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History of U.S. Government Remote-Viewing Projects

"Doc Hambone"

Early SCANATE Experiment

On 5/29/73, [Hal Puthoff](#) conducted a remote-viewing experiment with [Ingo Swann](#) using coordinates given to them by a CIA official interested in the project at [SRI](#).

Swann was able to draw a map of a small military installation, which was identified later as being in West Virginia (Targ, Russell and Puthoff, Harold E, [Mind-Reach](#), Delacorte Press, 1977, pg 1-4). The CIA official (identified by Targ and Puthoff as "our East Coast challenger", later revealed to be [Richard Kennett](#)) reported that the results were accurate and the map was even to scale.

3 days later (6/1/73), Puthoff received a call from [Pat Price](#), offering to have his skills tested. Puthoff reports that he was reluctant. But since he had briefly met Price and felt he wasn't a crank, Puthoff "on an impulse" read Price the coordinates of the experiment.

On 6/4/73, Puthoff received Price's 5-page response, which went into greater detail than Swann's. He went so far as to read off nameplates and labels on files. The CIA official confirmed Price's description, and Price was invited to join the project (Targ, and Puthoff, 1977, p46-8).

Puthoff and Targ felt that this experiment was important enough to include at the open of their book [Mind Reach](#). "For us, this type of experiment was definitive. There was no question of collusion between the challenger and the subject, and the target site was small and characterized by controlled access" (Targ, and Puthoff, 1977, p34).

"What makes the West Virginia/Urals Sites viewings so remarkable is that these are not best-ever examples culled out of a longer list. These are literally the first 2 site-viewings carried out in a simulated operational-type scenario." (Puthoff, Harold, "[CIA-Initiated Remote Viewing Program at Stanford Research Institute](#)", *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Spring 1996)

However, whether this was an "operational-type scenario" would be unknown to the average reader of [Mind Reach](#). So we are left with the question as to why Puthoff and Targ decided to showcase this particular experiment back in 1977. Some possibilities include:

- Despite what Puthoff later claimed, this may be a "best ever example". While it's on par with some of the results that have been claimed since the CIA partially lifted the veil of secrecy, this experiment is certainly more impressive than the other experiments documented in Mind Reach.
- Another theory is that the remote-viewing program was (whole or in part) a psychological operation against the Russians, who took these matters more seriously than the West. While most Americans would not have yet known of the CIA connection to the SRI research, Soviet intelligence certainly did ... and this example may have been directed at them.
- A more mundane explanation -- and one that I'm leaning towards -- is that this example was intended for the military intelligence community. During the time of the book's composition, the SRI program was reportedly hurting for funds, and the book was in part written to increase interest and funding opportunities (Schnabel, 1997, pg 204). Perhaps this operational remote-viewing example was intended to impress potential sponsors in the military.

It was long felt that this experiment was the one that first drew the CIA's attention. However, Puthoff reveals that the CIA was interested in the project after Swann identified a moth inside a box as a brown, moving leaf. (Harold Puthoff, 1996)

There are several inconsistencies and problems with the different accounts of this experiment:

- Schnabel's account of the tasking of this particular experiment goes as follows: Puthoff calls "Richard Kennett" (pseudonym, probably [Christopher Green](#)) and offers to show an example of coordinate remote-viewing. Kennett walks down the hall and asks a colleague ("Bill O'Donnell" - pseudonym) for a set of map coordinates. O'Donnell responds later that day, Kennett relays them by phone to Puthoff. Shortly after, they begin a remote-viewing session with Ingo Swann (Schnabel, Jim, Remote-Viewers, Dell, 1997, pg 104-107).

According to author John Wilhelm, however, the process was much less casual. According to him, the coordinates were selected by an NSA monitor, encrypted, sent to California to a CIA scientist located in Menlo Park (not on the East Coast), decoded, and passed on to Puthoff. However, Wilhelm may be describing the later SCANATE sessions, of which this could have been a less formal introduction. (Wilhelm, John, "Psychic Spying?", *Washington Post*, 8/7/77, B1)

- In the CIA's Executive Summary of the Final Report quoted by Hal Puthoff (Puthoff, 1996), it is implied that both viewers operated under controlled conditions. However, Price did his viewing at home and mailed in the results.

