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# **SchizoWorld**

**By**

**Kurt Snyder**

## Introduction

This is the story of what I have experienced as a person who has developed paranoid schizophrenia. It details my thoughts, feelings, and actions during the years prior to my first psychotic episodes, the time when I was insane, and the following years when I recovered (with the help of medication) and could return to society. Everything in this story is the truth—it is exactly what I experienced in my life. My name is Kurt Snyder. I live in Arnold, Maryland, just outside of Annapolis, in the United States.

This story can be read online at no cost by visiting [www.kurtsnyder.net](http://www.kurtsnyder.net). Once there, you can download my story and print out one copy for yourself.

I hope that you find this story to be useful. I think it is valuable information for schizophrenics, or doctors, family members and friends of schizophrenics.

The average length of time required to read the entire text is three to five hours.

I welcome your comments on my story. Please send your emails to [kurt@kurtsnyder.net](mailto:kurt@kurtsnyder.net) using the subject line 'SchizoWorld'. Please consider that I may not be able to respond to your email, due to the volume of email that I receive from around the world.

## In the Beginning

During the time that I was the most mentally ill, I had some experiences dealing with the subject of the CIA. In two separate cases, I met individuals that were employed as contractors for the CIA, who suggested I might also gain employment there. After these experiences, I became fixated on the idea that the CIA was going to recruit me for some type of position, and much of what I thought about each day involved this idea.

I thought I was an ideal candidate for employment in this type of government service. I earned the citizenship award for my class at graduation both in elementary and high school. Besides traffic tickets, I have never been in trouble with the police—never committed any crimes. I have never been involved with illegal drugs. I am very patriotic, and would never be tempted to disclose national secrets for any reason. I can be trusted not to willingly disclose privileged or sensitive information. People who know me well would say I have high moral character. I also have a talent for learning foreign languages. I earned an award for French Studies upon graduation from high school. I also learned quite a lot of Italian while I was an exchange student in Italy, and I learned some Spanish from the casual laborers I employed. I thought this skill with language could be applied to learning other languages in my future employment with the CIA. I

also sincerely hoped that I was going to get the opportunity to make a contribution to our national heritage. I thought working for the CIA would give me this opportunity.

My earliest significant memory concerning the CIA is in the form of a dream. While I was a teenager, I knew a woman whose husband worked with Naval Intelligence. She asked me to babysit their children for them one Friday night. As I arrived at their home, they introduced me to a gentleman who was accompanying them to dinner, and then they all left together. Later that night, I had a dream that this gentleman was a CIA agent, and that I had inadvertently discovered some national secret. In the dream, several men apprehended me and took me in a van to a secret location where I was interrogated. Part of the interrogation process involved using drugs that made me talkative, and at the same time gave me amnesia. When they were finished, they pushed me out of the van near my house, and I staggered home. The dream seemed so real, that I remember it very well almost twenty years later. Remembrance of this dream influenced some of my thinking when I became mentally ill.

In retrospective, I probably began to develop mental illness at about the age of 21. However, at that time, most of the symptoms were limited to my private thoughts, and I displayed few outward signs that others might think was mental illness. Many of my thought processes were personal secrets--I maintained some ideas only internally—I did not share them with others. It is clear to me now that these thought processes were the beginnings of schizophrenia. To my friends and relatives, however, I appeared ‘normal’. Until my first observable psychotic episode at the age of 28, most people would not have known that I was experiencing a mental illness.

My childhood was very normal. I had loving parents. I had friends whom I played with on a regular basis. My favorite sport was soccer. I played on soccer teams all year-round until I was in the ninth grade. I was exceptionally smart in elementary school. I always scored in the top 1% on standardized tests.

As a teenager in high school, I also did well in academics. I found most subjects easy. In college, however, I began to have difficulty. I found concentrating during class to be impossible. I would be in a lecture, and I would begin to daydream about a wide variety of different subjects, none of which related to the lecture material. After many minutes, when my concentration returned, I would be lost, having not experienced the continuum of the lecture. Outside of class, I found concentrating on homework to be just as difficult. I could not complete all the work that was assigned. My success in college became very inconsistent, and varied directly with the amount of work required outside of class. I would get A’s in some classes and F’s in others.

Also in college, I began to have sleep disorders. I tended to sleep very deeply. At times, I would sleep so deeply that it was difficult to wake me. Normal alarm clocks were not sufficient. The usual alarm clocks would continue to ring, vibrate, or play music for hours without any affect on me. They could not wake me. I would routinely miss my classes because I overslept. I often slept for more than 12 hours at a time. Much to the horror of my roommate, I obtained a special alarm clock that would make a sound similar

to a fire alarm. Even with this noise, it would often take a up to a minute for me to wake up.

If waking was a problem for me, staying awake was just as difficult. I could fall asleep in almost any environment, even noisy ones, at any time of day. I often fell asleep for the entire duration of a class. Furthermore, I had a propensity for talking in my sleep. According to others, I often spoke in whole sentences both for myself and other people in my dreams.

Another interesting sleep “disorder” for me was nightmares. Beginning at about the age of 16, I began having nightmares on a regular basis, and they continued for many years afterwards. In college, I would often wake my roommates or my girlfriend when I was screaming in my sleep. Upon waking, I rarely remembered the content of the dreams. I could not identify any particular stress in my life that would cause the nightmares or my eternal somnolence. Gradually, as I have gotten older, the daytime sleepiness, nightmares, and talking in my sleep have all gone away. I do not know what has caused their departure. Possibly it is an effect of taking psychiatric medication. The departure of these symptoms has coincided with my regular dosing of anti-psychotic medication. The only sleep abnormality I experience now is oversleeping. If I don’t use an alarm clock, I still often sleep for 12-14 hours at a time, usually on the weekends when I don’t have to get up early for work.

By my sophomore year in college, I became frustrated with my failures in academics, and I sought out other activities in which I could be successful. I became interested in martial arts, and began going to a dojo near campus. I took up the study of aikido, judo and jujitsu. I found practicing these arts to be very invigorating and exciting. The success I achieved in the martial arts overwhelmed my desire to succeed in academics. I found that I could concentrate very effectively on physical skills, in a way that I could not do so with academics. Soon, I was practicing martial arts three hours per day, and I was neglecting my academic studies. The only reason I stayed in school at all was because I had a desire to please my parents, and I wanted to meet their expectations. I was certain they expected me to continue my college education.

It was during my sophomore year in college that I experienced for the first time something that is similar to psychosis. In addition to going to school, I had started working for a hotel as an auditor on the night shift from 11pm to 7am. After work I would go to school at 8am. At the end of one semester, I felt I was unprepared for my final exams. I don’t think I had been to class in a month. I decided I would have to study vigorously. I started a 3 day cram session. I was very concerned about my final grades, and the anxiety and fear of failure kept me awake when I might normally have fallen asleep. I studied intensely and I did not go to sleep for more than 60 hours. After this time had passed I started to experience what I can only describe as fully conscious dreams. I started to have bizarre thoughts that had no connection with one another. In a normal stream of consciousness, one thought is usually connected to the next by some type of association. I began to experience one thought after another and none of them had any logical progression or logical connection to each other. My thoughts and perceptions had a very strange nature. Although I don’t remember any specific thoughts,

I remember the quality of them. For example, I might have been reading a book, and the book suddenly seemed like a house, then it seemed like a waterfall, then I thought of astronauts in outer space, then I was thinking about my Aunt Lynda, then my shoe felt like an anvil, then I thought about blueberries, then the blueberries seemed to be a fish, then I thought about glue, and I thought about glue being alive, then I imagined there was a galaxy inside my head, then the galaxy turned into a dime, then I was hearing a song in my head. Nothing seemed to make sense. While I was awake I was experiencing thought patterns not unlike those you would have in a dream. In reality, I don't believe I was experiencing any hallucinations because I still understood what was real. I understood that these were only thoughts in my head.

The bizarre thoughts started gradually and became more intense over the course of an hour. They started to intrude on my decision-making. I couldn't form a plan for the rest of the day or even for the next ten minutes. I realized that what I was experiencing was being caused by lack of sleep. I decided to go to bed as soon as possible. I went to sleep for perhaps six or seven hours, then got up to go to work. By that time my mind had returned to its normal state and I was able to function. After work, I took one of my engineering exams and got an 'A'. I also did well in other exams that semester. Although my cram session had been successful, the engineering exam I took was very easy. It was in a class called 'Statics', one of the most basic and simple engineering classes you can take. After this semester, I never had much success in school again. I also never undertook such a drastic cram session. Since that time, I have never again experienced anything quite like those thought patterns, even when I was psychotic.

By the middle of my third year in college, it was clear to me that I was not going to earn a degree by being a full time student. I was failing too often. I decided to go to work as a desk clerk at a hotel, and I went to school part time. I also changed my major from mechanical engineering to hotel management—a significantly less challenging course of study.

At about the age of 21, I began to think about what contribution I could make to society. Although I was not doing well academically, I thought that I was smart, and that I could achieve something significant in life.

It was 1992. I had recently discovered the world of fractals and chaos. After I understood the basic mathematical principles involved with generating fractals, they became the most fascinating and interesting things I had ever known. Even today, they are still the most amazing things I know of. They are truly wondrous, remarkable, and mysterious. Because the world of fractals is so new, I thought perhaps I could make some contribution to the field. There are many things about fractals that are not understood. I thought that if I concentrated my thought on them for a long enough time, I could make some discovery that no one else had made. I wanted to demonstrate the practical application of fractals to the real world. I wanted to discover a method of using fractals to describe the true shape of objects in the universe, and the behavior of a wide variety of natural phenomenon. In particular, I became obsessed with using fractals to describe the shape of clouds in the sky and various types of plants, especially trees. I also

wanted to find a formula or a process that could map out the boundary of a fractal like the Mandelbrot Set, without resorting to the same iterative formula that generates the set. As far as I know, this has not yet been achieved by anyone, anywhere, and I believe that many mathematicians would think it is impossible to achieve.

Because generating fractals involves the concept of infinity, I began to think obsessively about infinity and about new ways of describing infinity. I thought about these ideas on a regular basis for more than ten years. The simple fact that I wondered about these things does not mean that I was mentally ill, but the fact that I believed I could solve certain types of difficult problems indicates to me now that I was overestimating my mental abilities. These problems require a genius mentality to solve. I believe that I was exhibiting grandiose thinking. I kept telling myself that I was going to discover some previously unknown secret of the universe. I kept these ideas to myself--for most of a decade I never indicated to anyone that I was thinking about them.

At about the age of 22, I had my first significant paranoid episode. I was on a trip with my girlfriend, my brother, and his wife in the mountains of western Maryland. We were in an area of very low population density, spending the weekend in a rented cabin. For some reason, I began to feel very isolated and vulnerable. Images from horror movies were in the forefront of my mind. I began to imagine that someone could break into the cabin while we were sleeping and kill us all. I became very fearful and I grew increasingly concerned about the sturdiness of the entrance doors and their locks. I tried to reinforce the doors with chairs. Understandably, everyone else seemed bewildered about my behavior. This is the earliest memory I have of intense paranoid feelings. I did not experience another paranoid 'episode' for many years.

In almost all cases throughout my life where I have experienced abnormal thought processes, I also experienced abnormal feelings. The feelings and thoughts coincided. Thoughts of vulnerability bred feelings of vulnerability, and vice versa. In this case, where I was in the cabin, I was feeling significantly vulnerable, and associated thoughts soon followed. It was difficult to apply any measure of reason to these thoughts. This is the first time that I experienced what I call 'imagination infringement'. This is what happens when an idea that is imagined by the mind becomes a belief about reality. The mind believes the idea to be reality. The mind accepts the idea as the truth. This idea can persist even when there is evidence to the contrary. When imagination infringement occurs, what one perceives as reality is replaced by a fantasy. In later years, as my mental illness progressed, imagination infringement occurred more frequently and with greater intensity. At this time, I imagined that people might break into the cabin and murder us, and I began to believe this was actually going to happen. Eventually, however, I calmed down, I became more rational, and I went to bed.

By December 1994, I had been going to college part time for 3 years. I was almost 24 years old. I still had limited success, passing some classes, failing others. However, in general, I was doing better than I did in engineering. The coursework was much less rigorous. I had been working in the hotel industry for almost four years, but I was barely making \$9 an hour. I believed that if I pursued a career in the hotel industry, it would take me many years to reach a satisfactory level of income. At the time, I had a strong

desire to work for myself. I decided to quit my job and strike out on my own as an entrepreneur. My first idea was to become a computer graphics specialist. I purchased a computer system and spent thousands of dollars on software. I didn't immediately find a market for my skills so I started doing small handyman jobs to earn money. I found many different clients for this very quickly so I changed my mind. I decided to start a handyman service. I purchased a van, and I began buying tools.

Despite an abundance of work, I was in financial trouble. I had a lot to learn about business. I lost about eight thousand dollars during the first two years and I amassed a huge credit card debt. Most of this loss was due to equipment costs, a failure to charge a high enough hourly price for my services, and poor skill at estimating labor time. After two years however, I started to make a profit. I then began to concentrate my marketing activities on wealthy neighborhoods where I could get a high hourly rate of pay.

At about this same time, I became more critical about myself and my work. I started to have many feelings of anxiety and inadequacy related to job performance. I worried constantly about whether I was doing a good enough job. I also began to worry that my customers might be watching me while I was working. These thoughts made me much more self-conscious and interfered with my performance. I would not yet have characterized these thoughts and feelings as true paranoia, because at the time I never actually believed I was being watched, I was only anxious because I thought they MIGHT be watching. I think it is normal to have these types of thoughts occasionally, but I began to have these thoughts constantly. Both the thought and feeling that I was being watched by my customers had a symbiotic relationship. Sometimes, I would get the feeling that I was being watched, and this would cause me to think, "Maybe my client is watching me." Other times, I might think, "What if my client is watching me right now?" and this would cause me to feel self-conscious. The thought and feeling, although different, would feed on each other.

Over a period of many years, I experienced a spectrum of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that ranged from normal to abnormal, sometimes with no clear distinction. I had many symptoms of paranoia that at times would be considered normal. However, for me the trend was to experience these symptoms with increasing frequency and intensity. For example, it is normal that one might proceed with trepidation and wariness when walking down a dark alleyway at night. In such a situation, one might feel more aware of their surroundings, listen more intently, and look over one's shoulder. This is normal. I might have behaved the same way. But, if you had to walk down that same alleyway on ten different occasions, your fear and anxiety might diminish with each trip when nothing noteworthy happened. For me, however, my fear and anxiety would continue at the same level, or even increase with each trip.

At about the age of 25, the cycle of anxiety and thoughts related to my job performance began to mushroom. I was especially concerned about the impression I was making on new clients. I wanted to project myself as a competent and capable handyman. I became very self critical. Whenever I did something that I thought might be perceived as a mistake, I would think to myself, "What if my client saw that?" I would become anxious and nervous. These feelings would interfere with my work, and I would often have

problems thinking about the next step to take. I would quickly become unproductive. This would lead to more anxiety, and more concern about the appearance of competency I was trying to project. I would then worry more intensely about whether or not I was being watched.

The idea that my client might be watching became a constant thought in my mind. If it were not for the fact that these thoughts made me unproductive, they might have diminished. However, they did affect my performance, and over time they increased in intensity as the thoughts made me less and less productive on the job.

It is worth noting at this point that the fear of being watched caused much more anxiety than did the actual fact of being watched. When my clients did watch me, I had little or no anxiety. Sometimes, I would get a client that would stand behind me and watch every single thing I did. At these times, my anxiety was at the lowest level. I actually performed much better. When I was by myself, however, the IDEA that they MIGHT be watching me caused a real psychological problem. In my mind, I would imagine my client watching me with much criticism. My anxiety would peak. This idea was itself a stimulus that provoked certain thought processes and behaviors. The idea in my mind caused a greater reaction in me than the real stimulus did. I think this is a definitive symptom of schizophrenia. An imagined idea had more impact on my behavior than the real situation did.

You can imagine that having the same thoughts over and over for years can cause other neuroses. After a while, the idea that I was being watched by my clients began to grow and expand. If I was working outside, I no longer just worried that my client was watching, I also worried that maybe the neighbors were watching, or someone somewhere was watching me. This feeling began to follow me wherever I went. It attached itself to any entity in my mind that would normally be expected to watch the public. When I was on the highway, and I saw a police car, I would wonder if the policeman was watching me exclusively. I often felt relief when he didn't pull me over. When I went to a store, especially a large store like the Home Depot, I would feel like I was being watched by store security. I wouldn't actually believe I was being watched, but I would wonder, "Are they watching me now?" This would cause me a lot of anxiety. I would become nervous and agitated. I would have trouble concentrating on my shopping list. I would lose track of what I was supposed to be buying. The longer I was in the store, the more disorganized I would become, and the anxiety would continue to intensify.

This pattern of thought, feeling and behavior began to predominate everywhere. I felt like I was being watched constantly. I couldn't make the anxiety dissipate by reasoning alone. I might think to myself, "Why should I be uncomfortable if people are watching me? I'm not doing anything wrong!" But, the anxiety would continue. I would try to counteract my own thoughts. "People are not really watching me personally, they are too busy doing their own shopping. Store security is not watching me personally, they are watching everyone." I would still feel extremely anxious no matter what reasoning I tried to apply. The anxiety was irrational. I felt exposed and self conscious in every public place. This was especially true anywhere there were surveillance cameras.

Surveillance cameras added an extra measure of anxiety, because I felt someone could be watching me at any time without my direct knowledge. That possibility caused me the most anxiety of all. Exactly why this is true, I don't know. I think that paranoia is a very primitive emotion. The feeling that something may be watching you from a dark or secluded place stirs up primordial fear. The fear is that something is about to attack you, or hurt you, and you don't exactly know where it is, or what it's plans are. I think this is the root of paranoia. It is often a subliminal thought. You are not always fully aware of it when you are experiencing the fear of paranoia. When you are aware of the watcher and his location, you can adjust your behavior to compensate. However, when you don't know the location of the watcher, your anxiety is greatest, because any move might be the wrong one. Over a period of several years, my performance anxiety was slowly becoming paranoia. I could not escape it. Despite the paranoid feelings I was experiencing, I don't think anyone else noticed I was having an emotional or psychological problem, until much later when my symptoms became worse.

I continued working as a handyman and my business actually improved. I was targeting wealthy neighborhoods where I could earn a higher rate of pay. This was how I met two of my closest friends, Woody and Judy.

Woody and Judy lived in a very affluent neighborhood several miles outside of Annapolis, Maryland. At the time I met them, I had been doing most of my work in and around Annapolis. Their multimillion dollar house sits high on a point overlooking the Severn River. One day I had left a flyer in their mailbox. Judy called me after seeing my flyer. My first job for them was to install a shelf for plants over their windowsill. They were very pleased with the results, and they hired me for other work. After doing a few more handyman jobs for them, Woody asked me if I could be a caretaker for their property. The property surrounding their house was quite extensive, and required a lot of maintenance. That meant many hours of labor for me. I quickly accepted the opportunity. Very soon, I was spending three or four days per week at their home, and I saw them often. They liked the work I did for them, and they liked me.

After a few months of work, they were asking me to join them occasionally for lunch or dinner, and sometimes both. We developed a great rapport. I felt very comfortable talking to them, and I believe they felt the same way toward me. I would discuss all aspects of my life with them, and they would often give me advice on business and personal matters. They began to trust me implicitly. They felt comfortable with me, and they would often reveal very personal things to me about themselves. Over time, I got to know their personalities very well and I developed a deep respect for them. We had an emotional connection. I loved going over to their house.

In the summer, Woody and Judy would go to another home in Aspen, Colorado. They asked me if I would watch over their home in Annapolis while they were away. They gave me a key to their house, and the security code to their alarm system. I was supposed to check on their house once or twice per week for the three months they were gone. I ended up looking after their home for several summers. They allowed me to keep the key

throughout the year, even when they were home in Annapolis. I felt very honored to have earned their trust.

I believe that Woody and Judy's willingness to trust me demonstrates the fact that my emotional and psychological problems were not evident to the casual observer. If they had suspected any mental illness in me, I don't believe they would have given me the key to their house, or the security code to their alarm system.

## Iridium

It was during my second year of watching after Woody and Judy's place that I happened to come across a very lucrative business opportunity. It was during the fall of 1997. I was 26 years old at the time. I was at a party given by a college friend when I started talking with an acquaintance named Matt who was an engineer for Motorola. I had been telling everyone at the party that I was a handyman, and Matt mentioned that he might have an opportunity for me where he was currently working. He was very evasive about the details, but asked for my business card. I gave it to him. Three weeks later, Matt called me to ask if I would come out to his place of business to discuss the opportunity. He said the facility he worked in needed a maintenance person to work part time. The facility was located in Virginia, about an hour and a half away from my apartment. Considering the long commute, I was skeptical about how profitable it might be, but I went to meet him anyway. Although Matt was employed by Motorola, the sign at the front entrance to his facility said 'Iridium'.

Matt gave me a tour of the place. Matt was a contractor hired by Motorola, and Motorola was a subcontractor to a company called Iridium. Motorola, Matt's employer, was the principal investor in Iridium. He explained that Iridium was the first project of its kind. The Iridium project's goal was to provide global satellite phone coverage. Iridium users using a portable phone would be able to receive and make telephone calls anywhere on the surface of the earth, including anywhere on the oceans, or at the poles. ANYWHERE. The fulfillment of this dream system involved the deployment of more than 70 orbiting satellites. The building I was touring was called the "Master Control Facility" of the Iridium network. The network was expected to be completed by the end of 1998. The project would ultimately cost more than \$5 billion.

While I was touring the facility, I estimated that a lot of extra money had been spent to construct it, and I thought the investors would be willing to spend more money than usual to maintain it. The building had a control center that looked like a small version of the mission control room at NASA. Large Projection Screens were located at the front of this room which showed the locations of satellites in orbit, and other pertinent data. Two or three large satellite dishes were located in back, providing communication with the satellite network. The facility had a huge generator for maintaining electrical power in case of an outage.

The building also had an extensive security system. A security card was required to gain entrance to the building from the outside, and to access nearly every room inside. Surveillance cameras were in every room and hallway. Cameras were also located at various points all around the outside perimeter of the building. At the time, I did not anticipate how this environment would affect me.

As I took the tour, I took note of the busy pace that was set there. Nearly everywhere I looked, people were busy typing and monitoring their computer screens. Nobody seemed to be idle. I thought that Matt and his colleagues were too busy getting this project off

the ground to bother to look for another handyman. I estimated that it would cost about \$35 per hour to hire a maintenance company to provide a worker and I compared that with my regular rate of \$30 per hour. I also factored in the one and a half hour commute. I decided then that I was going to ask for a premium rate. A week after the tour, I sent Matt a contract for part-time maintenance services at \$40 an hour, two days per week. Then, I waited. A month passed by. Matt talked to me several times and tried to persuade me to lower my rate. He told me he wasn't the only one making the decision, and that my high rate might be rejected. I didn't believe it. I held firm to my price and I waited a while longer. I thought they wouldn't bother to look for anyone else. After three more weeks, I got my answer—the contract was approved.

I started working part-time at Iridium in February 1998. Immediately after I started work there, the Security Chief of the facility asked me to submit to him a criminal background check. I recall that I had to go through the State Police to be fingerprinted. My fingerprints were sent to an FBI crime lab in West Virginia for a criminal background search. The search came back negative, and I presented the official documented results to the security chief. However, I made one change to the documents. The documents had my original fingerprints on them in ink. I gave the security chief a copy of the documents, but with my fingerprints obscured with white-out. I did not want the security office to have my original fingerprints. Exactly why I felt this way is not entirely clear to me now. I had worries that I could be innocently connected with a crime at Iridium. This fear was irrational, and I now know of no rational justification for worrying about this. I certainly didn't plan to commit any crimes there. My worries were certainly a symptom of paranoid fears.

Within two or three weeks after I started working there, I had to participate in an orientation class for new employees. At the class they drilled into our heads the Acronym 'POPI'. It stood for 'Protection of Proprietary Information'. According to POPI protocols, almost every document generated there had to be placed in special trashcans upon disposal. The material in these trashcans was burned by a special contractor, instead being disposed of at a landfill. Apparently, management was afraid someone would go through the trash to try to get information about the Iridium project. They also warned us about sending emails to outsiders with information about the Iridium project. They talked about other security concerns, like allowing people to enter certain rooms without using their access cards. On the same day I was in this class, my Dad needed to get a message to me, but he did not have the phone number of the facility, and I did not own a cell phone at that time. He tried to call Motorola Corporation and get the number directly from them. After calling various places and dealing with many different operators, he was told the place where I was did not exist. This might have been an honest mistake by the operators, since the facility was new, and Motorola has hundreds of different buildings, but later that day, I thought, "What a paranoid organization!" This type of organizational behavior made it seem more likely to me that they would also conduct surveillance operations.

By this time, I had been having thoughts and feelings that people were watching me for well over two years. Even a normal person might have these thoughts occasionally, but I had these thoughts constantly. The thoughts themselves however, were not very specific.

They were abstract. I did not actually believe that any specific person was watching me. Rather, I had the feeling and idea that, in general, someone, somewhere COULD be watching me at anytime. When I was at a client's house, I thought they MIGHT be watching. When I was at a store, I thought store security MIGHT be watching me. When I saw a police car, I thought the police MIGHT be watching me. I didn't really KNOW whether they were watching me or not. But, this idea that somehow I was being watched occurred to me very frequently--perhaps hundreds, or thousands of times per day. My abnormal experience was the frequency with which these thoughts occurred to me. Up to this point in my life, these thoughts were not associated with any specific group or individual. I just had a vague idea that I was being watched. But that all changed when I started work at Iridium.

From the first day that I started working at the Iridium Master Control Facility, I felt the watchful eye of the cameras bearing down on me. They were present everywhere I went. They were a constant reminder that someone might be watching me every second. By the end of the day, I had a general feeling that someone or some group from Iridium was watching me all the time, although I didn't have a specific person in mind. This feeling stayed with me long after I had left the building. I can remember thinking on my way home that somehow I might still be under surveillance by THEM.

At about this same time I became concerned that my computer system at home might have been compromised. Sometimes, my computer would behave strangely. While I was viewing a document, letters that I did not type would sometimes appear on the screen when I wasn't touching the keyboard, or the mouse pointer would move on its own. I thought this was evidence that a hacker, or a virus had taken control of my computer. Also, sometimes when I was viewing a document, I could hear the hard drive being accessed long after the document had loaded. I tried for many months afterwards to pinpoint a specific process on my machine that could be causing these anomalies, but I was unable to do so. These abnormalities never completely went away and they seemed to happen only when I was connected to the Internet. I had no resources to pursue the matter any further. I didn't care that much that someone else might see what I was doing on the computer. I didn't have any sensitive information stored there. I also didn't use it to transmit any sensitive information. After a while, I gave up trying to determine what was causing the problem. I just kept the idea in the back of my mind that my computer might be under the control of someone else.

I continued working at Iridium two days per week under the strain of the cameras. After about one month of work, I had completed all of my original work assignments. At this point, the chief of security of the facility took it upon himself to provide me with new work assignments. This made my camera related anxiety go off the scale. After he would give me an assignment, I would worry about my performance greatly, and I would think, "Am I doing a good job? Does the security chief think I'm doing a good job? He could be watching me himself, right now!"

My anxiety at Iridium became very intense for several weeks. I soon came to the conclusion that my anxiety was creating behavioral patterns that would make me more

conspicuous. I kept looking over my shoulder. I kept looking directly at the cameras. I kept fidgeting. I decided that if security was not interested in me personally, they would soon become interested in me because of my unusual behavior. I did not want to become a “problem” for the security staff at Iridium. I decided it was in my best interest to ignore whatever thoughts I had about people watching me. I started a psychological war against myself to try to counteract the paranoia and negative thoughts I was experiencing. Everytime I thought “Are they watching me now?” I also tried to think, “No, they are NOT watching now! In fact NOBODY is watching me. No one cares about what I am doing.” Sometimes, if I had performance related anxiety, I would be thinking, “I’m not doing a good job, I’m screwing this up.” I would try to counteract that thought with another one—“I’m doing the best I can, that’s all I should expect”. If the security chief gave me a task to do, I would try to think, “He’s NOT watching me. He has a million other things more important to do. He is not concerned with me.” This tactic was only marginally successful at stemming the tide of persistent thoughts. In fact, it did not abate the thoughts at all—the thoughts continued without interruption, but it did help to somewhat reduce the anxiety they caused.

After three months of working at Iridium, the security chief, Bill, invited me to participate in some social activities after work. Several people from the facility, including Bill and my friend Matt would play street hockey on roller blades. We would meet in a school parking lot about ten minutes away. After the games, most of us would have a few beers and talk. I enjoyed this very much. It made me feel accepted and part of the team. It is interesting to note that at these games, I had no anxieties about being watched. When I knew people actually were watching me, I did not feel self-conscious or nervous in any way. It was only an abstract idea--a fantasy of some sort in my mind, which caused the paranoia. My imagination was a stimulus that had more impact on me than a real experience.

Although I did not have any idea that a specific person was watching me at any given time, the idea that I was under constant surveillance by THEM continued to grow stronger in my mind. I began to feel that I was under surveillance all the time, inside, outside, and away from the Iridium facility. I had no evidence that any surveillance was taking place, but I just felt that it was a reality. The feeling that I was being watched had changed into a feeling that I was being observed. This is a subtle distinction. At first, I did not believe that there was enough staff at Iridium to conduct surveillance on me, and I did not believe there was any reason for them being interested in me individually. However, I still maintained the idea that it might somehow be true. The idea that someone had taken remote control of my home computer system also grew stronger. So often, I wondered whether or not these ideas were true, that they became the truth in my mind. I thought of many different scenarios that would explain how and why these two things were true. At some point, these two previously unrelated ideas came together. I made connections between them both.

