

## **A Profound Spiritual Experience or Hallucination? You be the Judge.**

I have felt a vague but very real moral obligation to share the story of my meeting with God 35 years ago this week, but until now, have not had the courage. Hurts a deep part of my pride to share this. Feel the story below is weak, needs embellishment, needs more plot plausibility. But there's not a line of fiction here.

This is the contemporaneous journal entry account of what I loosely refer to as a near death experience. I either met God, or hallucinated that I did. I've vacillated in the 35 years since I wrote this whether I could have possibly met the supreme creator of the universe.

The founder of AA, Bill Wilson, had what he called a "profound spiritual experience". He later wrote that, *"Perhaps you raise the question of hallucination versus the divine imagery of a genuine spiritual experience... The Best evidence of that reality is the subsequent fruits. Those who receive these gifts are very much changed people, almost invariably for the better. This can scarcely be said of those who hallucinate"*.

You be the judge because I cannot prove anything to anyone. I was a full blown alcoholic atheist, needed 12 beers a day to feel OK between benders, who desperately wanted to drink myself to death.

After this experience, I did not have a drink for the next thirty years, attended thousands of AA meetings, have been happily married to Leo for 37 years, and am intellectually an agnostic who is emotionally committed to at least *try* and please and serve The Lord... try to do good no matter the objective reality of God.

This account happened, and was written, when I was 34 years old. For years afterwards, I studied near death experiences. The account of Betty Edie, in [Embraced by the Light](#), rings very true to me. My own experience leads me to concur that "we are all spirits, temporarily veiled from big picture reality, who all volunteered for our missions here to learn things that we cannot learn back home in the spirit world."

Anyway. Here's what happened:

9/4/1987

On August 4, my odyssey started. The first day of the second half of my life. In the morning I dropped Leo (my wife) off for her flight to Bogota and, after last minute in the office, Dave dropped me at Avianca at 4. I probably drank while I waited for the flight. I cant remember, but I'm sure I did. I always did.

Anyway drinks are free on Avianca. And I did 4 or 5 vodka and tonics on the way down. The Cartagena airport was uneventful and I checked into a suite in Capilla de Mar complete with a fully stocked refrigerator of every liquor I care to name. But that was expensive, so I bought a bottle of vodka from a nearby Bodega.

I was in Colombia for the most important business trip of the year. Supervise a quarter million dollar dry-docking. Clutch job. I hate that job. Really deep down hate it and Colombia by myself.

From Monday to Sunday I drank, and drank. I drank the vodka I bought, about a case of beer, and two refrigerators.. I told the ship I had dysentery and during that week, I shirked all responsibility, took the phone off the hook, and gave up. I crossed the point of no return kinda on purpose. I knew the end was near. I knew something had to give.

I remember fragments of that drunken week. I turned the suite into a hell hole. Broken bottles (I walked barefoot over the glass, I didn't give a shit), no linen change from maid service because I was ashamed to open the door. The bathroom toilet leaked onto the floor and I suffered tremendous bruises from falling down hard. I had lots of diarrhea and with the inadequate wipes of a drunk I stained all the sheets on both beds within a few days. I hardly left the room and hardly ate; I only drank to pass out. I did that a week before the following Sunday when alcohol refused to stay down.

That's when I stopped sleeping and literally vomited my guts out every fifteen minutes for the next 36 hours. By Tuesday, I was hallucinating pretty heavy but I knew it and it kept my mind off the vomiting which had become very painful and caused me to love my voice.

The hallucinations were a pleasant diversion. I had only slightly experienced this before when Leo went to Colombia in 1985. I watched weird fish grazing on the ceilings. They were semi-transparent. There were plenty of hallucinations but I knew that's what they were, up until Tuesday, anyways.

Some time Tuesday, the hallucinations behind my still sleepless eyelids began to get uncontrollably vivid. I'd close my eyes and start to see extremely vivid images. The images at first were figures and letter and fragments of formulae, lots and lots of them, as if I were scanning reams and reams of information that started out raw and gradually refined itself until I was receiving formulae instead of fragments and equations rather than figures, and sentences rather than letter groupings. There was a wealth of information that wasn't impressive except by the sheer quantity. The information came and came for hours behind my closed eyelids as I struggled and begged for sleep. I continued to vomit, into a stainless pot used to chill room service wine, and my body was so weak, exhausted. I was totally spent and in or near delirium.