Puthoff has us believe that he repeated the coordinates of a military facility (so secret that the coordinates are still classified) to a man who he only casually knew. Puthoff was formerly a Naval Intelligence officer, and worked with the NSA, so he should have known better. He remains tight-lipped about the coordinates even to this day, so I doubt that he would have been so careless. This leads me to believe that he either slipped up or Price was involved with Puthoff and/or SRI before 6/1/73.

- According to author Jim Schnabel, Swann viewed the site again a second time in his Mountain View apartment the morning after the initial experiment, bringing a report to SRI later (Schnabel, Jim, Remote-Viewers, Dell, 1997, pg 107). However in Mind Reach, Puthoff and Targ compress the original session with this report, presenting it all as a single session under controlled conditions. Further, the map Swann drew of the site that was published in Mind

Reach and posted above, appears to be the one drawn in his apartment -- not the one he drew at SRI as implied (Puthoff and Targ, pg 1-4).

- As for Price's report, both Schnabel (pg 110) and author John Wilhelm (Wilhelm, John, 1977) state that Price viewed the codenames and labels on a later session at the request of Hal Puthoff after reading his initial report. Again in Mind Reach, these sessions are compressed into one (Puthoff and Targ, pg 47-8). I recognize that compressing several events into one is a common narrative technique in some books. However, Puthoff and Targ go to great pains to list the specific dates of the sessions (and in Swann's case, even the time of day), so I don't feel that this is a case of mere over-simplification.
- Price's performance in this experiment is clearly superior to the ones done under controlled conditions as reported in Mind Reach. The drawings created in these later experiments are extremely crude in comparison. Also, this is the only case of remote-viewing that I have seen where the viewer is able to read. Supposedly remote-viewing is a right-brain process, and analytical activities like reading are impossible or extremely difficult. Not even the [PSI-TECH](#) crowd (who have gone to Mars and the Future) have been able to read while viewing. Jim Schnabel notes that Price had the unique talent of being able to read while remote-viewing (Schnabel, 1997, pg 126). But I have seen no other examples besides the Sugar Grove experiment.
- In the video "Psi-Files: The Real X-Files", narrator Jim Schnabel claims to have gotten access to the original coordinates and drove to a site which resembled a secret military base. However, according to Schnabel, the original target was a vacation cabin in the Blue Ridge Mountains, but the coordinates were slightly off. This brings us back to the problem inherent to SCANATE: some sessions report the objective map coordinates regardless of the believed target, and some report the target desired regardless of the objective coordinates. I have yet to see this conflict adequately resolved.

However, in his book Remote-Viewers, Schnabel reports that the coordinates did correspond to the cabin, but that the viewers were drawn to the military base because it was more interesting (Schnabel, 1997, pg 111).
- According to Puthoff (1996) and Schnabel (1997, pg 112), the facility described is a signal-listening post near Sugar Grove, West Virginia. According to author James Bamford, this listening post is a joint Navy/NSA microwave interception post, probably positioned to pick up domestic microwave communications from a nearby commercial station (Bamford, James, The Puzzle Palace, Penguin Books, 1983, pg 217-222). The station was distinguished at the time for having some of the World's largest microwave receiving dishes, although neither Price nor Swann mentioned any in their descriptions. The closest Swann gets is "There's a circular building, perhaps a tower..." (Puthoff and Targ, 1977).
- Both note that the site was a former missile base, although according to Bamford the base was built in the 1950s for the original purpose of electronic eavesdropping (Bamford, 1983, pg 217-8).
- Price claimed that the base was run by the Army, and even went so far as to name the Army 5th Corps engineers and Army Signal Corps among the personnel. However, the Sugar Grove base was manned by the Navy and the NSA.
- John Wilhelm claims to have visited the site (based on the coordinates of a leaked SRI report) and found nothing resembling a military installation.
- There is some question as to how and what degree the viewers' results were considered to be successful. Puthoff and Targ (1977) claim that their challenger ("Richard Kennett"/Christopher Green) confirmed Swann's account to be "correct in every detail" (pg 4) and Price's version "essentially correct" (pg 48).