I began to think of Iridium as a venture that would be of great interest to the United States government, especially the Defense Department, and the intelligence community. I was certain they would be one of Iridium’s largest customers. (In fact, this is what has

occurred). The Defense Department and the Intelligence community would not buy into a product that they thought was insecure. I expected that there would be great scrutiny of the Iridium system and its employees. Because I was working at the Iridium Master Control Facility, I expected the intelligence community to be interested in everyone working there, including myself. I thought the intelligence agencies would use every tool at their disposal for the purposes of evaluating the system. I believed these tools would include cyber-surveillance. I began to suspect that my computer anomalies were the result of careless user error on the part of the cyber spies.

So, after several months of working at Iridium, I suspected that I was under surveillance by the intelligence community, and that they had electronically placed something on my computer that enabled them to monitor my online activities. For many months, I wondered whether this was true or not. I certainly did not believe it was a fact, because I had no evidence to support this belief. But, I maintained the idea that it MIGHT be true, and I did not dismiss it. I also did not think my anxiety was a sign of paranoia. I thought my anxiety at work was a type of performance anxiety, a symptom of a poor self-image, and self-criticism. I thought that if my performance was adequate, this anxiety at work would diminish. I was wrong. There were many times when my performance was fine, but I still continued to be anxious when I thought I might be under observation.

After I initially had the idea that I might be under surveillance, I had many doubts about my own thoughts. I started to become introspective; I started to examine my own mind and how it worked. I thought extensively on the subject of knowledge. More precisely, I thought about how we know things to be true, and how many things are unknown. I quickly came to the conclusion that although I might believe something to be true, this does not make it the truth. This realization caused me to doubt my own beliefs. After this time, I never completely believed in my delusions again. When I say I believed I was under surveillance, I mean that I was nearly sure it was true, but I was never completely sure. I always had a little bit of doubt.

I came to understand that many people believe certain things, but they are often wrong. I also understood that many people believe certain facts, even though they cannot verify them. For instance, I believe there are more than 1 billion people living in China. Of course, I accept this as the truth because I have relied on information from other sources that I consider to be reliable. But I have no other evidence to support this belief. Also, there are many things that I know to be true, even though I do not understand exactly how I know these things. For example, most of the time, I know whether someone is a woman or a man simply by looking at his or her face. This holds true even when there are not other obvious indicators, such as a beard. However, I could not tell you how I know this. I can not give you a description of how a man's face differs from a woman's face. I don't know what features make a woman's face distinguishable from a man's. Often, you know something to be true without knowing how you know it. I simply know when someone is a woman or a man, but I do not know how I am making the distinction. Of course, your gut instinct is not always correct. There are a small percentage of cases where you simply cannot tell the person's sex by looking at their face. Your gut instinct, or your first impression is not always reliable. After thinking about these realities, I believed that I could not determine the truth simply by thinking about it. I realized that

my thoughts were irrelevant to the truth. I decided that I needed more evidence to decide whether it was true or not. I began to believe however that it was LIKELY that I was under surveillance. The fact that it was UNLIKELY never occurred to me. It is interesting to note however, that for more than a year and a half I did not make my thoughts on this subject known to any other person. I realized that most people would think the idea that I was under surveillance would be UNLIKELY, and they would therefore think I was crazy. So I did not mention my suspicions to ANYONE. I continued to think about them introspectively.

I thought that I would be under surveillance at a very high level. If the intelligence community was the group of people who were conducting the surveillance, then the security guards at Iridium would probably not know about this. I did think however, that the security chief would probably know something about it. I thought it was likely that he would be getting reports from the intelligence community about their findings. However, the security chief would probably not be in direct contact with the people who were following me. As the months passed, I began to believe more and more that this was likely to be the truth. I was probably under surveillance, and the spies were reporting their findings to their bosses, who were indirectly reporting the findings to the security chief. Of course, while I was at the Iridium facility, I still wondered constantly whether I was under surveillance by the cameras that were located all over the building.

At this time, I never thought that I had become paranoid. I thought that I understood a reality. I thought I was becoming aware of the FACT that I was under observation. However I was keenly aware that my behavior could be interpreted by an observer as paranoia.

As the months passed, and I continued to believe more and more that I was under surveillance, I also questioned why it was happening to me. It did not occur to me that it was untrue. I simply tried to understand why it WAS true. I thought of many different scenarios that would explain why it was true. I understood that conducting surveillance on someone was extremely expensive. I knew that I was beginning to exhibit paranoid behaviors that could be observed if someone was watching me carefully. I thought this was the reason that THEY were continuing to observe me. I thought my paranoid behavior would give them a reason to follow me even closer than before. Maybe in the beginning, I wasn't under surveillance at all, but the observations of the Iridium staff could have prompted them to hire surveillance. Perhaps this could be the truth. But if so, who would be conducting the surveillance? I thought it would probably be a private detective. How could I know what the truth was? Of course, that's probably the truth...they've hired a private detective.

## A Secret Message

One day after work, I left the Iridium facility to drive to my brother's house. I had to cross the Potomac River at a ferry crossing connecting Virginia with Maryland. Just on the other side of the crossing was a main road named Whites Ferry Road that went to the left, leading eventually to other major routes. If you turned right after the ferry crossing, you would continue down a dirt road. After having used this crossing ten or fifteen times, I never saw any vehicles go down that dirt road. The dirt road was marked by a sign labeled 'River Road'. There was another major road named 'River Road' that I knew about which was located ten or fifteen miles down river. I wondered whether the two roads connected. For some reason, I decided to take that dirt road on the right to see where it went. After turning onto the road, I noticed most of the other cars had gone to the left as usual, except for a van about 200 feet back taking the same route that I was. I thought 'Hmmm. I wonder where that guy is going?' I drove a short distance down this road and it turned into a paved road. I continued on it for another mile or so. The van was still behind me. I continued several more miles, until finally, the road led back to Whites Ferry Road. The van was still behind me. We had made a half circle and come back to Whites Ferry Road. However, it was not a shortcut. It was definitely the long way around. So, where was this other guy going? Obviously, he didn't know. He was following me! I stuck my hand out the window and motioned to the van to pass me. He didn't. I motioned again. He didn't move. I waited for a few more seconds. Finally, the van passed by me and turned right onto Whites Ferry Road...the same direction we would be heading if I had originally turned left at the ferry crossing, but at least a few miles out of the way. Was he following me? Maybe. Did it mean anything? Maybe. Maybe it was a private detective. Maybe. Maybe. Maybe.

I was very distraught that Iridium might have hired a private detective to follow me. I couldn't know whether it was true or not. I thought it might be the truth. I didn't want to be a "problem" for them. I didn't want them to spend money on surveillance of me. Would the detective report back to them about our circuitous route back to Whites Ferry Road? What would they think about this? They would think I was checking to see if someone was following me...a sure sign of a paranoid mind. This was not the image I wanted to project. A paranoid person is a crazy person, and a crazy person is often thought of as someone to fear. I thought I was becoming a person they would fear. A potential problem. I thought the logical choice for a potential problem was to get rid of it. This could mean they might cancel my contract. I didn't want that to happen. What could I do? I had to do something. I had to let them know I wasn't crazy. Also, I had to stop behaving abnormally. I had to get over my performance anxiety and other paranoid behaviors.

Then, I started to think about my computer system. Was it also the target of surveillance? Maybe. But, a private detective would probably not be able to take control of my computer system. It would take computer experts with highly sophisticated tools and access to the appropriate networks to target my computer system individually. I thought, maybe they didn't have control of my computer system. On the other hand, I completely

believed that the intelligence agencies would be training their tools on the Iridium project.

I had to communicate somehow to the Iridium staff, and especially the security chief, Bill, that I was not crazy. I had to let them know that I was not going to be a problem for them. I had to let them know that I was a 'normal' person. How could I do this? I could not communicate with Bill directly, because I might be wrong about the reality of the situation. Maybe there was no private detective following me. Maybe nobody was observing me at all. Maybe all these thoughts were just futile worrying on my part. If I went to talk to Bill, and nothing was happening, he would definitely begin to think I was paranoid and crazy. My solution would become the problem. No. I could not communicate with Bill directly. If I was going to communicate anything to him, it would have to be done through the observers themselves, through an unconventional channel. That way, if the 'observers' were not real, nothing would be communicated. And, if they were real, he would hopefully get the message.

I decided that it was still likely the intelligence agencies were monitoring Internet activity concerning the Iridium project. I thought, perhaps they didn't have control of my computer, but most likely they could pick up intelligence simply by monitoring the Internet. I would send them a message. I had read about tools that intelligence agencies use to filter information based on key words found in email and other transmissions. These transmissions are intercepted in a variety of ways, and then filtered based on their content. Yes, I thought I could send them a message using key words. But, it had to be a very carefully crafted message.

Maybe an intelligence agency would pick up my message and forward some information about it to the security chief. He might receive it. Perhaps. But, what would I say? I couldn't blatantly say something about being followed, because I'm not absolutely certain I was being followed. Also, what kind of response should I expect? If he receives the message from an intelligence agency, he certainly couldn't acknowledge his source. And, if I send the wrong type of message, they might get the idea that I definitely am crazy. I had to be careful. I decided to craft an ambiguous message with very general language. I came up with something like the following:

"This is for you guys at the Iridium Master Control Facility, in Ashburn. I understand you want to collect more information on me but doing it this way is unnecessary. Why not just come talk to me directly about your concerns?"

I know that I might project the wrong image at work. I really just want to do a good job, the best job possible. I have an anxiety problem related to work performance. I worry constantly about people watching me, especially the cameras. They make me nervous. But you don't have to be concerned about my demeanor. You don't have to be afraid of me. I get nervous. I have never posed a threat to anyone. If you want more information, just come talk to me on a one-to-one basis. Perhaps at hockey, or some other venue."

Of course, this message was directed mostly at the security chief, Bill. The hockey venue that I mentioned was intended to mean our friendly after work games.

I decided first to send this message to myself at my America Online account [dgtils@aol.com](mailto:dgtils@aol.com). Perhaps THEY could intercept it there. But then afterwards, I decided this was unlikely. At the time, I was online by dial up with America Online, and sending an email directly to myself--It probably would never leave the America Online networks. I wasn't sure they had the ability to monitor my computer directly. So, I decided to send it to my email forwarding service. The second time, I sent the email to [kurt\\_snyder@bigfoot.com](mailto:kurt_snyder@bigfoot.com). This would force the email to be routed over the Internet, and possibly intercepted by the Intelligence Agencies. If THEY weren't monitoring emails concerning the IRIDIUM MASTER CONTROL FACILITY, then most likely no one would get the message but myself. All of this was done with the intention that somehow, my anxiety would be diminished.

A few days later I was back to work at Iridium. I noticed on that particular day that I did not see one security guard walking around the building all day. Normally, they would make their rounds, checking exit doors, marking off things on their clipboards. But I did not see them. I thought, 'That's odd!'. Also, when I looked at the cameras this day, I noticed they were never pointed at me, not one time. I thought "How strange!" Toward the end of the day, I ran into Bill, the security chief. He said, 'Hey, I think Jim wants to talk to you.' "Who's Jim?" I said. "He works in your old room, in the back, past the lockers".

I used to have a small room where I kept maintenance supplies behind the locker room. But lately, it had been taken over by a few guys who I thought were Technical Support Staff. Of course, at Iridium, virtually everyone was some sort of "Tech Support". I didn't really know who Jim was but I said, "OK, I'll go talk to him".

I went into the back room and there was a very large guy sitting at a workstation. I had seen him around the building a few times. I said, "Are you Jim?" "He said, "Yeah! Hey, listen, I have some tickets to a Hockey game tonight and I wanted to know if you want to go?" "I thought, "I've never been to a hockey game...it might be interesting. Sure, I'll go". I also thought, "I wonder why he's asking me instead of someone else?"

Jim gave me my ticket to the game and we drove there separately. I got there late and found my seat. Our seats were both together. He was already there. Soon after the game started, He said, "Why don't we get something to eat afterwards?" I agreed, and after the game we went to a Chinese restaurant nearby. We started talking while we were waiting for our food to arrive. He started asking me about my job, and how long I had been working as a handyman. "Do you like your job? Do you like working at Iridium?" Then, somehow we started talking about the Internet. He started asking me more questions. "How much do you know about computers? How much do you know about networks and the Internet? Do you know anything about network security?" I don't recall exactly how I responded, but I mentioned that I thought the Internet was great, except that it provided a new avenue for people with the right tools to monitor our activities. I told him I thought that the more we move towards an electronic and cashless society, the more government could exert control over us by monitoring our communications and our transactions. Then he said, "I think everyone should know

everything about everyone else. Information is great. The more the better. I'm all in support of monitoring communications. If you're not a criminal, you have nothing to worry about." I then asked him, "What do you do at Iridium?" He said, "I'm the Network Administrator. I also work with network security." He told me, "At Iridium, we have tools to monitor emails. Email is filtered based on certain key words. We also monitor other Internet traffic. Most people have no clue that we're doing it. But I don't see anything wrong with it. If you're doing what you are supposed to be doing, you shouldn't be concerned. In fact, we've fired several people for inappropriate use of company resources." Later on, he mentioned the hockey games again. "Do you like hockey a lot? Do you want to come to any more games? I bought \$1000 worth of tickets. Do you think that's going overboard?" Soon, we finished our discussion. "Thanks for the ticket" I said. Then, I left.

Afterwards, I thought, "What just happened to me there? What was all that about?" I was certain he was talking about monitoring people on the network at the Iridium Facility, and not on the Internet, but why would he tell me that? I kept thinking afterwards, "Maybe they received my message. Maybe they misunderstood what I meant about hockey. Maybe he was discussing monitoring of email to see what else I would say about it. Maybe they are concerned that I know about their monitoring activities. A thousand dollars worth of tickets. Wow. Maybe they got the wrong idea from my email. But why didn't I see any cameras pointed at me today? Except for the security chief, I didn't see any security guards either. Hmm. Maybe they got the right idea. I just didn't know what to believe--but I made the assumption that somehow they had received my message.

Later, I thought to myself, THEY are not going to stop following me or observing me simply because I sent them a message. They are going to follow me and spy on me until they are satisfied that I am not a threat. I thought to myself, I must convince them that I am not a threat. I have to stop being nervous at work. I have to stop looking at the cameras.

I began to employ a strategy--I tried to become a very good actor. Even if I was extremely anxious, I sometimes tried to imagine that I actually was in fact the focus of everyone's attention, and that all eyes were trained on me. I imagined that I was on a stage. I imagined that I was the best actor in the world. My job was to act as normal as possible. I tried to pretend I wasn't concerned about any cameras, or anyone watching me. I tried to behave as if I was extremely confident about my work.

In the short term, this thespianism had some positive effects. To an observer, I think I would have seemed less paranoid. My anxiety was somewhat reduced. However, the mental energy required to maintain the barrage of counteractive thoughts left me drained and mentally exhausted at the end of the day. In addition, the acting reinforced the idea in my mind that people were in fact watching me. It put me in mental turmoil. So, I didn't maintain this act for very long.

At some point during that first year at Iridium, I began to wonder whether people were talking about me. This thought usually occurred to me when I overheard conversations

taking place nearby. I would be working, and I might overhear the following exchange between two people:

“Hey, why do you think he’s doing it that way?”

“I don’t know, maybe he doesn’t know any other way to do it.”

“But why is it taking him so long, he should have been finished a long time ago!”

“Maybe this is the first time he’s done something like this”

“Maybe he just takes his good old time. Maybe he just doesn’t have a good work ethic.”

“I don’t know. Don’t you think we should mention this to his supervisor?”

“Perhaps. But we might be causing problems for him. I don’t know if that’s our business. Are we justified?”

“What do you mean? We have to wait for him to finish to do our own work. He’s holding us up. He’s right in the way!”

“Maybe he’s doing the best he can.”

I would wonder if they were talking about me. I started to wonder this quite often when I overheard people talking. Most of the time I never actually believed they were talking about me, but I had a strong suspicious feeling that it was true.

At this time, I did not have a boss at Iridium to whom I reported on a regular basis. My duties were assigned to me by a variety of people, including Matt, and Bill, the security chief. In reality, I had very little guidance on a daily basis. This would soon change. A short while later, Iridium hired a Facility Manager named Bob to take charge of managing the maintenance of the building. He became my new boss.

At first, I was very suspicious of Bob. I wondered whether he had been hired specifically to deal with me. As I worked with Bob over the next several months, I came to have great respect for him. He was a very hard worker. He came to work early, and he left late, every day. He was a man of action. He was also very organized. When I arrived at work, he always had a list prepared ahead of time with tasks for me to do that day. He seemed to be able to judge my abilities very well. He never gave me anything I couldn’t handle. He also seemed to be genuinely concerned about the people working with him. He was very supportive and always encouraged me in my work. Often, if we were working late, he would purchase dinner for us. He never asked me to reimburse him for this. Although I often asked him whether he had an expense account for these meals, he always avoided answering the question. I assumed he bought the meals out of his own pocket. He also often gave me things. For instance, I did not have a good work jacket. So, he gave me one. (I still wear it today, 5 years later.) I came to look forward to working with him, and I began to trust him. However, I never abandoned the idea that somehow he might have been hired to deal with me, and would therefore be working directly for THEM. I thought perhaps part of his job was to get up close and personal with me.

## Delusional Expansion

In September of 1998, I took a trip to Florida. I drove down there from Maryland. I left in the afternoon and drove overnight. Late at night, probably about 3 am, I decided to pull off the interstate and go to sleep for a while. I took the first exit I came upon and found a rural road where there was no traffic. I parked on the shoulder in the grass and went to sleep in the front seat of my pickup truck. I was miles from nowhere and well off the interstate. There were no cars and no lights anywhere to be seen. When I woke up, it was still early in the morning, but there was some light from the dawn. I noticed an SUV parked across the Road about 300 yards behind me. I can remember thinking, "I wonder if that is part of the surveillance crew." I drove off the shoulder and made my way back to the interstate. I did not see the car follow me. But, I starting thinking, "I didn't see any cars parked there when I went to sleep. How did they find me? Maybe there is some type of tracking device attached to my truck. Yeah, That's it. There must be some kind of tracking device hidden on my truck."

After this point, the idea in my mind that I was under surveillance began to grow larger. I like to call this mental phenomenon 'Delusional Expansion'. The delusion expands, and becomes larger and larger. The delusion begins to encompass more people, more places, more things. This delusional expansion continued over the next two years. At this particular point in time, I began to envision a surveillance crew that was assigned to keep track of me 24 hours a day, no matter where I went. "They were following me to Florida. They had hidden a device on my truck that would allow them to keep track of me anywhere."

I got to my destination in Florida--a condo located on the water in Tampa. During my entire stay there, I noticed that there was one particular boat out on the water, directly in front of the condo, but perhaps a quarter mile out. I remember thinking that it must be part of the surveillance crew. Later, as I drove around Tampa I wondered how many vehicles were trying to follow me.

One night in Florida, I came across a theater and decided to watch a movie. The name of the movie I picked was 'Enemy of the State'. I don't remember whether I knew anything about the movie ahead of time. The movie is about a common citizen who comes under surveillance by the National Security Agency. During the movie, the main character is chased by government agents all over the city. During one chase scene, as I sat there watching the movie, I got tapped on the shoulder by a man sitting behind me who whispered 'That's you!'. I also heard a girl sitting behind me saying to him 'Stop it. Stop it now.' I did not turn around. After the movie, I thought it was very unusual that I was thinking about people following me around, and while I was watching a scene about a guy being followed around, someone would tap on my shoulder and say 'That's you!'. Perhaps it was just a coincidence. On the other hand, I thought, maybe the guy was a very unprofessional crewmember working for the surveillance team, and maybe he had committed the faux pas of interacting with the surveillance subject, (being me).

I didn't think about this situation very much after this, but it occurred to me at that time that when you are on a surveillance crew, there might be a great urge to communicate with the surveillance subject in some circumstances. Especially if you are not getting any information from the surveillance. This urge must certainly be controlled and suppressed if the surveillance is to be conducted properly. The point of surveillance would seem to be nullified if the subject knows they are under surveillance. In my case however, if they had received my email message, then they might think that I already know that they are watching me. If the subject knows when they are under constant surveillance, then direct communication with the subject might sometimes seem to be a better option for gathering information. After this incident, I got the idea in my mind that some members of the surveillance crew might have the desire to communicate directly with me, but that this communication was probably not allowed due to a set of standard protocols they were required to follow. Interestingly enough, the movie itself didn't influence my delusion. The movie was a fabrication of someone else's imagination. Even though the subject was similar to what I thought I was experiencing, it was not my own version of reality. It otherwise affected me very little.

I thought for sure that after the surveillance team had followed me around for a while, they would conclude that they were not getting anymore pertinent information, and they would 'Give up', or they would resort to other methods.

I returned to Maryland and continued working at Iridium for several more months. I also continued working several days a week for Woody and Judy. Sometime in the fall, Woody approached me and asked me if I could develop a Windows based computer program for him to keep track of mutual fund investments. Woody was a very shrewd investor. He had very specific requirements for this program, and he wanted it to display more than 30 data points on each mutual fund. He also wanted the program to keep track of funds over an 8 month period. Data for the program would be imported each month from a CD produced by a financial reporting company. At the time, there was no commercially available application that could meet his requirements.

I had never done any Windows programming before. However, I thought I was smart enough to learn how. I told him I would be starting from scratch and would need some time to teach myself. He agreed to be patient and wait a while for the results. I accepted the challenge. I bought myself a computer, and got to work on this new project. At first, I worked on it very little because my handyman work was occupying most of my time. It took me at least four months to learn the programming language, and it was at least five more months after that before I had an example to show Woody.

Now, it was about December 1998. Since my trip to Florida, I had not seen any more vehicles that I thought could be following me. Instead of concluding that no one was following me, I concluded that THEY no longer needed to follow me directly, because they had a tracking device hidden on my truck. That was the reason I saw no one following me.

At this time, I was renting a three bedroom apartment with another roommate. We needed a third roommate to lower our individual rent. We had discussed interviewing

several people together, and making a joint decision about who we would rent to. However, I came home from work one day and found a message that my roommate had already found someone. Apparently, he had decided, without talking to me, that this person was acceptable, and he had already given the guy the keys to our apartment. Later that day, I met our new roommate, 'Jim', and was immediately suspicious of him. Jim was about 50 years old, and seemed to be a little bit too friendly. I wondered whether Jim was an 'operative' from the surveillance team and had been assigned to infiltrate our apartment. I thought that this idea was a bit paranoid, so I decided to ignore it and allow him to move in with us, but I never abandoned the idea as untrue.

Jim became an unusual roommate. The unusual thing about Jim was that I saw him sporadically or not at all. He would come home after I went to bed, and he would leave in the morning before I woke up. I don't remember ever seeing or hearing him take a shower or a bath. I also never saw him washing any clothes. However, the few times I did see him, he didn't smell bad, so he must have been bathing and washing his clothes somewhere. Perhaps he was doing these things while we were at work. I don't know. I also don't think he ever left any food in the refrigerator or in the kitchen cabinets. I saw him maybe once every two weeks. He seemed reclusive to me. He didn't seem to be any threat, so after a while I did not worry about him anymore. "To each his own" I thought.

Also about this time, I had begun stopping at a particular bar in Great Falls Virginia on my way home from Iridium. I would have a few beers and maybe something to eat. On one particular occasion, I was sitting at the bar and a guy came up and sat next to me. He appeared to be about 55 years old. His name was Bruce. We started talking. He told me he was retired from the CIA after more than 20 years of working there. I believed this, because CIA headquarters was located only about 15 miles away. I asked him how he got the job there.

He said, "You don't apply for jobs at the CIA. They find you, not the other way around. I had a friend working there at the time who recommended me. I was recruited."

"What did you do there?" I asked.

"I was an analyst. But I can't tell you any more."

Then I asked, "What do you do now?"

"Nothing. I'm retired. I keep a boat in Annapolis which I take out every so often".

"Interesting. I live just outside of Annapolis."

After our conversation, I continued on my way home. This encounter was inconsequential to my thought processes at that time, but I would remember it later during a crucial point in my illness.

In January 1999, Bob, the facility manager from Iridium, decided to throw a party for some of the staff and their families. He arranged to use a community house in his neighborhood a short drive away from the facility. I was invited to the party along with about 30 other people. Most of us knew each other but there were some people that I did not know. Sometime in the early part of the evening, Bob had everyone introduce themselves to the crowd. Each person took their turn to tell a little bit about themselves. However, when it came to be my turn to introduce myself, Bill, the security director, stood up and did the introduction for me. He said something like this, "Everyone, this is Kurt Snyder, he is now our maintenance worker and handyman. He works hard at what

he does, he really tries to do a good job, he really is doing a great job, and we are happy to have him working with us. You may see him around the facility.” I was very surprised by this. I thought the fact that Bill himself was saying this was definite confirmation for me that he had received my message months ago. I thought, “Why else would he specifically mention what a good job I was doing?” But I also thought, “Why would he have waited six months to let me know that?” I thought this was Bill’s way of sending a message back to me. He didn’t mention the message itself or acknowledge receiving it, but he could validate my sentiments about my work.

After the party, Bob thought I had been drinking too much and insisted that I spend the night at his place. I stayed overnight there, but I left early in the morning shortly after waking. I wondered at the time if Bob had any knowledge of the surveillance “project”.

For me, the idea that I was under surveillance had become a reality. I was 90% sure it was true. I don’t think you could have proven to me that it wasn’t true. For months after the party, I continued to believe that the surveillance was an ongoing project, and that it hadn’t stopped. I began to question again why it would have continued for so long. I also began to wonder about my assumptions. I began to think, maybe I wasn’t under surveillance when I sent the message, but maybe I came under surveillance afterwards because they received the message! Perhaps THEY were wondering how I knew they were monitoring the Internet. Perhaps they had other questions about me that I couldn’t know about. I just couldn’t escape the idea that people were monitoring me all the time. I couldn’t understand why it was continuing for so long. At the same time, I hadn’t mentioned this idea to anyone else because I didn’t have any real proof that it was occurring. A related delusion, about my computer system being compromised, had also grown stronger in my mind over the course of several months. I began to believe that if THEY had a tracking device in my car, then they probably had bugged my phone at home, and were also monitoring my cell phone calls.

## Tests

Now, it was February of 1999. I tried to think of many reasons why the surveillance would have continued for more than a year. I thought, "Perhaps they still think I am paranoid?" I tried to look for signs that THEY were testing me to see whether I was paranoid or not. I noticed some things that seemed to indicate that was exactly what they were doing. One day, I came out to my truck in the morning, and I found the doors unlocked. There was a ribbon sitting in the passenger's seat. I had never seen the ribbon before. I was pretty sure that I did not put it there, and I was also sure that I had locked my truck the night before. Nothing in the truck seemed to be missing. I thought this was very strange. I blamed the incident on THEM. THEY had opened my truck and placed the ribbon there to see how I would react. A few weeks later, a similar event occurred. I came out to my truck one day and found a little doll in the passenger's seat. It was a Barbie doll, or something similar. This time, I was absolutely sure that I did not leave this object there. I certainly did not own a doll. I once again blamed this incident on THEM. However, I reacted differently this time. I realized that they now had access to my truck anytime they wanted it. I was worried that they could plant some type of evidence in my truck and that I could be connected with a crime of some sort.

I went to the police station to talk with one of the officers and get their opinion. The officer that talked to me, a woman, said that maybe it was a little neighborhood girl who had a crush on me, maybe she had put the doll there. She suggested that I forget about it. After I got home, I began to think about her suggestion, and I decided that I was worrying too much about it. I thought I needed to counteract my fears. I decided that if THEY really wanted to do anything malicious to me, they would have done it already, and putting a doll in my truck was actually a very benign act. One thing was clear to me-- THEY were playing games. I decided that in the future, I would leave the doors to my truck unlocked while it was in my driveway. That way, THEY could know that I didn't care about their games. In addition to my truck, I also owned a work van full of equipment and tools. I still kept this locked. These incidents taught me to be alert for other 'Paranoia Tests'.

Shortly after this incident, the security chief at Iridium, Bill, asked me one day "Which way do you drive to get home from work?" I proceeded to tell him the route I usually took to go home. Honestly though, I took several different routes home depending on the traffic. The following week, he asked me the same question again--"How do you drive to get home from work?" I told him again the route I normally take. Then, a few weeks later, he asked me the same question for a third time. This time, I told him I go different ways depending on the traffic. I thought it was extremely odd that he asked me this same question three times in a month. I thought for sure the questions were tests to see if I was paranoid.

Bob, my current boss at Iridium, also started asking me what I thought was a strange question. Every time I would call him at Iridium from somewhere outside the building, he would immediately ask, "WHERE ARE YOU?". He would say this very

emphatically, almost demanding an answer from me. I would tell him, and then we would have a normal conversation, usually about my work schedule. The strange thing is, he would ask me this question immediately, every time I called. I thought this was another test for paranoia. But, these questions didn't bother me at all. This 'Evidence' seemed to indicate to me that THEY were still wondering whether I was paranoid. It also seemed to indicate to me that Bob (my boss), Bill (the security director), and THEM (the surveillance team) were somehow working together.

I still wondered why the surveillance would have continued for so long. After all, conducting surveillance must be extremely expensive. Why would they spend all this money on one person? If they were only interested in finding out if I was paranoid, I was sure they would have collected enough information to make a decision months ago. If they had any doubt about this, why wouldn't they just cancel my contract? I thought, "That must not be the only reason for the surveillance. There must be another reason. Perhaps they are wondering about my work with Fractals."

I often went online to try to learn new things about Fractals. However, I never found what I was looking for. I never found enough material about the mathematics of Fractals. The only information I ever found was very basic beginner level mathematics. At the same time I searched for information on Fractals, I would also often search the Internet for information about encryption. I had some ideas about using iterative formulas to encrypt information. This was tangentially related to Fractals. I thought, "If the intelligence community was conducting cyber-surveillance on me, they might have noticed that I was interested in encryption." This assumes that they were specifically tracking my online activities. I thought maybe they were wondering whether I had devised a new method of encryption. The intelligence community might be interested in that. This might encourage them to continue surveillance on me. I thought to myself that maybe I was a genius, and I was actually going to develop some incredible mathematical theory combining ideas on fractals, encryption, and the growth of organic forms. I had already picked out a name for it. "Formation Theory". I was having grandiose thoughts. I was projecting my own thoughts onto THEM. "Maybe they think I might be a genius. Maybe they think I have developed a new revolutionary theory. Maybe that's why they are still observing me."