Anyway all this fucking data continued and it continued to become more complex, refined. The computer sheets of data turned into charts, graphs and maps. An endless supply. Geography was presented, topography, physical sciences, mathematics. I could only lay on my shit-stained sheets, surrounded by zillions of empty bottles, and watch. The sciences were followed by art. Art is harder for me than science and boy was I impressed. Hours of Morris Escher type art would unfurl in my mind as if I watched an invisible hand create all types of forms and colors. I could mentally somewhat control what forms and colors would appear next. It was a wonderful game turning birds into fish into submarines and the subs into torpedoes and then into whales. This game went on for hours and I enjoyed it immensely but failed to understand just one thing. Where the fuck was all this shit coming from?

The art started to fade the more I tried to figure out where the fuck all this information was coming from. After all, I can't draw and the art was fabulous and what about the equations?

Well, all this shit was appearing on the inside of my eyelids so I figured it was coming from me, my subconscious.

So then video pictures start appearing behind my lids. I was scared. It was like a video cam being carelessly carried down a busy center city sidewalk full of pedestrians. Lots and lots of face, most of

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them not seeing me but some of them met my eyes wordlessly. This went on in vivid detail where I could count nose hairs and see warts and all. Very real vivid faces, none that I recognized.

Then out of the crowd there's this wise ass slightly punk kind of person who engages me in conversation. He's surrounded by an aura of so so rock music. He is the only one that sees me then starts talking to me. I indignantly ask whom the fuck he is and for that matter, who the hell are all the other people walking around under my lids. He tells me that It's all my subconscious. I am amazed. All that information inside me? He says, "yeah". I said, "Even the art?". He says "yeah". I would love to be an artist.

So then this guy says he's there to represent my subconscious and the rest of my body and he is pissed off royally. This guy emits cacophonous music. He tells me that he is living in me and all the visions were to show how much is alive in my subconscious. They are all pissed. He is there as representative of all that's within me and he's there to whip me into taking better care of my body. I'm to blame for drinking 35,000 beer and killing brain cells and drugs and 17 years of abuse. Instead of me taking care of my body (temple), I'm abusing it and destroying it. He was there to show me that all that went on under my eyelids was within me. My subconscious had the database of a mathematician and the creativity of an artist.... And I was killing myself. He wasn't mad or anything, but firm. That's when the amazing auditory hallucinations began. He was going to teach me a lesson.

So the eyelid show stopped but faint nagging auditory hallucinations started. I couldn't tell if they were real or not, unlike the visuals, which scared me. By this time, its early dark morning hours of 8/12/87.

I called Dave (my boss) about 0600 on 8/12. I could hardly talk from so many hours of coughing and vomiting. I had been putting off the call and and dreaded it and could hardly talk so I drafted a memo, It started:

"Shortly after my arrival in Colombia I succumbed to a disease that claims tens of thousands of lives each year... the disease is alcoholism.

I read him that line and he was so receptive. I was amazed. He should have been royally pissed. I had been dodging coms with the office for ten days. I had no idea how the docking was going. I should have been fired. What a reassuring telephone call.

After the call, the auditory hallucinations started returning as I paced my filthy palace. About an hour or so after dawn, I was on my 18<sup>th</sup> floor balcony when I spotted the biggest school of fish I had ever seen. They were feeding in the shallows but extended offshore a mile wide as far as I could see. The beach bathers seemed oblivious. These fish were tremendous in size, my closest description was a 5 or 6 feet long kingfish, fat and full of meat. They worked bait fish as a team, herding them into shallows then pigging out. I thought the people on the beach would try to catch some. All that food swimming around, in a foot or two of water.

I was amazed. I had never seen such a school of meat there is contrast with so many poor people on the beach.

They didn't behave exactly as kingfish. I thought they might be snook but I couldn't identify them. I thought I might be hallucinating and tested the theory. I wasn't. To be sure and to try to identify the species I put on my trunks and decided to take the only dip of my sick odyssey. I confirmed the existence

of fish in the water. I remember being afraid as I waded out to neck deep water with my glasses on. Although the visibility was only one or two feet, I could make out vague shadows and confirm the size to be big, 5' or 6'.