- According to Schnabel's account, Kennett was initially told by "Bill O'Donnell" that the sessions were completely wrong. The next weekend, Kennett reportedly happened to be driving in the area of the initial target (a cabin) and saw signs of a secret military base. He later asked an official he knew if there was such a base in the area, after which Kennett and the SRI team were reportedly investigated by the Defense Investigative service (Schnabel, 1997, 111-2).
- Schnabel's account leaves out how Kennett would even know enough details to be able to confirm the experiment's accuracy. The intelligence community is heavily compartmentalized -- especially between agencies. Given that Kennett was investigated and treated with hostility merely for asking if there was a base in the general area, I tend to doubt that he was given a detailed map and a list of secret codewords. It may very well be the case that Kennett and/or Puthoff inferred the accuracy of the sessions by the intensity of the Pentagon's investigation, rather than an actual confirmation of the facts.
- However, according to a CIA report quoted by Puthoff (Puthoff, 1997): "2 subjects targeted on the site, a sensitive installation. One subject drew a detailed map of the building and grounds layout. And the other provided information about the interior including codewords, data subsequently verified by sponsor sources"
- Reportedly, this experiment attracted the attention of other government agencies including the Navy and NASA. These agencies did not independently confirm the results but relied on the word of SRI, the CIA, and the NSA. (Wilhelm, 1977)

In my opinion, there is quite a bit of misinformation surrounding this experiment on the part of SRI and/or the CIA. While some of the inconsistencies might be attributed to the secrecy surrounding the site and the project as a whole, presenting this experiment to the public and to other agencies indicates to me that SRI and/or the CIA had another agenda.

Gondola Wish

Around 1977, [Lt. Skip Atwater](#) of the Army's Systems Exploitation Detachment (SED) -- which was under control of the office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (ACSI) -- suggested to the head of the SED (Col. Robert Keenan) that the Army develop a small, experimental group of psychics. The suggestion passed up the chain of command and was approved by the ACSI, [Major General Edmund Thompson](#).

The project -- which was codenamed '**Gondola Wish**' -- had a small budget and began the planning stages around late 1977. Lt. Atwater was given some funds, some office space, and a commanding officer (Lt. Scotty Watt). After consulting with the researchers at [SRI](#), Atwater and Watt began screening possible recruits. The new recruits were to serve only part-time and remain officially attached to their current units.

The original recruits included:

- Ken Bell, Army counterintelligence
- Fernand Gauvin, Army counterintelligence
- Jackie Keith, civilian working with Army special ops
- [Joe McMoneagle](#), warrant officer
- [Mel Riley](#), photo-interpreter
- Hartleigh Trent, photo interpreter, Navy petty officer
- 1 unnamed Army captain,
- 4 unnamed civilian photo-interpreters

Soon after Gondola Wish was staffed, by early 1978, they had conducted only a few remote-viewing sessions before the work was halted. The project was considered to be "human use experimentation" and the process of approval, consent, and medical evaluations had to be completed. Several months passed, and the 6 most promising candidates (Riley, McMoneagle, Bell, Gauvin, Trent, and one of the civilians) were sent to SRI to be evaluated. Atwater and Watt were looking for the best 3 candidates, but all 6 seemed to fit the bill. Those that didn't go through training soon faded from the project. (Schnabel, Jim, Remote-Viewers: The Secret History of America's Psychic Spies, Dell, 1997, pg 13-20)

'Gondola Wish' had the support of [Ed Thompson](#) (who participated in an experiment himself) and to a lesser degree was supported by INSCOM (Army Intelligence and Security Command) commander William Rolya as well as the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Army. Due to this interest, in 1978 'Gondola Wish' was moved into better quarters and redesignated 'Grill Flame' (Schnabel, 1997, pg 23-5).

Grill Flame

In late 1978, 'Gondola Wish' was redesignated as the "Special Action Branch" (codenamed '**Grill Flame**'), which applied to the operational unit and the research at [SRI](#). The unit was reorganized as an offensive spying unit and moved into buildings '2560' and '2561' at Ft. Meade. The budget was increased and there were 3 full time viewers: Ken Bell, [Joe McMoneagle](#), and [Mel Riley](#). The unit reported to [Ed Thompson](#), but was tasked by approved members of the intelligence community. (Schnabel, Jim, Remote-Viewers: The Secret History of America's Psychic Spies, Dell, 1997, pg 24-5)

The SRI research program was integrated into 'Grill Flame' in early 1979. Controlled by the DIA, tasking came through the DIA's on-site representative Jim Salyer (Schnabel, 1997, pg 220-1).