Sometime in the spring of 1999, I began hearing clicking noises while I was on the telephone at my apartment. I only heard these noises on that line. I never heard the noises on my cell phone, or any other phone. They sounded like someone else was picking up another phone. They would happen quite often during a conversation, perhaps three times a minute. It also seemed like I could hear them only on my end. No one I talked to heard them on their end. I wondered what might be causing the noises. I thought it might be from some device that tapped my phone. At the same time, I wondered, "Why would anybody use a tap that would give an indication that it was being used? Certainly a good spy would not use a tap that caused noise on the line that was tapped." These clicking noises continued for several months.

I also started to wonder about people I saw in various places. While I was at the store, I would notice people in the same aisle as myself, and I would wonder, "Is that guy

observing me? Is he with the surveillance project?" I would think this especially when I saw someone who was not buying anything. If they were just browsing, I would be particularly suspicious of them. On one particular day, while I was at the Home Depot closest to Iridium, I saw a guy doing just that. I was wondering "Is that guy observing me?" I decided to alleviate some of my concerns by talking to him. "Hey, can I help you with anything? I come here all the time. I run my own handyman service." "No thanks, I actually run my own company too. We install shades and blinds. My name's Brian." We talked a little bit more, and I told him about my contract with Iridium. He seemed very interested in what I was doing at Iridium. I gave him my business card. He did not give me his card. I left feeling a little more relaxed.

At Iridium, because of my close work with Bob, my anxieties were decreasing, my confidence was increasing, and I felt I was doing a better job overall. Bob was a great manager. But, I still felt and thought that I was being monitored all the time, and it was causing me a lot of mental stress. I desperately wanted to decrease this stress. The obvious 'solution' in my mind was to get the monitoring to stop. Of course, I never realized it would not stop. I never realized that it would continue perpetually because it only existed in my mind. I never wanted to talk to the security chief directly (at least not to initiate a discussion about surveillance), because although I was 95% sure it was happening to me, there was still that remaining 5% doubt. I decided that I would talk to him after I was 100% sure it was true. I would prove it was happening to me first. I decided I would find the tracking device that was located on my truck.

Where would I find the tracking device? Obviously, it was located somewhere that any normal inspection would not detect. What if I had gone to a repair shop and the mechanic working on my truck noticed it? That wouldn't happen. THEY would hide it somewhere out of plain site, somewhere it would be difficult to find. However, they would be taking a risk that they might be discovered while planting it on my truck, so they would choose a place where they could plant it quickly, and get away quickly. They would do it in such a way that it required a minimal amount of time. Perhaps they would choose a particular part of the car that they could change with minimal effort, replacing the original part with a replacement part that also has a tracking device in it. Or, they would place it somewhere that was unlikely to be inspected, like the inside of a door, or the underside of a seat. In any case, I thought the search would take all day, maybe several days. I had to use the truck often, so any search had to be completed within one day. I couldn't do it myself. I needed help. I decided to ask two of my best friends to help me. We would tear that truck apart until we found the tracking device.

Expecting them to be reluctant to help me if they knew what it was about, I decided I would get a commitment from my friends before we got to work. I called my friends on the phone and I told them that I needed their help for a whole day sometime in the next few weeks. I said I could not tell them exactly what we were doing until that day. The main reason I did not tell them what we would be doing was because I didn't want THEM to know. If THEY knew, THEY might remove the device ahead of time. I told my friends I would choose the exact day around their schedules. I told them what we were going to be doing would be difficult, that it might seem unnecessary, but that it was very important to me, and I reminded them that I had never asked them for a specific

favor before. I was counting on their help. One of my friends asked, “Is this going to involve guns or explosives? Are we going to rob a bank?” He was joking, but I said “NO. THIS IS NOT GOING TO INVOLVE GUNS OR EXPLOSIVES. We won’t be doing anything illegal. Will you help me?” “Yes.”

Both of my friends had pledged to help me. Because I had these conversations over the phone, I was sure THEY would know I was planning something, but THEY couldn’t know what it was. I scheduled the important day a week ahead of time. It happened to be one of the same days I was scheduled to work at Iridium. I waited until that morning to contact my boss, Bob, however. I called him at about the same time I would normally get to work. The conversation went something like this:

“Hello, this is Bob”.

“Hey, Bob, this is Kurt”

“You’re not coming in today are you?”

“No, I’m not.”

“Boy. I’m disappointed in you. Okay. Do what you have to do. I hope whatever you’re doing today is important. When are you coming in then?”

“Friday, I’ll be in on Friday”.

“Ok, Good-Bye”

I thought from his immediate reaction, that Bob already knew ahead of time that I probably wouldn’t be at work. Once again, this seemed to indicate to me that he was getting information from THEM.

I still had a few more hours before I told my friends to be ready. I took the time to think about what we were going to do. I thought, “What am I looking for exactly?” I didn’t know what a tracking device would look like. Probably it would have some power source, like a small battery, or perhaps it was connected to the electrical system of my truck. What if I actually found something? What would that mean to me? I still wouldn’t know who exactly was following me. I could go talk to Bill, but he could simply say he knew nothing about it. I couldn’t see how discovering the device would improve my working conditions, or my mental state. I couldn’t see how finding the device would make me less anxious at work. It would only make me more anxious. At the last minute, I decided that instead of looking for a device, it would be better if I simply stopped thinking about surveillance altogether. I should focus my energies on making these worries and my anxiety evaporate. I called my friends and told them to forget about helping me. I cancelled the project.

A month or two later, I got a call at my apartment one morning.

“Hey, this is Brian. Do you remember me?”

“Yeah, from Home Depot, yeah I remember you. You install shades and blinds, right?”

“Yes. I’m calling because I might have an opportunity you might be interested in.”

“Great. What is it?”

“I was wondering if you might want to go to work for my company.”

I couldn’t see myself simply hanging blinds and shades all day, so I said:

“Well, I’m pretty comfortable working for myself right now.”

“I could offer you a salary up to fifty thousand dollars”.

“Wow. How do you earn that much money hanging blinds and shades?”

“We have contracts with the FBI and CIA. I would want you to work there.”

“Really? Don’t they have their own people to do that stuff?”

“Not really, they have contractors who do maintenance work for them.”

“Well, my long term plan is to continue building my own business, by myself. I don’t really want to go to work for another company at this point. However, I have a guy who has been working with me part time for over a year. He’s a great worker. I’m sure he would be interested.”

“Has he ever been involved with drugs, or other criminal activity?”

“Actually, yes, he had a drug problem a few years ago but he’s been clean for more than three years. I’ve never had a problem with him since he’s worked for me.”

“That doesn’t matter. He wouldn’t be a candidate. We need people that can pass a security clearance. I thought you might be a good candidate.”

“That’s too bad. Sorry I couldn’t help you.”

Hmm. FBI, CIA. I thought it was very unusual that this guy, who I originally thought might be observing me, would be calling me to discuss a possible opportunity at the CIA. Hmm. The very next day, I was talking with my neighbor Alfred. He lived downstairs below my apartment. He was from Russia. He had emigrated with his family one or two years earlier. We were talking about his various experiences in the United States. I was asking him some questions about the differences between government in the USA and Russia. He mentioned to me that he had recently been visited by the CIA. Two agents had come to his apartment and asked him many questions. He told me that they were especially interested in the last job he had in Russia. Alfred had previously worked in the defense industry in Russia. He said one of the agents spoke fluent Russian. They asked him many questions about who he had worked with, what were the names of his coworkers, what jobs did they perform, etc... He also told me that they already seemed to know the names of many of his previous coworkers. I wondered whether I had been under surveillance by the CIA because I was living in close proximity to Alfred. I wondered whether Brian from ‘Home Depot’ had communicated with the CIA about me prior to calling the day before. Would he have gotten approval from them?

## Games

One evening in late spring, I was sitting with Judy at their breakfast table in their home near Annapolis. She has a very long driveway that comes from the main road in a long curve up to the garage. From the table you can see a car's headlights coming up the driveway. Sometime in the early evening we were at the table talking, and we saw a car drive up. At the same time, one of the automatic garage doors opened. At first, we thought it was Woody coming home. Then the car drove off. We confirmed with Woody that it was not him. We wondered who had opened the garage door. Later that same week, Judy reported that the garage door opened again and neither Judy nor Woody had opened it. It seemed that someone else had the ability to open their garage door. Judy and Woody quickly decided to have the garage door openers replaced. I wondered whether this incident was some kind of game like the doll and the ribbon I found in my truck.

Another month passed. It was now June 1999. I had tried my best to forget about any surveillance issues, but the truth was, they were still a significant part of my everyday thoughts. Sometime around June 12, Woody and Judy asked me if I would do a special project for them. Their daughter, Melissa, who lived in New York City, wanted a special piece of antique furniture that was located at Woody and Judy's house near Annapolis. They asked me if I would transport it in my van to their daughter's apartment in New York. I said "Sure, I'll do it."

I happened to be working late at Woody and Judy's house the day before I was scheduled to go to New York. To save a trip the next day, we decided to load the furniture into the van that night. It was about 10:30 at night. We put the piece in the van and I left. On my way home, I stopped for gas at a local gas station. While I was filling up the tank, a young man approached me and said, "I'm stranded out here, could you give me a ride to downtown Annapolis?" I thought, Downtown Annapolis is only a few minutes out of my way. I said "Where do you want to go downtown?" The place he mentioned was not a very good neighborhood. I did not want to drive there at night. I looked at him carefully. He was wearing a tee shirt and gym shorts. He didn't seem to have any pockets. I thought he looked harmless. I said "I won't take you where you want to go, but I'll drop you off at the hospital, that's only a few blocks away from there...you can walk the rest of the way." He said, "OK". I finished filling up the van, and we left.

In ten or fifteen minutes, we were already downtown and only a few blocks from the hospital. I couldn't remember which street to turn on. I turned down the wrong street, only one block short of the correct one. Immediately, I realized my error, and I stopped the van to decide what to do. My passenger said something, I looked over, and I saw he was holding a knife in his right hand with a blade about four or five inches long. I thought, "Great! Where the hell did he get that?" I quickly put my hands up and started to focus on his hand with the knife. At first, I was not listening to him, I was only focusing on the knife. I could not get out of the van because I had my seatbelt on. I was not about to reach down to undo the seatbelt because I would be putting my guard down. He was

screaming something at me. I finally understood he was saying “Put your hands on the dashboard!”. I said to him “There is NO WAY I am going to put my hands on the dashboard. You can forget it.” He said again, “Put your hands on the dashboard!” I then leaned across towards him and tried to grab the hand that was holding the knife. He moved his hand back and easily kept it out of my reach. It was a long way across both seats. He said, “What’s the matter with you? Do you want me to stab you or something?” I said “No sir, I don’t want you to stab me, but I AM NOT going to put my hands on the dashboard!” I tried to grab the knife hand again, but was unsuccessful. He screamed something else at me, I don’t know what. I tried to think of something to confuse him. I said “I’m an undercover police officer.” He said nothing. He reached over with his left hand and undid my seatbelt. I waited a few seconds while I watched him carefully and kept my focus on the knife. I saw a chance to get out, and I took it. I quickly exited the van. I ran about twenty feet away from the van and turned around to look. I thought, “Damn, I left the keys in the van!” The van was not moving. I thought, maybe he won’t steal the van. I decided to run to the hospital to call the police as fast as I could. I made it to the hospital in about one minute, went straight past the sign-in booth to a back room. I told a nurse what happened and she let me use a phone to call 911.

A police officer arrived at the hospital within 5 minutes. I explained to the officer what happened. He got on the radio and said, “I think we found your van already...come with me.” Apparently, the guy with the knife had driven the van away and was driving through red lights on his way out of town. Another officer had spotted the van and had been chasing it for several miles. I got in the officer’s car and we drove to where the van had been stopped. It had run off the road into the woods and crashed into a streambed. It was totaled beyond repair. The driver was nowhere to be seen. He had fled into the woods.

The police brought in dogs, and a helicopter with powerful searchlights, but they could not find the thief. The police would not let me go near the van until after the dogs had finished searching the area. This took about an hour. All I could think about was Judy and Woody’s furniture in the back of the van. I wondered what kind of damage had occurred to it. I was embarrassed that I was so stupid. Other than that, I did not feel very stressed by the whole situation. I thought, “So I was stupid, oh well.” I did not think “I could have gotten killed!” I did not think “I could have gotten stabbed!” I did not think much about my personal safety at all. What I did think was “I should have waited for him to try to climb over the seat of the van, then he would have been at a disadvantage!”

At about 1 am, the police let me inspect my van. The furniture was damaged, but not significantly. I thought I could repair it. The police called a tow truck on my behalf. In the meantime, I called some close friends in Annapolis and asked them to get my other truck from my apartment. They got to the scene about 2 am and helped me move the furniture from the van to the truck. The next morning, I continued with my plan to take the furniture to New York.

I drove up to New York in a few hours. Judy and Woody had already given me the keys to Melissa’s Apartment. When I arrived, Melissa was at work. I moved the furniture inside and then immediately got to work repairing it. All that was needed was some wood glue and clamps to secure a paneled door. Later that day, Melissa came home and

we went out together for dinner. I told her what had happened to me the night before. She insisted that I call and tell her mother immediately upon returning to the apartment. In the meantime, I found out from a friend in Annapolis that there was already an article in the local Annapolis newspaper detailing what happened to me. It seemed that the press had read the police reports from the night before and was able to get an article into the morning newspaper. I did not know exactly what was in the article when I called Judy. I expected Judy to be upset that I had given a ride to a stranger while I was transporting their special piece of furniture. I tried to avoid telling her that part of the story. If I recall, I tried to invent a little white lie to cover up my stupidity. However, I had told the police the truth about what happened, and everything I had described was in the newspaper article. Judy had the local newspaper at home and after reading the article, she called me back to question what had happened. I then had to admit to her the truth. I was sure she and Woody would be upset with me. Later, neither Judy nor Woody was angry with me, and I was relieved.

Part of the deal of delivering the furniture to New York involved an understanding with Melissa that I would be able to spend a few days at her apartment and just enjoy the city. During those days, there was another handyman named Joe doing a small wall repair job at her apartment. Melissa told me he would be coming. Joe said he was working for the landlord. He came to the apartment twice while I was there to spackle over a hole in the wall in the stairwell leading to the basement. While he was doing his job, Joe and I started talking, and we compared our experience on the various jobs we had done over the years. After he finished, we spent maybe another half an hour talking. Somehow the subject of crime became a topic during our conversation. I told him what had happened to me a few days earlier with the stranger, the knife, and my van. He said to me, "Maybe this guy with the knife was a hitman". I said, "No, I don't really think so. I don't have anybody who's out to get me. Besides, he had the opportunity to stab me several times, and he didn't". He said, "You can't make those kind of assumptions in this game." I said, "What game?" He said, "Forget it. what I meant to say is life. The whole thing is about not making assumptions. How do you know he wasn't a hitman?" I said "He just didn't seem like a hitman." Joe said, "You couldn't tell if he was or not. I know a hitman named Larry Schorer. On the outside, he seems like the nicest guy in the world. On the inside, he's an empty shell, cold as hell. You'd never know it by looking at him or by talking to him. That's how they get close. So you don't really know what this guy wanted. Maybe he wanted to kill you. Maybe he wanted your van. Maybe he wanted your money. You just don't know. The next time something unusual happens, don't make assumptions, Instead try to figure out what the game is. If you figure out the game, you'll be on the fast track." "Ok. I'll take it under consideration." I thought to myself, "He kept mentioning the 'game'. What did he really mean? What kind of game was he talking about?"

## Somebody's Watching Me

A few days later I returned to Annapolis. Not long after that, Woody and Judy left for their summer home in Aspen. At the same time, I had started to work more vigorously on Woody's mutual fund project. Often, I would work at their house on Woody's personal computer, writing code and testing my programs. On one of these evenings, while I was at Woody's desk, I started to get the feeling that I was being watched. I was all by myself, and no one else was at home, but the feeling persisted and began to make me uncomfortable. I started to look over my shoulder and around the room. Woody's office was an unusual shape. It was built in a form similar to a circle, or an Octagon. As I looked around the room I saw a vent on one of the walls. I distinctly got the feeling that someone was watching me through the vent. At first, I dismissed this idea because I thought, "How could someone be inside the vent? It's probably too small! There can't be any room in there!" However, the feeling would not go away, and I began to think about how much room was behind the wall. I knew that most residential walls only have 3 ½ inches of space in them. But then most rooms are rectangles, with another room directly on the other side of the wall. THIS ROOM was an octagon. I walked out of the office into the hallway to examine the other side of the wall. The wall of the hallway did not follow the shape of the office. I walked down the hallway and into the next closest room, a bedroom, also directly behind one of the office walls. This room's walls did not match the shape of the office either. There was a small closet in this bedroom that was located on the side adjoining the hallway. The hallway wall and the walls of the bedroom seemed to be perpendicular to one another. Upon closer examination of the bedroom, the hallway, and the office, I determined that there must be an empty space behind the office wall, exactly where the vent was located, and that this space was at least 4 feet deep and 4 feet wide. There was no doubt about it. Exactly where the vent was located, there was a small hidden room, behind the office walls! I had never noticed this before. Then, I realized, "There actually could be someone in there!"

For a little while, I thought, "I should find the hidden opening to this room and check to see if someone is there." I soon determined that the opening to the room was probably in the bedroom closet. For a few seconds, I thought about going into the closet and looking for it. But then I thought, "No, I can't do that, that would be snooping around Woody and Judy's house. They trust me. They confide in me. They expect me to watch over their house, but not to search through their stuff. I can't go looking through their things." So, I decided to continue working and forget about it.

A few days later, I was back at their house. On my regular rounds of checking each room, I came into the bedroom that was located directly behind Woody's office. The closet door closest to the office wall was wide open. Very clearly, I could see another door hidden inside the closet that obviously led to the empty space. This hidden door was also partially open but I could not see into the hidden space. Prior to that time, I had never seen the inside of this closet before. Everything else in the house was in place. Nothing else was left open. I thought, "That's so odd! Why would THIS closet door be the one left open?" Then, it occurred to me that perhaps the maid had left it open. At

that time, Woody and Judy had a person who came to clean the house on a regular basis, even when they were away for several months. But obviously someone was in that hidden room at some point in time, why else would the door be open? I thought “That’s just strange. I’m going to call Judy.” I called Judy at their home in Colorado, and I explained what I had found, asking if I could check the room that was located ‘in the closet’. She said, yes, no problem. I went back to the closet, opened the hidden door, and found just what I expected. There was a small hidden space, and you could see Woody’s office through a small vent in the wall. I did not note anything else in particular about the room. It was just an empty space. Then, I finished surveying the rest of the house.

I reported back to Judy that I did not find anything amiss. I still wondered whether there had actually been someone in that space a few days earlier. Obviously, if someone WAS there, Judy and Woody must know the person, how else would the person have gotten in the house, and found that space? I knew that Judy and Woody had designed their entire house themselves. They had it custom built. I also wondered whether they had intentionally designed the shape of Woody’s office to allow for that hidden space. I wondered if someone had left the closet door open so that I would definitely find the hidden space. Was there some intention that I should know about it? I wondered whether Woody or Judy could somehow be cooperating with the surveillance crew. Why would that be true? Could that be true?

I went back into Woody’s office and started to look for other signs or strange things. I couldn’t go rummaging through his stuff...that would be wrong. But, certainly there would be no harm in looking at things that were in plain sight. I started to look around his office. On one of his bookshelves, he had some kind of commemorative plaque or engraving that had been given to him. On the plaque, there were several names, but one of them stood out... it was the last name of my friend from Iridium, Matt. Other than Matt, I had never known or even heard of any other person with that last name. There can’t be that many people with that last name in Maryland. Could the person referred to on the plaque be a relative of Matt’s? Maybe his father? Could Woody know my friend Matt? Could Matt be dealing with the surveillance crew? Prior to this time, I had never associated Matt with THEM. Could there be a connection? Maybe somehow the surveillance crew had found a link between Matt and Woody. Maybe they were communicating with Woody through Matt. Maybe Woody was cooperating with them. Perhaps Woody knew Matt before I even worked at Iridium. Maybe the reason I am working at Iridium is BECAUSE he knows Matt. Maybe I got the contract at Iridium because of Woody’s influence. Maybe Woody is helping the surveillance team because he thinks it is in my best interest! (I always expected Woody would act in my best interest). Maybe Woody can’t tell me directly that he is helping the surveillance team, but perhaps having the door left open is some kind of communication to me that he is working with them. Maybe he wants me to know. How was Woody involved? What was the truth? At this point I was beginning to experience another delusional expansion. My delusion was growing to encompass more people and more places.

Near the middle of July 1999, this was my mental state: I thought with near certainty that a group of people whom I could not observe myself was observing and tracking me 24

hours a day. The reason I did not see them is because THEY were professionals. I thought THEY were employed by one of our national intelligence agencies. I did not know what agency THEY were with. They were very good at their job. I thought perhaps the surveillance had started out at a very low level (possibly utilizing private detectives) and had increased to a high level operation (utilizing a team of career intelligence officers who were professional spies). I was fairly certain the surveillance had been continuing for more than one year, possibly the entire time I worked at Iridium. I thought that Bill, the security director at Iridium, was probably in contact with the surveillance team, probably collaborating with them. I expected that Bill was directing the surveillance at the facility, and that someone else unknown to me was directing the surveillance outside of the facility. I thought that I was being observed very closely at Iridium by the Iridium security staff, but in general, I did not think that any security staff besides Bill knew about any surveillance outside of their facility. I wondered whether Bob was working for THEM. I wondered if Bob had been assigned to work at Iridium to get close to me. I also wondered whether Jim, my roommate, was working for THEM. Perhaps he had been assigned to infiltrate my apartment. I thought that THEY had probably tapped my phone, and were monitoring my cell phone transmissions. I thought that THEY had probably hacked my personal computer and had placed software on it to keep track of all my online activities. I thought they probably had a GPS tracking device on both my vehicles. I expected that they had also placed a microphone somewhere in my truck to pick up any conversations I had there. Obviously, the reason THEY were still following me was because they still have unanswered questions about me.

I still wondered very often why the surveillance would have started in the first place. I had several theories. First, I thought perhaps it started because the staff at Iridium thought I was paranoid. Second, I thought perhaps everyone with access to sensitive information at Iridium might have been put under surveillance. I had keys to virtually every room of the facility. I kept in mind that the Iridium project cost over \$5 billion dollars, and the MASTER CONTROL FACILITY was one of the most important parts of the project. Third, I thought perhaps I wasn't under surveillance when I first thought so, but maybe I came under surveillance later because they had intercepted my 'secret' message. Perhaps they are wondering how I knew they were monitoring the Internet. Perhaps they think I will expose this monitoring to the public. Lastly, perhaps THEY were following me because they thought I was a corporate spy.

I had just as many theories as to why the surveillance had continued for so long. Perhaps THEY are still wondering whether I am paranoid or not—They can't decide. Perhaps they think I might be a genius that has discovered some new method of encryption. Perhaps they still think I am a corporate spy—they are waiting for me to make contact with my 'employer'. Perhaps THEY are thinking about hiring me for a job that requires special security clearance. This job requires such a high level of clearance that they have to keep me under surveillance for years prior to offering me the job. I imagined this was the case with maintenance men who work at the CIA—they need access to all areas of the building—this would certainly require a very high level of clearance. Perhaps they wanted to offer me a new contract at some secret facility. Also, I wondered whether ALL my theories could be true at the same time. Perhaps they think I'm paranoid, AND perhaps they think I'm a genius, AND perhaps they think I might be a corporate spy,

AND perhaps they want to hire me. They are still trying to figure out the truth. I thought, I'm wondering what the truth is about THEM, and THEY are wondering what is the truth about ME.

I still didn't entirely understand why I was under surveillance, but I believed more than ever that it was true. However, I still had a little bit of doubt. I thought for sure that they would give up the surveillance eventually and someone would come talk to me directly—at least that was my hope.

I had developed enough trust in Bob, that I thought I would talk to him about what I knew to be definitely true...that I was having anxiety problems at work. Bob and I went out to lunch one day and the conversation went something like this:

“Hey Bob, I want to talk to you about something important.”

“Ok, Shoot...what's up.”

“I think you know that sometimes I seem agitated and nervous at work.”

“Yeah. And?”

“I just want you to know that I really am concerned about how well I do my job. I really just want to do the best job possible. I get performance anxiety. You don't have to worry about me. I really just want to do a good job.”

“You think people are watching you all the time.”

(I was surprised by this, and said nothing in response.)

After a short pause, he said, “You know, they have medication for anxiety. Maybe you should go see a doctor.”

“I said, Ok I'll consider that.”

Later, I did consider it, but I decided that a doctor couldn't help me very much. I thought my performance anxiety was actually caused by poor performance. How could a doctor make me perform better? I also believed the related anxiety I experienced was caused by people observing me. I did not associate the anxiety with the idea--I associated it with a perceived fact. How could a doctor get people to stop observing me?

I thought I should make one more effort to get THEM to come talk to me directly. I thought they had been monitoring my cell phone and my apartment phone for months. I decided I would send THEM a message, only I would play a little game with them, just as they had played a game with me by leaving a doll on the seat of my truck for me to find. I decided I would send them a message in code—one that they would have to decipher. I made up a very easy code using numbers for letters that I thought would be easy to break. I expected the intelligence community could break this code in less than an hour. I called my apartment number from my cell phone and proceeded to use the touch tone numbers on the phone to send the code. Basically, the decoded message was as follows:

“I am tired of you following me around. I don't know what information you are looking for or expect to find, but why don't you just come talk to me in person? If you don't come talk to me soon, you will never get the information you are looking for. This is almost your last chance. What harm would there be in talking to me?”

On Friday, July 23, 1999, I was driving home to my apartment and I happened to look off the main road onto a side road that led to a dead end. Parked on the side road, perhaps 20 feet from the corner, I saw my roommate Jim sitting in his car. After I passed by, he pulled out onto the main road behind me. I arrived at our apartment within minutes, and directly behind me was Jim, pulling into the driveway. I asked him what he was doing parked on that side road. He denied he was ever there. He feigned ignorance. I didn't push the issue, and I let it drop. However, I wondered again if he was working for THEM.

On Saturday, July 24, 1999, I was returning to my apartment late at night with a girl I had been dating. As we came towards the apartment, we saw a van blocking my parking space. Just as we got to the van, the headlights of the van came on and it quickly pulled into the road and sped off. It seemed very suspicious to me. I had never seen that van before. I wondered why it had been parked in front of my apartment, and why it had driven away so quickly. I immediately thought it was THEM. I got out of the car and told my date to stay in the car. I found the apartment door was unlocked. I went inside cautiously and looked around. Nothing seemed to be missing or out of place. Even so, I remained very cautious. I wondered about my roommate Jim, and whether he was involved with the person in the van. I told my date I didn't want to sleep there. THEY were playing games with me. We went over to a friend's house to spend the night.

Sometime during the week of July 25, 1999, I ran into Jim at our apartment. We started talking about our jobs. As far as I knew, Jim worked at a warehouse about 30 minutes away where he operated a forklift. He started talking about his workday. Suddenly he said, "How do you know when you are paranoid? I've been seeing a doctor, and he put me on medication. But I don't know if I really need it. How do you know when you are really paranoid? How can you tell?" I wondered if Jim was asking me this to see what I would say about myself. I didn't say very much. The conversation ended rather quickly. I expected he was testing me.

## Hackers

Near the beginning of August, 1999 I started to become psychotic. I am using the word psychotic to mean that my perception of reality was becoming predominately influenced by internal stimuli and not external stimuli. There were certain external stimuli that triggered a flood of internal thoughts, but my perception of the real world began to be influenced more by my thoughts than by stimuli from my environment. Although I was having delusions about surveillance for over a year, my general day to day perception of reality until that time had been based more on true events. At this point, the delusions began to predominate.

On Sunday, August 1, 1999, I had decided that I was going to break off the relationship with the girl I was dating. The odd thing is, there was absolutely nothing wrong with her. In fact, I actually liked her quite a lot. However, I felt very uncertain and uneasy about my future and I didn't want her to be involved with my problems. I thought something very significant was going to happen to me. I arranged to meet her in the morning and gave her the news. She started to cry, and I left. I felt like a jerk. I don't think she realized I was having mental problems.

That night, I returned home about 10pm. As I pulled into my driveway, I looked back over my shoulder and saw a car perhaps 300 feet up the road, driving very slowly with its headlights off. I immediately became very suspicious of this car. It was THEM. They must have been following me. I quickly backed out of the driveway, and drove towards the car. The car was facing the opposite direction from me. The car's headlights came on and it drove away quickly. It made a U-turn and started to leave my community. I followed it and got its license plate number--ZD1 178. I then called the police. I told them there was a suspicious car in my neighborhood. They told me an officer would be over to look around the community. When the officer arrived, I gave him the license plate number. He called into his dispatcher, and they ran the license plate number. He then told me, "That tag doesn't exist in the State of Maryland." I thought, "OK. Hmm. That's definitely what I saw on the car. " I thought maybe I had gotten the state wrong. Maybe it was an out-of-state car.

I went into my apartment and got on the Internet. I tried to find resources on the net for license plate number searches. I could not find any that were free of charge, so I gave up looking and I started to surf the net at random. I was feeling very vulnerable, and was aware that THEY could be watching all my online activities. After perhaps one hour, something unusual happened. I had requested a Yahoo Search Page and was clicking on the various links that were returned. I clicked on two links that supposedly pointed to different locations on the web. In each case I was redirected after the initial connection to some page named sting.htm. It was a blank page with no data. A few minutes later, I brought up my web surfing history from the week before. I clicked on another link to visit a site where I definitely knew the content. Instead of being able to view the correct page, I was again redirected to this page named sting.htm. My computer wasn't behaving normally. Immediately, I thought this was definite evidence that my computer had been

hacked. Here, I was trying to connect to a known site, and instead I was being directed to a totally different site. This was the first time I was absolutely sure that my computer had been hacked. It was THEM.

