



QUESTIONS WITHOUT EASY ANSWERS

A Report from Dr. Thadius T. Malone

TIME: ARE WE EXPERIENCING ALL OF IT?

At Dylan Carrillo's request, I have spent the past several weeks talking with people who know considerably more about physics than I do.

That is always a useful exercise.

My own background is psychology, with particular interest in perception and human behavior. I can discuss how people experience time. I am considerably less qualified to explain what time actually is.

So I contacted several scientists and researchers whose work touches physics, cosmology, neuroscience and the study of time. I asked each of them essentially the same question:

Is it scientifically reasonable to consider the possibility that time might not behave exactly as human beings experience it?

The answer was surprisingly easy.

Yes.

What becomes considerably more difficult is deciding what that means.

HUMAN TIME

We tend to think of time as something extraordinarily dependable.

A second is a second. An hour is an hour. Yesterday happened before today, and tomorrow hasn't happened yet.

But there are actually two different subjects hidden inside that statement.

One is **physical time**.

The other is **our perception of time**.

We already know that human perception of time is remarkably flexible.

An hour spent waiting can feel much longer than an hour spent doing something enjoyable. A frightening event lasting only seconds can seem much longer to the person experiencing it. Memory can compress years and expand moments.

That does not mean the clock changed.

It means **we did**.

Our brains do not contain a little clock that perfectly records our passage through existence. They construct an experience of duration from attention, memory, emotion and sensory information.

That was my starting point.

Then the physicists made things more complicated.

THE CLOCK ISN'T QUITE AS SIMPLE AS WE THINK

Modern physics has already established something that would have sounded absurd to most people a few centuries ago:

Time does not pass identically for every observer under every circumstance.

Relative motion matters.

Gravity matters.

Two extremely accurate clocks can experience slightly different amounts of elapsed time when subjected to different physical conditions.

This is not speculation. Relativistic effects have been measured experimentally and are important enough that technologies such as satellite navigation must account for them.

That does **not** mean somebody can walk into the New Mexico desert for forty minutes and return seventeen minutes later.

I want to make that distinction very clear.

The physics we understand does not provide an ordinary explanation for some of the stories contained in The Mesilla Files.

But it does establish something important:

The idea that time must always behave exactly as our everyday experience suggests is already wrong.

The question is how much further we are justified in going.

MORE THAN ONE DIMENSION OF TIME?

This was where my conversations became particularly interesting.

I asked whether there could be more than one dimension of time, in something analogous to our multiple dimensions of space.

The answer was not, "Absolutely not."

But it certainly wasn't, "Yes."

There have been theoretical approaches in physics and mathematics that explore additional temporal dimensions or more complicated structures of spacetime. These ideas are highly speculative and face serious problems, including causality and stability.

In other words, mathematics can allow us to discuss things that nature may have no intention of permitting.

One scientist put it to me in a way I particularly liked:

"Possible to describe is not the same thing as possible to exist."

That distinction should probably be hanging on the wall at TRC.

Still, the discussion raises a useful question.

Human beings evolved to perceive the world in a manner useful for survival.

We perceive three dimensions of space quite naturally. We experience time as moving in one direction.

Past.

Present.

Future.

But our experience does not establish that our perception represents the complete underlying structure of reality.

It establishes only that this is how human beings experience it.

SUPPOSE THERE WERE ANOTHER TEMPORAL DIMENSION

For purposes of discussion—not as a claim—consider something.

Imagine a sheet of paper.

A creature that could perceive only a single line drawn across that paper might understand movement forward and backward along that line.

But you and I can see another direction.

We can move above or below the line.

To the creature confined to the line, that additional direction might be extremely difficult to understand.

Now substitute time for space.

If time possesses some structure beyond the single direction we experience, would we recognize it?

I don't know.

Neither did anyone I talked with.

And that is precisely why the question interests me.

THE ORTEGA PROBLEM

This brings us inevitably to Sheriff Tomas Ortega.

