into planetary recognition and expand my reach to all who might consider their plight on planet Earth.

Chapter 16

Calculating A Billion Deaths Defied

My message in support of the physical preservation of the human race reached a limited audience up to this time, partly

because half the population is more concerned with spiritual survival. Nothing gets the attention of energy people like a major crisis that evokes anxiety and fear. So far, the crises I was involved in have not progressed to beyond the immediate. They started with what most regarded as local problems, the best examples being Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. They grew to a national threat like the incident in DC. There was some international aspect to the incident in Thailand, but, so far, nothing that grabbed the attention the entire planet.

History has shown that major social change comes about under conditions where an idea is presented whose time has come, and a majority of people are in a position to embrace it. The internet helps in this regard where ideas can be exchanged quickly. Of course, this is restricted to people who have access to the internet and it appeals to those who are not struggling with daily survival. Those who have limited access and limited resources tend to be followers of a change in consciousness rather than to be in its vanguard.

The issues that I am raising would not be embraced by those who are more oriented toward emotional or spiritual survival. Individuals in that world place much less importance on physical survival. (Those who value the world of light, energy and faith I sometimes refer to as "Energyists." Those who tend to value the world of substance, science and thought, I call "Physicalists.")

Unfortunately, religions in this regard make the problems even worse. When the major religions were established thousands of years ago, the founders were concerned about lessening the despair of the common man. Everyone was desperate for hope. The only hope during those primitive times was the belief in a better world after death. This next world has two purposes: to reward the virtuous and punish the sinner.

In this way, religions have perpetuated physical suffering and death. Humans who have hope of an afterlife are more likely to create life. And they have assurance that killing their enemies will condemn them to eternal damnation

Energysts also tend to believe in a "supreme being". This causes them not to question authority and to consider themselves inferior. If they are made to feel inferior, then they in turn must be superior to others. This leads to a need to control others as well as a justification to destroy others, as evidenced by numerous disputes between religionists throughout history. To a spiritualist, the ultimate objective is a spiritual reward for themselves and the eternal banishment for their enemies. Therefore physical existence becomes less important.

The human race has evolved to the point where we now know what we are doing and how we are doing it. We no longer have to rely on belief in another life. We who focus on the material world have to reach out to those who are more focused on the spiritual and show them that the physical is worth saving.

The Energyst way of life also provides justification for

creating a life that will inevitably lead to death. This occurs when the felt needs of the existing humans are more important than the needs of the unconceived. Once a conceived human is born, good parents must devote themselves to the newly born. Prior to conception, however, the existing humans are thinking of their own needs. Common needs of those considering procreation include: the need to validate one's parents; the need to nurture; the need to create a life purpose; the need to fit in; the need to ensure one's survival in old age; and, of course, the need to engage in sex and prove sexual prowess.

When it comes to reproduction, there are three possible combinations of humans in a bipolar world. The first is a couple who are both in touch with the material world. They are likely to agree with the premise that creating physical life subjects those who are created to physical suffering and death. If they are successful at resisting social and familial pressure, they have the nature and insight to avoid conception.

The second combination is composed of two individuals who are both more visceral. They may understand the physical implications of procreation, but they nevertheless will tend to follow their own instinctual needs and produce human life.

The third combination is made of individuals, one of whom relates to energy and the other to matter. In this case, compromise can be had which is no compromise at all. That is where the material individual would require zero procreation and the spiritual individual would require let's say ten offspring, for example. A compromise might be five. This is no compromise for the individual who prefers zero,

even though some progress has been made in saving lives.

Every human, even those who favor the energy realm, have the potential to understand what they are doing in the substantive world. So there is always hope that they can overcome their proclivity for instinctual reaction and be open to the physical implications for their future offspring.

Those who are materially limited or who have no prospects for the future, certainly no retirement or pension plans, feel pressure to create life to support themselves in old age, proving the old adage that misery likes company. Many surveys of different cultures and incomes show that those human beings who feel more secure about the future tend to create fewer human beings.

Unfortunately, those families living in impoverished conditions continue to expand. The only way to cause a modification of their behavior is to appeal on a social level and in a charismatic way where they are more likely to respond to the form and not to the substance of the argument. A situation that provokes an instinctual reaction on their part is required on a global scale that demands their attention and may cause them to question their beliefs and perhaps save the human race from extinction.

There is a certain number of people who may respond positively to this message. The calculation derives from the current population of the Earth of over seven billion people. Assume that one billion have not reached reproductive age and another billion are beyond their reproductive years. Of the remaining five billion, a few will not engage in reproductive relations, but that number is relatively small.

So conservatively assume that five billion would make two and a half billion couples with reproductive potential. As explained earlier, approximately one third of these couples, if randomly distributed, understand the implications of their actions and could reduce their procreative rate.

A third are more concerned with the spiritual and energy life side and will ignore the material implications. The final third will compromise and reduce the number of human beings that they may have created. This leads to the possibility of around one billion who are not be created. Therefore, the current projection of a global population of nine billion could be reduced to eight billion. This number still puts a huge stress on earth resources and continues the prospect of social conflict over territory and dominance, but at least it is proceeding in the right direction.

This outcome will only happen if couples put the needs of the human race before their own needs. This is possible if they have the capacity and information needed to admit the implications of their collective actions.

For those who are insecure about the physical world and take solace in the spiritual, it should be pointed out that when they create life in their image and likeness, they are playing god. If only god can create life, then only god can take life. Problems arise when humans make life; they then are under the impression that they are permitted to take life. Very often, this is the rationale used to justify religious and ethnic pogroms.

A distinction can be made between these two realities by asking the question: Who created you? If the answer is god, then the respondent has a spiritual orientation. If the answer

is "My parents", then it is safe to say there is a more secular mindset.

It may seem obvious to those of us who are more inclined to rational observations, but those who create life are condemning that life to death. A religionist will find consolation in the belief that the life they create will continue after death into their eternal reward. On the other hand, if there is no next life, then life, and all its attendant pain, is unnecessary.

There are those (not of a scientific mind) who say that an outlook like this threatens the existence of the species, and is "anti-life". The opposite is true. Reducing population growth will guarantee perpetuation of the species. More resources, less conflicts and smaller families will lead to less suffering and less death. All we can do is attempt to appeal to the more sentient parts of humanity, help them feel more secure and encourage them to reduce growth rates, save a billion lives, and ultimately save the planet.

History teaches us that deeply held convictions felt by the mass of humanity (but with no basis in the material world) can be changed. At one time, most believed that the earth was flat, that dark skinned people were inferior, and that women did not have the ability to vote. The time has come to challenge beliefs like the notion that physical death leads to spiritual reward. The conditions were now right to save billions of lives and I am in a position because of my notoriety to be deeply involved in achieving this goal.

Chapter 17

The World in the Balance

Pakistan and India exist in two separate realities since before the time when Pakistan was partitioned from India. To the present day, each culture is antagonistic toward the other, some would say as a result of their religious differences. My theory, based on the Taoist principle of yin and yang, is that one represents a more spiritual basis and the other is more materially oriented.

There are many theories as to the cause of the friction between the two, but there is no denying that each society is out to destroy the other. This conflict is a continuation of the history of the human race. The major deadly factor shared by these two societies in particular is that each possesses nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them. If a nuclear conflict should result, treaties have been established that would compel the other nuclear powers to come to their aid. This could easily escalate into a third and final world war. This is an inescapable result, yet humanity accepts it.