After Ed Thompson left his post in 1981, 'Grill Flame' came under the control of INSCOM and was designated '**Detachment G**' within INSCOM's Operations Group (Schnabel, 1997, pg 280).

According to [Ed Dames](#), the original unit had 6-8 commissioned military intelligence officers. "Grill Flame (which was listed on the INSCOM books as 'Detachment G') had consisted of soldiers and a few civilians who possessed varying degrees of natural psychic ability. These operatives utilized altered states to achieve (varying degrees) of target contact."

(Dames, Ed, "[Ed Dames Sets the Record Straight](#)")

In 1983, 'Grill Flame' was redesignated '**Center Lane**'.

Individuals associated with Grill Flame:

- [Jack Vorona](#): overall manager
- Lt. Col. Murray B. "Scott" Watt: commander, 1978-82
- Lt. Col. Jachim: commander, 1982-83
- Lt. Col. Brian Busby: commander, 1983-
- [Lt. Skip Atwater](#): operations officer, 1978-87
- Ken Bell: viewer, 1978-82
- [Joe McMoneagle](#): viewer, 1978-84
- [Mel Riley](#): viewer, 1978-81
- Fern Gauvin: viewer, 1978-81
- Captain Rob Cowart: viewer, 1982-3
- Hartleigh Trent: viewer 1978-83

Center Lane

'Center Lane' was the codename for the operational unit of the remote-viewing program, redesignated from 'Grill Flame' in late 1983.

Control of the unit shifted from INSCOM's operation group to the more direct control of [Albert Stubblebine](#). The unit was known as INSCOM 'Center Lane Project (ICLP)'. (Schnabel, Jim, [Remote-Viewers: The Secret History of America's Psychic Spies](#), Dell, 1997, pg 280)

In late 1983, 4 more individuals were recruited to Center Lane: [Captain Ed Dames](#), Captain Bill Ray (counterintelligence specialist), Captain Paul Smith, and Charlene Cavanaugh (civilian analyst with INSCOM). These four began a training program which began at the [Monroe Institute](#) and concluded with personal training with [Ingo Swann](#) (Schnabel, 1997, pg 292-3).

After Gen. Stubblebine's retirement in 1984, 'Center Lane' was completely without support in the Army. [Jack Vorona](#) arranged for the unit to be transferred directly to the DIA's Scientific and Technical Intelligence Directorate when Army funding ran out in late 1985, at which time it was redesignated '**Sun Streak**'. Until that time, the unit was given no official taskings (Schnabel, 1997, pg 319).

'Center Lane' started when Ingo Swann at [SRI](#) came across a breakthrough in his techniques in 1983. He developed a training program and trained 6 military officers (including Ed Dames) over a period of 6 months. After finishing the training in late 1983, the viewers returned and started applying their knowledge. The unit was renamed 'Center Lane' with Dames as the operations and training officer.

"Dames took a 'let's see what this baby can do' approach, replacing the unit's former intelligence collection methodology with the breakthrough technique."

(Dames, Ed, "[Ed Dames Sets the Record Straight](#)")

Individuals associated with Center Lane include:

- Lt. Col. Brian Busby: commander, 1983-1984 or 85
- [Lt. Skip Atwater](#): operations officer, 1978-87
- [Ed Dames](#): trainee, 1983-84, assistant operations officer, 1985-88
- [Joe McMoneagle](#): viewer, 1978-84
- Bill Ray: viewer, 1983-84/85. Commander, 1984 or 1985
- [Paul Smith](#): viewer, 1983-1990
- Charlene Cavanaugh: viewer, 1983-?
- [Lyn Buchanan](#): viewer, monitor, 1984-92

Sun Streak

After Army support and funding of the [Ft. Meade](#) operational remote-viewing unit ran out in late 1985, [Jack Vorona](#) transferred control directly to the DIA's Scientific and Technical Intelligence Directorate. The unit was known as **DT-S** ('DT' for Scientific and Technical Intelligence Directorate, 'S' for Special) and was given the codename '**Sun Streak**'.