I packed, waited for my ride to the airport. The agent didn't come, so I took a taxi and waited in a vomit mood at the airport for my flight. Almost missed it. I was paged by the agent, rushed through immigration and was the last one on the Pan Am 727-20. The flight of my life.

Shortly after takeoff, Eric Burdon of the Animal started blaring, "We got to get out of this place" on a radio. I could not figure out where the music was coming from. I thought it was coming from behind me and I asked the people behind me to please turn down their radio. There turned out to be a father with a little 8 year old girl who was listening to a Walkman. When I saw her, I knew she wasn't listening to the Animal.

The music remained loud in my head but as I surveyed all passengers within sight, it became evident that I was the only one listening to Eric. I then immediately thought this was the work of the little punk in my head. So meanwhile, the song/music turned into a repetitious medley that got louder and louder.

These fucking auditory hallucinations were deadly. I knew it. Several times I wondered if I was going insane – or perhaps I had already crossed that threshold. I got on that flight very sick and desperate for help.

So I sat there in my smoking aisle seat with noise only I could hear out of control. It turned very unpleasant and louder and louder. The decibels hurt and I remember thinking of how I had held onto my sanity through all those hours of aloneness and vomit, deep in the heart of darkness. I knew that if the noise kept progressing, and wouldn't stop, that I'd soon cross that line into irreversible madness. I thought the noise could easily snap me and I was afraid. I thought of the little punk in my head and things he said. I agreed that he was right; I had been destroying the body. I remember saying to him, "I surrender. Please, you are hurting my ears and the body shouldn't be hurt as you told me last night. I give up – I'll do anything you say. I surrender!!!"

The excruciating noises immediately transformed into soft comfortable music. Everything changed. The air became charged and I felt a strong feeling of excited anticipation as if just seated in a theater and the show of a lifetime is about to begin.

I don't think that the next two hours can be adequately described on paper. It like waking up from a bizarre dream and trying to explain how the back field turned into an ocean, or whatever. Just like trying to explain a very complicated idea that's inside of you, but describing it with mere words. I never tried to put to prose feeling experienced during hallucination which we recovery people now fondly refer to as "profound spiritual experiences".

The plane became a cathedral and my private audience with The Lord began. He started by saying very clearly, "It was always intended that you enter the kingdom". The voice was stern and masculine but at the same time musical and understanding. Everything said had a kind of cadence put to various kinds of music, especially message rock music melodies. Hard to explain. Anyway, God very dramatically sent me a message through an extraordinary medium of lecture, music, and conversation that lasted the entire remaining flight. God didn't just tell me things word for word except for some major points that I

needed to hear such as the above quote. Sometimes His voice would drift down to a whisper behind the music that was always incredibly beautiful and supernaturally arranged,

The basic message, as I understood it, was as follows:

*It was always intended that I enter the Kingdom. Thus far I fucked up in life so bad that I would Cease to exist and be left out. If I had died in a fall in Cartagena that would have been such a grievous sin to Leave Leo and infant Mark stranded. I would have been denied the Kingdom. What a waste of all the gifts I have been accorded. Divine intervention was necessary to save Denis, or at least give him another chance. It was made clear that this was not for Denis' sake but for that of others. I was supposed to live so that something could be fulfilled. Maybe a yet to be born child was supposed to do something. Leonor was mentioned by name as having a prominent place in the Kingdom. If there's royalty there, she's part of it. She deserved more than a drunken husband. I must change or be damned.*

That was the lecture part of it and I felt like a child be scolded by a loving parent. I was upwelled in emotion and strained so hard to hear and understand each thought. Remember, all of this is going on at 39000 feet in an aisle smoking seat.

That was the end of the sermon. What followed was riddles and music in answer to my deepest thanks, undying proclamation of love & faith, and many questions.

After the "thanks for saving my life (soul), I asked how I might serve during the second half of my life.