Recently tensions between the two countries have escalated beyond the usual animosity. Each has threatened the other with nuclear annihilation. My reputation as a nuclear

intervenor and unbiased observer being what it is, they agreed that I was to mediate between them. And for some reason, I was able to convince the leaders of both parties to attempt a face-to-face negotiation. My well-known approach is to accept the contrary nature of both cultures. This balanced view seems to appeal to both, at least in theory. As a result, they agreed to a summit meeting where a truce might be hammered out. At the very least, we might be able to delay Armageddon for a short time.

A neutral location for the meeting was necessary, so I chose Vilnius, Lithuania. My paternal grandmother was born in a village in that country and I wanted the opportunity to visit for the first time. Also, this is the region of the world where East meets West. Perhaps I could learn from the peoples of this area how the two realities have come together over the course of history, and if there is any hope for peaceful co-existence.

In the year 1908 at the age of 16, as I learned recently, my grandmother attended a wedding where she became acquainted with a young Lithuanian fellow her age who was living in the United States. He had traveled back to his homeland to attend the event. My grandmother decided to follow him to America. Her parents strenuously objected, but she had made up her mind. Two years later, she boarded a ship leaving behind her parents and her eight siblings. She would not see them again for 60 years.

After arriving in America, my grandmother married her love and they settled in western Massachusetts where my grandfather found employment as a furniture painter with a furniture manufacturer. Furniture making was a major

industry in their homeland, and continues to this day. They proceeded to produce two sons, my father and his brother. When the two boys were four years old and two years old, respectively, their father died at the age of thirty-two. Even after exhaustive research, I have not been able to determine his cause of death. There is some speculation it could have been influenza.

My grandmother, alone and poor, needed to find support quickly. An old friend of family relates that my grandmother narrowed her choice between a poor fellow who was nice to the kids and a less poor fellow who had a mean temper. She decided to marry the latter. He passed away from natural causes when the boys were in their 40s.

Because of my father's employment with the airlines, he was able to obtain discount tickets so that he could take his mother back to the land of her birth some sixty years after her departure. None of her siblings had ventured past the country's borders. After her one and only visit, she returned to the United States and passed away three years later in 1981.

My father and his mother had no interest in passing along stories from her youth. The family approach was a determination to blend in and leave their origins behind. Consequently, we knew very little of her life or family in the old country. After my father passed away, I became curious as to my roots.

Twenty years after my father's demise, we received a phone call from a woman residing in Florida who claimed her new husband was a relative of ours on my father's side of the

family. This was a surprise. She was a widow in her 80s who had gone on to the internet to find herself a new husband. They married and settled in Florida a few years before.

Even though her eyesight is poor, and he reads and speaks no English, they drove themselves north to attend her college reunion, not far from my hometown. Over the course of several days, they graciously reviewed hundreds of pictures and identified most of the subjects, whereupon I discovered the only picture that exists of my paternal great grandparents. My cousin says that my great grandfather died at the age of 114 after gathering his family around him so as to divide his property and relate his final words of advice.

It turns out that my cousin is the son of the sister of my grandmother. Shortly after we met him, his mother passed away in 2005 at ninety four years of age. She was the last of my grandmother's siblings to expire, and I never got to meet any of them.

My Florida cousin and his wife arranged to meet me at the Vilnius airport. The next few days we drove around the country and visited with relatives too numerous to remember. We were treated to many dinners with a variety of meats, liquors, and other foods including the "zeppelin" which is meat wrapped in a potato covering shaped like a blimp. The country impressed me as being similar to Switzerland without the mountains. It is quaint, small-scale and most people have the basic necessities. Construction was going on in the city financed mostly by the European Union.

The Soviet Union dominated the country until it was thrown out in 1991. My cousin's wife tells the story where as a

schoolgirl she was imprisoned by the Nazis for writing a poem they considered to be subversive. When the Soviet Union was approaching as the Nazis were in retreat, she and her fellow prisoners managed to escape from jail just before the invading army arrived.

We visited a memorial park where remnants of the Soviet occupation are on display including a cattle car used to exile prisoners to Siberia. In daily life, the occupation is still evident in massive Soviet architecture and a low standard of living compared to western Europe. They tell me that the worst result of the Soviet system is the deeply engrained habit of engaging in the black market and routinely conducting illegal activities. Corruption is still common and distrust pervades the national psyche.

The recent book titled "We Are Here Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust" (by Ellen Cassidy from U. of Nebraska Press 2012) attempts to understand the extermination of the Jewish people in Lithuania. She writes that "The Jews had to steal and cheat, conceal and cringe" which describes the experience of the Lithuanians in general under the Nazis, as well as the Soviets. She goes on to say that "Chronic fear and uncertainty made the Jews easier to control." This need to control is a pervasive element in the bipolar world.

Explaining current Lithuanian culture, Cassidy notes that "By 1991, when the Soviet Union collapsed, half a century under two regimes had turned Lithuania into a cauldron seething with competing martyrdoms, hatreds, and resentment." This goes a long way in laying the foundation for life today. Even though Lithuania has been occupied frequently over its history, it still retains a strong identity and national pride.

They extol their ancient language as having some elements of Sanskrit. While there is a pagan past, it is generally a Roman Catholic country. It seems that the old folks at least practice faith in their religion to retain some dignity and some hope. Those who I encountered are cynical about their prospects but, nevertheless, are happy to have survived the turmoil of the last few decades. The younger generation is plugged into the world, well educated, speaks English, and is generally optimistic about the future.

I only had time for a short visit. Fortunately, the country is relatively small and the road system is quite good with little traffic outside of the cities, so I was able to view many of the highlights. Among other locations, we visited the city of Kaunas, the Old Town section of Vilnius, Our Lady at the Gate of Dawn in Vilnius, and Vilnius University where a cousin of mine is studying medicine. She tells me that her studies are sufficiently advanced to qualify her to practice medicine in the states.

We also toured the remarkable Hill of Crosses where the Soviet occupiers when they first arrived removed a Christian cross a farmer had erected on the top of a hill. The story is proudly told that each time the Soviets removed a cross, more were planted in its place. Eventually, the authorities had no choice but to cease their futile actions. Today over 60,000 crosses are assembled on the Hill, with more being added every day. Most are left in remembrance of a loved one, in supplication for a miracle, or in reverence for their religion. The United Nations has declared the hill a World Heritage Site.

I found most people to be well-educated, well informed and

healthy (health care is free to all citizens). As of this date, the country has not adopted the euro as currency. As you might expect, given their history, there seems to be some skepticism about outside forces having influence over internal politics and culture.

Over thousands of years Lithuania has been overrun and controlled by its neighbors. In 1795 it was annexed by the Russian empire. After World War I, it was occupied by the Germans. The area around the capital of Vilna was briefly a free zone until the Poles annexed the city. The Soviet Union moved in, only to be pushed out by the Nazis during World War II. Then the Soviets recaptured the territory at the end of the war. And they were driven out by a popular uprising in 1991. This is another example where East meets West and conflicts result. The Lithuanian culture seems to be a mixture of some materialism and some religiosity. It remains to be seen if this combination will result in accommodation or conflict.

The Lithuania scholar and diarist Zelig Kalmanovitch noted that the struggles to keep the Jewish culture alive in Lithuania was "the clear victory of spirit over matter." Another validation of the bipolar model.

As you might expect, my grandmother's eight siblings produced a large number of cousins. They all seem to be doing well and I am hopeful that their standard of living improves. One sign of their education and confidence in the future is that all have produced small families of no more than

two or three offspring. This would tend to indicate a less spiritually based approach which bodes well for their material progress.

Chapter 18

A Personal Death March

A cousin on my mother's side was imprisoned by the Nazis after they invaded Poland. He is a Polish Catholic.