I also became very alarmed that the page I was being directed to was called 'sting.htm'. I thought this might be an inside joke of some sort on the part of the hackers. They were 'stinging' me. I also had another idea which made even less sense. I thought perhaps the page was called sting.htm because somehow THEY were trying to implicate me in online criminal activities. Perhaps they were collecting information about my online activities and the collection process somehow involved this page titled 'sting.htm'. Perhaps I was not supposed to see this page. Somehow the software they had installed on my computer was functioning improperly and my browser was being redirected to this page in error. In any case, I was now certain that my computer system had been hacked, and that THEY had installed some type of spyware on it illegally and without my permission.

I started to wonder again who exactly THEY were. Were THEY the FBI, CIA, DOD, Iridium? Somehow I came to the conclusion very quickly that THEY were the FBI. The FBI had tapped my phone, the FBI had placed spyware on my computer, the FBI was monitoring my every move. But why? I couldn't understand how the FBI was connected with Iridium. Maybe they were investigating me as a corporate spy. I didn't know or understand why the FBI was involved, but I believed it. It was clear to me that they had overstepped their jurisdiction and authority. I couldn't believe they had any legal authority to tap my phone, or put spyware on my computer. To how many other people were they doing this same thing? What should I do? I decided I was going to find evidence that spyware was on my machine. I was going to identify and locate the relevant files that were on my computer. However, I knew that I didn't have enough computer knowledge or the tools to do that. I would have to work with someone that had more experience than myself. I disconnected my computer from the Internet so THEY wouldn't have the opportunity to erase the evidence.

It was now almost midnight. I was becoming very agitated. I called someone I knew named Dave who owned one of the largest Internet service providers in the state of Maryland. He also owned a computer repair shop. We had gone to high school together. I thought for sure that he would be able to help me with his technical knowledge. It was clear when he answered the phone that I had woken him from his sleep. I explained what I thought was happening and asked him if he would investigate the 'sting.htm' url I was connected to...could he try to connect to it in the morning and investigate the source code for it? He said sure. He did not question me or complain about being called in the middle of the night. I thought, great, I have some help. I then called my brother. I asked him if he would get on the Internet and try to connect to the same urls and see if he was redirected to the 'sting.htm' document. I wanted to be sure the behavior was only happening to my own computer, and no one else's. He wouldn't do it. He said he was tired, it was late, he was not going to do it. I told him it was very important to me. He still refused. I hung up the phone. I was very angry with him.

I called one of my best friends, Chip, and I called my Dad. I told them to come over right away, it was very important. They both came to my apartment within 15 minutes. I told

them both I thought the FBI had planted something on my computer and were monitoring my online activities. My dad was very skeptical about that, but he said “So what if they are monitoring your activities? Why worry about it?” My friend Chip said very little but I could tell he was also skeptical. I said, “Even if you don’t believe this is happening to me, what would you do if you did believe it?” They had very little advice to give me.

My dad soon left to go home. Chip stayed a little while longer. In the meantime, for some reason I began to think that if I turned off the computer, I might destroy some of the evidence. Perhaps the monitoring process used temporary files. If I shut down the computer, these temporary files might be deleted. So I decided I needed to leave the computer on until I got some help from technical experts. I had to be sure no one else would turn it off either. I thought someone might cut the power to our apartment. I was also worried that my roommate, Jim, who was probably in his room, was overhearing all this talk. I still had suspicions that he was working for THEM. I decided that I needed to make sure that no one would turn off the power to our apartment. Our circuit breakers were located in a basement which had an exterior door that was always unlocked. I had to go down into the basement and secure this door so that no one would be able to flip off the circuit breakers. I did not want to allow Jim the opportunity to come into my room and turn off the computer while I was down there. So I begged my friend Chip to wait in my room until I could secure the basement door. He waited. I went downstairs and, using some ingenuity, I was able to secure the door so that no one else but me would know how to open it. I came back upstairs and my friend Chip left.

On Monday morning, I woke up very early without an alarm clock. That was very unusual for me. I started calling around to various Internet Security consultants I located in the phone book. I did not speak to anyone directly, but I left messages for them. I also knew of a special organization in Washington DC called the Center for Democracy and Technology ([www.cdt.org](http://www.cdt.org)) which advocates for reduction and prevention of government surveillance in cyberspace. I thought they might have the technical resources to expose the spyware that was installed on my computer by the FBI. I thought they would be interested in my case. I put together a packet of information explaining what I thought was happening to me and delivered it to them in Washington. I also delivered a copy to a computer science professor at the University of Maryland.

I expected that THEY knew from my telephone calls that I was going to try to expose their illegal actions. I thought they would want to protect themselves and they would try to prevent me from exposing them. I expected they might take drastic measures. I thought they might start to put pressure on me in some way. I thought the Intelligence community might have a whole array of sophisticated tools they could use on me, but I didn’t know exactly what to expect. I thought they might do something to discredit me. I began to mentally prepare myself for the onslaught I thought was coming.

On my way back home from Washington, I was listening to the radio in the car. I usually listen to music. After one of the songs stopped, I heard what sounded like demonic voices coming through the speakers. After the voices stopped, an announcer said something like, “You think that’s scary, wait until you hear about the cost of health insurance these days!” Obviously, it was some type of commercial. But I didn’t think so.

I thought, it's THEM. They are trying to stir up feelings of fear in me. They are close by somewhere. They know what radio station I am listening to because they have a microphone in my truck. They are broadcasting their own message over the same radio frequency. But their message predominates over the legitimate radio station because they are so close to me and the power of their broadcast is greater over such a short distance. Anybody else hearing the message would believe it is just a commercial. They are using psychological warfare against me. They probably have a whole team of people dedicated to psychological warfare. They're not going to fool me. I'm smarter than that. I had all these thoughts within a few seconds after hearing the commercial. I quickly noted what time it was on the clock. I had a plan.

I needed to stop at Woody's house on the way home to check on it. When I got there, I thought, I'll call the radio station and confirm what commercial was actually on the radio at that time. However, I wondered if Woody had been cooperating with the surveillance team. I thought, there might be hidden cameras located all over the house. The phone might be bugged. Even worse, the telephone calls might be diverted somehow through a surveillance team operator. For some reason, I thought, depending on where I make my call, I might actually get a surveillance team member, pretending to be the person I called. I decided THEY could not know ahead of time who I was trying call. I got a phone book to look up the phone number of the radio station. But if I'm on camera, then they might see I was looking at radio stations in the phone book and that would tip them off, they would be ready for my call. Instead of being connected to the radio station, I might be connected to a surveillance team member, who would pretend to be working for the radio station. I decided I would give them no time to formulate a plan. They would not have the advantage. How could I look up the phone number without them knowing it? There must be cameras everywhere. Hmm. I thought of the ONE place that was most unlikely to have a hidden camera...inside the chimney of the fire place! Woody and Judy had a large circular fireplace in between their kitchen and living room. I crawled up under the chimney with the phone book and looked up the number for the radio station. I thought, there was no way a hidden camera would see what I was looking for. Of course, I could have just gone outside to look at the phone book, but I didn't think of that. I immediately called the radio station. I thought, THEY'LL never be able to formulate a strategy against me this fast. I was curious to see what would happen. Someone picked up my call and the conversation went something like this:

"Hello." (They did not say the name of the station)

"Hello. I'm calling to find out what commercial you were playing on the radio at 1:55pm"

"What?"

"I'm calling to find out what commercial you were playing at 1:55pm"

"I don't have that information"

"Don't you have some kind of play lists or something?"

"No. I don't have that."

I hung up. I thought, "A radio station that doesn't have a play list. That doesn't make any sense. I wondered if I was actually talking to the radio station, or if I was talking to an impostor. The surveillance project seemed to be getting bigger and bigger. THEY

were pulling in all kinds of resources to deal with me. Another delusional expansion was occurring.

The next day was Tuesday, August 3, 1999. I was scheduled to work at Iridium. I wondered, had the FBI been in contact with the people at Iridium since Sunday? I arrived early at work, as I usually did, between 7 and 7:30am. Bob was already there and had a list of things for me to do. I wondered if anything unusual was going to happen. Bob gave me his list and I noticed there were only three or four things on it. He usually went over the list with me thoroughly, showing me what he wanted done. We went into a nearby room to a particular person's cubicle so he could show me the first task. It was one of those modular cubicles that are divided by fabric-covered walls. Bob wanted me to cut off part of the desk and reposition it a certain way. This also involved moving the computer and possibly a filing cabinet. The second task I was to perform was to go to another building called the Annex, and spackle some holes in the walls of a particular office. The few remaining items on the list were small and would only take a few minutes. I thought, "I have the whole day to do two hours of work!"

I decided to go to the other building first to accomplish Task #2. When I arrived, the door to the office was locked and no one was there. This was the human resources office. I did not have a key to that door. I asked the secretary when the human resources director would be back. She didn't know. I decided to wait. I waited for approximately an hour. No one showed up. I had the option of asking one of the security guards to let me into the room, and he would have...but I had been warned the week before by the human resources director herself that I was not allowed in that room when she wasn't there. In the meantime, some people in adjacent offices had asked me if I would replace the burned out light bulbs. Since that was also part of my job, I decided to do that. That took perhaps another half an hour. I waited another hour after that. The human resources director did not show up. I decided to go back to the Master Control Facility.

I went to work on Task #1. I went to this person's cubicle, and started to disassemble the desk. As I was about to cut it, the person whom the cubicle belonged to came along. He said, "What are you doing". I explained what the plan was. He said, "I would rather you do something else instead. How about cutting it on the opposite side and putting the desk in the corner? Then you could put the filing cabinet and computer on the other side." This was a different plan than what Bob had suggested. I stood there for a few minutes thinking about it. During this time, this guy started talking with a coworker. Their conversation went something like this:

"Hey, Joe, I need to talk to you."

"Yeah, about what?"

"About those clicking noises. You know...the clicking noises on the telephone line."

"What about them?"

"Where do they come from, what are they for?"

"They happen when the system switches from analog to digital."

"Oh. Can't we stop them? Why do we need them?"

"I don't know, that's just the way the system works."

I became very interested in this conversation. I wondered if they were talking about the system that was monitoring me at home, since I had heard clicking noises on my telephone. However, they did not speak about anything else. I wondered whether they were trying to communicate something to me.

I started thinking about my work again. I decided I should check with Bob before making any changes to his plan. I went back to Bob's office, and he wasn't there. I looked for Bob around the building. I couldn't find him. I decided to return to the Annex. After I got to the Annex, I found the human resources director still wasn't there. I came back to the Master Control Facility. I then decided to go to lunch.

By the time I got back from lunch, it was probably one or two o'clock. I was worried about my performance for the day. None of the items on the list had been completed. I eventually found Bob in his office. He asked me how the day was going. I told him about the office being locked, and how this guy wanted me to do something different with his desk. Bob looked at me very sternly and said with a sharp tone of voice, "Listen, when I give you a job to do, I want you to do it my way! I don't care about anybody else! Don't listen to anybody else! Do it the way I tell you, and that's final! If they have a problem with it, they can talk to ME afterwards! Is that clear?"

I felt like he was scolding me. I felt like he was yelling at me. I felt like I hadn't lived up to his expectations. I don't know why exactly, but I started to cry uncontrollably. I couldn't stop. Bob left me alone for a few minutes. When he came back, I was still crying. He said, "Listen, pull yourself together! Come on now. Lighten up. Get it together. I want you to know that I care about you and I'm doing this for your own good. Come on, pull yourself together." Immediately after this, Bob got a telephone call. Then, I heard him say, "Yeah, See what I mean? It's no mystery. I told you so. Ten minutes and ten phone calls later and its just like I predicted." I wondered if he was talking about me. Who was he talking to? Bill, perhaps. Maybe this incident was meant to be some kind of demonstration. Everything had taken place directly in front of the security cameras. Maybe Bob was just trying to demonstrate that what I cared about most was doing a good job. He had never scolded me like that before. Why was he doing it now? Was he doing this as a result of some directive he was given by his superiors? Was he doing this to prove a point?

## Backup Copies

On Wednesday, August 4, 1999, I had promised my friend Patrick that I would take his mom and stepdad to the airport in the morning. He was unable to do it because he had work commitments. The plan was for me to drive their van to the airport and bring it back to Patrick's house afterwards. After dropping them off at the airport, I was on my way back and I was thinking about my computer system. I wanted to preserve the 'evidence' that was on my hard drive. I decided that I needed to make a copy of my hard drive as soon as possible. It was much easier for me to transport my computer in the van, than in my pickup truck. So I decided I would use the van to take my computer to Dave's computer repair shop. Then, I would drive the van back to Patrick's house.

When I got to the repair shop, I asked for Dave. I hadn't spoken to him since Sunday night. I wondered if he had checked on the 'sting.htm' url. He wasn't there. I inquired about making a copy of my hard drive, and I told them I needed it as soon as possible. One of the chief technicians took me into his office. He asked me what I wanted it for, "Why do you need it so soon?" I explained a little about where I worked and what I thought about spyware on my computer. He said, "Are you hearing clicking noises on your phone?" I said, "Actually, yes!" He said, "I used to work on some surveillance projects before I worked here. I was a contractor for the Department of Defense. The clicking noises are recorded with your conversations. They mark key words in your speech. I wouldn't worry about it. You might actually be up for a promotion! As far as copying your hard drive, we really don't do that here. You might want to take your computer to Best Buy—they can copy it for you." "OK". I left and decided to drive directly to Best Buy in Annapolis.

On my way to Best Buy, I stopped at a traffic light. While I was stopped, the door locks all unlocked. The van had those remote control door locks—the type that are operated by radiowaves. I pushed the button to lock the doors. Immediately, they unlocked again, by themselves. I pushed the lock button a second time and the locks locked. As soon as I released the button, they all simultaneously unlocked again. I held my finger on the lock button for twenty seconds, when I let go, the locks unlocked. Then after a short pause, the locks locked themselves, and then unlocked in succession several times in a row. They went back and forth between being locked and unlocked. Then, they stopped.

Immediately, I knew it was THEM. Who else but the intelligence community would have the ability to intercept and reproduce the radio signal required to lock and unlock the van doors? THEY must have been using a very sophisticated piece of equipment to do this. They were playing psychological games with me. They were trying to make me feel vulnerable, and their plan was working.

Until this point, I still had a small bit of doubt about whether I was being followed, but this incident made me absolutely sure. I was now convinced that I was being followed by a group of people from the intelligence community. Only they could have operated the door locks like that. I doubted that any other group would have the technology to do this.

Once I was convinced, I became very scared. I don't know exactly what I was afraid of. I began to imagine that a bunch of government agents would pull their vehicle up beside the van, open the doors, and steal my computer, with all the 'evidence' on it. I thought had to protect myself somehow. I decided the computer was no longer safe with me. For some reason, I decided immediately to go see a lawyer.

I knew a lawyer that had an office nearby. I thought I could leave the computer with him, acting as my agent. I drove straight to his office. When I got there, I tried to open the van door with the remote control button. It would not open. I thought, "It's THEM! They are transmitting some kind of interference signal." I had to manually open the door. I picked up the computer and carried it into the office. When I got inside, I found out that the lawyer I knew was not there, but the secretary suggested I should talk to someone else in the office.

I met with a different lawyer, and explained to him that I thought the FBI had illegally hacked my computer system, and that I wanted him to safeguard my computer until I could get some more technical help. He said he could not accept responsibility for my computer, he said I should instead contact a lawyer that deals with 'intellectual property rights'. He also suggested that I should talk to the local police.

I did not want to drive to the police station by myself. I wanted someone else to follow me there, in case the FBI decided to stop me and steal my computer. I was also very afraid, although I don't know specifically why. I needed help. I decided I could not call my Dad, because he didn't believe me when I had explained what was happening on Sunday. I expected my friend Patrick should be home from work by now. He would be wondering where I was. I called Patrick on the phone from the lawyers office. I was going to ask him to come to the office. He answered the phone and immediately he said, "Where are you?" I told him I was at a lawyer's office. Then, he said, "Where are the keys to the van?" I thought, "Where are the keys? What does he mean 'Where are the keys?' I have the keys in my pocket of course! What is the problem with him?" He asked me again, demanding, "Where are the keys? Where are the keys?" I started to become suspicious of him. I wondered whether I was actually talking to Patrick, and not some impostor. I hung up the phone. "Who else can I call for help?" I couldn't call Woody, because as far as I knew, he was in Colorado. As I was thinking of Woody, I also thought about a friend of Woody's named 'Rudy' for whom I had done some handyman work. He seemed like a very nice man. I thought he might be willing to help me. I called Rudy on the phone. When he answered, I said, "Rudy, this is Kurt Snyder. I'm in trouble, I'm at a lawyer's office in Annapolis, can you come help me?" He said he would be over right away.

When Rudy got to the lawyer's office, he told me that Woody had returned from Colorado and would be home for a few days. I explained a little bit about what I thought was happening. I told him I thought the FBI had placed something on my computer system to monitor me. He could see that I was afraid. I asked him if he would follow me to the police station. He agreed to do this. In the meantime, I carried the computer back out to the van. I opened the van door, but when I tried to close it, it would not close. I gave the remote control to Rudy and asked him if he would try it. Even Rudy had trouble

closing the door. The door would close halfway, and then open again. I knew it was THEM. They were interfering again. I was eventually able to close the door by manually forcing it closed.

When we arrived at the local city police station I explained some of my concerns to one of the officers. The officer told me this was not their jurisdiction because I lived in the county, and not the city. He referred me to the county police station, which was located 10 miles away. I asked Rudy if he would follow me over to that station. He said he had a dinner engagement and really needed to get back home, but he agreed to follow me anyway. Rudy told me that when we got to the station, he would only be able to stay for a few minutes.

We arrived at the county police station and an officer came out to talk to us. Rudy started to talk to the officer first and said “I can’t stay here longer than a few minutes, but I want you to know that I am a professor from the University of Maryland, and former chair of the business school. Here is my card. This man here needs your help. Please listen to him. He is not crazy! I’m sorry but I have to go now.” Then, he left. I sat down with the officer and explained to him that I thought the FBI was following me and that they had placed something on my computer. He said he personally did not want to get involved in anything that the FBI was dealing with, but that he would refer me to a special agent of the police department that dealt with computer crime. Apparently there was only one specialist for the entire county. He tried to call this officer on the phone, but only got his voicemail. He gave me the officer’s contact information and suggested that I contact him in a few days.

I was still resolved to get a copy of my hard drive as I had intended earlier. I wanted someone to follow behind me after I left the police station. I tried to call Woody’s house but there was no answer. I had no one left to call but my parents. I called them and asked them to come to the police station. They did. After they got there, I told them I had already talked with an officer at the station, and that he had referred me to a specialist. I told them I needed to make a copy of my hard drive and that I wanted to go the Best Buy store closest to Annapolis. My mom followed me over there. I don’t think my mom or dad knew I was experiencing a mental illness at this time. I left my computer with the Best Buy technicians and asked them to make two copies of my hard drive, including the boot sector of the disk. I would pick up the computer in a few days. I was worried that someone from the FBI might come in to try to claim the computer for themselves, so I printed a fake name on the service ticket, instead of using my own name. I also put a password on the ticket and I specified that anyone claiming the computer would have to know this password. Afterwards, I drove the van back to Patrick’s house. His girlfriend ‘Alex’ came out to meet me. Patrick was there, but he wouldn’t talk to me... apparently he was angry with me for keeping the van so long—I was about six hours late. I left the keys with Alex and went home.

## What's Really Going On?

By that evening, I had calmed down and I was thinking about the day's events. I was now absolutely sure that I was being followed, and I was absolutely sure it involved one of our intelligence agencies...probably the FBI (because I thought they were responsible for domestic intelligence). I couldn't figure out how the FBI was connected with Iridium, but I thought that they must somehow be related. I thought they had begun using psychological warfare against me—with the goal of making me more psychologically unstable. Why would they want to do that? This was different from simply protecting their interests. After all, I might become psychologically unstable at Iridium, and cause problems for them. Why would they take that risk? Perhaps they weren't intentionally trying to make me unstable, perhaps they were just testing my psychological limits? But still there would be the possibility that I could become unstable. They were putting me under stress. Obviously, they needed to know whether I could become unstable or not. This information was more important to them than my position at Iridium was. They were testing my limits.

The guy at Dave's computer shop had suggested I might be up for a promotion of some kind. Perhaps they were considering me for a job that required me to withstand a lot of stress. Maybe the guy in my van with the knife was sent by THEM. I thought I handled that stress quite well. On the other hand, when Bob yelled at me just a few days earlier, I didn't handle the stress very well. Perhaps they knew about both these events. Perhaps they arranged both of these events. Perhaps they were perplexed why I handled one stressful situation well and not the other one. Perhaps all these situations were part of some kind of evaluation. They are putting me under different types of stress to see how I would react. Perhaps they need to know how I function under different types of stress. Maybe they are going to offer me a job that requires me to operate under a lot of stress!

I thought about Brian from the Home Depot and his recent call asking me if I was interested in working at the FBI or the CIA. At the time, I thought he was wondering if I would be a maintenance man of some sort. But perhaps that was just a cover story. Maybe he was really interested in what I would say about working there. Maybe he just wanted to know if I would be interested in working for the CIA. Maybe he really had another job in mind for me. Certainly a maintenance man would not need to operate under a lot of stress. They want me for a different job. Yes, that's it. They've been testing me to see if I was a suitable candidate for this other job. But what kind of job was it? Maybe they were evaluating me for several jobs all at once. Depending on which tests I pass, they will recommend me for different positions. Maybe I'm under surveillance all this time and they are playing these games because they are evaluating me for some super important job. I thought, they are putting a lot of effort and taking a lot of risk to evaluate me. These jobs must be some of the most important jobs they have. Maybe the jobs are so super secret that they need to be absolutely sure I can handle them, and not break down psychologically. Maybe these jobs are so important that they can't do a normal security clearance where they talk to your friends and family. Instead, they put you under very high level surveillance for months. This is some type of job that no

one else will ever know about except me and THEM. I thought, it must be a job for the CIA. Nothing else would come close. Nothing else would require such extreme measures. Perhaps the FBI is the agency that clears people for these jobs. After all, the FBI is in charge of domestic intelligence, not the CIA. That would explain why the FBI was monitoring me. But what is the connection with Iridium?

I started to think back to what Bruce, the former CIA employee, told me at the bar. They recruited him because he knew people who worked at the CIA, and they recommended him. They sought him, not the other way around. I thought, maybe I know someone who is in the CIA. Maybe Bob is with the CIA. But then I thought, "Bob showed up after I thought the surveillance had already started. Bob could be a CIA agent that was assigned to me. But the person who knows me very well must be someone else. Someone else I know works for the CIA, that must be the truth. Who was it? When would I find out? It must be someone I know very well. Someone I've known for years. The CIA would never recruit someone they didn't know very well. It must be someone I am close to."

I couldn't decide what connection there was with Iridium, but I decided there had to be one--after all, I thought the surveillance had started with them. I thought, with all these ideas in my head, I am not going to be able to work effectively at Iridium anymore. I would be too distracted and unproductive. I have to cancel my contract. If I was being considered for another job, THEY would be contacting me soon enough. I also thought, "If they really are considering me for a secret job, then all this surveillance must be reasonable and necessary!". I decided that I no longer needed to know what kind of spyware was on my computer. I was going to assume cyber surveillance was part of the evaluation process. Perhaps the evaluation process needed to be stricter for me because my neighbor was a Russian national. But, perhaps I was wrong. Maybe they were conducting surveillance for some other reason. Perhaps I should still preserve the evidence on my computer. Perhaps. Perhaps this, perhaps that. Perhaps.

On Thursday, August 5, 1999, I was scheduled to work at Iridium. I called Bob in the morning and told him, "Bob, I want you to schedule a meeting for me with Matt, the director of Iridium, you and me. I have some issues I need to discuss with them." He said, "Kurt, I'm not going to arrange any meeting like that. If you have something to discuss, you're going to discuss it with me, just you and I." I said, "I have to cancel my contract. I can't work at Iridium any more." He said, "Why not?" I said, "I have a conflict of interest." He said, "Ok. Do you want to come pick up your stuff?" I said, "Yeah. I'll be there at 1pm". He said, "Ok, I'll be ready for you." I was surprised that he didn't ask me any other questions.

I then called Woody and found out that he was at his home near Annapolis for a few days. I had confided in him many times before and valued his opinion greatly. Even though I had some suspicion that he might somehow be involved with the surveillance, I trusted him, and I thought he would always act in my best interest. I wanted his opinion about my decision to stop working at Iridium. I asked him if he would meet with me. He agreed to meet me. I went over to his house, and we had a discussion that lasted for twenty or thirty minutes. I told him that I thought my computer might have been hacked and I thought Iridium was involved in some way. He agreed with me that if I was not

comfortable working there...I should quit. Towards the end of our conversation, he said, "Just be aware of what assumptions you're making."

I had asked my dad to go with me to Iridium to get my tools and materials. On the way, we stopped in Washington DC at the Center for Democracy and Technology. I asked them to return the packet of information I had left there earlier in the week. They had not yet looked at anything in the packet. We then continued on to Iridium.

When we arrived at Iridium, Bob met me at the main entrance. He said, "Kurt, I don't know what assumptions you are making, but if you ever want to come back here, just call me...you can come back anytime." I then asked Bob, "I know I am canceling my contract without notice. Will I have any problem collecting my final bill?" He said, "No. You won't have any problem. Don't worry about it." I got my things together and we left. I started to think, Bob mentioned that word, 'assumptions'. So did Woody. What assumptions was I making? I was assuming I was under surveillance. I was assuming Iridium was involved. What else was I assuming? Did they know something I didn't?

On the way home, my dad and I decided to stop and hit some golf balls at a driving range. I was starting to experience more symptoms of psychosis. I sat down outside the clubhouse while my dad waited in line to purchase a few buckets of balls. I sat right behind a line of golfers driving balls. In front of me, there was a young man, probably 15 or 16 years old, also driving balls. There was an older man in the stall next to him giving him instruction. For some reason, I thought this kid looked familiar. I wondered if I had seen him before. I started to wonder whether he was part of the surveillance crew. I thought, would they recruit someone that young? I heard the older man giving him pointers. I wondered, if he's with the surveillance crew, why would he be hitting golf balls? I thought, "Because they have to look natural. Yeah, If they just stood around watching you, you would know they were watching you, so these guys have to act like they aren't watching you. They have to act like they're hitting golf balls like everyone else." I listened to the instructions given by the older man. I thought, "This kid must be a new recruit. This older guy is just telling him how to look natural. Yeah, that must be the truth."

Sitting nearby at a picnic table was a group of other people talking amongst themselves. I started to listen intently to their conversation. Part of it went something like this:

"What was he afraid of?"

"I don't know, "

"What happened?"

"Nothing"

"On Saturday, Jeff told me to increase staffing. He told me to start working on the new projects. He also told me to find something we could use on the web."

"Like what"

"He said whatever, just use whatever you can find."

"Don't you think he overreacted?"

"I don't know, we didn't do anything serious. Nothing we haven't done before."

"We're starting on the new projects tomorrow."

“Are you going to increase the staffing like Jeff wanted?”

“Yes”

“Just don’t go overboard. We’re already losing money on this project.”

“By the way, don’t stress him out...I think he could lose it”.

I wondered whether they were talking about me, or about the events that happened to me over the past week. They must be with the surveillance team, I thought. This was a mild symptom of a thought disorder I call personalization. Personalization is when you perceive that random impersonal events in the real world have some personal connection with yourself. In this instance, this personalization also coincided with another common thought in the paranoid spectrum—the belief that people are talking about you. I wondered why these people would be talking about me where I could hear their conversation. Were they playing some kind of mind game with me? Maybe they were trying to send a message to me somehow. Maybe they are trying to warn me that the surveillance project is going to expand. Maybe they are warning me about a future increase in activity.

While I was sitting there, a very large flying insect fluttered by. It was a very strange looking insect. I suddenly thought about insects being called ‘bugs’, and about covert microphones being called ‘bugs’. I wondered whether the CIA had bugs that looked like bugs! Could the engineers develop microphones that flew and behaved like real insects? I partially began to believe that the insect I was looking at was actually a microphone of some sort. I say I partially believed it because I did not think it was a fact, but I did not entirely disbelieve it--I did not recognize that the thought came from my imagination. I believed the thought was a perception of the real world.

My dad came out with our buckets of golf balls and we started to hit them. I played horribly. Virtually every ball I hit veered off to the left or right, and less than 5% went farther than 100 yards. It was just about the worst golf I had ever played. I wondered if the people at the picnic table were taking notes about my performance.

## My Mind on Drugs

The next day, Friday, August 6, 1999, I stayed at my apartment for most of the day. Sometime in the afternoon, I started to marvel at the explosion of the internet--how in such a short amount of time it has changed the way people live and communicate. Clearly, the internet phenomenon rapidly expanded because of the invention of the hypertext language, and the coincident invention of browser software. This revolution in technology was unforeseen 50 years ago. I wondered how the internet would improve and change over the next 50 years. I wondered whether something even more spectacular would come into existence. How much faster would computers become? How much more powerful would memory storage devices become? Over the last fifty years, the amount of addressable memory and speed of computers has increased by a factor of a million. I started to wonder what kind of capability we might have in 50 years if we could improve by another factor of a million. We could have video games and virtual reality worlds that are almost indistinguishable from reality. This assumes that monitor and projection technology would also improve by a factor of a million. Imagine a projector, projecting an image into your eye that equals the resolution of your retina. I also wondered if, in the distant future, data devices could be developed that would feed data directly to your brain, bypassing the need for receiving information through your 5 senses. My thoughts reminded me of the film 'The Matrix'.

I doubted that a computer could ever produce anything equal to the complexity of the universe. Somehow the virtual environment would fail to duplicate everything in the real world. On the other hand, I thought, if someone was raised from birth in a virtual environment, how would they know what the real world was like? They would think their virtual world was the real world. But, a virtual environment couldn't be maintained forever without it breaking down at some point. Accidents happen. Mistakes happen. No environment is perfect. Even a virtual world would be affected by external events. Nothing in the universe can exist in a closed system. However, I also thought, perhaps a lot of investment could be put into safeguarding such a system. A person could be maintained in a virtual environment where the equipment generating the environment had backup systems that were protected from adverse events. Still, all equipment must exist on a maintenance schedule if it is to operate reliably. Eventually, the equipment would have to be shut down for maintenance. A person existing in a virtual environment would notice when the equipment was shutdown, wouldn't they? Maybe not. What if the maintenance was performed when they were unconscious?