The answer was more riddle, joke, and music rather than words. It was like being treated to intense sensual and emotional and spiritual stimuli. Nothing in my experience came close to the feelings. The Lord revealed Himself to be exactly the God that I could serve and worship without reservation. He had a fantastic sense of humor and made such wonderful use of music full of sweetness and light. Some messages were simple and clear such as the fact that if I were ever to fulfill my dreams and accomplish good things on this planet, then I sure as hell had to do so before death – which could come at any moment. Time to get ready.

I remember asking, imploring – How can I best spend my remaining time here. The reply was given but I had trouble understanding it. Through the static and the jumble and whispered below the music, it sounded like World Hunger.

World Hunger? That couldn't be true, I thought population control and environmental protection would be more to my liking. More about that later.

Lots of loose-ended clues were sent but received garbled. I took out my journal and attempted to write things down. Maybe I was supposed to meet up with other selected people to accomplish things. I don't know. Four weeks later, my journal page contained indecipherable rubbish. I thought at one point he was talking about 12 holy clans and Leo or one of her kids played a key role in things. He also said I could call Him "CC".

At the end of the flight, I was in complete euphoria. Imagine a personal invitation from The Lord. He does exist and is the purest form of love, happiness, and all that matters. I remember promising

unfailing faith which I sensed He didn't believe. It also seemed that this divine revelation was the miracle of my life. Enough faith to last a lifetime for me and all whom I told.

I was near tears in my end flight euphoria. I had been up about 65 hours and was in a spiritual yet exhausted inebriation. I remember thinking that the plane and the hotel room were suddenly holy places. My false pride made me wonder whether they would become shrines. I took the whole experience way too proudly. I walked off the plane cocky. I was saved. If someone asked, I was humbler than thou.

Anyway I did leave that plane euphoric like never before. I breezed through immigration and customs. I felt so well that now I was saved.

I wondered out loud with God whether treatment was still necessary. Well I decided to go for my six days and learn how mere mortals quit drinking. Teach me humility that may even come in handy.

Dave met me and wanted to take me to Hollywood but I insisted on south Miami to be closer to Leo and home.

Leo, by the way, was still in Flandes Colombia, full of worry. She called me at Cartagena. I was drunk. I was sick and told her my plan to come to South Miami Hospital. She freaked and I was too sick to care. Poor girl, she deserves better.

So Dave picked me up and I was cocky as hell after a personal visit from the creator of the universe. We came to SMH and Marlin greeted us and did a hard sell as it was close to 5 PM and they said 28 days – not 6. I was surprised and said “no” but Dave relented and told me to forget about the job and do it so I did after a quick trip home to pick up some clothes. “The saints come marching in” played on Dave's radio, a secret joke that he could not hear.

So by 6 or 7 I had safely checked into the detox wing. I was completely spent, exhausted, and hadn't slept since Sunday midnight. I was in sanctuary for rest and cure and God was in His heavens and all is right with the world.

Despite my swim and morning shower in Cartagena, I arrived cruddy. The nurses told me to go to sleep and I was almost there when they wheeled me to TB x-rays. Later they took blood and the timing was almost perfect on purpose to prevent sleep. I felt peaceful, exhausted and sleepy. Nobody knew, including myself, that I lay down to sleep in the beginning of Phase III alcohol withdrawal.

I lay down and felt so good. Nothing was on my mind since the flight but one thing, God. I remember talking to Him while being wheeled to x-ray. I felt young and innocent and whispered secrets to God as if he was my best friend who hears me best when I whisper. I was finally in bed for the night at 8 or 9 and was sleepy as hell and lay there whispering good night to God. We were on a first name basis, me and the Creator. I was so amazed in a childlike innocent way, fully convinced that I was saved by a miracle.

I felt like a little kid who had just discovered the best toy or game. Whispering into my pillow and getting answers. An infinite friend, an infinite love.

I remember looking out a hospital window at a yellow street light. I was without glasses and looked out at the fuzzy light through a semi-transparent curtain that was loosely woven like a window screen. My door was closed and in the darkness it was the only source of light in the pitch. A warm fuzzy yellow

glow out the window to my right. I remember asking God if I could focus on the light as if it were Him., this having something to look at while we conversed. He said, "Sure, why do you think I put it there?" "Clever guy", I thought. Then I started thinking and pondering my flight, especially the message about what to do with my salvaged life.