Under branch chief Fern Gauvin's command, the unit reportedly began to shift towards more occultic methods including channeling and tarot cards.

(Schnabel, Jim, Remote-Viewers: The Secret History of America's Psychic Spies, Dell, 1997)

"In 1986, the Army passed the highly controversial unit to DIA. 'Sun Streak' (ferreted away in DIA's Scientific and Technical Intelligence Directorate as DT-S) was a bastard element. This is because DIA is an analytical agency -- it has no charter to collect intelligence!" Ed Dames claims to have continued to collect and pass on information under the nose of the DIA's civilian administrator, Dale Graff.

"By 1989, Dale Graff had replaced all of the trained military professionals with psychics virtually taken "off the street", thus rendering the project ineffective for intelligence collection purposes but highly entertaining for certain civilian officials who came to visit DIA's 'witches' to obtain personal psychic 'readings.'" (Dames, Ed, "Ed Dames Sets the Record Straight")

In 1988, a Pentagon Inspector General team evaluated the 'Sun Streak' operational unit. The viewers were ordered to avoid the team, and many documents were shredded behind the inspector's backs. (In the documentary "Psi-Files: The Real X-Files", Ed Dames claimed that 3 shredders had their motors burnt out in the process). (Schnabel, 1997, pg 369)

By 1991, the unit had only 4 viewers: Lyn Buchanan, Robin Dahlgren, Angela Dellaflora, and a DIA civilian. Around this time, the unit was redesignated '**Star Gate**'. Also around this time period, the unit left Ft. Meade. I don't know the date of the move or where it was moved to. (Schnabel, 1997, pg 380)

Individuals associated with 'Sun Streak' include:

- Bill Ray: branch chief, 1985-1988
- Bill Xenakis: branch chief, 1987-8
- Skip Atwater: operations officer, 1978-87
- Ed Dames: assistant operations officer
- Fern Gauvin: assistant operations officer, 1985?-1987. Operations officer, 1987. Branch chief, 1988-1991?
- Gene Kincaid: assistant operations officer
- Lyn Buchanan: viewer, monitor, 1984-92
- Angela Dellaflora: viewer, channeler: 1986-95?
- David Morehouse: viewer, 1988-1990
- Mel Riley: viewer, 1986-90
- Paul Smith: viewer, 1983-90
- Robin Dahlgren: viewer, channeler, 1988-95?
- Paul Tyler: Navy Captain, head of Sun Streak's medical oversight board, UFO enthusiast

Star Gate

Codename for the operational unit of the DIAs remote viewing program from approximately 1991 (redesignated from 'Sun Streak') until its termination in 1995. I have seen this codename been used casually by journalists to describe the entire remote-viewing program.

I have heard that at this time, the unit was no longer housed at Ft. Meade. But I don't know when they left or where they went.

'Star Gate' began around 1991 and had only 4 viewers: [Lyn Buchanan](#), Robin Dahlgren, Angela Dellafiora, and a DIA civilian. No attempts were made to recruit new personnel. The branch chief of Star Gate was [Dale Graff](#). When Graff resigned in the summer of 1993, he was replaced by a DIA HUMINT (human intelligence) specialist.

(Schnabel, Jim, Remote-Viewers: The Secret History of America's Psychic Spies, Dell, 1997, pg 380-1)

In 1994, there was an attempt to move 'Star Gate' to the CIA's Office of Research and Development. The CIA was reluctant to take the unit but agreed under the condition of an outside [evaluation](#), which was carried out by AIR. (Schnabel, 1997, pg 386)

[AIR gave an unfavorable report of the program](#), and the CIA set about shutting it down in 1995. Since then, there have been rumors that the project went deep 'black' or that the intelligence community still funds some low-level *psi* research.

According to viewer [Paul Smith](#), during 'Star Gate', the unit changed from a "SAP (Special Access Program)" to a "LIMDIS" (limited dissemination) program.

[Back to MFC Index](#)

[Back to Hambones Index](#)

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