I go to sleep every night. Generally, I am a very deep sleeper. I am usually completely unaware of anything that happens while I am asleep. What if I actually existed in a virtual world? There could be equipment far more powerful than my wildest imagination which is attached directly to my brain and is generating a virtual world that I think is the real world. Maybe that is the truth. What if THEY are the people who were monitoring me in this virtual world. That would explain how THEY can keep track of me all the time. That would explain why I feel like I am always under surveillance. What if the REASON I fall asleep is because THEY have to do maintenance on the equipment that

generates my virtual world? Even worse, maybe I don't really have a body or a brain at all. Maybe my whole existence is just some computer program running on some highly sophisticated equipment that I could never understand. Maybe nothing I know to be real is actually real. Maybe.

How could I prove that I was in a virtual world? I decided that the virtual world could not exactly mimick the real universe. The real universe will always be larger and more complex than any subsystem within the universe. I decided this must be a universal truth—It must be a universal law. No subsystem can operate with the same complexity of the system that contains it. Second, using similar reasoning, I decided that no subsystem in the universe could have total knowledge or control of the system that contains it. This would mean that the real universe would eventually affect the virtual world in unexpected ways. A virtual world can not be maintained without being affected by something from the outside. What does all this mean? It means that if I was living in a virtual world, there must be flaws in it that I can test. If the system that generated my virtual world were anything like a computer, then there would be bugs in the software. Of course, if I existed myself as only a program in some sophisticated computer, then my own thoughts themselves might be subject to bugs. I decided that I should monitor my own thoughts for irregularities or inconsistencies. I also decided that if I ever saw anything that was 'impossible', that would be an indication of a bug in the virtual software—it would be evidence that I was living in a virtual world. Also, things might happen to my virtual world as a result of influence from the 'real' universe. If for example, the equipment which generated the virtual reality used something like 'electricity', then there might be power outages or power surges that I would notice from time to time. These 'power fluctuations' might manifest themselves as unusual events like seeing bright lights or experiencing a blackout. Also I thought, if I had lived my whole life in a virtual world, then I might not know how the real universe actually worked. There might be a fixed set of laws by which the virtual world operated, which I had grown accustomed to. But the more complex laws of the 'real' world might be more elusive. I may have been sheltered from these laws.

I did not immediately believe any of these ideas were true, but I did not disbelieve them either. I maintained in my mind that they might be the truth.

I was having all these thoughts when my aunt Lynda called me. She lived about 15-20 minutes away. She was inviting me over to her house to eat crabs. I drove over to her place immediately. On my way there, I was in a trance. I was still thinking about virtual reality and the possibility that the universe I knew was not real. When I got to her house, we immediately sat down to eat. As I sat at her kitchen table, I was still wondering whether I was living in a virtual reality or not. While I was eating, my perception of my own body became distorted. I started to feel like my mind was physically separated from my body. I started to believe that I was somehow perceiving the world from a remote location, that I was not actually sitting at a table in my aunt's house. I felt like my mind was becoming aware of a different universe...the universe where I actually existed, not the virtual one. This was not simply an idea in my mind. I was experiencing some kind of altered perceptual state that affected my senses. I was having something like an out-of-body experience.

I thought, “If this is not my real body, what kind of body do I really have?” Maybe in reality I was some other type of creature, far different than the human being I have believed myself to be all these years. I believed that any minute, I was going to become fully aware of the ‘real’ universe, and my ‘real’ existence. I thought I might exist in some kind of horrible laboratory, strapped to a virtual reality machine. Maybe I was a prisoner, forced by some kind of alien creatures to participate in an experiment for my entire life. Maybe I was actually an alien of some sort too. Perhaps I was not the human being I had seen in the mirror all these years. I looked down at the crabs I was eating. I thought, “Maybe I am actually a crab, or some kind of crustacean. Maybe I am being forced to eat my own kind as part of some sick simulation.” How disgusting. What a horrible thought! I stopped eating the crabs for a little while.

My Aunt then said to me, “What’s the matter with you?”

“What do you mean?”

“You have this strange look on your face. What’s wrong?”

“Oh, I don’t know...nothing.”

At about this time, I began to hear clicking noises. These were different clicking noises than the ones I heard on my phone line. They had a slight metallic sound. They did not seem to be coming from the real world (which I had experienced all my life), nor did they seem to be inside my head. They sounded like they were coming from some other place. I thought I was becoming more aware of noises in the ‘real’ world (where I was hooked up to a virtual reality machine). The clicking noises must be sounds from the equipment. I began to feel despair, fear, and anxiety that I was about to discover a reality far different from the one I knew. I was horrified that everything I knew--my family, my friends, my life—were not real. I thought, “Do I really want to know the truth? Do I really want to experience the ‘real’ world?” I thought my life until this time was pretty good. Did I want to leave my good life, and experience the reality that I was the subject of some kind of experiment? No. I decided, I don’t want to accept that. I’m not going to let this happen. It would be better to continue my virtual life, unaware of the ‘truth’. I decided, I must have some faith that the world I know really exists. I must believe my real life to have meaning, to have existence. I have to have faith in that. Within a few seconds after this thought, my perception returned to normal. My ‘out of body’ experience stopped. The clicking noises stopped. I felt normal again. I kept eating the crabs. Afterwards, I drove home.

The next day, on Saturday, August 7, 1999, I woke up in my apartment shivering with chills. I did not remember going to bed. I had never had a loss of memory in my entire life. I wondered if someone had given me drugs to influence my memory. I looked at the temperature gauge in the apartment. It was 73 degrees Fahrenheit. There was no reason why I should have the chills. I then recalled that shivering is sometimes a side effect of anesthesia. I tried to think about the night before. I could not remember anything after the crab feast. I could not remember driving home or going to bed. I became very suspicious. I did remember the strange sensory distortion and bizarre thoughts I had at my aunt’s house. I thought, THEY must have given me some kind of hallucinogenic or psychedelic drugs. Maybe I was on LSD. That would explain my strange perception and

the crazy idea that I was in a virtual reality. Then, later, something else must have happened, but I just can't remember what. THEY must have accosted me and given me an amnesiac or anesthesia of some sort. That's why I woke up with the chills. Why would they do that? They must need some other information from me that they haven't gotten through their surveillance. Maybe they abducted me and gave me an interview. Maybe they searched through my apartment. I had come to the conclusion that they wanted to hire me for a position, but now I no longer trusted that judgment. What happened last night? I no longer trusted THEM. I thought my roommate Jim was probably with THEM. THEY must use him to get access to me. I thought, maybe they still do want to hire me for a position, but maybe they also have another agenda I don't know about. What kind of evaluation would require them to drug me? I thought I had still better preserve the 'evidence' on my computer.

I wondered if I had told them the name and password for picking up my computer at Best Buy. I had to get to the store as soon as it opened and retrieve my computer. I drove there immediately and waited for the store to open. Luckily, they still had my computer. I picked up the copied hard drives and I took both the drives and my computer to Woody's house where I decided to hide them in his basement. Woody had an alarm on his house, so I thought they would be safe there. I still trusted him.

I continued to think about why THEY would have drugged me and given me an amnesiac. Maybe they interviewed me. Maybe they gave me some kind of truth serum. Then, they should know everything they wanted to know. Maybe they are thinking about making me an undercover agent and sending me overseas. Maybe this was also part of the evaluation. I didn't know. I didn't trust them.

If I was going to be sent overseas as an agent, I thought I probably would be gone for years, maybe decades. I wondered if I would be willing to make that sacrifice for my country. Maybe I wouldn't get a chance to see my family anymore. I hadn't seen my brother's family very much that year. I decided I would go visit them that day. They lived about an hour away in Germantown, Maryland. I drove over there in the afternoon. I don't remember what else I did that day between the morning and the afternoon.

Sometime after I arrived at my brother's house, a family friend came by whom they had known for at least six or seven years, possibly longer. She was mostly a friend of my sister-in-law. Years ago, I had gone on a date with this woman, but I don't remember what we had talked about. She said to us, "I decided to come by at the last minute. I had other plans, but I just decided to change them so I could stop by here." I thought, "She decided to change them at the last minute? Why? Did she change her plans because of me?" Once again, I was experiencing the effects of personalization. I thought for some reason that her agenda had some personal connection with me. Suddenly, I thought, "She's with THEM!". I wondered how she could be involved with THEM. My brother and his wife (Denise) had known her for years, long before I ever worked at Iridium, long before I felt like people were watching me, long before I thought people were following me. I wondered how long the surveillance project could have been going on. When did it start? Maybe it started years ago, long before I was aware of it.

I became convinced that this family friend was with THEM. Because this woman was mostly Denise's friend, I wondered, "Was my brother's wife involved?" When I got the chance to be alone with this woman, I thought I would ask her an open-ended question to see what she would say. I said to her, "Does Denise know?" Of course I was referring to the surveillance project. She said point blankly, "No. Not at all. She doesn't know anything." A few minutes later, she came back to me and said, "Actually, I'm not sure what you were talking about." Then, she mumbled something I couldn't comprehend. I thought, "Now she's trying to backtrack. She should've feigned ignorance the first time. Now she's trying to confuse me." I became even more convinced she was part of the surveillance team, but I continued to wonder how this could be true. After a short time, she left. I was unconvinced that my sister-in-law was not part of the surveillance effort. Maybe the surveillance team is following me for some very important reason that I do not know. Maybe they recruit people close to my family to try to get more intelligence. Maybe they recruited this family friend. Maybe they recruited my sister-in-law.

## A Long Crazy Day

The next morning, Sunday, August 8, 1999, my brother Jason and his family were going to church as usual. My brother normally left earlier than the rest of the family because he was the choir director at their church. He was already gone. Denise asked me if I wanted to go to church with them. I think I recall that I said something rude to her, and left abruptly. However, mentioning church had influenced my thought processes. After I left, I began to think about God.

I hardly ever go to church. For the most part, I have never been a religious person. Although I had been raised Christian, I have never accepted Christian doctrine as the truth. For me, the gospel of Jesus is a myth. I was agnostic for most of my life until I became mentally ill. I believed that if a God did exist, it was unknowable to us as human beings, and there was no reason to think about it. The universe is already more complicated and mysterious than we can understand—that is enough religion for me. In my mind there was no reason or practical value in thinking about God. However, at this time, I began to have more religious thought. I also began to experience grandiose thinking. I started to feel like I was joined with the universe on some metaphysical, philosophical, and spiritual level. I was becoming involved in something HUGE. I wondered if God was somehow controlling the events in my life. Perhaps God had some grand plan for my life, and this plan was just beginning to unfold. I started to believe that what was happening to me had some importance for the entire world. Maybe God was directing the events of my life for some greater purpose that would influence all of humanity. At the same time, I thought, “I don’t really believe in divine intervention!” But then I thought, maybe I was wrong. Maybe God really did exist. Maybe I was special and extremely important for the world. I started having profoundly spiritual feelings.

I thought, for a split second, perhaps I was Jesus. Then, I immediately realized, I don’t believe in Jesus (at least not in his divinity)! Then, I thought, maybe I was the anti-Christ. But that would imply that I believe in Jesus. I didn’t believe in the anti-Christ prophecies either. My disbelief in religious ideas was so strong that I couldn’t believe them even when I was mentally ill. Suddenly I thought, maybe that’s what THEY think. Maybe THEY think I’m Jesus. Maybe THEY think I’m the anti-Christ. Why would they think that? I started to make comparisons between Jesus and myself. First, I had read somewhere that religious scholars have estimated that Jesus started his ministry when he was 30 years old. I also knew many people believed that Jesus might return near the Millennium. I was going to be 30 years old in 2001, the year of the true millennium (2000 years after 1 A.D.). Secondly, Jesus was a carpenter, and I was a handyman (sort of like a carpenter). I thought, “They certainly wouldn’t believe I was Jesus based on these two things alone!” Still, I did not disbelieve THEY were thinking about this. I thought perhaps they were thinking this way—I thought I would have to wait and see what else happens.

I still kept thinking about God as I was driving in my truck. Maybe there is a God after all. Maybe God is playing some kind of cruel trick on me. Maybe what is happening to me is God's way of getting his kicks. I started to think, how can I know if God exists? Where is the proof?

I had never in my life seen anything that made me think there is a God. In fact, I can immediately think of at least a dozen reasons why God does not exist. So how could I prove to myself that God is real? The only thing I could think of was a paradox: "The universe is infinite in time and space, yet nothing within it is!". (I believe even now that the universe is infinite.) For some reason, at that time, I thought this might be proof that God exists. Now, I do not fully understand this reasoning or why I made the connection between infinity, the finite, and the existence of God.

Then, I started thinking again about my sister-in-law. Could she be involved with the surveillance team somehow? I couldn't see how this was possible. I had known her for many years. When could the surveillance have started? I had met her when I was 15. Somehow, while thinking back to that time, I remembered the dream I had when I was 16 years old about being abducted by the CIA and interrogated. I wondered, could that have been real? Could they have been following me since I was 16 years old?

I started to feel like many more people were involved in the surveillance that day. I guessed there might have been 50 or 100 people following me. I thought to myself, "I can't figure this out. This doesn't make any sense to me." I decided I needed to talk to someone who knew more than I did. I still trusted Bob, from Iridium. I was pretty sure he was working for THEM, but I still trusted him. I decided that there was no harm in talking to him about any of my thoughts, since I had already quit my job there. I knew Bob was a workaholic, and I expected he might be at work even on Sunday. I decided to drive out to Iridium to see if I would find him there.

At Iridium, there was a gated area behind the facility where access was limited to a select group of people. Most people were not allowed to enter this area. It required a special key card to gain access, and then it required special keys to enter the building from the back. I had turned in my access cards and keys the previous Thursday. Even so, I had grown accustomed to parking there, and I decided that I would park behind the facility this time. I arrived at Iridium and pulled up to the back gate. There was a speaker in front of the gate through which you could communicate with the security guards. I pushed a button on the speaker to get their attention. A voice, which sounded to me exactly like Bob's, said, "Who are you?" I said, "It's Kurt! Open the gate!" The gate opened immediately, and I drove around the back of the facility.

After parking my truck, I walked up to the entrance door. I no longer had my keys. I had to pick up an outdoor telephone to call the security guards. One of the guards answered. I said, "I don't have my keys, come down and let me in." He said, "I'm going to do more than that. You have no business coming here. I'm going to come down and rough you up." I said, "Well, you just try it!" In a few minutes, he was opening the door. He immediately said "I was just kidding you! You know what I mean? Come on in." I entered the facility and we stood just inside the door in the hallway. There was another

security door blocking access to the rest of the building. This door also required a special card to get access. The guard said, "What are you doing here today?" I said, "I'm here to see Bob" He said, "I don't think he's here." I thought to myself, "I just heard his voice on the speaker out front, and you're saying he's not here? You must have been in the security room with Bob when I heard his voice. You're playing mind games with me. I better take a look for myself." I said, "Well, I have to go to the bathroom. Are you going to let me pee on the floor?" He said, "Ok, come on in." He promptly opened the door leading to the rest of the facility. Once inside he said, "Come on up to the office when you're finished". Then, he left me alone. This was definitely poor procedure on his part. I did not have my security badge, my access card, or my keys. It was also very unusual that I was there on a Sunday.

I actually did go to the bathroom. Afterwards, I couldn't really look around the facility because I no longer had an access card. I couldn't get in any of the rooms. So, instead I went straight up to the security office. Bob was not there. I asked the security guards to page him. They said "What do you want us to say?" I said, "Tell him this is his last chance!" (What I meant by this was, "This is your last chance to talk to me!") They said, "Are you sure you want to say that?" I said "Yes. Tell him it's his last chance. I'll wait here for ten minutes to see if he responds." They said, "Ok."

After ten minutes, the same guard who let me in the facility came out and said, "We've had no response from him. What do you want to do?" I was sure Bob was in the building. I thought, "They're playing games with me." I said, "I guess I'll be leaving now." However, the guard said, "I'm sorry, but I can't let you do that." He may have been joking again, but I did not take this as a joke. I thought, "I am not going to let them keep me here. I don't know what they plan on doing with me."

I had been standing very close to the front entrance to the building. My truck was parked at the back entrance. The guard was blocking the path to my truck, but he was not blocking the way to the front entrance door. I realized I was not going to be able to get back to my truck. I decided to abandon it. I very quickly walked out the front entrance without saying anything. I kept walking and I did not look back. I did not hear him following me, nor did I hear the guard say anything.

A short distance away from the Iridium facility was a hospital. I decided to walk to the hospital, and arrange transportation for myself from there. I arrived at the hospital in about 10 minutes. I went to the main desk and asked if they could call me a taxi. They did. As I sat outside the hospital waiting for the taxi, I wondered what THEY would be doing. How could they follow me without the GPS receiver in my truck? I thought, they might be guessing I would call a taxi. I wondered if they would have a taxi of their own. Perhaps they would trick me and send their own taxi to pick me up. Or, they might pull up in a van and whisk me away. I became very suspicious of any cars driving by. Eventually, my taxi arrived and I got in with a bit of hesitation.

I needed to get transportation home. The hospital where I was located was 75 miles from my home. I thought the easiest thing to do would be to get to the nearest subway stop in Virginia, and take the subway to the station closest to my home in Maryland, where my

parents could pick me up. I told the driver I wanted to go to the West Falls Church subway stop, and I told him how I wanted to get there. I said, "Take Route 7 all the way down to Falls Church. Stay on Route 7." This was the most direct route I knew. He said, "OK, no problem."

We left the hospital and started on our way down Route 7. The cab driver started talking to me. We had a short conversation like this:

He said, "Do you ever have people talking about you?"

I said "What do you mean?"

"I mean, do you ever find people talking about you?"

"Well, I'm sure people talk about me sometimes. Everybody talks about everybody else at some point."

"No. I mean, they keep talking about you behind your back, all the time"

"Give me an example of what you mean"

"I have this dog, you see, and people don't like my dog. They keep talking about me and my dog"

"Is there something wrong with your dog, Is he barking all the time or something?"

"No. They just don't like him. They want me to get rid of him."

"Is your dog dangerous?"

"No. But they're always talking about him"

"So what, who cares what they think or what they talk about?"

"It's not what they think. It's the fact that they keep talking about us."

"Well, just ignore it. Who cares?"

"I can't ignore it. I don't want them to talk about us."

"How do you know they are talking about you"

"I just do"

I started to become very suspicious of the cab driver. I thought he might have been one of THEM. I wondered if he was testing me. I knew that paranoid people often become preoccupied that other people are talking about them. I thought the driver might be testing me to see what I would say about myself. Once again, I was personalizing the conversation. At this time, we were 4 or 5 miles from Iridium, still traveling on Route 7. I had instructed the driver to stay on Route 7 all the way to Falls Church, at least another 20 miles. Suddenly, the driver exited off Route 7. I said, "What are you doing? I told you to stay on Route 7!" He said, "I know a shortcut. This way is faster." I knew from experience that the way he was going was not really faster. I had specifically told him to go straight down Route 7. Why was he diverting from my instructions? I became very anxious. Where was he taking me? Is he kidnapping me? What do THEY want to do with me? I thought, maybe they're just going to kill me. On the other hand, maybe they just want to talk to me. Ok, they're going to kill me, or just talk to me. One or the other. If they're just going to talk to me, the driver certainly could have mentioned that to me. What harm would there be in telling me they're only going to talk to me? He departed from our course without even warning me. Surely they're going to kill me. Otherwise, they could have given me some warning. Maybe they're just testing me again. Maybe this is just another stress test. What should I do?

I said to the driver, "Are you going to kill me?"

He said, "What?"

I said, "Are you going to kill me?"

He said, "No, I'm not going to kill you. What do you mean, 'Am I going to kill you?'"

No, I'm not going to kill you."

I thought, "It's obvious he's taking me some place I don't want to go. Whatever the reason, I'm not going to wait to find out the answer." The taxi soon stopped at a red light. I seized the opportunity—I got out and ran away. Immediately, I thought, "They must not be abducting me, they certainly would have made sure the doors were locked. On the other hand, maybe the driver made a mistake, maybe he forgot to lock the doors."

I had to come up with another plan to get home. I was still more than 20 miles from the train station. I didn't want to take another cab. I thought, "I'm only a few miles from Dulles airport. This is a major airport for Washington, D.C. I can walk to the airport from here in a few hours. From there, I can get a bus to the subway station. I started to walk along the highway in the direction of the airport. I was very wary of the vehicles driving by. I thought THEY might pull one of their vehicles up beside me and abduct me again at any minute. I thought, "I have to get a weapon of some sort to protect myself." I saw a steel cable lying on the side of the road. I picked it up. I didn't exactly know how I could protect myself with this, but I felt better having it.

To demonstrate how fragile my state of mind was, I saw a street cleaning machine coming down along the edge of the road. I thought, "It might be THEM. THEY probably have a whole fleet of vehicles that are disguised. I better avoid this side of the road." I crossed over to the other side.

After a few minutes, I became aware of a vehicle following me. It was a white colored SUV. It pulled up close to me, and a man got out. It was Bob! I thought, "Bob! I should have known. Bob is definitely with THEM! How else could he have found me? He must have been following me the entire time since I left Iridium! Or, he is in contact with THEM." I tried to avoid him. He was yelling something at me. Finally I understood he was saying, "Kurt! I want to talk to you! Kurt! I want to talk to you!" I thought, "NOW he wants to talk to me! No way. Forget it! I told him it was his last chance and I meant it. He MUST be with THEM. NOW, after trying to abduct me, they want to talk to me." I tried to think of something appropriate to say. I came up with, "FUCK YOU!" I turned and ran the other way. He got back in his vehicle and kept following me on the shoulder. I thought, "I have to get away." I tried to run, but the shoes I was wearing were floppy. I took them off and started to run in my bare feet. I decided to cross the highway to the other side. There were a lot of cars on the highway and there was no crosswalk. I thought, they'll stop for me if I give them enough time. I saw an opportunity to cross—I walked out in front of a car that was about 200 yards away. It stopped. I then crossed to the other side. I started to run towards the airport. I ran maybe a half mile when I heard sirens behind me. It was two police cars, with Bob following behind them. I thought, "I won't be able to escape from the police. They can call a helicopter, or canine units. I won't be able to get away." I stopped and waited for them. I thought, I wonder if THEY have a special connection with the police.

One of the officers approached me.

He said, "What are you doing out here?"

"I'm trying to get to the airport."

"This man says you were crossing the highway dangerously."

"Yes, I was trying to get away from him!"

"What are you holding that cable for?"

"I pick up things. I'm a handyman. I thought I might be able to use it."

The officers then conferred with Bob for a few minutes. I couldn't hear what they were saying. I tried to avoid making eye contact with Bob and I turned my back to him. Eventually, one of the officers came back to me.

He said, "You were at Bob's office earlier today. Do you want to go back there?"

"No. I don't want to go back there."

"You left your truck there."

"Yes."

"Don't you want to get your truck?"

"No. I'll get it later. Some other day."

"What are you planning on doing today?"

"I'm planning on walking to the airport."

"What are you going to do at the airport?"

"I'm going to get a bus to the metro train station. Look, I'm not going to have a conversation with you. You have two options. You can arrest me, or let me go. I'm not going to stand here all day talking to you. Arrest me, or I'm leaving!"

"Just wait a minute. We might be able to help you. Don't go anywhere."

He went back to discuss some things with Bob for a few minutes. The officer came back with a cell phone (probably Bob's) and said, "We got your brother on the phone. He wants to talk to you."

"Hi, Jason. What do you want?"

"What are you doing? Do you want me to come pick you up?"

"No. I am going to the airport."

"Why are you going to the airport?"

"I'm going to get a bus."

"I'll meet you at the airport."

"No. Do not come to the airport!"

We talked for a few minutes discussing whether he should come get me or not.

I was insistent that he not come.

"Let me talk to the police again"

"Okay"

After a few minutes, the police told me they would take me to the airport. One of the officers gave me a ride. I wondered whether Bob had a special relationship with the police. He could have called THEM, but he didn't, he called the police instead. After

five or ten minutes, we arrived at the airport. Once there, I purchased a ticket to the nearest subway stop.

As I got on the bus, I thought, “Bob knew where I was going. THEY had plenty of time to prepare. I bet there are some agents on this bus with me.” I said outloud so everyone could hear, “This is ridiculous. When are you going to give up?” Then, I heard someone whispering, “How did he know?” and I heard another person saying “Shhh...Be quiet”

We arrived at the train station, and I bought a ticket. I thought, there’s probably 4 or 5 agents getting on this train with me. I decided that I would “Lose them”. I took the train only a few stops to the Ballston Station. I got off the train and took careful note of who else got off with me. I watched carefully as I exited the train station to see where these other people were going. I went the opposite direction from them. A few blocks away from the train station was a hotel. I went in the back door. I took the elevator to one of the upper floors. It didn’t seem like anyone was following me. I waited five or ten minutes. Then, I took the stairs back down and exited the front door. I still didn’t see anyone. I thought, “Maybe I lost them.”

Soon, I was feeling hungry. I decided to get something to eat. I crossed the street and walked a few blocks until I found a restaurant. I went inside and took a seat. I still felt like I was under observation, and I believed it. I thought, “How could they have followed me after all that?” I started becoming suspicious of the patrons at the restaurant. I started to wonder if any of the patrons were part of the surveillance team. I was very distracted by the thoughts in my head. I didn’t notice who was there before me, or who came in after me. I started to think, “How can I tell who is a spy and who isn’t?” I wondered “Is there something different about these people around me that would distinguish them from the people I might normally see?” I looked around and noticed there were a lot of kids. I was in the bar area at the time. Why were there so many kids? I thought “Maybe the spies brought their kids along.” As I thought about it, I came up with a reason why they might have brought their kids. The surveillance crew was having a hard time following me that day. They needed more people. They were so shorthanded that they called people who were normally off work and ordered them to come to work. These people who got called at the last minute couldn’t make arrangements for their kids, so they brought them along. At this time, I couldn’t realize how ridiculous this idea was.

I started to wonder why they were so desperate to follow me. There must be a far more important reason for following me than I could know. Once again, I started to wonder how long the surveillance had been taking place. Was it happening when I was a teenager? Had it been going on for more than ten years? Was my dream about being abducted by the CIA a dream, or was it the truth? What happened on that day long ago?

I tried to recall the day when I was a teenager and I was babysitting for the woman whose husband worked in the intelligence community. I tried to remember exactly what happened. I am not certain whether I remembered actual events, or whether I invented some of the memories. I recalled going down into the basement with the kids. There was a back room where they were not allowed to go. “Don’t go in there!” they said, “We’re

not allowed in that room! Nobody is allowed in that room!” Was there something in that room that I discovered? Did I go into that room? Maybe. What happened in that room?

I finished eating and left. I decided to walk to the next subway stop instead of getting on the train locally. It was no more than another mile away. I thought, “There must be 100 people following me. With this many, there is no way I can escape.” I did not actually see anybody following me, but I still believed they were following me anyway. I got on the train at the next stop.

The train I took went underground while passing through the center of Washington D.C. Then, after leaving the downtown area, it came above ground again near RFK stadium. As the train came out of the tunnel, I looked out the window and in the distance saw a police car traveling with its lights flashing. Behind the police car was a white SUV with a flashing blue light on its dashboard. I thought, “It’s Bob! Dammit! Somehow he’s still able to follow me!”

The train arrived at the end of the line. I got off and immediately went to a pay phone to call my parents. The first call I made did not go through. I wondered, “Maybe THEY are interfering with my parent’s phone line.” While I was standing at the phone, a man came up to another phone nearby to make a call. I listened to some of his conversation. He started saying, “Hey, Man! You’re not going to do that to my family! You wouldn’t hurt them! I’ll do whatever you want! Don’t hurt my family!” I immediately thought, “He’s with THEM. This is some kind of psychological warfare. They are trying to plant subliminal messages in my mind. I’ll just ignore him.” I tried to call my folks again. This time I got through, and my grandmother answered the phone. I was still suspicious as to whether THEY might be playing games with me. I thought they might be able to redirect my phone call. I also wondered whether they might have a machine that would alter their voices to make them sound like the voices of my family members. I wanted to be sure I was actually talking to my grandmother. I said, “Grandma, can you tell me that story again about what Mom did when she was a little girl?” It didn’t really matter what story she told me, but probably it would be a story I knew and THEY didn’t. My grandmother told me about the time my mother hit someone over the head with a hammer. I thought, “Yep, I know that story. It must really be my grandmother on the other end.” I then asked for my parents, and I asked them to come pick me up at the train station. They arrived about 45 minutes later, and we went home. They did not ask me very many questions about what happened.

I spent the next day, Monday, August 9, 1999 at my parents house. Apparently my parents had spoken to Bob on the phone. They were getting wise. They wanted me to go see a psychiatrist as soon as possible. What good is a psychiatrist? I had other plans.

My dad had made arrangements to pick up my truck from Iridium. I kept wondering why Bob had called the police on me, instead of calling THEM. My parents told me that the Iridium facility had to go into ‘Lockdown’ Mode because of me. This is a situation where they secure the entire facility and force people to stay in certain rooms, usually in response to a security emergency. I thought “Lockdown? What the hell? Why did they need to go into Lockdown mode? I didn’t do anything!” They also told me the security

officer said I was being belligerent. I thought “I was being belligerent? HE was the one being belligerent, NOT ME!” In my mind, I started to go through everything I did at the facility. I wondered why Bob felt he had to call the police. The one thing I remembered was what I said—“This is your last chance!” Obviously, he didn’t know what that meant! He didn’t have any knowledge of the secret messages that I sent! Maybe he thought that was some kind of threat? Obviously, THEY weren’t communicating everything to Bob.