Apparently, the Nazis were afraid that the authority of the Pope might supersede their own sense of superiority. Here again, the need for the material reality to dominate spiritual reality led to mass destruction. This is his story.

My name is Joseph. I was born in 1927 in a small rural town in Poland. It is nestled in the foot hills south of Kraków with a river flowing near it. A steep road serves as an entrance to the town square and the elementary school where I received my first diploma. To the left of the square stands an historical church which was built in the 13th century. The remains of a stone tower which served as a defensive fort in the past looms over the river nearby.

Though our family was poor, we were very happy. My mother was a strong willed and religiously devote woman who was instrumental in instilling a deep Roman Catholic faith in all her children. She bore twelve children in a twenty-five year span. My father was a caring and devoted family man. My fondest memories are those of my childhood spent with my siblings.

Sadly, we never had the opportunity to be raised as a whole family under one roof. During the war in 1942 my oldest

sister was taken to Germany to work. In 1943 at the age of sixteen I went to Warsaw to work in my uncle's carpentry shop. Little did I know that I would not see my family again for a long time. This was the time of the Jewish ghetto uprisings and my uncle was part of the underground movement against the Germans. Many Poles risked their lives hiding Jews knowing that the penalty was death. The summer of 1944 was most memorable for me. The Russian front was nearing Warsaw and Russian radio was urging poles to take up arms against Germany. On August 1, 1944, the Warsaw uprising began

Even though I was not part of the underground, I was forced to act as a messenger and was assigned to assist a machine gun operator. Armed with two homemade grenades and two ammo belts, we proceeded to our post in a potato field only to find that the machine gun was jammed and rusted. Nevertheless, we ran to where action was happening on a street where the Germans had their warehouse. My superior instructed me to wait in front of a house across from the warehouse. While dodging gunfire, I witnessed one of our men blown apart by his own handmade grenade.

About 10 minutes later the gunfire grew weaker and I decided to go inside the entrance of the house. Though the family present was furious with my intrusion, I stood my ground. A few minutes later, I looked through the window and saw several Germans armed with submachine guns approach the warehouse. I did not dare use the two homemade grenades. Instead, I went to the yard and buried them. I searched my pockets and to my surprise I found two machine gun bullets which I also buried. To this day I don't know how they got

there.

I spent that night in the yard next to a masonry wall fence behind some vines. It rained that night and a kind-hearted man from the house brought me a sack to keep me warm. The next morning I decided to leave my hiding place and proceeded back to my uncle's shop. On the way back, I was stopped by Germans, searched and released. Had I had the two machine gun bullets in my pocket I would have been shot on the spot.

During the uprising, the Germans bombed the city systematically, destroying every building, block by block, leaving only rubble behind. When our block was next to be demolished, the Germans appeared in tanks and, using loudspeakers, urged civilians to get out. We proceeded to leave and were ushered to a train destined for a holding place outside of Warsaw. On the way there the train stopped in several places. At one of the stations I noticed my uncle and his partner were talking to the local women and children. The moment the train started, my uncle and his partner slipped into the group of women without being noticed by the German guards. I was now left alone.

I met my aunt at the holding center, but we were soon separated. My aunt, her sister, and her two children, along with other mothers with their children and men over 60, were ushered in one direction, while younger men and women (ages 16 to 60) were directed in the opposite direction. We were herded into boxcars and endured a several-day train ride destined for the concentration camp in Austria called Mauthausen.

After the train stopped, we walked several miles to the camp and, upon arrival, the men and women were separated. We were ordered to give up all our valuables and documents for safekeeping and then stripped naked. Our heads were shaved bald, and we were given numbers to replace our names. Our dignity and freedom were taken away.

Chapter 19

The Death March Continues

For about two weeks we were kept naked for so-called quarantine purposes. At night we were given a blanket and allowed to sleep on a concrete floor with some straw scattered around. We slept only on our sides since there was no room to turn or sleep on our backs. In the morning, we returned the blankets and were left naked of the rest of the

day. For breakfast we were given a small bowl of liquid "coffee". The accounting of prisoners took place twice a day in the morning and late afternoon. I recall one such morning when three SS men were present and one had a camera. I decided not to look at them. They were maybe twenty feet away from our line of prisoners. I was about forty feet to the right from their view. Since I did not look at them, I was not aware that they took a picture of our line. I found out later, however, that they did.

After two weeks we were finally clothed with underwear, striped pants and a jacket. Then we were made to endure a long march to an associated work camp at Gusen II. During the first few days we were assigned to triple bunk beds with each bed holding three prisoners. In case of escape, they shaved a strip of hair on the center of our heads, front to back, for easy identification. To my knowledge, however, no one ever escaped from this camp.

I was initially assigned to building tunnels in a mountain, shoveling sand and stone onto a conveyor belt. The conditions inside the tunnel were bearable compared to the outside where temperatures dropped during the mid-October night shifts. Fortunately, after two months I was assigned to

the special contingent comprising young boys aged 12 to 15. We numbered three hundred and twenty-five (of which 17 were Poles and the rest were Jews).

The new group was responsible for cleaning barracks and washing and cutting beets and potatoes for the camp kitchens. I was assigned to washing potatoes in two large concrete bins. Though the work was exhausting, it was better than cutting and cleaning the potatoes where the prisoners were beaten with rubber hoses. My legs were constantly wet from the work. The cold conditions left me vulnerable and I developed open sores and swollen legs.

The men in charge were the chief "capo" and two assistants, both prisoners (a Spaniard and a Pole). We had alternating day and night shifts every month. Our workplace and kitchens were separated from the main camp area. I can vividly recall incidences that occurred.

Once a Russian prisoner was caught picking remnants from the potatoes which was forbidden. They beat him mercilessly with a whip, tied his pants at the ankles, and drenched him with cold water before pushing him out into the cold outdoors.

The front and rear doors of our barracks were always guarded by one of the prisoners. On one occasion the front guard asked me to bring him a bowl of washed potatoes. At about twenty feet from the door, an SS man walked in and started to yell at me. I ran to my station and dumped the potatoes into the basin. The SS man was shouting "halt", but I disobeyed. The chief capo started punching my face. The front guard warned me to keep quiet. The episode

ended with ten hose lashes to my back. The front guard later told me he had never seen a man stay alive after disobeying. I should have been shot on the spot. He shook his head and said someone is watching over me.

One of the vivid memories I have was how addiction affects people even in a harsh environment. A friend of mine and I were in the main camp passing by the washroom. We saw a young Pole offering his daily ration of bread in exchange for one cigarette. This really surprised me, so I asked "Why are you so irrational?" He answered "I know I will not last long in this place, so my wish is to have a last puff." Then and there I vowed that I would not be a slave of habits. Cigarettes and extra bread were given to prisoners working in the underground factory making military fighter planes.

Days dragged on. When I was working the night shift and slept during the day, one of the boys had a loose bowel movement and could not make it to the toilet, letting go on the barracks floor. The man in charge ordered the boy to be drowned. The boy, a Hungarian Jew, was screaming for his life. They dunked him into a barrel of water. He came up for air a few times, but after a while there was no struggle and he was presumed drowned. A few hours later, however, he regained consciousness and was allowed to live. The lack of oxygen must have affected his mind to the point that he lost all fear.

Beatings were common. I was beaten for not having a Jewish mark (a yellow strip) on my jacket. Fortunately, my two friends vouched for me, telling the guards that I was a Pole.

