

GRAY: When we first met, you had already been involved in UFO investigation for about 12 years. But at that time you had just become interested in the Philadelphia Experiment about a year earlier. How did you become interested in this particular subject?

BILL: I first encountered the subject about 1965 when I read the book, INVISIBLE HORIZONS, by Vincent Gaddis. The last chapter dealt with strange disappearances at sea during the 19th century. He also recounted rumors of the so-called Philadelphia Experiment with the analogy that if this could be done artificially, it also might happen naturally.

Frankly, I was quite skeptical about the rumors, although I knew that at the basis of most any rumor one could find a kernel of truth. I had been kicking around the idea of doing a study on how a rumor or hoax could be perpetrated from some small element of truth....

GRAY: You're saying you thought it was a hoax?

BILL: Absolutely. I planned to call my study "The Anatomy of a Hoax". The Philadelphia Experiment would, I believed, make an excellent subject. This, I thought, was a rumor that had been blown up into a fantastic story that many people believed. I wanted to find what few facts were involved and then show how they had been embellished.

I didn't have an opportunity to actually do anything with this idea right away. But during the summer about five years ago, I was spending a long, hot evening alone (my wife and family were away), and I didn't feel like going to bed at that time and this particular subject came back to my mind. I pulled out my files on the topic and began to organize them, and that got me interested again. The more I investigated, however, the more I began to be convinced that there was a great deal more to it than met the eye at first glance. I still wasn't convinced the rumor was true, but there seemed to be enough to it to go after it on grounds other than just trying to expose it.

GRAY: Those of us who have read your book know that you now believe it is not a hoax. Are these assumptions correct?

BILL: I think all the book is saying is that there is a very strong possibility that something very much out of the ordinary occurred.

Indeed, there WAS such a ship; there WAS an experiment; there WAS involvement by the Navy and scientific people -- an organized project put together for purposes perhaps somewhat different from the actual results. Of this much I have no doubt. The question is, "What DID happen?" Definitely something strange, something very, very strange, happened, and I think that part of the problem of determining what actually happened comes from the likelihood that those who were involved with it didn't know exactly what happened.

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GRAY: What were some of the first things you discovered that began to convince you it wasn't a hoax and to get you really hot on the track?

BILL: I suppose some of the first things I uncovered were not "things" at all! When I began requesting documents from the military, government archives, shipping lines and so on, one of the first things to set me suspecting something was going on was not SOMETHING, but LACK of something.

Documents for other ships which should have been there WERE there, but NOT for the U.S.S. Eldridge, the ship allegedly involved in the experiment. The log for the ship was not available for three months after the date of launch, the time frame during which the experiment allegedly took place.

People I tried to interview gave me reactions which led me to believe they were withholding information. For instance, if I were to accost an ordinary person on the street and ask him, "What about this secret experiment you were involved with?" his immediate reaction likely would be, "What's wrong with you? Are you out of your head?"

On the other hand, if you walk up to some other person, ask the same question, and they back away and say, "Well, wait a minute! I can't talk about that -- how did you find out I was involved with it?" -- When you get that kind of response, you begin to suspect, even more, that there WAS something to it. And if you get that kind of response from a number of people, and then put it all together, this certainly gives you grounds to dig further.

The Witnesses

GRAY: Are you saying that you have run across witnesses to the experiment and that they can't talk because the information is classified?

BILL: When we talk about witnesses we need to define the term. There really are two classes of witnesses involved here. The news media and the public first ask about the witnesses on board ship, and that would be one classification of witness. The second would be those who were not on board the ship, but those who were there -- those who may have witnessed the experiment but who were not actually affected by it.

Now, which of these two groups is most important to us? The men on the ship are NOT the most important group. First of all, they were only volunteers. They involved only a few sailors -- around 30 to 40 -- one source has it at 38. These men were told only that some kind of experiment would be carried out, and that their assignment would be to move the ship from point X to Point Y and back again. They were not told what the experiment would involve, of the expected results, and they certainly weren't prepared for

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Consequently, even if we did find these men and questioned them, they would be unable to tell us as much as we might at first suppose -- and certainly they couldn't tell us the complete story. Surely they could tell us of the horrifying results they experienced -- or maybe not even that much. For they were mentally affected by the electromagnetic field, whether temporarily or permanently we aren't certain.

Today we know -- although we didn't in 1943 -- that electromagnetic energy in certain wavelengths can indeed affect the mind in a variety of ways: Anything from a complete coma to ringing in the ears. Remember, we were onto the Russians a year or so ago, when we suspected they were beaming microwaves at our embassy in Moscow (but then nothing more was heard about this -- we probably were trying the same thing on them). In fact a great deal of research is being done on this today. Of course, electromagnetic energy in certain wavelengths can even cook things, for example, the microwave oven.