## Psychosis

On Tuesday, August 10, 1999, I continued to think about the events I had experienced over the past two months. I came to the conclusion that all these events were some type of test for my acceptance into the CIA as an agent. But, I also thought, there must be some other information that I don't have. I honestly believed 50 or 100 people were following me around over the past week. There must be another reason why they are investing so many resources on my case. Surely, even the CIA doesn't have enough resources to keep 50 or 100 people following every candidate. That would be impossible. They would never get any real work accomplished. I must be special for some reason. Maybe they are considering me for upper management. Surely, the higher the position, the more stringent the security measures must be. Someone who manages other agents must be able to pass a stricter test than the agents themselves. Wouldn't that make sense? I thought, I definitely must know someone who is already in the CIA. Someone very close. I must have been personally selected for a very super secret position. Who did I know? When would I find out? And what exactly was the connection with Iridium?

Even though I had come to the conclusion that I was an employment candidate, I didn't trust THEIR methods. I had suspicions that they had drugged me, abducted me, and used psychological warfare against me. There was something else I didn't know about all this. While I stayed at my parents house, I wondered how THEY could continue to monitor me. I wondered if THEY might recruit my neighbors to help them. I wondered whether they might use psychological manipulation on my neighbors. I decided I had to warn them. I went next door to my neighbor's house, and knocked on their door very loudly. My neighbor, a woman, opened the door and I said, "Someone might be using psychological warfare against you." She immediately said, "Where is your grandmother, is she alright?" (My grandmother lived with my parents). I said, "Yes. she's fine" Then, she quickly closed the door.

I was worried that THEY might start to use more severe methods of manipulation on me. I didn't trust them. I decided I needed some help. But, who has more power than the FBI or the CIA? Who can tell the CIA or the FBI what to do? The president, or Congress, that's who! I decided it was unlikely I could get any help from the president. But maybe I could get some help from Congress. I went to the congressional offices in Washington D.C. and left a written message for several congressmen. I don't remember exactly what was in the message, but it stated that the FBI and Iridium were involved in some way, and it pleaded for them to investigate the matter further. I actually got one response a month later from Barbara Mikulski, a Senator for my state. She sent an official letter to the FBI, asking them to respond to my allegations. (The FBI never responded)

Gradually, I was becoming more and more psychotic. By late night, perhaps 11 pm, I had lost all touch with reality. I turned on the 'Tonight Show with Jay Leno'. (This is a nationally broadcast talk show in the United States). It seemed to me like the show was produced especially for me. I think this idea was the result of personalization and grandiose thinking.

I also started having more religious ideation, which was very uncharacteristic of me. I was having grandiose thoughts concerning my influence on the world. It seemed to me that somehow the entire world was becoming affected by the events I was experiencing. I started to think that the world might be coming to an end.

I tried to rationalize why there would have been 100 people following me last Sunday. I remembered the dream about being abducted by the CIA. I started to believe that maybe I had been brainwashed by the CIA when I was a teenager. Maybe that is the reason why I had so many nightmares. Maybe I was part of some kind of twenty year project that had started to go out of control. Maybe they were afraid I was going to reveal some closely guarded secrets about the CIA's psychological warfare methods. I started to believe that somehow, my faith in God had so far protected me from their methods. This was very unusual thinking for me, because I never really had much faith in a God. I always thought the universe existed independent of any guiding hand.

I imagined that I was in a direct conflict with the CIA. I thought there were two groups of CIA agents that were gathering their resources. One group, the "Bad" agents, were planning to eliminate me. These are the agents that had tried to abduct me, that had drugged me, that had used psychological warfare on me. I imagined that the "Bad" agents might be killing everyone involved with the project. The other group, the "Good" agents, were trying to protect me. I also thought perhaps some of the "Good" agents might have thought (erroneously) that I was Jesus. I wanted to discourage this thinking.

I knew that I was behaving strangely. I thought this was due to the brainwashing process. I thought that they had brainwashed me to become a "super-agent". They had planted subconscious thoughts into my psyche that would render me more sensitive to surveillance. These thoughts were intended to enable me to detect when anyone was following me, or surveilling me. This was the reason I became so anxious when THEY started following me. Subconsciously, I was able to detect that I was under their surveillance. So, I thought that the CIA had brainwashed me as a teenager, and when THEY started following me, this activated my subconscious alarm system. I figured that since THEY were also part of the intelligence community, they may have uncovered some type of information related to the brainwashing project. However, complete information may not have been available to them. I suspected that, because of me, there was chaos going on throughout the ranks of the intelligence community. They were trying to pull strings everywhere to find out what the truth was.

I also wanted to know exactly what had happened to me in the past to make me this way. I wanted to know the truth about what they had done to me. I would not believe anything any agents told me. I would only accept the truth from the top ranks of the government. I thought they alone would be able to know the truth.

It is with all these thoughts in mind that I crafted the following email, which I intended to be a communication to THEM. (My Mom had found and saved a copy of this email) I wrote the email at about 1am.

“As far as I know, I am an American citizen. I put my faith in God, Myself, My family, My country, and my world, in that order. As things wear away and chaos ensues, each one of these will slowly erode. Except for the first. When you have no other leg to stand on, God will not let you down, he will make you strong. With God on your side, who can oppose you?

I have put my hand out to offer it innumerable times. You have slapped it away. WHEN, WHEN, god please help us WHEN are you going to get some faith yourself?

I know an incredible amount of information about your organization, your strategies, your intentions. (This was somewhat of a lie)

I have lived my life in all respects trying to be a good person. I do not know exactly why I am the way I am. I do not believe that is important. Whatever information you are seeking IS NO LONGER IMPORTANT. I do not know what information you are seeking and I don't care.

Everyone must make choices in life. As I told you before, you may choose good or evil. When you don't have enough information about something, you must use what you have and make the most righteous decision possible. If I have learned anything in my life, that is the honest to god truth. If you believe this, things will turn out fine.

There is much goodness in the world. There is far more goodness than evil. That is why you fail against me. I go forth in the name of god, who governs my conscience.

In case you are wondering. I am only a man. a very smart man. I am just as human as everyone else.

I need you to have faith, and I need the top commanders of the United States government, the joint chiefs of staff themselves, to come forth and usher me to the pentagon. This should not be widely publicized as yet as people may make their own conclusions too soon. I also need them to give me the information they have about ME. I do not care about any other type of information. I do not care about your national secrets. I will not abuse this trust. I honestly do not know what is going to happen to us. I am not going to intentionally harm anyone. I can help you to de-escalate this problem. I'm a very smart guy as you probably know. But you must ask for help when you need it. This is a leap of faith and trust. If you can do this, I will help to alleviate your problems. I believe we can control this problem, but only if we all have faith in god and our country. sometimes it is hard to do this. Things happen that are beyond our control. I do not know why this is true except that it is a universal truth for every system within the universe.

people do bad things sometimes. I believe that people have done bad things to me in the past (in this lifetime). Please stay calm. This is a dangerous time. The bible has predicted things like this. I believe that if enough people believe the world will end, it will. I also believe that if enough people believe the world will continue, it will continue. Do not make assumptions about ANYTHING permanent. That is my advice. As ever, be true to your own beliefs and your own conscience and do not betray that.

As of now, I believe that someone or something, a person or organization, did something very bad to me in the past. It is buried in my subconscious mind. It has made me suspicious of other people. But, it has not impaired my thinking. I do not believe that anyone but myself can extract it. I also believe that my brains come from evolution and that my faith comes from god. I am ready for the truth about myself to be revealed. It is possible that no one knows what this truth is. If people did bad things to me in the past, those people may be dead now. I don't know. I may never find out. I am prepared for that also. I DO KNOW THIS—no matter what, I will always honor my father and mother for giving me this life. I have enjoyed it thoroughly and I hope to continue it into the future.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR TRUTH. In this incredible and unbelievable situation we must adhere to the fundamental things which we undeniably know to be true. In my case, I know that God loves me, that my family loves me, and that both will support me in this crisis.

On a separate note. The things that have caused this problem ARE definitely evil.

Sharing, cooperation, patience, trust, caring, compassion, service, hope, and especially faith, are gifts from god. Each one of these things was trampled upon during the escalation of this conflict. These virtues give life. This is a warning. Do not take these virtues lightly. We must preserve life, celebrate life.

For the time being, I suggest that you do not change your ways immediately for the possibility exists that we may have total chaos. We must preserve order. Growth is a slow process. If you have faith, we can grow into a more civilized society.”

## The CIA Wants Me

The next day, I woke up early. It is interesting to note that at all times during my life when I have been the most psychotic, I slept very little. This is especially unusual for me, because, normally, I tend to sleep a lot.

On this particular day, much of the ideation from the night before had evaporated. However, I still had the idea that perhaps I was a candidate for recruitment into the CIA. I was wondering who I knew who was in the CIA. Rudy happened to call me on the phone. He was the man who went to the police station with me. He said, "Kurt, can you come over sometime to discuss things? I might have a project for you." I said, "Sure, how about today?" We arranged to meet that afternoon. I went over to his house. We went into his living room and immediately we started discussing my suspicions about what was happening to me. I told him only what I was certain was the truth at that time. I explained that I was working at the main control facility for a multi billion dollar satellite system, and that I thought for this reason, I somehow came under surveillance by the intelligence community, and that they had placed software on my computer that would enable them to keep track of my online activities.

Rudy said, "Who do you think is doing this?"

I said, "I don't know, one of the intelligence agencies...the FBI, DOD, CIA, I don't know."

He said, "How would you like to go to work for them?"

I said "Who?"

"The CIA. How would you like to go to work for them?"

"What do you mean?"

He said, "I worked for the CIA for a while. I know a recruiter. I could talk to them for you."

I thought, "Wow, now it's getting interesting! I was right!"

I said, "What would I do for them?"

Rudy said, "You could be an analyst"

"But I have no experience. I didn't even graduate from college."

"That doesn't matter. They'll train you."

"What would my salary be?"

"You could make up to a hundred thousand dollars a year."

"Wow."

We talked about this for a few more minutes.

Then he said, "Listen. I wouldn't mention this to anyone just yet."

"Ok. I understand."

After our discussion, he showed me a handyman project he wanted me to work on. Then, I left.

Now I was absolutely certain I was right. The CIA wanted to recruit me. They were going to be calling me any minute. But, I also thought, "I don't really know Rudy very well. Why would he recommend me for the CIA?" I knew his friend, Woody, much better. I thought, "Maybe Woody is in the CIA. It was probably Woody who recommended me. Maybe they will never tell me this. After all, everything is on a need-to-know basis. What else don't I know about this situation? There must be some other information I don't have. I will have to wait and see what happens next."

I worried that I did not understand everything about the situation. I thought I was definitely a candidate for employment at the CIA, but I also thought that there was some other problem that I couldn't know about. Why would they have 100 people following me? I thought that perhaps in addition to testing me as a candidate, the CIA might have been investigating me. At some point, I became fearful that the CIA might try to abduct me (again), or they just might decide to kill me. I wasn't sure.

I spent the next several days at my parents house. On one of these days, I went over to my apartment. My roommate Jim was there. I had suspicions since I first met him that Jim was one of THEM. When he saw me, he immediately started yelling at me. Apparently the rent check I gave our landlord had bounced. Jim was upset about this and kept saying that his credit was going to be affected. I was thinking that Jim's behavior was just another stress test that THEY had planned for me. I knew his credit was not going to be affected at all. I thought he was really being a great actor. He seemed very angry. Jim was putting on his best actor's face. I started to laugh, and Jim stopped yelling. Then, he started to laugh too. He said nothing else. I thought, "This just confirms my suspicions that he is one of THEM. Why else would he start laughing if he was actually angry with me?"

My parents soon arranged an appointment with a local psychiatrist. My friends and relatives went to talk to him prior to my appointment. This psychiatrist had a home office in the same neighborhood where Woody and Judy lived. I wondered if there might not be some other connection between them and the doctor. I also had some suspicion about whether the psychiatrist might have some connection with the CIA. When I finally met with the psychiatrist, I told him NOTHING. I thought, "What could he do to change anything? What is he going to know about what is happening to me? What is the point of telling him anything? He's not going to believe anything I say." He diagnosed me with Bipolar Disorder based on the consultation with my family and he prescribed Lithium. I knew I wasn't Bipolar so I never took any of the medication. My parents were insistent that I take the medication so I tried to convince them that I was taking it.

A few weeks later, my mom had scheduled an appointment with our family doctor for herself. She wanted me to go with her to the doctor's office. For some reason, I also had to see Woody and Judy that day. They had returned home early from their vacation house in Aspen. I went over to their house before the doctor's appointment. They asked me what I was doing the rest of the day. I told them I was going to our family doctor with my mom. They asked me, "Who is your family doctor?" I told them who our doctor was. Later on, when I was at the doctor's office, I was sitting in the waiting room waiting for my mom to finish with the doctor, and a man walked in. He approached the

counter to check-in. He said to the nurse, "Hi. I'm here to see the doctor. I'm the one who called at the last minute. My name is Mr. Schorer." He then proceeded to sit down across from me. I thought, "Schorer. Hmm. Where did I hear that name before? I heard it from Joe, the handyman in New York. He mentioned that he knew a hit-man named Larry Schorer." Before this man arrived, I was not thinking about Mr. Schorer, New York, Joe, hit-men, or anything even remotely related to those subjects. The entrance of this man was completely unexpected. I sat there for a few minutes. Mr. Schorer was looking through a magazine. He said to me, "I'm reading about Josef Mengele--the Nazi 'Doctor of Death'. Really interesting. I like that kind of stuff." Soon afterwards, the nurse called him back into the office. I became very suspicious of this situation. I wondered if this encounter had been arranged by THEM. I thought it might be an example of the mind games they had been playing with me. I wondered if this man was actually named Mr. Schorer. It could be anybody, it could be an imposter. How could THEY have arranged it? I thought, how could they even know about my conversation with Joe? Suddenly, it seemed clear to me that there was a connection between Woody and THEM. I had told Woody that I was going to the doctor's that day. Woody and Judy had also arranged for me to go to their daughter's place in New York two months earlier. They must have arranged for Joe to do some work there and to tell me about Larry Schorer. I remembered Joe telling me about the 'game'. Maybe that was a clue to what was happening. I remembered the hidden space between the walls of Woody's office, where I thought someone was watching me, and the open door I found later on. Woody was also very good friends with Rudy. It couldn't all be a coincidence. They had some kind of plan. They were playing some kind of game. But what was the point of all this?

I also started to wonder how Judy might have been involved in all these events. I remembered the time we were sitting at her breakfast table, when a strange car came up the driveway and opened her garage door. At that time, it seemed to me that she was not that worried about it. I wondered, "Maybe she was just playing along with the game?"

I became very angry and hurt that Woody and Judy would participate in a game like this, with me as the pawn. I decided I was going to return their house key. I gave it back to them the next day without any explanation. I had always thought they would act with my best interest in their minds. I thought, "Maybe they believe they are actually acting in my best interest. Maybe they went through this same process themselves to get recruited into the CIA. Maybe this is a rite of passage." I wasn't sure that Woody wouldn't give THEM access to my computer. Maybe he might think it was in my best interest for THEM to have access. I didn't think so. I retrieved my computer from his basement.

During the work week, I often went to a local Bagel Shop with my Dad. We normally went in the morning. I had been doing this with my father for more than a year. Coincidentally, I started to find Rudy at the Bagel Shop on a regular basis. I had never seen him there prior to this time. I thought the CIA must have directed him to go to the Bagel Shop so he could meet us there.

## Making Assumptions

I wondered how I should think about all these events that were happening to me. Joe had told me not to make assumptions. Bob had mentioned making assumptions. Woody had also mentioned something about assumptions. Maybe that was a clue to navigate through all these experiences. Don't make assumptions. I tried to think for several days without making assumptions. I found that it is impossible. You are always making assumptions about one thing or another. You make subtle assumptions based on past experience and internal perceptions about reality. Usually these assumptions are subliminal. For example, you might think, "I am going to the store later to buy groceries." This thought assumes many things that you do not become fully aware of--that your car will be working, that the store will be open, that you will have money, that something else will not prevent you from going to the store. I decided that if I could not abstain from making assumptions, that I should try to understand the types of assumptions I habitually make, or at least try to be more aware of these assumptions.

I knew I didn't know everything about the situation I was in. There seemed to be so many unknown variables. Rather than make assumptions arbitrarily, I thought I should talk to someone who might know more than me. I arranged to meet with Woody one day. I had a whole series of questions for him. I expected that Woody would tell me the truth if he was able to. However, if he was in the CIA, I thought he might have to lie about some things. I went over to his house, and we sat down in his living room. We had a long conversation, similar to the one that follows below.

I told him, "Woody, I have a lot of questions for you. If you can not answer them truthfully, then I would prefer that you not answer them at all."

"Ok."

"Are you responsible for me getting my job at Iridium?"

"No."

"Do you know Matt, a friend of mine from Iridium?"

"No."

"I think you know I called Rudy to come help me a few weeks ago when I thought I was in trouble. Did you come back for a few days that week because of me?"

"No."

"You and Judy came home early this year from your place in Colorado. Did you come back early because of me?"

"No."

"Do you know anything about my job at Iridium that I don't know?"

"No."

"Are you involved in anything concerning me that I don't know about?"

"No."

I had many other questions for Woody that day which I don't remember. I really drilled him thoroughly for twenty or thirty minutes. (Woody recalls, five years later, that during this conversation I told him that I didn't trust him anymore.)

A few days after my conversation with Woody, I was thinking, “THEY have put me under a lot of stress.” I was certain there was a connection between THEM and Iridium. I thought Bob was probably working for THEM. I decided I should be compensated for all the stress I was under. I came up with a dollar figure that I thought was appropriate, and I incorporated this additional amount into the final bill I sent to Iridium. I was certain they would pay it. They did.

Shortly after receiving their payment, I was looking in my basement for an empty cardboard box. I found a cardboard box, but it was not empty. Inside was a large disk drive. I did not remember ever buying this particular disk drive. It was not the type of disk drive that would fit my computer system. It was the type that might be found in a large disk library. I wondered if I could have taken it by mistake from Iridium. I often took home empty boxes to save for later use. I would never steal anything. I thought, “My God! That’s what all this is about! They think I’ve stolen some kind of important information. Maybe there’s some kind of secret information on this disk drive! Maybe they caught me on camera taking this from the facility! Maybe they think I’m a spy!” I called Bob and left a message on his voicemail about the disk drive. He called me back and left me a message saying that there was no way I had anything at home from Iridium. I was relieved.

One day I went into downtown Annapolis to get some ice cream. Across the road, I saw Bruce, the retired CIA analyst whom I had met at the bar in Virginia. I wondered if he was still working for the CIA. Maybe he was assigned to my case. Maybe seeing him wasn’t a coincidence.

The next day, I decided to try to determine how many people were still following me. At this time, my dad became reluctant to let me go anywhere by myself. I wanted to go out driving around. He said he would take me wherever I wanted to go. We left home and got on the freeway towards Washington. He asked me, “Where are we going?” It didn’t really matter where we went, because I was mostly interested in seeing if anyone was following me. I said, “Follow that car” as I pointed to the car ahead of us. We followed this car for about 25 miles. Then, I said, “Take this exit”. We turned onto another highway. We continued driving another ten or fifteen miles. By this time, I had forgotten my original intention to observe whether people were following me or not. I wondered why my dad was willing to drive somewhere without knowing where we were going. We drove another 25 miles or so and stopped at a McDonald’s near the house where I grew up in Baltimore. I wondered whether the other customer’s at the McDonald’s were working for THEM. This included a kid I saw who was about twelve years old. Afterwards, we drove another 20 miles back to our home in Arnold. I still couldn’t understand why my Dad was willing to drive such a long circuitous route.

In the fall of 1999, I started to experience fewer symptoms of psychosis. I did not feel like I was being followed, but I did not abandon all the ideas I had about surveillance, the FBI, or the CIA. The fact was, I stayed home most of the time. I finally decided that my sister-in-law was not connected with THEM. I also decided that her friend was not

connected with THEM either. I did not recognize these earlier assumptions as faulty thinking, I only thought I had made a simple error in judgement.

I started to work more diligently on Woody's mutual fund application. By December, I had a full working version ready for him to use. This achievement is evidence that some of my symptoms had dissipated.

At some point, Rudy had called and left me a message saying that our project could wait until the springtime. I thought this meant that the evaluation process for CIA recruitment would be extended to the springtime. I waited patiently. For five months, nothing unusual happened.

## A Strange Vacation

In February of 2000, I decided I needed to find some direction in my life. I felt that I had no plans for the future. I didn't know what to do. I needed to decide what to do. I still believed the CIA was going to offer me a job anytime soon. Would I accept it? Should I accept it? If not, what else should I do? I was also still thinking about fractals, infinity, natural forms, and encryption. I had many ideas about a new mathematical theory that I had not fully developed. I wanted to get away from life for a while, to clear my mind, to seek inspiration. I decided to take a vacation. I would go somewhere very remote, to do some soul searching and some meditation. I chose to go to Glacier National Park, in Northwest Montana. The cheapest way for me to get there was by train. I decided to buy a National Rail Pass that I could use for one month. I would take the train from Washington D.C. to Glacier National Park. I would also visit Chicago, Seattle, and San Francisco before coming home. I expected the trip would take me two or three weeks.

I was not afraid of going to such a remote place by myself. I had abandoned the idea that the CIA might decide to kill me. I thought if that was a possibility, they would have had several opportunities already. I thought I was still an ideal candidate for recruitment. I expected they might try to send someone to talk to me while I was away from home and alone. It would be the perfect opportunity for them.

I don't know exactly what day I left on the train, but it was sometime during the first week of March 2000. I left from Union Station in Washington D.C in the late afternoon. This first day was uneventful. By 11am the next day, I had arrived in Chicago. Immediately I started to feel like I was being followed. I found a hotel a few blocks from the train station. Later that day, I met some Italian friends who were in Chicago on a business trip. We went out to dinner. I don't think they noticed I was having mental problems. After dinner, They dropped me off a few blocks from my hotel so I could visit a local bookstore. I then walked around the city for while at random.

While I was walking, I noticed a couple walking several dozen yards behind me. I took a very indirect route through the city, making a zigzag pattern over five or six blocks. Then, I saw this couple again. I wondered if they were following me. I assumed they were. I became very agitated. I started to believe everyone on the street was following me. I continued to wander around the city. Somehow, four or five hours passed, but it seemed to me like it was only an hour. It was now getting very late. It must have been one or two o'clock in the morning. Very few people were out on the street. I thought, "Where did they all go? No one is following me now! They left?" I wondered why they would have stopped following me all of a sudden. I thought it must be a sign. They no longer NEEDED to follow me. I must have passed their evaluation! Now, THEY would be making contact with me very soon. I had a lot to think about. What kind of offer would they make? Would I accept? I returned to the hotel.

Next day. I decided to leave for my next stop, Grand Forks, North Dakota. The train left in the afternoon, so I had the morning free. I went to the Sears Tower, and then to the

Field Museum. I wondered whether anyone was following me. I didn't see anyone following. But, how can they make contact with me if no one is following? I headed back to the hotel to get my bags, and then to the train station to catch the train. I thought, "Somehow, they will arrange a meeting with me."

I boarded the train for Grand Forks, which was 14 hours away. After a few hours, I got restless in my seat and decided to take a stroll around the train. I went into the smoking car to have a cigarette. As I came into the cabin, there was a girl in the corner seat who said something to me like, "Hey! You finally made it here! Take a seat." I sat down next to her. I thought, "This must be the one. This is my contact person. This is going to be interesting." There were also two or three other people in the cabin. Apparently she had been talking with them already. They were in the middle of a conversation about the upcoming presidential primary election. We talked for several minutes about who we thought was going to win the election. I asked my 'contact' what her name was. "Lisa" she said. I thought, any minute now, she's going to be talking about the CIA, the FBI, or something like that. Somehow the conversation changed, and we started talking about our nation's drug problem. Lisa said, "What do you think about that story that the CIA had sold drugs in Los Angeles?" (There had been an article printed that week in some major newspapers that the CIA had funneled drugs from South America to Los Angeles to raise money for the Nicaraguan contras). I said, "They can't get the best information about things like that unless they are in the business." Afterwards, we talked about a variety of topics for another hour or so. Finally, Lisa said, "Let's have dinner together." I said "OK". We agreed to meet in the dining car later.

At dinner, Lisa sat next to me. She was flirting with me the entire meal. She told me she had a sleeping cabin at the back of the train. When we were finished our meal, she said, "I have a bottle of wine back in my cabin, do you want to share it with me?" I said, "Sure! I'd love to! I'll meet you there in a few minutes." She really seemed interested in making personal contact with me. I wondered how far she would go to get information. Was she willing to sleep with me?

I went into the bathroom to freshen up. Then I went to her cabin. It was very small, barely enough for two people. We could only sit on the bed. There was a curtain or a door to the cabin which she kept open while I was there. We started to drink the wine and talk. We ended up kissing for a little while. She never closed the door to the cabin. She did not mention anything else about the CIA, any job opportunities, or anything else. She did not question me about much of anything at all. I asked her how far she was going on the train. She said 'Portland'. That was still more than 24 hours away. I asked her why she didn't just fly to Portland. "Personal reasons" she answered. Eventually, it got to be very late. I left. I was perplexed by the outcome of events. Later in the night, the train arrived at Grand Forks, and I got off. Lisa did not. I was confused.

At the Grand Forks railway station, I shared a cab ride with another woman who had gotten off the train. Of course, I was wondering whether she was with THEM. The cab stopped at my hotel first. Before I got out, this woman handed me a pamphlet about Jesus and his ministry. I wondered if THEY were trying to communicate with me in some way through this pamphlet. I thought, "THEY must be wondering about my

religious views.” I wondered if some of the surveillance team thought I might be Jesus. I thought I should discourage this view and try to communicate back to them. I read through the pamphlet. It mostly spoke about having a hole in your life that only Jesus could fill. I couldn’t really identify with that need. I circled different parts of the pamphlet that I thought applied to me, and I made some notes on other parts where I had a difference of opinion from the author. I left this pamphlet somewhere where I thought THEY could retrieve it. I started to get the idea that some of the surveillance team must be in support of me as a candidate for recruitment, and others must be against me. They couldn’t decide whether to recruit me or not. I thought some of them might be trying to prove I was crazy, and others might be trying to show I’m just an average person, and still others might be trying to prove I was a genius.

At some point, I started walking around Grand Forks. All day long I walked, possibly for eight or ten hours. I felt the whole time I was being followed. I went into a huge Sporting Goods Store to pick out a pair of binoculars or a scope for my trip to Glacier National Park. There was a guy in the store that seemed to be idling nearby me. I asked him, “Are you from around here?” “No. I’m from Chicago” “What do you do? Are you a hunter?” “No. I’m in the surveillance business.” Hmmm. In the surveillance business! Hmmm. Obviously, my next question should have been, “Are you surveilling me?” But I didn’t ask him that. Instead, I said “What do you think of this scope?” “Looks like a good one to me.” I bought the scope, and left the store. I walked back to the hotel. I wondered if that guy was with THEM. I wondered, before I was in Chicago, I never actually saw anybody following me on the street. Why would I have seen them on this trip? Why would I have seen this guy at the sporting goods store? I thought the CIA was better than that. They should be able to follow you without you knowing it. What was the difference? I wondered if there was a different group of people following me this time. Perhaps?

The next morning, I caught the train for Glacier National Park. It was still more than twelve hours away. For the first few hours, I tried to analyze what was happening to me. I wondered why I would have seen people following me in Chicago. If they weren’t with the CIA, who were they with? I remembered my plea to the congressmen for help. Maybe the congressmen had hired their own investigators. Maybe this new group of people were actually private detectives. Maybe the congressmen had asked the FBI or the CIA about me, and decided to launch their own investigation. They were probably wondering whether I was crazy, or whether what I wrote in my message to them was true. I imagined there might even be some senators on the train with me. Perhaps Lisa wasn’t with the CIA. Maybe she was with these new investigators. Maybe she was just testing me...maybe this new group of investigators were testing me just like the CIA had been testing me earlier.

I went to the dining car to have breakfast and I was seated with three other gentlemen. I was sure they were all evaluating me for the investigation. I thought, “Maybe this new investigation is a collaborative effort. Maybe these were people from different government agencies...the CIA, FBI and Congress too.” I was experiencing another expansion of my delusion. When the waitress came with our check, I decided I wanted to see what would happen if I claimed I had no money. Would they pay for me? I thought,

“They are spending thousands of dollars on this investigation. Surely another \$15 from their expense account won’t matter at all.” I feigned that I was broke. Sure enough, one of the gentlemen paid my portion of the bill without complaint. This just reinforced the idea in my mind that I was correct about everything.

After breakfast, I went to another traincar where there were also a few tables to sit at. At a nearby table, there was a group of people playing cards. I overheard their conversation. It started to seem like they were talking about me. I thought they were CIA agents trying to use subliminal messages to cause a reaction in me. The conversation went something like this:

“Hey, he’s putting on the poker face now!”  
“I bet he doesn’t have anything better to show”  
“He’s going to fold any minute”  
“You don’t have any good cards left, do you?”  
“Are you willing to bet it all?”  
“Look at that! I can’t believe you had a straight!”  
“You’ll never get a good hand like that again”  
“Wait until the next game”  
“The next game, you’re really going to see me make a move”  
“What are the odds you’re going to win at all?”

I thought if Congress was now involved in the investigation, the CIA was in trouble. Perhaps some of the agents admitted drugging me, trying to abduct me, etc. Now the CIA was going to do everything in their power to make me look bad. I wondered what other tricks they would try. I imagined that there was a group of ‘good’ CIA agents who would do the right thing, and there was another group of ‘bad’ CIA agents who would try to manipulate, or eliminate me.