One evening an older prisoner was tied and hung from the ceiling by his hands. They kept him in that position all night. By morning he was either unconscious or dead. Death was very commonplace. We had approximately 400 to 600 deaths per day (about 15,000 per month). The population of the camp was 15,000 prisoners. A friend and I passed a pile of corpses one day. One of the men on the pile started to talk to us in Polish. He told us who he was and where he came from. He was very calm and composed. Lying on the snow, he was numb. We had no pencil and paper to write, and I forget this man's name.

I found out later that Gusen II was the worst in Mauthausen. A friend of mine who was in Gusen I (1/4 mile from Gusen II) told me that they had self help among prisoners. If a prisoner went out of line, however, he was sent to Gusen II to be finished off.

During the winter months it was commonplace to get rid of prisoners who could no longer work by stripping them of their clothes, giving them a blanket, and lining them up in the washroom at night. Upon entering the building, a prisoner was hit with an ax or a hammer on the head. A second person would catch the falling body and dunk his head into a barrel of water.

In the early spring of 1945 they got rid of prisoners by placing them without clothes into a special sick barracks. When nightfall came, they were forced outdoors barefoot and left there for the night. How could anyone withstand the outdoors barefoot with snow on the ground?

Sanitary conditions were atrocious: no soap or towels, one

pair of underwear, a pair of pants and a jacket per person. Consequently, we had big problems with bedbugs. I tried to kill as many as I could find in my clothes, but it was a losing battle since the bugs would crawl all over to me from the other prisoners at night. When the main barracks were fumigated for three days, we shared our barracks with other prisoners. Ten prisoners in each bed. Thirty per three-tier bunk bed.

We were forced to work continuously those three days. On the third night I was so tired I was falling asleep on my feet. I received permission for quick nap, squeezed through a window (all windows were open even in winter) and slipped under a bunk bed. When I woke up, I was half paralyzed from the cold coming through the open window. To this day I feel pain on my left side. By March of 1945 I developed open-sores on my legs from the knees down and then the legs started to swell and remain that way. Toward the end of April my legs were like balloons. Touching them they felt like dough. When I pressed on the swollen area, the skin would not spring back.

In March and April, allied bombers were hitting targets in the city of Lintz, about 15 miles from Gusen II. The atmosphere became more relaxed and we surmised that the end of the war was near.

Finally, on May 5, 1945, at 5 PM, armored tanks showed up behind the main gate of the prison. The first tank's hatch opened and a black head appeared. We knew they were not Germans and all hell broke loose. People were running in all directions. Some prisoners got hold of machine guns and sought revenge. Since the months of March and April were more relaxed, prisoners were not killed off as before.

Several thousand prisoners were bedridden. Many prisoners died by eating too much rich food from the Army rations. Once the Red Cross took over, things improved.

I and many other prisoners left the camp that late afternoon and walked to Lintz, approximately 15 miles away. We stayed there for about two weeks. When the Americans informed us that the Russians were going to take over Austria and offered to transport us to an American zone, we did not hesitate. We landed in a refugee camp in Nuremberg.

After 2 to 3 weeks in a refugee camp, I had an opportunity to work for the American Army. About 30 former prisoners were accepted in this Polish labor company. We were employed in the US Army supply depot. Since I was not in good physical shape, I was assigned light-duty jobs such as cleaning tables and sweeping the dining room floor. I was grateful for the medical care offered by the US Army. It took about a year to heal my leg. The sores do come back once in a while. The problem was caused by malnutrition.

In 1946 we were released from this labor force and immediately joined a Polish guard company guarding US Army depots. In July 1947, this work assignment was terminated. I landed back in a refugee camp in Bamberg, near Nuremberg.

Chapter 20

American Dream

Since I only finished grade school in Poland (no higher education was allowed Poland during the war), I decided to enter high school. I was 20 years old. By my sophomore year, March 1949, I had an opportunity to emigrate to the US. My sponsor was a farmer from Iowa. With no formal education, no vocation, and no knowledge of English, I landed in the heart of farm country. I was used to farm work, but

it was hard not being able to communicate. There were no schools of any kind teaching English. The work on the farm was twelve to fourteen hours a day (about eight hours in the field and the rest was devoted cattle and chickens).

In December 1949, I decided to leave the farm and move to Detroit, Michigan. At that time I found out that I had to register with the draft board. Detroit was a hard place to find a job, so I relocated to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where I found a job in a bakery. In July, 1950, I received a draft notice from the Army in Detroit.

As I was in Milwaukee, I asked the board to transfer the papers there. On December 11, 1950, I was inducted into the Army and assigned to the signal corps. After completing basic training at Camp Gordon, Georgia, I was sent to signal corps school at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, to take a course in signal radio communication. I had a hard time convincing the company commander that I could manage the course. The school work was conducted eight hours a day on week days with an additional six hours on Saturday. Since I was not a party man, I usually studied at night. I was fortunate to meet three fine gentleman with higher education who were married and did not care about going out for a good time. These three men accepted me into their circle. Since we were in the same class, I was fortunate to take advantage of their help. After nine months of lectures

and discussions for 12 to 14 hours a day, I progressed well

During my stay in the Army I enrolled into high school correspondence courses. At the end of two years in the signal Corps, I passed the high school equivalency exam. This gave me a chance to apply to engineering school on the G.I. Bill. I enrolled at the Indiana Institute of Technology in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I failed the entrance exam, but, being a veteran, the school gave me special high school refresher courses. My average for freshman year was 2.5. My senior year I managed to achieve a 4.0 average. For the four years of civil engineering college, my average was 3.3.

After graduation in 1956, I found employment at Nussbaumer and Clarke Engineers in Buffalo, New York. There I met my wife who was also from Poland. We were married in 1957 and have two children. We are both grateful to be able to raise a loving family without the threat of war or separation. In 1960 I started working for the city of Buffalo where I stayed for twenty-five years. In 1985 I retired from civil service and went into private civil engineering practice.

In 1966 I visited my family twenty-three years after I left Poland and five years after my father passed away. In 1992, I retired on Social Security. I thank God every day for my life and my family

Sometime in the 1980s, I happened to meet a Polish visitor to the United States who previously traveled throughout Europe, including Austria. I spoke about my past ordeals during the war and mentioned the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. He was intrigued because his father died there. He had visited the camp and described the museum which is erected in the memory of fallen prisoners. He then showed me the

museum's brochure which includes the pictures of prisoners. Browsing through the brochure, I was stunned to find my group from Warsaw and, on closer inspection, I recognized myself standing the third from the right.

It is hard to describe the emotions that came over me. It was like reliving the moment when three SS men taking the photographs (pictures that I was not sure existed). This coincidence seems unbelievable, and yet, at the same time, it is absolutely true. The same could be said the Mauthausen Concentration Camp.

That ends my cousin's account.

Chapter 21

The Ultimate Conflict

The India Pakistan conference was held at a hotel a short walk from Old Town in Vilnius. The animosity by Pakistan toward its neighbor is still strong resulting from the partition of the country when it is estimated that one million Pakistanis perished. In terms of genocide, this is a small number. In recent history, the Chinese cultural revolution is estimated at having eliminated up to 78 million lives. It is said that the Stalinists in Russia wiped out up to 23 million. The Nazis eradicated 17 million.

These are only three of the worst examples of genocide in history of the world. If you have hope, then you might say that things can only get better. But it seems to me that if we continue to avoid the problem then the cause only gets stronger.

It is important to note that genocide only occurs when large numbers of people cause it to happen. Figures like Mao or Stalin or Hitler may instigate and encourage lethal behavior, but they are not able to accomplish their exterminations without committed followers.