As far as I can determine, two of the men did not survive. Possibly more did not, but at least two didn't come back when the ship returned to visibility. Those who did survive were shipped off to the Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland, and put under treatment for unspecified lengths of time. I am told that only eight or nine were finally discharged, and that these suffered from mental incompetence -- or so it was alleged.

After all, this would make a perfect cover if they did talk about the Experiment. The Navy could say, "Look, you're talking to a nut -- what do you expect to get from a person like that?"

I've got to get from a person like that? hand. That is, I've talked to somebody who talked to the actual persons. But within the past week I've got to one of these men directly, and he has indicated he will come forward and tell his story to me first-hand.

GRAY: You mean you've personally talked with this witness?

BILL: No, I've talked to a third party who has promised to put me in touch with the witness.

GRAY: And you will be able to speak with him face-to-face?

BILL: I'm in the process of setting up a meeting. This person went to his friend and said, "I'm aware of this book that is out, and I think the story needs to be told. I don't want my name involved. I'm afraid to come forth, but on the other hand, it's been too long as it is and I have to get this out of my system. Set up the meeting and I'll talk to Moore as long as my identity is not revealed to him."

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I don't want to get my hopes too high on this before the actual interview, for I don't know if I will be dealing with a bona fide witness or a crackpot. I do know that the third party involved is highly reputable.

Anyhow, let's now go to the other side of the coin: the witnesses who were military and scientific people involved with the project.....

"Dr. Reno"

GRAY: Are these the people you have written about in the book?

BILL: Yes. But there was a problem here. In order to print any information they gave us, we were required keep them anonymous and guarantee them the right to edit. So some of the best and most pertinent information had to be taken out of the manuscript because they would not allow it to be printed for fear it would lead to their identification.

One of these men procured the ship for the Experiment, and he described the process of obtaining the U.S.S. Eldridge. He also was actually there at the time the Experiment was carried out. But he would not allow us to print certain parts of his statements.

Another was a scientist who had been with the project on and off from its very beginning and had worked with the actual handwritten notes by Dr. Einstein.

GRAY: Are we talking about "Dr. Reno"?

BILL: That's how the Allende letters identified him, but of course that was a pseudonym he used. I've given him a more respectable pseudonym in the book -- that of Dr. Rinehart.

Although he had been off the project for a while before being brought back into it, he knew a great deal about it. Like the other witness I mentioned, he agreed to talk about it only with the condition of anonymity. And he wouldn't let us use anything connected with his second involvement.

GRAY: Doesn't that put me and other readers of your book at a disadvantage in evaluating your claims?

BILL: Of course it may. But after all, as I stated before, all the book is saying is that there is a very strong possibility the Experiment took place. The book doesn't make claims of final conclusions.

Dr. Rinehart was a very valuable witness. He named other people who were involved, and went into detail about the beginning of the project, what they were trying to accomplish, for example. He said very definitely that all they expected was radar camouflage. That is, all they were trying for was a way to make a ship or aircraft disappear from a radar scope -- not from eye sight!

But when the experiment was tried, something went wrong ---- and everybody was horrified.

What happened was the last thing they expected. His description is most interesting. He said it was like the opposite of a neon light being turned on. When you turn on a neon bulb you first get a blinking effect, and if you look at it closely, you then see a swirling effect before the light comes on.

In this case there was first the swirling effect, then blinks and flashes, and the ship was gone! According to his recollection the outline of the ship was visible where it displaced the water, but that soon that too was gone.

Everybody panicked, not knowing quite what to do. Finally, when some of them got their wits back together, they shut everything off, and at that point the ship came back. But that was when the fun began -- because when they counted heads not everybody came back with it!

And I asked, "What does that mean? Where are these men?" He answered that he heard some of the crewmen jumped overboard in their panic, and that some of them were so disoriented they could not swim.

Rinehart didn't believe their disappearance was particularly important, except for their tragic loss of life.

Other people speculate that the men are still out there, caught in a "time flow" of 1943, and that some day they will reappear. Of course I don't quite buy this. I think it is too far-fetched, even in the context of the fantastic Experiment.

GRAY: What about charges in the press that Dr. Rinehart never existed?

BILL: I think that if I could throw his real identity in their faces we could show them that he did exist. But I can't do that. Again, I don't think the thrust of the book is to prove anything. The book is saying that here is a rumor that is 30 years old and is still persistent, in spite of all attempts to put it down. And here are the results of as much of the investigation as we can write about. Now you know all about the rumors and what we can reveal about our investigations. Now you, the reader, decide: did it happen or didn't it?

What About Allende?

GRAY: We've talked about witnesses -- the crew members and the scientists and military personnel behind the scenes. Now, what about other observers, and I guess you know whom I'm leading up to. One of the most controversial persons connected, though, I must admit, my own personal favorite element of the thing. Of course I'm speaking of Carlos Miguel Allende, Carl M. Allen, or whoever. In your book you suggest he may be an imposter, but I gather you haven't made up your mind yet on this. He claims to have been a