As I sat there, I once again tried to analyze what was happening to me. What was the real reason all these people were involved? How could I be that important? There was something I didn’t know about all this. What was it? I became very agitated. For some reason, I decided that I had to get off the train. I had to change my environment. I decided to get off at the next stop. The train stopped. I had no idea where we had stopped. All I knew is that I wanted to get off the train. I was confused. I couldn’t find my luggage. I didn’t remember which train car my luggage was in. But, I had to get off the train. Right at that moment. If I tried to find my luggage, the train would leave. I had to get off. I asked the porter on the platform, “Do you know where my luggage is?” “No.” I decided to leave my luggage behind. I said to the porter, “I’m leaving my luggage on the train. What is the last stop for this train?” The porter said, “What do you mean?” I said again, “What is the last stop this train makes? Where is it?” He said, “Are you getting off here?” “Yes, I’m getting off here. Tell me what is the last stop for this train!?” I wanted to know what the last stop was so I could call the railroad and have them retrieve my luggage when they cleaned out the train. The whistle was blowing last call. The porter said “Don’t you want your luggage?” I said, “Dammit! Jesus Christ! Just tell me what is the last stop this train makes? Can’t you tell me that? What the hell is the matter with you!” The porter said, “I don’t understand what you mean.” I was getting

frustrated. “The hell with it! I’m leaving!” I walked off the platform. I did not see anyone else getting off the train.

I immediately tried to find a place to stay. I walked a few blocks and found an old hotel called the Roosevelt. I couldn’t believe it, but the price of a room was only \$24 per night. I found out I was in Glasgow, Montana. It was a very small town. I called home and left a message about where I was staying.

I wondered if the CIA would be able to keep up with me. I thought they might somehow have a contact or a representative even out here in this small town. I figured they have contacts EVERYWHERE. I thought they still might try to make contact with me through one of their representatives that lived in this town.

Over the previous four days, I had gotten very little sleep, probably an average of 3 hours per night. This was very unusual for me. I knew I needed some rest. I tried to take a nap in my hotel room, but I could not fall asleep. I went to the local drug store to try to find a sleeping aid. They didn’t have any. I then decided to go get something to eat. I walked to a Dairy Queen nearby. I went in and ordered something that sounded like a pork chop sandwich. What I got was something different. I sat at a table and took a bite. I hated it. I sat there drinking a soda for a few minutes. Some tall guy came in the door and looked right at me. I thought, “This must be the contact person.” I said to him, “Hey! Have a seat.” He sat down right across from me at the same table. I told him the sandwich I had was awful. He recommended a different one. We both went up to the counter and ordered the sandwich he recommended. The new sandwich was great. We then had a conversation that lasted for about 45 minutes. I don’t remember very much about what we discussed, but the entire time, I was trying to figure out whether he was from the CIA, FBI, or Congress. I think I kept talking about what I thought was happening to me. I was communicating my confusion about the whole situation. I must have been behaving strangely, because at one point, he suggested that I might be autistic. He recommended I move to Glasgow. He said I could buy a four bedroom house for only ninety thousand dollars. He also told me that there was a great Barbeque Restaurant down the road. He suggested that I should go there for dinner, and that he and his friends would be there. I soon left to go back to the hotel.

When I got back to my hotel room, I found something very strange and unexpected. On the dresser, there was a copy of part of a letter a girl had written to me over ten years ago. I had met this girl on one of my trips to Italy. She was an American who lived in Mississippi. The copy was just a few sentences excerpted from the letter, but I recognized it immediately. I certainly did not bring this letter with me. I had not been thinking about this girl, or my trip to Italy at all. Why would someone have left this here? Who left it here? How could they have gotten a copy of the letter? Why would they have only copied a few sentences? I was perplexed. I tried to think of reasons why this letter would be important. As I remembered, there was nothing of consequence in the letter. What was the significance of this? I had decided that I didn’t know all the reasons why the surveillance was being conducted. Perhaps this was a clue. Maybe those spies who are in support of me are trying to communicate something to me. Maybe this was the missing piece of the puzzle that I didn’t know?

I tried to understand why this letter would be significant. I hadn't been in communication with this girl for more than ten years. How could the investigation be related to her? Maybe she became a spy for the CIA. Maybe the CIA was following me on my trips to Italy. Maybe she was already some type of operative when I first met her. Maybe she disappeared. Maybe she was working for the Italian intelligence agency. I tried to think of a hundred reasons why she would be important. Maybe THEY think there is some kind of hidden message in this letter. There must be some kind of intelligence problem I didn't know about. I couldn't figure it out. I gave up thinking about it.

I decided to call home. I was using the phone in my hotel room. My dad picked up on the other end. "Hello?" Click. The phone went dead. I blamed THEM. I thought, They're interfering with my phone call! I wasn't sure if they were disconnecting the call here in Montana, or at home in Maryland. A few minutes later, my dad called back. The phone rang but I didn't answer it. After a few minutes, I heard a knock at the door. It was the front desk clerk. I opened the door. She said, "Your Dad is on the phone." She had a cordless phone in her hand and apparently could connect the call to my room with the cordless phone. I said, "Let me talk to him on your phone." She said, "No. Pick up the phone in your room." I said, "My phone is not working correctly. Let me talk to him on your phone. I'll just be a few minutes." She said, "No." "Fine. I won't talk to him at all then." I closed the door. I thought I could try to call him back later.

I needed to relax. I filled the tub in the bathroom with warm water and got in to soak. I tried to clear my mind and decide what was really going on. What was the significance of this letter I found? I started to review everything that had happened to me on my trip. I was thinking about my experience in Chicago. Suddenly I realized that although I thought everyone was following me in Chicago, I did not actually see anyone following me for certain! I suddenly realized that there was a huge difference between reality and what I thought was true. I thought, "My god. Something is wrong with my mind! Something is wrong with my brain! I must have a brain tumor!" This is the only time during my illness when I was not taking medication, and I suspected something was wrong with me. I did not realize that I had a major delusion. I only realized that my perception was faulty in this one particular instance. I decided I needed to get to the hospital right away. I went to the front desk and asked where the hospital was. The clerk arranged for someone to drive me to the town medical center.

When I arrived at the medical center, I went to the sign in desk. There was only one nurse on duty in the entire facility. I said, "I have to get a CAT scan. Something is wrong with my brain. I think I have a brain tumor!" She said, "Are you suicidal? Do you want to hurt yourself or other people?" "No." "I suggest you come back tomorrow. You can speak to a doctor then." "Ok." I walked back to the hotel.

By now, it was probably 10 or eleven o'clock at night. I went to my room. I still could not sleep. I turned on the TV. The weather report said the temperature outside would be very low this night. Maybe in the single digits. It warned about anyone going outside in the cold. I remembered that I needed to call my folks. I didn't want to use the same phone again because I had problems with it earlier. I decided that I needed to use a

phone far away. I went to the front desk again. I asked if someone could take me to a bar on the outskirts of town. There was a young kid sitting in the lobby, maybe about 18 years old. He said he would take me in his truck to such a bar outside of town. We got out there, and I called home from a pay phone at the bar. When I talked to my dad, I wondered if it was really him on the phone, or an impostor. When I was finished, the kid drove me back into town.

I went back to my hotel room. Soon, I got thirsty. I went to the lobby to buy a coke from the vending machine. I took a swig. God! How awful it was! It tasted bitter. I wondered why it was bitter. Maybe THEY had somehow changed the cokes in the machine. Maybe the coke was poisoned. How could they have done that? I noticed there was no one at the front desk. I waited there for maybe fifteen minutes. Nobody came back to the desk. I wondered if they had left the hotel.

I decided that I needed to call my folks again. It was probably two or three o'clock in the morning at home, but I didn't realize that. I normally would not call them so late at night. I needed to get to another phone somewhere outside the hotel. It was cold outside, so I took a blanket with me to keep warm. When I got outside, there was no one around. The streets were empty. I thought, "The town looks deserted." Pretty soon, I believed the town actually was deserted. The truth was, it was so late at night, there was no one on the street. I thought, "Maybe THEY evacuated the town for some reason." After I had walked a few blocks, I started to here a sound like car horns blaring in the distance. This went on for several, maybe ten minutes. I decided to walk in the direction of the noise to see what was going on.

I was now in a residential neighborhood a few blocks from the hotel. I have no idea what time it was. I came across a cat in the road. At first, the cat was very friendly. It came up to me and rubbed against my legs. Then it rolled over onto its back. I reached down to rub its stomach. The cat suddenly hissed at me and scratched my hand. Then, the cat ran away into an open garage nearby. I looked down at my hand and there appeared to be something small, like a splinter, stuck in the fleshy part of my thumb. Suddenly, I thought "This cat must have been trained by the CIA to attack me. It had some kind of dart on its paw. It has stuck me with some kind of poison dart! My God! I better get it out right away!"

I ran up to the nearest house. I knocked on the door. Then I thought, "The town is deserted. There's no one home." I thought, "I have to get this thing out immediately before the poison starts to work! I'll just go inside and find something to cut this thing out of my hand." I tried the door, It was unlocked. I went into the kitchen and started looking through the drawers for a small sharp knife. I didn't immediately find one. I thought, "I'll use a pair of nail clippers. There is probably some nail clippers in the bathroom." I walked out of the kitchen and through the living room into one of the bedrooms. Immediately, I saw two people in bed. A man and a woman.

The man said to me, "Hey! Who are you? What are you doing in my house?" I said, "Oops. I'm sorry. I thought you weren't home. I'll leave right now." He got out of bed and followed me into the living room.

I said, "I didn't think you were home. I just came in to get some nail clippers. I'll leave right now."

"Wait a minute. Who are you?"

"I'm Kurt Snyder. I live near Washington D.C."

"What are you doing here?"

"I came out here on vacation."

"Why are you in our house?"

"I needed some nail clippers. Do you have any nail clippers? I need to get this out of my hand." By this time, the woman had come out of the bedroom too. We were all standing in the living room.

"What's wrong with your hand?"

"There's something stuck in it. I need to get it out right away. Do you have any nail clippers? Please get me some nail clippers!"

"What about some tweezers? Do you want some tweezers?"

"No. I need some nail clippers. Do you have any?"

The man said to his wife, "Can you get a pair of nail clippers?"

She came out with some nail clippers and gave them to me. I no longer saw anything in my hand, but I cut a little piece of skin out of my thumb where I thought the dart had been.

I said, "Thanks. I'll be going now."

The man said, "Wait a minute. Where are you going to go? What are you doing here in Glasgow?"

I said, "I don't know. There was some kind of intelligence problem. I got off the train."

"What kind of intelligence problem?"

"I don't know. That's the problem!" I started to cry uncontrollably.

The man said, "Just calm down. Sit here. We're going to get you some help. Just stay here for a few minutes. I'm going to call someone to come help. Is that OK?"

"Yeah."

I waited there for a little while, crying.

The man said "Everything's going to be OK. We're getting you some help. Would you like something to drink?"

"Ok."

In a few minutes, a police officer arrived. He seemed very nice. He said, "I'm going to take you to the medical center." "Ok." We arrived at the medical center a few minutes later. The same nurse was on duty who I saw earlier that evening. She talked with the officer for a few minutes. Then, she had me lay down on a hospital bed near the check-in desk. She asked me for my parents' phone number. I gave it to her. She soon got them on the phone. I was skeptical as to whether she was really talking to them or some one else. I thought THEY might be able to intercept the phone call. She might actually be talking to some impostors.

The next thing I remember is waking up in a padded room on a mattress lying on the floor. There was wire mesh glass in the windows. I did not remember being moved to this room. The last thing I remember was lying on the hospital bed. I looked out the small window in the entrance door. I didn't recognize anything. I wasn't sure that I was at the medical center anymore. I wondered if somehow THEY had drugged me and

moved me to another location. I could be anywhere! I had one window which looked out on an outdoor space. Across a small field was another wing of the facility. I started to look out this window and scrutinize everything, trying to figure out where I was. There was virtually nothing out there, and certainly no clues to where I was located. I then looked out the window in the door. I could see some items that indicated I was still at a medical facility. But, was it the same facility I came into last night? There was no way I could know.

After maybe one or two hours, I got a visitor. It was the man who's house I went into the previous night. He said, "Hi, Kurt. I'm the man whose house you came into last night. Do you remember me?" I did remember him. I don't recall the rest of our conversation. He left after a few minutes. I started to wonder why he was visiting me. Maybe somehow he was with THEM. How could he be with them? I remembered the advice Joe gave me in New York. Don't make assumptions. I was assuming I went into his house at random, and that he was just an average resident in this town. Maybe that was the wrong assumption. Maybe somehow I was led to his house. Maybe everyone in this town is with THEM. How could that be true? Maybe somehow I wasn't in Montana at all. Maybe I was in a secret town, where EVERYONE works for THEM. How could that be true? I thought I had gotten off the train at random. Maybe I didn't. Maybe somehow they used some kind of psychological manipulation to influence me to get off the train at a specific place. I thought I got off on impulse. Maybe they were using subliminal messages to make me anxious and nervous. Maybe I reacted to these messages by deciding to get off the train. Could that be true?

A nurse brought me some magazines to read. Newsweek, National Geographic, and Time. I started to look through the magazines. In Newsweek, there was an article about how to find a new career. In the article, I suddenly recognized two girls that were my coworkers at a hotel six years earlier. (I saved this magazine. Even now, five years later, these people still seem to look like my former coworkers.) However, in the magazine, they had different names. I thought, how and why would these people be in this magazine? I wondered if the magazine was legitimate. I thought, maybe THEY printed a bogus magazine for me to read. Maybe this is some kind of clue. Maybe this is some type of communication to me. The Newsweek article was about finding a new career. Maybe this is a reference to the recruitment process. Maybe these two girls were working with THEM six years ago. Maybe THEY have been observing me since I was a teenager. Maybe the dream I had about being abducted by the CIA was true. Maybe my whole life since then has been some kind of evaluation for a super secret job. That's what they mean by a new career. Maybe all these experiences are some type of interactive game which is supposed to teach me how to be an agent. Trying to think without making assumptions. Maybe this was all a project by the CIA to see if they could produce a super-agent. Maybe they have been molding me for the past 12 years. At this point the idea that this surveillance project could have been going on for many years seemed very likely to me. I was experiencing another expansion of my delusion.

I looked at the other magazines. The National Geographic had something about Nebraska in it. I thought, maybe I am actually in Nebraska, and not in Montana. How could that be true? I got on the train in Grand Forks, North Dakota. I thought it was an

Amtrak train headed for Montana. Maybe it wasn't an Amtrak train. Maybe it was a special train that the CIA operated. Maybe this train was actually headed for a secret town in Nebraska. Maybe that's where I am now! I decided that I needed to determine where I actually was. I had to get out of this room.

A little while later, a nurse came to the door. I think I had been talking out loud the entire morning. They must have been listening to me.

She said, would you like to get out and see where you are?

I said, "Yes."

She said, "We'll go outside the exit for just a few minutes. Would you like that?"

"Yes."

"You must promise you won't run away. Do you promise not to run away?"

"Yes. I won't run away."

She opened the door and let me out. She said, "Follow me." We walked down the hallway and out an exit door. She said, "See where you are?" I looked around. The medical center was at the edge of town. There was a field stretching off for miles on one side, and the town was on the other side. There was nothing to indicate what state we were in. I thought, I need to investigate this further. I started to walk away from the facility. The nurse said, "Wait. Where are you going? You said you wouldn't run away! You promised me you wouldn't run away!" I ignored her. Of course, I wasn't running away....I was walking away! The nurse ran back to the hospital. I walked a few blocks. There was nothing to indicate where the town was actually located. Soon, a police car pulled up beside me and an officer got out. He said, "We have to go back to the hospital. Get in the car." "Ok." I got in the car and we went back to the hospital. They put me back in the same room.

After perhaps half an hour, I started hearing car horns again. They started out softly, but quickly became very loud. It sounded like the noise was coming from outside the room, from somewhere outside the building. This noise did not sound like just a few cars, it sounded like a thousand cars blaring their horns all at once. It was a very disturbing sound. I wondered why so many cars would be blaring their horns. I started to think they were blowing their horns for me. "A lot of people must know THEY are keeping me here. They're blowing their horns to get me released." The sound went on for at least fifteen minutes, maybe half an hour. I thought, "I have to get out of here, or there's going to be a riot." I started to look at the window which led to the outside. It was the type that had wire mesh imbedded in the glass. I thought I could break the glass, but I knew there was no way I could cut through the wire before they stopped me.

I decided I would wait for an opportunity to escape when they opened the door again. In a little while, the nurse came to the door for some reason. When she opened it, I pushed my way past her and ran out of the hospital. The sound of the car horns had already stopped. Once outside, I did not notice that there weren't a thousand cars out there. I decided to head back to my hotel. Eventually, a police officer found me again. I ran away. He followed me. At first, I was running as fast as I could, but then I thought, "I just have to run a little bit faster than him." I slowed down and ran just fast enough to stay ten feet in front of the officer. He got tired really fast. He started to walk. Then, I started to walk. He said, "Where are you going?" "I'm going to the Roosevelt" He said,

“You don’t need to go there. What do you need there?” “I just need to get to the Roosevelt.” For some reason, I stopped, and he caught up with me. He said, “We can do this the easy way, or the hard way...which way do you want it?” I didn’t know what he was talking about. I said, “Ok. The hard way.” He put the handcuffs on me, but not too tight. Then, he led me back to his car and took me back to the hospital.

Once I was back at the hospital, the nurse told me, “Your parents are coming here tomorrow.” “Ok”

Eventually, some mental health worker came in to talk to me. She started to ask me a bunch of questions.

“What is your name?”

“Kurt Snyder”

“Who is President of the United States”

“Bill Clinton.”

“Why are you here?”

“I don’t know.”

“Where do you think you are?”

“Last time I checked, I was in Montana, but I’m not sure where we are exactly.”

“What were you doing last night?”

“I was walking around the town.”

“How did you get here?”

“I don’t know. They brought me to the medical center.”

“Why did they bring you to the medical center?”

“They said they were getting me some help.”

“Do you remember that you went into someone’s house? Why did you go into the house?”

“I was walking outside. I got scratched by a cat. When I looked at my hand, there was something in it. I had to get it out. I didn’t think they were home.”

“Are you hearing voices when there is no one there?”

“No.”

“Do you think you have any special powers that no one else has?”

“No.”

“Do you think you know anything that no one else knows?”

“No.”

“Do you want to hurt yourself or other people?”

“No.”

“Do you see things that other people don’t see?”

“No.”

“You ran away from the hospital earlier. You told the nurse you wouldn’t run away. Why did you run away?”

“I didn’t run away...I walked away”

The next day, my parents arrived. I wondered why they had come. They visited me for a few minutes. Maybe ten at the most.

The staff at the medical center asked me to sign an agreement saying that I would return to Maryland with my parents to be evaluated at a psychiatric facility. I signed it. I thought, "This must be one more step in the recruitment process."

After another day or two, my parents took me back to Maryland. They had booked an airline flight for our trip. Upon arrival in Maryland, we went immediately to Sheppard Pratt Hospital, where I was admitted as an inpatient. They signed me in as a voluntary admission. This meant that I would have to be released within 72 hours if I requested it. At my request, they also gave me a CAT scan. The scan came back negative for any irregularities.

After being in the mental ward for one day, I thought "All these people are crazy! I don't belong here!" I requested that they release me. In the meantime, I met with several doctors. One of the doctors wanted to prescribe an anti-psychotic medication. I told them, "I'm not going to take that stuff!" I asked him "What will that do to a normal person?" He didn't have any information on those effects. I decided "There's no way I'm going to take that. Who knows what it will do to me!?" I was released from the hospital. My parents had the prescription filled, and asked me to take the medication, but I never took it. I merely pretended to take it for their benefit. However, even without the medication, the symptoms of psychosis decreased over the next two weeks.

I still had almost two weeks of value left on my Rail Pass. I told my parents I wanted to go skiing in Vermont. I don't know why, but they agreed to let me go as long as my father went along too. We took the train from Baltimore up to Rutland, VT. We went skiing for two days, then we returned.

I was still wondering about surveillance, the FBI, the CIA, and now Congress. I didn't have any perspective on why I was admitted to the hospital. However, I kept thinking about my perception that people were following me in Chicago. I knew something was wrong with that. I decided I needed to do a test. I would go somewhere where I knew most of the people must be completely random strangers. I would then make a note every time I thought I saw one of THEM. I decided to go to Manhattan. I took the morning train. I walked out of the train station and walked a few blocks to a park. I thought, almost everyone here will be a complete stranger that has absolutely nothing to do with me. I started making notes as I saw people walk by. I came up with different symbols to correspond to different feelings. If I felt a person was one of them, I would make a certain symbol on my note pad. If I thought they were a random stranger, I would make another note. If I was just suspicious of them, I would make a different mark. I sat on a bench for about half an hour, enough time for more than a hundred people to walk by. I compared my notes. I thought more than half the people were with THEM. Another quarter of the people were labeled 'suspicious'. I thought this proved to me that I had some kind of perceptual problem. However, I didn't disbelieve my delusions, I simply thought I had become conditioned to expect that people were with THEM. I took this into consideration. I would try to better evaluate my assumptions in the future when I thought someone was with THEM.

## The Agency

Sometime in April 2000, I decided to connect to the Internet again. I had not made an internet connection since last August. I was worried THEY would do something to my computer to destroy any evidence that they had been tracking my online activities. I still had the opinion that I could one day uncover their Trojan horse programs if I only learned enough about computer security. I decided that if something happened to my computer, I could use the copied hard drives I had saved in my basement. I connected to the Internet for several hours. Then, I logged off. The next day, I started to use my computer for some other task. It booted up to a blue screen, not the windows desktop. I tried to reboot several times. Each time the boot process became shorter and shorter. Finally, It would not even load the BIOS. It would complete the POST test but then all I got was a black screen. I thought “Great! Just what I expected. I connected to the Internet and THEY trashed my computer!” I then thought, I’ll just use my backup hard drives. I installed one of the drives and found that it was blank. I installed the other drive and found that it too was blank. There was nothing on either of my backup disks. “Damn!”

By June 2000, I decided I needed to go to work. I had given up my handyman business. I had not done any real work for six months or more. I thought I could go to work for a temporary employment agency. I decided to call temporary agencies in Washington D.C. I thought they would be able to provide me with work everyday. I called several agencies in Washington and I generally had to leave voice messages for all of them. Soon after, I received a call from a temporary agency, but it was not one of the agencies that I had called. The name of the agency did not match with the ones I had called. This agency wanted me to come for an interview the next day. I was very suspicious, but I was also intrigued. I wondered whether the agency was run by the CIA. I went for the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, they offered me work that same day.

My first job for the temp agency was at a communications company. There was two of us from the agency working at stuffing envelopes for two days. The other worker, Jeff, lived in DC. We talked a lot while we were stuffing envelopes. Jeff said to me, “How long have you been working for the Company?”

“This is my first day. How long have you been working for them?”

“A few years. Do you speak any foreign languages?”

“I speak some French and Italian.”

“You’ll move up quick. They have work to do all over the world”

“Really? Hmmm. How many employees do they have?”

“I don’t know really, but here in Washington, they have agents all over the city. Hundreds.”

Hmm. Agents. Who was he talking about? A temp agency, or the CIA?

At about this time, I started to become very sensitive to noises in my environment. I started to become conscious and acutely aware of many everyday sounds that I would normally have ignored. Sounds like car horns, people sneezing, coughing, machinery rattling, fan motors, and other noises that are normally considered to be background

noises became very disturbing to me. I could not ignore them. The same thing occurred with gestures. I became very aware of people touching their noses, rubbing their chin, running their fingers through their hair, wiping their nose, and scratching themselves. I couldn't ignore them. They caught my attention more than any other stimuli. They began to seem unnatural to me. It seemed as if people were intentionally making these sounds and gestures for some purpose. They seemed to have some special meaning, but I could never quite figure out what that meaning was.

A few days later, the temp agency had assigned me to work at a prestigious private school. I arrived at the school at about 9am. I met with my contact person, a woman, to discuss the day's work. The first task she gave me to do involved a box filled with hundreds of envelopes that were pre-packaged to be mailed out to the student body's parents. This woman also had a list of several dozen names whose envelopes were to be removed from the mailing. The problem was, none of the envelopes were in sorted order. They were unsorted. She wanted me to find and remove the envelopes for people whose names were on the list. Apparently, the school used a mailing service like Mail Boxes Etc., instead of taking them directly to the post office. A representative from the mailing service was scheduled to come by at 9:30 to pick up the mailing. This woman said that the mailing had to go out that day. The courier would only stop by once to pick up the mailing. It was absolutely necessary that the mailing go out that day. It was also absolutely necessary that all the envelopes corresponding to the names on the list be removed from the mailing. There was not enough time to complete the task before the courier picked up the mailing. I told her this. She was insistent that it be completed. She also insisted that the mailing go out that day. Then she left the office. The courier came on time at 9:30, but not all the envelopes had been removed from the mailing. I made a decision. I quickly read what was in the envelopes and decided that sending out the mailing would do no harm. I sent it out with the listed names included. The woman came back to the office and was furious with me that I had sent out the mailing. I thought, "I warned her that there was not enough time. It's not my problem." At the same time, I wondered if this was another test arranged by the CIA to see how I would operate when given conflicting or unreasonable instructions.

The following day, I was sent to another location. This time, it was an information technologies consulting firm. I arrived early and was shown to a cubicle. I was told my job was to answer the phone for one of the vice-presidents of the company. I sat there for two hours without a single phone call. I asked my contact person what I should do. He said, "Answer the phone when it rings." In the next two hours, I received two phone calls. I felt like I was useless. Surely this guy could answer his own phone. All I did was forward the calls to his extension. What was the point of me being there? Was this all part of some kind of mind game? The rest of the day, I did virtually nothing productive. Maybe THEY were testing my patience.

For the next two weeks, I was sent to an all-girls-school called the National Cathedral School, located on the grounds of the National Cathedral. I was assigned to do data entry. This job went very well. Then, I was reassigned to work for the National Academy of Sciences on something called the 'Federal Demonstration Project'. The first task on this assignment was to assemble some 3-ring binders containing documentation

for a conference that was to be held the following week. I looked at the documentation that we were putting into the binders, and the various sections did not seem to be related to one another. I became very suspicious about this task. Was there really a conference going on? Why did the documentation seem to be so diverse? What was this conference about? Of course, I could have simply asked what the conference was about, but I did not think to do this.

Also working with me that day was another temporary employee--Juan. He was originally from Brazil. He had an engineering degree from CalTech. He said he had come to DC to take this job. I thought, "You have an engineering degree from a prestigious university and you came all the way to the east coast to take this job as a temporary worker? That just didn't make any sense to me." I thought, "Maybe there is something more to this job than I thought. Why would someone give up much better opportunities for a temporary job? There must be something more to this work than I can see. Perhaps he is one of the people investigating me. Who would he be working for? The CIA, the FBI, Congress?"

The following week, the conference was held. I was assigned to sit at the sign-in desk where we would give each attendee a binder and direct them to various meeting rooms. Something very strange began to happen to my mind. I started to think that the "Federal Demonstration Project" was actually a carefully planned event designed to demonstrate something about me to all the agencies who had been surveilling me. I thought all the attendees were representatives from the FBI, CIA, Congress, and Iridium. They were trying to demonstrate once and for all that I was either crazy, or normal. I was experiencing the effects of personalization again. I thought the people passing by the sign-in desk were all the people who had been following me over the years. The strangest thing is that I began to believe that I recognized all these people, even though I did not recognize them at all. There was a strange duality to my thoughts. In one respect, I thought these were people I had seen following me, but I did not recognize their faces. I thought some of the people who were following me were passing by the desk in disguise, some of them were not, and some of them were strangers I had never seen before. I thought this "Federal Demonstration Project" was designed to demonstrate my reaction to each of the people passing the desk.

During the time that I was sitting at the desk, Juan was sitting next to me. He said several times, "What do you think about this conference?" I said, "It doesn't seem like there is any real point to it. I'm not sure what they are trying to achieve." He said, "I'm just as confused as you. I don't know what I'm doing here." While we sat at the desk, I started to overhear a conversation going on behind me between some other workers. This is part of what I heard:

"What do you think he's thinking about?"

"Who cares."

"If he doesn't straighten up, I'm going to go over and smack him around."

"You think he's getting scared?"

"Yeah, probably...he's a real wussy boy."

"He's wondering what the hell is going on. He doesn't know"

“Do you think he knows anybody?”

“I don’t know. I don’t care. He’s going to be eliminated anyway.”

I thought they were talking about me. I decided to ignore them. I didn’t listen to them anymore. A while later, I went to the bathroom. Juan came in. He said, “What do you think about what those guys are saying?” I said, “I just ignore them.” “Good. That’s good. I don’t think I want to work here anymore. I think I’m beginning to hate this job.”

I started to think, “It doesn’t really matter what I do here today. There is no point to the job I was given to do.” I became very irate about being tested once again. I started to become rude to the people coming up to the desk.

That evening, as I was driving home, I heard some new songs on the radio. I wondered if the CIA was transmitting the songs. I wondered if the songs were written specifically for me. I thought they were trying to use psychological manipulation on me again. I think these thoughts were the effects of personalization again. I have found that many schizophrenics often interpret random stimuli to have some personal significance for themselves.

I started to wonder why THEY would go through so much trouble, staging a “conference” just for the purpose of evaluating me. I came up with a theory why they would do that. I decided that the surveillance must have been going on since I was a teenager. Probably it was conducted by the CIA. Maybe it was a top secret project to see how they could manipulate someone over time. When I sent my message to the Congressmen, they started to investigate. Maybe they were able to find out that the CIA and/or the FBI had been following me for years, but they couldn’t find out the details of the project. So they decided to launch their own investigation. The CIA told the Congressmen that I was just paranoid. The Congressmen were skeptical. The Congressmen must have arranged the “Federal Demonstration Project” to test me themselves.