My theory about the conflict between material and spiritual may not apply to the differences between India and Pakistan. This hatred seems to result from extreme adherence to the

Muslim and Hindu religions. Whatever the cause, a substantial number of people have lost their lives as a result of the need of one religious group to dominate another. This is not uncommon in world history. It appears that extremes, no matter what reality they exist in, can cause harm within their worlds, as well as in opposition to the other reality.

As the conference was about to get underway, I was pulled aside by an older Pakistani gentlemen from the delegation. Speaking in hushed tones, he confided in me that the Pakistani military was about to launch a preemptive nuclear strike against India within the hour. My worst fears had been realized! What were they thinking! How could this possibly be stopped? He admitted that he had no answers, only that his government sensed a vulnerability in India and intended to take advantage of it. He claimed that the action was inevitable and would be welcomed by the majority of his fellow countrymen. I would not accept this.

Immediately I called together the Pakistani delegation and demanded that they contact their government and their military and have the mission terminated. The delegation leader was in his seventies, spoke with a British accent, and had a deliberate and unflappable demeanor. He acted surprised and claimed that he had no knowledge of this matter and were just as shocked as I was. Furthermore, he advised me not to overreact. He had to have known, at least if he was in touch with material reality, that if I went public with this information, the Indian government would launch their own preemptive strike.

They seemed out of touch with the physical reality that if Pakistan attacked, then India would retaliate and both sides

would be decimated. They were more in touch with a spiritual notion that they would be rewarded in the next life. Regardless of which reality they experienced, the other nuclear powers would be obligated to defend each side, presumably with the ultimate force. This could not be allowed to happen.

In desperation, I contacted the UN Secretary-General and the US Secretary of State (both of whom were in attendance), pledging each to secrecy, hoping that they could exert some influence and allow cooler heads to prevail. These contacts had to be done behind the scenes so as not to trigger a response from India.

Determined to keep up public appearances of normalcy, I decided to go ahead with my participation in the conference even though I was only going through the motions. The absurdity of the situation is evident when you realize that Pakistan is bringing physical destruction upon itself. How can such irrational behavior be justified by the aggressor? Probably with the belief that they will be entitled to a spiritual reward.

In a moment of clarity, I realized that I had to threaten the Pakistanis that I would reveal their planned strike to the Indian side. The Pakistanis might be persuaded to back off if at any moment an attack was about to be launched against them. I asked the delegation leader to issue my threat to the Pakistani military in which I included a deadline. Otherwise, they might have time to put their plans into action. I gave them one hour. He agreed to pass along the message.

One hour arrived with no response. At that point I asked the

delegation to accompany me to the function room where the Indians were meeting. My intent was to reveal what I had learned while the Pakistanis were monitoring over my cell phone. This was enough to convince them to hold fire. The crisis was temporarily averted, but certainly not permanently eradicated.

Human beings seem to be adaptable, even to the worst of conditions. They want to believe in the future. Tolerant of aberrant behavior, they are infinitely patient with the most debilitating of circumstances. Maybe we have come to the point where we should not tolerate widespread genocidal behavior. Maybe we should face the causes and implement preventive measures.

Therefore, I propose to lessen death and suffering by changing our consciousness, looking at life in a different way, and taking control of our future. I decided that I would no longer tolerate the death of our children for the benefit of their parents who need to face the facts of physical existence. Every human being has the intellectual capacity to contemplate such a world if only they are encouraged to do so.

Chapter 22

Visitors

It all started with a phone call I received from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. By this time I am living in Southern California with my wife, her mother, her son and her daughter-in-law.

The Secretary-General indicated that my presence was requested at U.N. headquarters in New York, where I have been asked to participate "in an historic event of unprecedented importance," apparently not one in which he had any control. He was not able to give any details over the phone.

Over the years, I consulted with the United Nations on a number of problems where large numbers of people were subject to mass annihilation. Surprisingly, there are not a lot of people who specialize in this area. Most people seem absorbed with their immediate problems, ignoring the forest

for the leaves.

Here again, a distinction reveals itself between the two worlds of human life. One side tends to relate better to individuals and the other side to the group. We all contribute to collective action, but are often unaware of the consequences beyond our personal needs and experiences.

Since setting up shop in California, my notoriety has expanded to where my website consistently draws a good number of visitors. (See Appendix) My observations on the site are free to view. Anyone who wants to make a comment must pay a nominal fee. Not surprisingly, most comments are negative. It seems the energy types can not refrain from expressing their fears, anxieties and doubts, even though I contend that the linear logic of the written word usually appeals more to the Physicalist.

The more I attempt to explain the material world, the more I provoke those in the world of energy who accuse me of being everything from anti-Christ to anti-life to cold and heartless.

Every time I point out that an unconceived life will not suffer and die, I make sure to advise everyone they should forgive their parents. And parents should ask forgiveness of their children. Those that do offer and receive forgiveness have written me to say that they have experienced a profound sense of relief. Those who refuse to acknowledge the inevitable almost always express their fervent belief in divine intervention and eternal reward.

Those who agree with my observations are asked to sign a pledge on my website where they commit to considering the implications of a conscious decision to create life. So far,

over ten million individuals have publicly declared their recognition of the physical fact that they can guarantee their offspring will not suffer and die if they are not created. Although this fact of physical existence may seem obvious, it still is vehemently contested and rejected by half of the population. Most countries whose inhabitants have little hope of survival in any security or longevity are resisting this point of view.

This phenomenon is similar to times in history when deeply held, long lasting beliefs were challenged. If history is any guide, beliefs will slowly change, although at the moment, my views seem more radical than most, since they go to the question of life itself. Perhaps what we need is a more objective, even other-worldly, perspective to bring some understanding into the debate between those who rely on thought and those who rely on instinct. I admit that the thought that a parent has condemned their child to death is impossible for most people to accept.

Upon arrival in New York, I was ushered into the Secretary's office at United Nations headquarters where small group of people were gathered around a conference table. The Secretary General introduced me and proceeded to inform me that the United Nations had received a communication from outer space wherein I was asked to represent the Earth to intelligent life residing in a galaxy not our own.

Chapter 23

Another Perspective

I am not someone who has given a great deal of thought to the possibility of interplanetary life. When I was told this astonishing news, the only thing that came to my mind was a quote from Carl Sagan who said that if we discover them, we are probably the more advanced, but if they discover us, they are probably the more advanced. This made sense to me, but it really didn't answer the question as to why of all the people on earth I was asked to represent the planet.

One reason the group could come up with is that I was in news broadcasts which the visitors were probably monitoring. Others thought that it might have to do with my observations concerning the bipolar nature of human existence. Whatever the reason, I was quite shocked at this development. Since I am by nature very attached to the planet, there was no way I was going to leave the surface of our world to engage in a contact of this nature. On the other hand, I was uncomfortable in arranging a meeting on the surface. Some humans from either reality might react badly. Also there

was an understandable concern among the group about allowing an advanced species access to our atmosphere.

So I suggested we form a delegation, and proposed the meeting take place on the moon. For some reason, I remembered that NASA could accommodate six passengers on a re-supply mission to the International Space Station. We decided that the delegation of six individuals would be comprised of three women and three men from various regions of the planet.

On a map of the world, we divided up the landmasses into six convenient regions. All of the regions contained countries that were in conflict. Humanity's dual nature being what it is, this was unavoidable. Hopefully, this occasion might bring the planet together. At the least, it will cause the human race to view human existence from a wide-ranging perspective.

We can came up with names of individuals we thought would be acceptable to most, but certainly not all, inhabitants of each region. Each would be asked to participate and each would be asked to supply an alternate of the same gender in the event they were not able to complete the training.