"World Hunger". He may just as well asked me to chase and catch the horizon – but that's not what I felt that night. He had mentioned other names; people to connect together to get the job done. That made sense; it couldn't be done alone. Then, "coincidences" started to come to mind. Where would the food come from? The ocean, of course. Isn't that funny I have a degree in Marine Biology. Then it hit me that I had that vision of all those fish standing off a beachfront of hungry people. And I thought about krill. I looked up at the Light and asked if I were on the right track. The light remained unchanged. I continued my line of thought. Arctic and Antarctic seas are rich in nutrients and the answers were there. Hadn't the flight vision mentioned Maine? Either in this flight or later, I learned that this world and its resources were designed for 14 billion to live and eat. A strange dream or hallucination, isn't it? When 14 billion people are here and fed, equilibrium would be reached and the world as we know it would end. At this point, the biggest sin by far is that of the 5 billion aboard now, most of them are hungry or starving. The gravest injustice. So how do you turn 5 billion hungry into 14 billion people fed? No birth control, no abortion, and food, lots of food to stimulate reproduction.

So I ironically looked up to my yellow light and asked if I was supposed to ask Leo to have 8 more babies and move to Antarctica to coordinate krill harvesting. I laughed and He laughed over Leo's reaction to that one.

The light shined through tiny squares in the curtain. Depending how I moved my head, it would shine through either one or two squares. So I says to God, "No shit, CC, am I really supposed to go near the caps for food and knock up Leo a lot"? I told Him I was going to love my head with my eyes closed. I asked for the answer to come up one square of light for "yes" and two squares for "no". I did it and there came up.... One and a half squares. I belly laughed and felt God laughing too. I loved Him so much. What a sense of humor. What a guy. My friend. My Lord.

Then, in love, I lay there and reflected that the direct communication on the plane was once in a lifetime. What a shame. Then I looked up at the Light and felt love well up in me and the barest hint of a smile crossed the yellow light. I was breathless and started hardly believing, but hoping, that I wasn't seeing things.

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Post Script 8/15/2022: About ten years ago I told a therapist of my feelings of divine moral responsibility to tell my story. She urged me to do so. For about 25 years after the experience, my faith in God and my meeting was rock solid. My faith had evolved. I was almost ashamed of my 1987 account and wanted to make it more compelling, more believable. To make a long story short, for the next ten years or so, encouraged on by the pains of arthritis (what loving God would invent arthritis?), I leaned toward hallucination. I mean, what are the chances I met God, versus some drunk in the DTs hallucinating that he did. For lack of a better way to describe my present working model of reality, here's the capsule version. At the end of the day, it boils down to trying to do the next right thing. I posted the below in an astronomy forum. The reason I have decided to finally make this journal entry public after 35 years, are the requests to share my story from people who were resonated by this:

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Facebook Post 7/26/22: The size of the observable universe appears to be beyond belief. Add in the part of our universe we can't observe, then add in a foam of a zillion zillion universes unraveling in string theory and we have a working model of reality that's preposterously big, clunky. Overlay all that with QM and the crucial role of the observer. Lastly, consider latest published papers suggesting that there is no such thing as big picture objective reality. Reality appears personal and relative.

The scale of things, the Fermi Paradox, and the grainy holographic nature of reality lead me to believe we exist in a simulation.

But I am a biased observer. In a near death experience in 1987, I either learned, or hallucinated that I learned, that Earth is a type of graduate school for spirits, temporarily veiled from big picture reality, to learn things we could not otherwise learn back in the "spirit world" from which we volunteered for our assignments here.

Here on earth, Uncertainty seems a constant. Science appears to be perfectly almost intentionally agnostic. No proof of gods, no proof that universes can "naturally" create themselves. So the atheist is free to create a godless universe, and the theistic whirling dervishes free to create theirs. Both models might be equally "true". No big picture objective reality to measure against.

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So I have decided to live in a reality where the God I met in 1987 is real. The only way I know how to do this is to try to do the next right thing that lands in front of me. A well-intended missionary asked for my story, again, weeks after