As I was driving home, I became more disorganized. I started to make wrong turns on my way home. I started to think, “Why did I make that turn? Why did I turn that way?” I wondered if somehow the CIA was manipulating me. I came up with a theory on how they could be manipulating me. I believe I was experiencing another trait of schizophrenics that I call post-belief-rationalization. This happens when you believe an idea first, then develop a rationale afterwards for validating the belief. I had done this many times during my illness. I started to believe the CIA was manipulating me. Then, I came up with a rationale for how it could be true. I thought that if they had been following me for years, they could have conditioned me to respond to certain stimuli in certain ways. I imagined that they had been transmitting subliminal messages through my car radio for years. Perhaps every time I turned right, they would transmit a sound that was nearly inaudible. This would be a sound that you might ignore while listening to the radio, but your sub-conscious mind would respond to it. They would transmit this subliminal sound every time I turned right. They would transmit a different sound every time I turned left. After hearing these subliminal sounds several thousand times, I would be conditioned to turn right or left upon hearing the sound. I would probably turn right or

left without even thinking about it. “This must be what is happening to me. I’m making these wrong turns because they are manipulating me through the radio.” I started to believe this. I turned off the radio. But then I had the thought that there might be a speaker hidden somewhere in my car that could produce the sounds even when the radio was off. I decided that I would not be manipulated. How could I escape their control? I would drive a partially random route home. I didn’t want to drive a route THEY decided for me. I would drive straight ahead on every street, except that every time the minutes of my dashboard clock changed to 1,3,5,or 7, I would make a turn in the direction of home, or I would continue going straight ahead. It took me a LONG time to get home this way. In some cases, I ended up at a dead end street, and I had to turn around. But I thought “At least I wasn’t under THEIR control anymore.”

## Another Admission

I was becoming more and more psychotic. After I got home, my parents started to suspect that something was wrong with me again. They called my psychiatrist. My psychiatrist told them to take me to the emergency room the next morning, and they could admit me to the mental hospital.

While we were eating dinner, my mom introduced us to some funny looking exotic pears. They were very different from the average pear. I thought to myself, “Maybe they are the result of genetic engineering.” Then I thought, “They are so strange. I didn’t expect they would be able to manipulate genes that way for many years to come.” Suddenly I thought, “Maybe I’m twenty years in the future! Maybe it is actually 2025. Somehow I’m in the future!” I wondered why I hadn’t aged at all. I wondered why my parents hadn’t aged at all. Why don’t I remember any of the previous twenty years? These thoughts did not make me disbelieve the idea that I was in the future, they just made me confused. I thought, “Maybe my parents have been cloned. Maybe these are impostors.” I started to look for signs on my folks that would indicate they were not actually my parents. I tried to look for birthmarks, or a mole, or something else that would be different even on a clone. I had never looked for these things on my parents before, so even if I found something like that, I wouldn’t have known whether my original parents had those marks or not. I studied them very closely for more than half an hour. Finally, I decided that I wasn’t in the future—They must be my real parents!

That night, for some reason, I became very fearful that the CIA was going to break into the house and kill my parents. I would be blamed for it. I stayed awake all night. Sometime during the night, I started to see a strange glowing light. I was lying on the bed, and the light appeared to be projected against the corner of the room where the walls and ceiling meet. It was a warm light with several different colors of the rainbow. There was a bright center colored purple, with orange light diffused around it, and then towards the edges it was yellow. The colors changed gradually to all the colors of the rainbow. I tried to find what was projecting the light onto the ceiling, but I could not find the source of the glow.

As I lay there in bed I started thinking about my ideas on fractals. I thought about iteration and infinity. Then, I started to think about thought itself. I started to examine my thoughts and how one thought leads to another thought. Thought seemed to be like a fractal. One thought iterates another thought. I started to remember my ideas about subliminal messages sent by the CIA through my radio and how they might influence my thoughts. I tried to understand what forces in my mind were influencing my thoughts at that exact minute. It seemed to me that somehow the glowing light I saw was responding to my thoughts. I had the idea that somehow the CIA was trying to influence my thoughts at that moment through the glowing light. I started to think about feedback loops and the looping that takes place in computer programs. I tried again to focus only on my thoughts and how they seemed to emerge from my subconscious. I was concentrating very hard. I began to ignore the glowing light and all other stimuli from

the external world. I was focused on my internal thoughts alone. I was trying to see how the subconscious mind influences thinking. Suddenly, I experienced something very strange. I cannot begin to describe it adequately. This was the only time I had experienced this in my entire life. I was trying to shut off the influence one thought had on the next thought. I was trying to break that chain reaction that is your stream of consciousness. First, I had a feeling of being overwhelmed by my own thoughts. This was accompanied by a strange noise. Then, it seemed like I experienced two separate distinct thoughts simultaneously. They merged together. Finally, I immediately experienced a total absence of thought for one or two seconds. This was a very subjective experience--I have no other words to describe it objectively. It felt like my mind was not responding to any stimuli whatsoever, either external or internal. I actually worried later whether I had experienced brain damage.

In the morning, we left for the emergency room. The hospital we were going to was located an hour away. This was the hospital that was closest to the mental institution. On the way there, we stopped at a McDonald's to get something to eat. I saw a man at the counter moving very slowly. I wondered why he was moving so slowly. I thought, "My god! Time has slowed down! What have I done to make time slow down? Maybe what happened to my mind last night has influenced the world somehow." We left the McDonald's and I noticed that everything seemed to be operating at normal speed. However, I continued to believe that time had slowed down for the rest of the world. Somehow, we were caught in a bubble where time was flowing normally, but the rest of the world must be in this horrible predicament, where time had slowed down. I imagined that the entire world was moving in slow motion, and it was my fault. I also imagined that somehow, the whole world knew it was my fault.

When we arrived at the hospital, they put me in an isolation room and locked the door. I wondered what they were going to do with me. I thought, "Some people might think I was god, since I had caused time to slow down." I didn't know how to reverse the process. What could I do? I thought some Christians, believing Jesus was god, would think I was Jesus. What would those people do with me? I thought they might want to crucify me, and test whether or not I was really Jesus. Of course, I knew I couldn't pass this test! I was getting really nervous and anxious. Then I thought, "I really don't know for sure what they are going to do with me. I don't have enough information." There was a male nurse sitting outside the door, guarding me. I thought, he should know more than me. I asked him, "What should I do?" "Relax." He said. I then asked him, "What would you do if you were me?" "Relax!" "Ok. I'll try to relax." But I couldn't relax. I had to escape.

I started to examine the walls of this room. They were all made of drywall. I thought, "I can break through this stuff." I started to hit the wall with my fist as hard as I could. The first place I hit must have been a stud, because I didn't make a dent. The nurse called some other people immediately. Several men came into the room and strapped me to a hospital bed. After they were gone, I easily got out of the straps. The men came back. One of them said, "We keep putting it on, but you keep taking it off! Don't take it off this time!" I didn't realize he was talking about the straps. I thought he was talking about the space-time continuum. Somehow they were fixing the time distortion, but somehow I

kept causing it to re-occur. I didn't know how to stop doing it. I said, "I haven't figured that out yet!"

After a few minutes, they came and took me in an ambulance to the mental hospital, which was located nearby. I spent several days there. In the meantime, my mom called the temporary agency and told them I was in the hospital. After I got out of the hospital, I went to report to the temp agency for work....and they fired me.

I decided I still needed to work, so I applied for jobs closer to Annapolis. I got a job at City Dock Coffee, on Maryland Avenue in downtown Annapolis. I worked there for a total of five days until they fired me. I don't know exactly why they fired me. I found that I had problems making easy change for people. On one of the days, my supervisor reported that \$40 was missing from the drawer. I actually think she stole it herself to get me fired.

## Taking the Medicine

My parents again began to notice something was wrong with me, and took me for an emergency appointment with the psychiatrist. I had not been taking the medication he prescribed. I think he knew this was the truth. He insisted that I take the medication—a type of atypical antipsychotic called Geodon. Although I previously had fears about taking the medication, I thought that thousands of people had been involved in following me and observing me, and I thought it was about time they gave up. I thought if I took the medication, then THEY would be convinced that I was crazy, and THEY would stop following me. Of course, this would probably ruin my chances for ever being recruited into the CIA. But I thought it was for the greater good of everyone. In August, I started to take the medication.

The medication did not work immediately. It did prevent the recurrence of any major psychotic episodes, but I continued to believe my delusions for many months afterwards.

Near the end of September 2000, I developed a deep depression. This was the lowest point of my life. I had no mental energy whatsoever. I laid in bed for most of the day for several weeks. In October 2000, I tried to go out into the yard to rake leaves. I could not even rake up leaves within a small radius of 2 meters. Any physical action seemed to require a huge amount of mental energy which I didn't have. I began to dread facing the rest of my life. I could not imagine living my entire life in this state. Part of this depression was obviously due to a chemical imbalance, but I also believe some of it was due to realistic ideation. A few months earlier, I had thought I was a candidate for a fantastic job with the CIA. I realized that now, I would never be given that opportunity. I also realized that I had failed to develop any mathematical theory of fractals, which had been my dream for ten years. I was not a genius. Probably, I would never develop such a theory. I had wasted ten years of my life thinking about it. I began to understand that I had been placed in a mental institution due to mental problems. I had not done any significant productive work for nine months. In my depressed state, I could not imagine that I would ever be able to do any productive work again. I felt inadequate for life. I believed that I would never again achieve anything significant. I thought my best years were behind me. I also began to think that I would probably never get married. After all, who would marry a crazy man? Probably the first time my date found out I was schizophrenic, that would be the last time I saw her. I felt I had no future. I spent several months doing absolutely nothing.

I continued taking antipsychotic medication. Slowly, very slowly, I began to have insight into my mental illness. At first, I simply decided that I had had poor judgment about some things. I should not have gone into that house in Montana. That was poor judgment. Gradually, as time passed, I began to see that I not only had poor judgment, but my perception and thinking was faulty. The cat that scratched me was not sent by the CIA. I began to understand that the horns I heard were not real, that the glowing light I saw did not exist. These realizations came slowly over a period of two to three years. The longer I had a particular delusion, the more time was required for me to let go of it.

A good friend of mine began to encourage me to become an Oracle Database Administrator. I had written a database application for Woody to keep track of his mutual funds. I thought I might be able to apply some of this knowledge to learning Oracle. By January 2001, my depression had abated and I decided I needed to do something with my life. Perhaps becoming an Oracle Database Administrator was something I could do. The only problem with my plan was that Oracle classes were very expensive. A one week class cost \$2500. I had no money. I had no working computer. My mom was skeptical that I could succeed in this career. However, Woody was not. After talking with Woody one day, he told me he would buy me a computer, and pay for the first Oracle class I took. I accepted his gift and I was extremely grateful. I took my first Oracle class the following month and I passed the first certification exam. After this success, my parents decided to pay for the remaining classes.

In general, these classes were very difficult. The instructor presented much more information than I could absorb during the class. I developed a pattern where I would take a class, and then I would study independently for one or two months before taking the certification exam. Eventually, I completed all the courses and I passed all the exams –I was certified as an Oracle Database Administrator.

Looking back at my behavior, I think my core personality did not change while I was mentally ill. If I was someone else, I might have reacted violently to some of the perceived incidents. For instance, when I thought people were following me, I could have turned on them and attacked them. Or, if I was a fearful person, I might have decided to carry a gun. However, I am not a violent person, I am not an aggressive person, nor am I a fearful person (in general). I think someone with a history of violence would become violent if they were mentally ill. Someone who is not violent probably would not become violent.

Sometime during the spring of 2001, I decided that I wanted to get involved in community service. The best way I knew how to do this was to become a member of my local Fire Department. So, in April of 2001, I joined the Fire Department. I went for Fire Fighter training that summer. It was very difficult for me. However, I graduated with 12 other cadets out of an original class of 28 people. After this, I started to volunteer as a firefighter. I found that I was not a good responder. When we got an emergency call, I was always the last person ready to go. I went to a fire once and I found that I was wondering what to do all the time. I did not have good instincts for emergencies. I decided I should not be a firefighter. Instead, I became an administrative member of the department. I am now the building and grounds committee chairperson. I am also chairperson of the budget and finance committee, and I am Vice-President on the Board of Directors. I find that I can do these jobs well, and for the most part, no one else wants to do them.

In August of 2002, I was ready to go back to work full-time. All of my symptoms of schizophrenia were under control with the help of medication. My mental state had been stable for more than a year. I started to tell people that I was looking for a job. My dad met Rudy at the bagel shop one day and he happened to mention that I was looking for a

job as an Oracle Database Administrator. Coincidentally, Woody had already been talking to Rudy about job opportunities for me as a Database Administrator. Rudy told my Dad, "I think my wife needs an Oracle Database Administrator at her office." I called his wife, and she arranged an interview for me. I was hired shortly after the interview.

During my first year in this job, I would occasionally get severe anxiety, perhaps once a month. At these times, I couldn't function at work and I would have to go home. I made my boss aware that I was schizophrenic, and she was very understanding when I had to leave. Beginning in the second year, I started to have another type of anxiety. I would get this anxiety almost every morning, and it would last for several hours. It made me restless and nervous. I couldn't sit still. The anxiety was very intense. This anxiety was like nothing else I had ever experienced in my life, and it was by far the worst feeling I ever had. It had a much different quality than the common anxiety most normal people experience. I wanted to escape from existence, to leave this experience behind. At times, I would have preferred to die instead of continuing to experience this feeling. It was awful. Horrible. I could not work effectively at my job. However, I did not leave work, because I was having these attacks every day. I certainly couldn't take every day off. My doctor said I was experiencing akathisia, a side effect of the anti-psychotic medication. He gradually switched me to a different anti-psychotic medication, and this anxiety went away within two months.

The more I understood my illness, the more ashamed I became of myself. It took a long time to admit that I had been mentally ill and that I have a mental illness. At first, I wanted to hide this fact from other people. Eventually, though, I decided that I wouldn't have done anything differently in my life, and so I couldn't blame myself for my illness. Finally, I accepted it and could talk to other people about it.

Looking back at some of my experiences, I can now re-evaluate some of them with a clearer mind. When I found the letter in my hotel room, when I heard a thousand car horns in Montana, and when I saw the glowing light at my home in Maryland, these were definitely hallucinations. There is no other logical explanation for them. But, they were not simply part of my 'imagination' in the usual sense of the word. I did not imagine these events in the same way you might imagine you are on a desert island, or you might imagine you are flying in the sky. These events were real to me, just as this text you are reading seems real to you now. These events were not 'ideas' in my mind. When they occurred, I had absolutely no conscious thoughts about them prior to their occurrence. They were unexpected and surprising. And they seemed real. Absolutely real. In the case of the letter I found in my hotel room, I picked up the letter with my hands, I crumpled it up, and I threw it in the trash can. When I heard a thousand car horns, I heard them as if they existed in the real world. When I saw the glowing light, it existed in one corner of the room, and it did not move when I moved my eyes to another part of the room. It was as if there was actually a light source emitting the light. If these events were a reality invented by my brain, then there was a very sophisticated neural process going on in my head to generate them. These experiences were produced by some part of my brain that had never been activated before.

I cannot say if any of the other events I experienced were hallucinations. For instance, some of the conversations or voices I overheard may or may not have been real. I have no basis for evaluating the truth about these other events.

I have been at the same job now for three years. It is going very well. I have been able to do everything that has been asked of me. Several people at work know that I am schizophrenic (because I have told them), and they hold this information in confidence. I think the rest of my co-workers would never suspect that I ever had a mental problem.

I want to thank all of my friends and family for staying close to me during my illness. No one ever abandoned me. This was truly a blessing. I am grateful to know so many wonderful people. Special thanks go to Mom, Dad, Alex, Patrick, Woody and Judy. You're the greatest!

Lastly, I have found that the longer I take psychiatric medication, the better it works. I now have virtually no symptoms of mental illness whatsoever. I no longer feel or think that people are watching me or following me. In public places, I no longer feel exposed. Security cameras do not bother me. Every month, I continue to notice small improvements in my psychological and emotional state. With the help of medication, I hope to experience a normal existence for the rest of my life. Unfortunately, not every schizophrenic person responds favorably to medication. Let's hold out hope for these people that better medications will be invented some day.

## Several Years Later – Recent update

The previous sections of this manuscript were written over five years ago. This section is what I hope to be an update on my experiences over the last four years, and is prompted by some recent experiences I have had over the last month. The following section (titled Schizophrenic thinking) is my personal analysis of schizophrenic thought patterns that I have noticed in myself. They are presented in the hope that someone else with schizophrenia will become aware of the same patterns within themselves, and thus be convinced to seek permanent treatment.

Generally, I have experienced little to no symptoms since 2001, however, over the last few recent years I have occasionally had an occurrence of minor symptoms once or twice per year, over a period of a few days or a week. Usually these would be in the form of minor paranoid thoughts that were distracting, but I was able to dismiss them without much effort. For instance, I might be driving in the car and I would wonder whether someone was following me, but the thought had very little permanence, and I would understand that it was irrational and it would evaporate within 15 or 20 seconds. These thoughts might occur to someone without schizophrenia, however, if I would have these thoughts more than once per week, it seemed to me to be a marker of schizophrenic thinking, and the irrational part of my mind was becoming stronger. When I would inform my doctor about these thoughts, he normally prescribed a slight increase in my medication. After a brief period of time on the new dosage, the thoughts would stop. This reinforced my belief that I do in fact have schizophrenia, because the medication (intended for schizophrenics) would improve my thought processes (by eliminating irrational thinking). This pattern of recurrence of symptoms and adjusting the dosage of my medication paired with subsequent diminishment of symptoms has taken place three or four times over the past four years.

For the most part, the effectiveness of the medication has been superb. For the vast majority of the time since my psychotic episodes, I have had no symptoms, except for the rare occasions I've just described. The occasional flare up of minor symptoms has been brought under control with adjustment of medication. On a severity scale of 0 to 100, with 100 being the most severe symptoms I ever experienced, and 0 being no mental illness whatsoever, I would rate the severity of these occasional symptoms as between 10 and 15 points.

But even at that rating, the symptoms would be fleeting. I was able to recognize the truth, and then they were gone. That is, until this month.

In the past month, I have experienced symptoms on a scale of 20-30 points, with mild paranoia, temporary disorganization, strong anxiety, and permanence of a delusion, that I cannot dismiss even as I write this.

What follows next is a description of events that led to this recent revival, how I reacted to these events, and how I decided to cope with it.

When I was the most severely ill back in the spring and summer of the year 2000, I had several experiences when I was overhearing conversations of other people. Their conversations seemed to emphasize certain words that I could not ignore. It seemed as if they were accentuating these words to get my attention. The perception of these words caused some kind of anxiety to occur in me. Also, the conversations I heard somehow seemed unreal, or distorted, with the emphasis being placed on words in a strange way. The words seemed to have some kind of special significance for me alone. I didn't believe these people were participating in a normal conversation. It was THEM. THEY were trying to unsettle me. I believed the people speaking these words were in some way carrying out a psychological attack on me. It fueled my delusions that people were following me everywhere. Until one month ago, it had been over 9 years since I've had any experience like that.

In the present, I am currently in school studying computer science at the University of Maryland. Often, I like to do my studying at local coffee shops or bookstores. Approximately one month ago I was studying for my classes when I became aware of some person or persons talking. I could not ignore their words. They seemed to be emphasizing certain words or phrases, like 'Russia', 'France' and maybe 'CIA' or 'FBI' and I overheard the phrase 'They're following me'. Other than this, I don't even remember exactly what they were saying, but these words seemed to stand out. I tried to ignore their words and focus on my studies, but I couldn't. My perception of their 'conversation' was exactly like my experiences years ago when I was severely ill. It occurred to me that this was some sort of test to see if I was sensitive to certain words or phrases. This is the delusion that I have even now. I know it is a delusion because I have no evidence to support my conclusion that this was a test. I am believing something without absolutely any proof or evidence. All I can be sure of is that I was overhearing someone talking. Well, actually, I can't even be sure of that. Because I never looked at the people who were talking. I was trying concentrate on my studies, and trying at the same time to suppress my emotional reaction to these words. Later, I would wonder whether in fact I was hearing voices. I started to question whether what I heard was real. In any case, I was reacting negatively to what I was hearing, whether real or not.

Over the past 9 years, there have been times when I have overheard hearing people mention the FBI or CIA, Russia, etc. I even have a friend who works with the FBI, and have seen him several times, but he doesn't make me paranoid. Why should I have this reaction to these words now?

I couldn't help thinking that this was a test. THEY were following me again. I started having all the delusional thoughts I had years ago. THEY were tapping my phone, THEY were monitoring my cell phone calls, THEY put a microphone in my car. THEY were following me everywhere. In the next week, I had more than 40 distinct delusional thoughts. However, I was able to dismiss all of them, except the first. (That I was being tested).

Again, I know this is a delusion because I have absolutely no evidence to conclude that. My conclusion is based solely on intuition, which is often wrong.

I started thinking, ‘Why would they come back after ten years?’ I have no good reason to answer this.

Even though I was able to contain my initial delusion and keep it from expanding, I started to experience other symptoms which I have not had for years. I started to become suspicious of people I saw at random. I also became indecisive and disorganized. During a conversation with a friend, I started to become acutely aware of certain gestures she was making, gestures which normally should be ignored. The gestures seemed to have some special meaning. I realized at the time that this was abnormal. My perceptual filter was malfunctioning.

Approximately one month after this, I was at the bookstore cafe again, trying to study, and again I heard two people talking nearby, I believe a man and a woman. This time the conversation seemed relatively normal, although I was trying my best NOT to listen. I heard the words ‘CIA’ and ‘FBI’. It seemed the man was talking about his job as an investigator, or asking questions an investigator would ask. I really didn’t pay attention. The rest of the conversation escapes me now, but I could not ignore the words ‘CIA’ and ‘FBI’. The two people certainly weren’t saying anything directly related to me, nor was it threatening. Nor were they emphasizing any particular words. But my reaction was immediate anxiety. The more I tried to suppress it, the more anxious I became. Eventually, the two people left, but the effect on me was continued anxiety. A short while later, I became self-conscious, something I count as part of the paranoid spectrum of ideation and emotion. Twenty minutes after that, I was becoming indecisive and disorganized.

Why would these conversations bother me? I couldn’t simply decide that they didn’t bother me. I couldn’t suppress the anxiety. It was irrational. Clearly, something in my subconscious was being affected and I didn’t entirely understand what was going on in my own mind. The emotions weren’t a result of a conscious pattern of thought. It was instinctual. Push the right button and automatically get a reaction.

I realized that in general I was experiencing schizophrenic symptoms. I called my doctor, and he increased my medication by 40%. The symptoms which had seemed to have been suppressed for ten years are just lingering under the surface.

In all honesty, I hope it happens again. That is, overhearing a conversation about the FBI or CIA. I hope that my reaction will be normal...to simply ignore it, or at least to maintain a calm disposition. It will be interesting to see if the medication is working. I would certainly like to feel and believe that I am free of any mental disease, and that it is under permanent control.

My hope is to someday say with confidence that I have a mental illness but I am no longer mentally ill. But that may not be 100% attainable. Although my life has been nearly symptom free for most of the past nine years, these minor occurrences of illness may represent a fact of life. Perhaps we are never completely free of our demons. I need to be vigilant in identifying possible symptoms so that they can be managed effectively. I view these recent occurrences in the same way that I view someone being treated for

diabetes. Although the disease might be managed well, every few years there may be a flair-up, or a slip-up. The important thing is to recognize the symptoms early so they don't get worse. If all the symptoms can't be entirely avoided, then you need to develop strategies to keep them from worsening.

Based on my recent experiences, someone might say to me "Don't go to the bookstore Cafe! ". But I can't not do that. I like going to the bookstore cafe. I'm not going to hide in fear of the universe, because it is not the universe that is the problem, it is me. I have to overcome my own minor limitations. I believe that is achievable with consistent effort.

The next section is about schizophrenic thought patterns, or at least the dysfunctional thought patterns I have noticed in myself.

## Schizophrenic Thinking

What follows is an assessment of the dysfunctional thought patterns I had when I was the most severely ill and some of which I've had recently. This assessment is not intended to be used to diagnose any illness, it is simply a compilation of the observations I have made about myself and how other schizophrenic people might have similar thoughts. In the passages below, I use the term 'you' to mean someone who is schizophrenic, but these are all thoughts I have had myself, and I didn't take a poll of any other schizophrenic person to determine if they've had similar thoughts, but I believe these distorted thoughts probably apply to most paranoid schizophrenics. There are other types of schizophrenia (like the disorganized type) for which this compilation may not apply. Also, many people without schizophrenia may experience these thought patterns at some point in their lives. The difference between the average person and someone with schizophrenia is the frequency and intensity with which the schizophrenic mind has these types of thoughts. Someone with schizophrenia may be experiencing these faulty thinking patterns every day, or even every minute, whereas the average 'mentally healthy' person may experience these thoughts rarely (like once per year). If you are unsure whether or not you have schizophrenia, you should consult with a psychiatrist for an evaluation.

1. Delusions grow and expand, but you are not always consciously aware that it is happening. Irrational thoughts about a single person becomes an irrational thought about two people, then a dozen, then a hundred, and finally is generalized to everyone. So when you think you're neighbor is watching you, a year later you're thinking everyone is watching you. This expansion of the delusion is not just limited to numbers of people, but it can be an abstract idea. You might get nervous one day about the traffic cameras at an intersection. Then a while later you are nervous about the shoplifting cameras in your local retail store. Eventually, you are wondering if there are cameras you don't know about in your car, in your house, in your bathroom. The delusion changes and grows.
2. You believe something BEFORE you have any evidence to support that belief. Most people draw conclusions after seeing the evidence, but you draw your conclusions before you have any evidence. For instance, you might believe you are being followed, then AFTERWARDS you start to look for people following you. Or in an extreme case, you might believe an alien is living inside you, and AFTERWARDS you are convinced that your stomach grumbling is evidence that it is true. You then start to take a mental inventory of all the things that support this conclusion. You also may not realize that you had these thoughts before the evidence was present.
3. Certain events, objects, or people in the world have some special significance just for you. You might think that a stranger you see on a street corner is there because of you. The fact that you got a parking ticket means that the government is out to get you, and you alone. A newspaper lying on the park bench was put there specifically for you.

4. You have an inflated sense of self importance and grandiose ideas, often paired with a delusion. You think that people are following you because you are special or that you have some quality that no one else on earth has. You think you are the smartest person around, or that you are important to everyone on earth. In association with religious thinking, you might believe that you are God, or Jesus, or some other divine being, like an angel. ( I actually never seriously thought this myself, but I had similar grandiose ideas – I thought I was going to discover some fabulous mathematical principle that would transform our entire understanding of the universe, and in that respect I was special or important to the entire world).

5. Things that you never noticed or thought were related now seem to be related. The relationship is one that you know most people would not believe. In other words, most people would consider the relationship to be non-existent, but you think you are so smart, or so observant that only you know about the relationship. This relationship may seem to be related to other irrational thoughts you are having, or may be related to a delusion you are having. The relationship may have some special significance for you. For instance, upon hearing someone saying the word 'Cafe', you think that it is a code word for your house, or upon seeing a flashing red traffic light, you think the flashing light is related to people dying (like everytime it flashes, someone is dying). Of course, this last part about the flashing light is true, because people are dying all the time, no matter what is happening. But of course the two things (the flashing light and people dying) are not really related at all, they are merely coincident. In a similar fashion, you see that other things which are coincident (occurring at the same time) are actually related, but you never thought that before, and most people would not think that, but somehow you in particular are aware of some connection that no one else knows about. (There are literally many trillions of things going on at the same time. Somehow in the complex web of the universe they may be indirectly related, but somehow you think you can see the relationship directly where no one else does. It is a relationship that is not reasonable, but to you it is completely logical.) This personal understanding may be connected with the idea that you are special that only you are able to recognize it because you have some special ability.

6. You believe you have some special power that no one else has. Like the power to kill someone simply by touching them, or the power to bring things back to life, or the power to read people's mind, or see into the future, or to live forever. This can be related to the feeling that you are somehow special for the world.

7. You are keenly aware of certain sounds, sights, smells, or tastes that most people ignore or do not perceive the same way you do. This could be certain gestures that other people make, like scratching their nose, brushing their hair with their fingers, rubbing their chin, etc. Or a peculiar taste that seems to be different than anything you've tasted before. Also you can't ignore sounds that most people ignore, or in some way you are acutely aware of certain sounds like car horns, screeching tires, birds chirping, fans running, people talking nearby. Most people are only minimally aware of these things or if they are, these things are forgotten almost immediately, but with you, you are painfully aware of them and can't ignore them even when you try to.

8. You think your actions affect everyone in the world, somehow. (ask yourself....Really?)
9. God communicates directly with you. (This is certainly never true, in my opinion)
10. Someone or something is playing tricks on you.
11. You think about something that is unlikely or improbable. First of all, you rate the probability of this happening much higher than most people. So perhaps when most people think it is 1 in 10,000, you think it is about 1 in 10, usually as a result of what you perceive to be 'evidence'. This leads to another thought that is also improbable. You think the reality of these two things together are equally probable, when in reality the combination of the two thoughts is far less likely. For example, suppose you believe your neighbor is following you. Well, I have no data on the likelihood of this, but since I've never heard of it happening before, I would say the probability is far less than 1 out of 40,000 that any neighbor is following you. However, for purposes of illustration, you say you think this is 1 out of 10. You later think that perhaps the neighbor has somehow installed cameras in your house, even though you never gave them a key to your house, AND you lock your doors. I would say a reasonable probability that the neighbor COULD do this is less than 1 in 10. Let's say you agree. And let's even suppose that your estimates of both probabilities individually are correct. Then the probability of both happening together might be 1 out of 100. But you think the probability is 1 out of 10 for both, because one reality implies the other reality. In fact, a reasonable person would assume the probability is 1 out of 400,000. However, you think it is 1 out of 10. Your assumption of the probabilities shrinks over time, as you collect 'evidence' that they are both true. Eventually you think the probability is 1 out of 2, and later you are sure that these things are actually happening. (you are 100% sure). A good strategy for evaluating any thoughts on any subject are to ask yourself "What would MOST people think?" If you are far off the mark, you better re-evaluate what you are thinking. This applies to any situation in life, and the times when it is the wrong strategy, (while there are certainly exceptions), are few and far between.
12. The government, or some organization, is infinitely powerful. They have the ability to manipulate everything, to your detriment or your benefit. (Of course, no one and nothing is all powerful and in most cases we all have less power than we would like).

This is the end of the list. However, again, these are only the thought patterns I have noticed in myself.

If you have schizophrenia, and can suggest other faulty thinking patters, or if you disagree, please email me ([kurt@kurtsnyder.net](mailto:kurt@kurtsnyder.net)). I would love to hear what you think. Please use the subject line 'SchizoWorld', otherwise my spam filters will reject it.