While this may seem arbitrary and presumptuous, we could think of no other way of selecting representatives that would take less time and be less contentious.

The secretary called NASA and requested a postponement of the next launch until an announcement could be made. Each of the six candidates to act as emissaries were contacted and asked if they were interested and if they were able to

physically endure a trip to the moon.

After overcoming their initial shock, each agreed to the conditions. One week would be allowed to get one's affairs in order and one week would be devoted to training as required by the space agency.

A press conference was called the next morning where the secretary announced to the world that we had been contacted by beings not of this Earth. And that a delegation had been selected to represent the planet.

As you might expect, the announcement reverberated through every person on the planet. Based on my bipolarity theory, two general reactions ensued. One was of confirmation that these creatures existed and that they might teach us something. The other reaction is a more visceral one that included superstition, panic and disbelief. As in all things human, these reactions confirmed the existence of two different human realities.

Space travel is not something I was looking forward to. I would prefer to remain on the planet and protect the natural environment. At the same time, the visitors may be able to supply some information as to how we can eliminate the major problems that confront us. So I was persuaded to head the delegation.

As a way to involve the peoples of the Earth, I suggested the UN set up a website where everyone could submit questions that we would pass along to the visitors

This new development of engaging those from another planet gave all humans the opportunity to see the world from a

distance and from other-worldly perspective. There was a possibility that differences among people would seem less important from afar.

For those who are not familiar with my observations, being selected as a planetary representative would give me the global exposure that I was hoping for. It certainly added to my status as a public figure who apparently had good intentions regarding the species. It remains to be seen whether those from another planet actually were aware of my observations about human life. The question arose as to whether they would need an internet service provider to view my website!

Because of my expanded popularity, my ideas began to take on a large-scale dimension. Millions more visited my website and took a pledge to reduce their procreation by at least one individual. This brought my work of saving lives to a new level.

Beginning in Southeast Asia saving 100,000, I went on to save 250,000 in DC, and billions between India and Pakistan. Now hundreds of millions around the world are taking a pledge to reduce the number of humans they would create. My goal of saving one billion people is within reach. That would mean one billion fewer deaths that had to be endured by those who did not ask to be born. The planet is being pulled back from the abyss of destruction and the human species is saved from extinction.

While billions still suffer and die, many more are reconsidering their belief in an afterlife. This causes despair

in those who rely on hope, but it has also given a sense of satisfaction to those who trust in their own physical senses. They can finally admit what humans have known since we evolved from animals: That the way to save lives is to keep them from being created. That revelation is finally taking hold which means the pain and suffering of physical existence will finally be lessened, and those who are created will live a longer, happier and more meaningful existence.

Chapter 24

Conclusions

So, my initial assumption that the greatest human achievement of saving lives is not shared by everyone. A substantial number of humans apparently find spiritual survival to be more important. And their belief systems have convinced them that the only way to achieve spiritual reward is by way of physical existence. If the afterlife does exist, then human suffering and demise can be justified. If the hopefulness of an afterlife was created by religious

leaders to justify human suffering, then they have needlessly caused distress to countless generations.

My concern is not only the prospect (and witness) of death, but the pain and suffering that must be endured so as to presumably merit an eternal reward. If that reward is not forthcoming, then the suffering each generation guarantees to its offspring is not only unnecessary, but unconscionable. Only time will tell.

It also appears (for those who place more value on appearances than substance) from the story just presented to you that the only way to save the planet and life on it is to appeal to those who find the physical to be less important than the spiritual. The way to do this is to avoid the substance of the problem and focus on the form. Those who regard the ephemeral to be more important will respond to dramatic and frightful events such as the prospect of invasion of an alien, be they from another country or another planet.

Those who are more in touch with the physical do not need any convincing. They already appreciate the importance of the material world. They are less likely to rely on religious beliefs or inherited superstitions. Those who live in the world of energy and light place less emphasis on the substance of an argument and more emphasis on the need to calm fears and maintain a sense of security derived from familiarity and predictability.

Freedom is a highly touted goal for most people on earth. Americans prize our freedom of religion, of assembly, of free expression. On the other hand, we are not free to choose

where we are born, who we are born to, and when we are born. Some people are quite content to live without this freedom and impart this fatalism to their children. They would rather be told what to do, what to think, and how to behave. Even the U.S. Constitution does not provide for freedom of thought which, presumably, could be used for subversive purposes.

Furthermore, freedom not only means freedom from government interference, but also freedom from social interference. Freedom for some also means the freedom to imagine the world substantially different than the one we have inherited.

The writer George Bernard Shaw once observed: "The reasonable man adapts to the world. The unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man." (Man and Superman 1903).

It is quite evident that social systems can lose their meaning and relevance. Religions can become outmoded. Social conventions come and go, and knowledge is expanded. Freedom of thought to conceive of substantially different modes of behavior, not to mention improved attitudes, values, and beliefs, is well within the realm of human imagination.

The human animal has evolved to the point where we can now question religious beliefs that discourage us from evolving. The concept of human evolution is probably prohibited in most religions because if thought evolves then the followers may reject religious concepts established thousands of years ago when science was in its infancy. We

now have the ability to question beliefs and progress within the knowledge that we can control our own destiny.

The future of humanity can be assured if we acknowledge that we are dealing with two realities. On the one hand, we can point out the inevitable demise of the physical person and, on the other hand, the need to appeal to those who live their lives in fear. We who tend to reside in the physical can assure those in the ephemeral that the physical nature of their being is transitory and can be accepted without jeopardizing the lives of their offspring.

In order to save future generations, we need those living in both realities to realize that they reduce pain and save lives by not creating them. One way to do this is by appealing both to the intellect and emotion in a dramatic and convincing manner. There does not appear to be any alternative way to lessen the impact of population growth. Millions will continue to suffer and die prematurely because we cannot control the instincts that drive us in a futile attempt to survive on an individual basis. This individual focus tends to cause mass annihilation as one group of people struggles to destroy others they view as a danger to their own survival.

One of the hardest lessons to learn is that too much of a good thing is bad. The common wisdom states that too much of a good thing can be bad. But that is not correct. Too much good results in detrimental outcomes. The survival instinct that established the human race is resulting in large numbers of premature deaths caused by resource depletion and territorial disputes.

My involvement with weapons of mass destruction and my witness to incidents of genocide throughout history lead me to

the conclusion that we are fighting with ourselves in a futile attempt to survive. We need to realize that what we are doing and come to terms with our existence as a result of our bipolar nature. We need to resist current thinking and end our journey to oblivion. Otherwise, we will continue to accept mass destruction as long as it does not impinge upon our individual survival. This is no longer acceptable.

The current economic system that dominates our lives teaches us that there is only one cost to any product or service. There are in fact two other costs that the system does not take into account: the cost to society and the cost to the natural environment. Each individual action contributes to these costs. Therefore, individuals continue to take actions that may be insignificant on an individual basis but that have enormous consequences on the larger world. The economic system does not discourage the destructive impact of our individual action. Consequently, humanity is its own worst enemy. We as a society must take into account all costs to reduce damage to the natural environment. This requires that humanity learn lessons from the past. This can only be done on an individual basis that result in collective salvation. Paradoxically, humanity had ways to reduce the effects of creation early on, but was struggling as a species for survival. We have to move beyond our primal tendencies and assert ourselves with the knowledge that group action will save us as long as we reduce the number of human beings. This will lessen conflict, improve the quality of life for those who exist, and ensure the survival of the species. The only way that this can be accomplished is by appealing to those who live in both realities. If we are successful, then someday even the soulful will find procreation less appealing. We have no alternative.

It is often difficult to bring up these issues in casual conversation. Americans do not like to be seen as negative or pessimistic or serious. We prefer to be optimistic and positive with hope in the future. Unfortunately, existing humans often use their children to justify their own existence just as they gave hope to their parents. It is time to face the fact that human existence is a hopeless proposition. We must not continue to use our children in a futile attempt at what religions referred to as eternal life for ourselves and well as for them.

Once we were used by our parents to fill their needs. Now we are using our children for the same purpose. We can take action to avoid the demise of future offspring if we accept the consequences of our actions. This change of consciousness will not come easily and will not be adopted by everyone unless an earth-shattering event gets their attention. Convinced of the error of their ways, those who view life through a light filled prism will embrace life in a new way. Maybe my observations, based on ancient observations and generic understandings, can begin a historical transformation.

Appendix

Observations Posted on the Internet

(Author's Note: The following is an essay I posted on the internet (www.HumanExistence.webs.com) where anyone wanting to make a comment is charged a nominal fee. Most comments are negative, but those who live in the world of energy can't seem to restrain their need for self expression. The site also includes a pledge where a couple can promise to save the life of their offspring by resisting the urge to create them.)

A non-religious theory as to the origins and continuation of human existence

My intention is not to offend anyone with my beliefs. Neither do I wish to debate nor defend them, nor convert anyone to my perspective on human life. I simply wish to find others who see the human condition as I do.

We as a species are now sufficiently advanced to go beyond our instinctual basis as animals to a more intellectual

capability. This shift in consciousness allows us to predict the consequences of our actions, modify our behavior and change the way we conduct our lives. As a result, we are no longer required to follow patterns established as we were progressing through the various stages of existence. We can now make conscious decisions to resist social, cultural and physical influences and eliminate human suffering and death.

There are those who will disagree with my view. This does not make them wrong. They are living in a reality that is different than mine. It is important to realize that there are two realities and that both are legitimate. Human beings live in two worlds recognized by the ancient Buddhist precepts of yin and yang. That is, all human beings are composed of both physical and emotional elements.

There are many other ways to describe these components: male and female (as in traits, not gender); facts and feelings; west and east; earth and heaven; outer-directed and inner-directed; tangible and intangible; intellectual and instinctual, linear and circular, singular and holistic. This bipolar model also relates to the north and south poles of the planet. In all these examples, each "side" relies on the other, and is dependent on the other. They can be referred to as "opposites", and can develop a tension that at its extreme devolves into a conflictual relationship. This could explain many of the clashes we see throughout human history.

Scientists refer to these elements as matter and energy. This discovery happens to be a key to the functioning of an atomic bomb. The book "The Tao of Physics" by Fritjof Capra

shows how western science and eastern mysticism can be used to explain these life forces. Just as this insight has the potential to end all life, it also has the potential to explain all life.

Those who are more in touch with the tangible world I refer to as "physicalists", and those who are more in touch with the non-tangible, I call "energyists."

For purposes of understanding human existence, I conclude that this model works well, and I hold that each of these worlds, the tangible and the non-tangible, are of equal importance, and that one is not superior to the other.

The equality of our polarities is a difficult premise to maintain because, without the physical, the nonphysical would not be manifest. The world of energy as in emotion, spirit, light, feeling, etc., is dependent on the physical to be realized using the physical senses. This leads to the conclusion that the material has more value than the emotional. We see this preference to an extreme in Western societies that value physical comfort and bodily survival as important, and in Eastern societies that value religious doctrine and spiritual survival as paramount.

Energyists may argue that the physical world is not necessary to establish the existence of the spiritual. I contend that a human being must exist in the physical realm in order for any theory to be constructed. In order to put forth an idea, a person must exist as a physical entity, and to enter the spiritual world, according to all religions that I know of, a person must first come to be on the material plane.

This seems to be the basis of all religious thought: That

spiritual life only comes to us when we exist in the physical dimension. Most religionists, however, would probably disagree with that idea. That, of course, is to be expected since they are more in touch with the spiritual side of life. By their very nature, they are inclined to relate to life more strongly in the intangible realm, even if it defies rational logic. Logic being more characteristic of the physicalists.

This leads me to my first observation that half the human race all of the time, or all of the human race half of the time, will not accept: That god did not create humans, but that humans created god.

Those who disagree with this will react in ways that are appropriate and expected from an energyist point of view. Others who are more inclined toward the physical can see why my conclusion is necessary.

Through no fault of our own, we humans find ourselves thrust into physical existence at birth. As far as I am able to determine, all major belief systems contend that we did not exist before conception and that the purpose of our physical experience is to reach a spiritual reward. According to religionists, if there is nothing after physical death, then there would be no purpose to physical existence. Consequently, energyists have had to create what they call an afterlife to justify human existence.

I contend, as would any physicalist, that we come into tangible existence when two existing humans engage in a sexual act. The motivation for this activity (in physical terms) is generally accepted to be one or a combination of the following: the sex drive; the need to nurture; the need to

lessen pain; the need to find pleasure; the need to ensure comfort in old age, among others. All of these needs are those of the existing humans. None apply to the human that is produced because of them. The unconceived human's needs are rarely if ever taken into account. Consequently, the rights of the unconceived are not acknowledged and respected.

Most good parents are adamant that one of their most important goals as parents is to minimize the pain and suffering of their offspring. Parents everywhere would do anything to avoid witnessing their child's demise.

I can give them a 100% guarantee that their children will never suffer and never die. Where in human life is anything guaranteed, especially something so important? The only action necessary by the existing humans to achieve this worthy goal is that they not conceive. If they have no offspring, then their offspring will not suffer pain and they will not experience death.

This may seem patently obvious to individuals in touch with the physical world, but it does not seem to be acceptable to most humans. One possible explanation for this denial is that existing humans are in so much pain or are so blinded by our own needs that we, by and large, are unable to agree to this fundamental fact of (physical) life.

Since humans evolved from animals, we have had to follow our instincts (another characteristic of the energy side of life) through most of our existence. Relatively recently in human evolution we have become able to predict the outcome of our actions and to modify our behavior, especially as it relates to

the physical world.

We, as a species, are now in a position to reduce and even eliminate the need to bear children. Nevertheless, we are still subjected to powerful forces, some innate and others social, that attempt to control our behavior.

For example, we are born with an overwhelming need to return to the womb. What else explains a child's fixation on the place from which it originated. This fixation leads us to conclude that our parents must have had our best intentions in mind when they created us in their image and likeness.

Our parents played god as they decided when, where, and with whom to create us. They based their actions not on knowledge, because humans do not have the ability to predict the future. Rather, they based their decision (or more likely their unthinking behavior) on their needs. Needs that have to be met even at the unavoidable eventuality that their offspring would suffer and die because of them.

How is this action commonly justified? Well, the reasoning goes (for those who rely on reason), our parents did it to us, so it must be acceptable. And everyone is doing it, so it can't be wrong. The most pervasive and overarching motivation, however, is that life is so intolerable, that anything or anyone who gives us a modicum of pleasure is worth the agony that they will have to suffer as a result of their physical existence. Besides, they can have kids to serve the same purpose.

Therefore, humans create life in an unthinking, irrational and futile attempt to ease their own pain. What is more

distracting than a cute child that gives our life meaning? On the other hand, one could say that if only god can take life, then only god can make life. Most religions do conclude that humans are precluded from taking a life. Since religions are based on intangibles, such as faith and hope, they do not rely on logic when making life.

By creating a human being, most people seem to be saying that life is so painful, so fundamentally flawed, that they have to do something, anything to make it at least temporarily less intolerable. This is a troubling revelation. And one that most humans avoid facing at all costs: That our parents were thinking of themselves when they created us. And our needs were ignored prior to our conception.

Regarding this conclusion, most people resort to the common platitude: "You should be thankful that your cup is half full, and stop complaining that it is half empty." I find this advice to be highly suspect. I want to know why I was handed a cup half full. Who got the other half? Why do most humans get a cup considerably less full? Why are we told to accept it? Who is giving this advice? And why? Could it be from those whose cup is overflowing? Or who hope that someday it will be?

Most humans in our present state of evolution are capable of confronting these questions, but are terrified at finding the answers. Some of us are now sufficiently secure and self-aware to admit that we owe it to the unconceived to stop them from being made to endure physical pain and physical death.

Is there any tenet by any religion that pre-conception is untenable? Does any ideology claim that the unconceived

are in dire straits, or that they crave to be made physical? Certainly, there are those organized religions that demand births to increase their power and influence. There are others that require cheap labor and docile obedience to enhance their need for superiority. But most couples who are aware of the consequences of their actions and have the means to alter them will conclude that they are under no obligation to conceive. And, to the contrary, they are saving a life by causing it not to be formed.

One should not conclude that this approach eliminates the need for sex. We who exist need every opportunity to relieve our pain and seek some solace. But we should endure our own suffering without having to impose it on our offspring.

If a couple feels that they must experience child birth (to fulfill either their physical or emotional needs), then they should attempt to limit themselves to one child. This might be acceptable if they are willing to adopt a child of the other gender that will produce a balanced family, as well as provide a home for the adoptee. This will also have the added benefit of slowly, over a long period of time, reducing the human population to a more humane level.

If this life view is practiced, then life will feel pointless, at least for a few generations. But this has always been the case. Being one of over 6 billion, on a planet among billions, one can feel insignificant. As we have seen, the common practice is to create children to try to mitigate our lack of significance by exercising superiority over our children, while at the same time being distracted by their innocence and naiveté. This is, of course, the reason humans created religion and the idea of a god.

As I stated at the outset, I do not want to insult, upset or challenge anyone's beliefs. However, if one is convinced of the absolute correctness of their own belief system, then he or she will not feel threatened by my positions. If they have doubts, then they will react negatively.

I have no desire to engage in arguments, diatribes, or debates over my positions. I will certainly attempt to offer clarifications in writing. These are not issues that lend themselves to spontaneous responses. Energyists have a need to express themselves without reflection because that is their nature. As I said earlier, I am simply looking for others who believe as I do. I am not looking to convert anyone to my world view. I understand that what may appear to be rational ideas must be automatically rejected by energyists because life already contains too many unknowns, and they crave a feeling of security.

If I decide to have one less child, or no children, what do the religions advise me? Do they say I am interfering with god's will? If so, how is that possible? Is there a spirit somewhere that has to wait until it is claimed by its body? Religions do not seem to address these questions. As far as I can tell, religions tell me that it is up to me regarding the number of humans I create. The Catholic religion prohibits its leaders from creating life, so there must be some advantage to restricting procreation.

All religions are theories constructed by humans to help themselves make sense of the physical world and their place in it. Why does physical existence not make sense? Most religions were established by humans who claimed some

guidance from some supernatural entity. These are emotionalists who need to feel that someone is watching over them and is aware of a reason for their existence. These are people who must concede control over their lives to a being of superior intelligence, because they know they are not capable of controlling their physical circumstances.

Religions, and other energy-based ideologies, rely on theories based on a need to escape the physical demands of life and ignore the implications of physical evolution.

Why do we continue to create human life when our intelligence should militate against it? The physical need to return to the place from which we came indicates an overwhelming drive to return to the womb. Social and practical limitations dictate against constant coital embrace, so we often engage in other activities that substitute for physical reattachment. Verbal exchange can satisfy this need in some. Smoking, drinking and eating all result from an oral compulsion, often referred to as an addiction.

No one seems to ask why this need exists beyond infancy. It reveals a need to return to a prior state. A disconnected state is a state of anxiety. This anxiety is the result of a separate physical existence. If an infant could, it would revert to a preconceived state. Why then do we existing beings deny that infant its basic needs? Why do we ignore the adverse reaction to being born?

Are we not now sufficiently advanced in our evolution to acknowledge the possibility that human life has no meaning beyond death? And that we are now able to stop this madness? That we can now control ourselves and save the

lives of our children by stopping their conception?

This approach is actually quite common among physically secure people. Those existing humans who experience a high standard of (physical) living tend to have fewer children. If human life at its best is not to be shared with larger numbers of children, then it may not be as desirable as once thought. Those whose physical existence is more tenuous tend to have larger families. The common explanation is not that life is so desirable that it must be shared. On the contrary, it is thought that life is so unpredictable and insufferable that the existing humans need help to support themselves and assure themselves that some of their children will survive them in old age.

If life was so good, those of us who live a good physical existence would want to share it with our progeny, not reduce their numbers. Those in misery need more children to help them tolerate physical existence. Those living well have a lesser need for children to distract them from their situation. So, if life were good for most people, then birth rates would fall. Those in positions of power within organized religions find this threatening, and so advise against fewer children. Those of us who live well find ourselves needing and wanting fewer children because we feel less fear about the future.

Fear and suffering are no longer valid reasons for creating life. Knowing that we have come to a point where we can save lives by causing them not to be conceived should be a guiding principle for living a life of meaning. We should stop the madness and let humanity slowly recede into its natural state, unencumbered by instinct and thoughtless

behavior. We should use our intellectual capacity and our ability to predict the consequences of our actions to improve conditions for existing humans without creating more in the process.

I would be interested to hear from anyone who believes as I do. I would also like to know if anyone is aware of an established belief system that follows the views I have outlined above.

I would venture to say that my approach relies on a balance between the two poles of life as I have described them. Those who practice on the extremes will not be able to relate to this concept. Extreme materialism is just as destructive as extreme emotionalism. Therefore, those who react strongly to my views will be at the extremes and not able to understand this life view. Those who agree with my interpretation are welcomed to add their comments and help to articulate and expand on my attempt at an explanation. I will also appreciate any assistance from you in posting this essay in appropriate forums and groups who may share my ideas.

I am well aware that most people will react badly to my view. It may depress, upset or otherwise repel them. I regret this reaction, and wish them no harm. I would strongly advise them to return to the world of illusion and myth to help relieve any discontent a physical view of life may cause them.

On the other hand, it would be satisfying to find others who have come to the same conclusions and who can offer solace and support to each other. The view I offer is so obvious to me that I can only conclude it must find some acceptance

among a few others.

We Americans vociferously defend our freedoms, but I am not sure we practice them to their full extent. Freedom to me does not mean freedom to conform, but freedom to think differently. It is not only freedom to agree, but freedom to disagree with widely-held beliefs. I have the sinking feeling that freedom to most Americans is the freedom to dream of wealth, luxury and power. This, I believe, is a physical dream to the extreme.

The freedom to speak of beliefs that are not acceptable to the majority is a basic right. To be in the majority can be a dangerous thing, not only to a minority, but to most people. If the American ideal means anything it is the proposition that new ways of thinking must not be suppressed, either by government or by conventional thinking.

So I offer a view of life that doesn't seem to me to be all that crazy or extreme. But I have not heard it expressed among casual conversation. And, judging from general social discourse, there doesn't seem to be any interest in discussing the meaning and purpose of life, beyond reciting inherited beliefs and superficial platitudes.

Please respond to HumanExistence@Verizon.net if you agree with the above, or wish to offer constructive comments. Thank you.

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