According to the material being studied by TRC, Ortega described an excursion in which his experience of elapsed time did not appear to correspond with the time measured elsewhere.

The famous numbers are:

Approximately forty minutes out.

Approximately seventeen minutes back.

There are numerous conventional explanations that must come first.

Ortega could have been mistaken.

The record could be inaccurate.

A watch could have malfunctioned.

Memory could have distorted the experience.

Someone could have embellished the story later.

The document itself could be unreliable.

All of those possibilities deserve consideration before we invent new physics.

But Captain Voss's alleged response makes the account considerably more interesting.

When Ortega kept asking where he had been, Voss reportedly suggested he might be asking the wrong question.

"Ask when."

That is not scientific evidence.

It's a sentence in an old account.

But it's an interesting sentence.

WHAT IF LOCATION ISN'T THE ONLY VARIABLE?

Most discussions surrounding strange places begin with geography.

Where did this happen?

Where is the boundary?

Where is the Old Desert?

Where is the Enclosure?

Those are spatial questions.

Perhaps we should at least consider whether some of the material collected by TRC is describing something different.

Not simply:

Where was Ortega?

But:

When was Ortega?

Or, more cautiously:

Did Ortega experience time differently while he was there?

Those are very different questions.

DIFFERENT RATES OF TIME

One possibility I discussed with several people was whether two regions could somehow experience radically different rates of elapsed time.

Under known physics, differences in elapsed time are possible.

Producing the enormous differences suggested by some interpretations of the Mesilla material would require extraordinary circumstances for which we presently have no evidence.

That's important.

We should not take a genuine scientific principle and stretch it until it conveniently explains whatever mystery happens to interest us.

That isn't science.

It's storytelling.

And The Mesilla Files already has plenty of storytelling.

Our job is to know where the evidence ends.

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER POSSIBILITY

What if the problem isn't that time is moving faster or slower?

What if two events that appear separated to us are related through some structure we do not perceive?

That idea becomes much harder to discuss without wandering into speculation.

But I find it fascinating.

Imagine two places separated by a mountain.

Someone unfamiliar with tunnels might assume traveling from one side to the other requires going over or around the mountain.

Then someone discovers a tunnel.

The distance hasn't disappeared.

There is simply another route.

Could spacetime contain relationships that are equally unintuitive to human perception?

Physics has theoretical frameworks involving wormholes, additional dimensions and unusual spacetime geometries. None provides evidence that such a phenomenon exists near Mesilla—or anywhere else in the form described in these accounts.

But they remind us that our intuitive picture of reality is not necessarily reality itself.

THE 50,000-YEAR QUESTION

This also affects another issue TRC has been examining.

Some descriptions attributed to the Old Desert bear intriguing similarities to environmental conditions that existed in this region tens of thousands of years ago.

That does **not** mean the Old Desert is New Mexico 50,000 years ago.

Similarity is not chronology.

I've repeated that because it's an easy mistake to make.

But if we are willing to investigate the possibility that the mystery involves time as well as geography, then the resemblance becomes a legitimate question rather than merely an interesting coincidence.

Not proof.

A question.

WHAT I WOULD LOOK FOR

If Dylan wants my advice—and apparently he does, since he keeps sending me boxes—I would stop looking for one spectacular event.

Look for repetition.

Do different witnesses independently describe unusual elapsed time?

Do clocks fail in particular locations?

Do reported events cluster geographically?

Do the same locations appear in records from different decades?

Are there environmental conditions associated with the reports?

Most importantly:

Can any of it be measured?

Because that's where an interesting story has a chance of becoming something else.

MY CONCLUSION

I started this inquiry hoping somebody would give me a simple explanation of time.

Nobody did.

Instead, I came away with something considerably more useful.

Our everyday experience of time is not a complete description of time.

Physics already tells us that.

Human psychology certainly tells us that.

Whether the unusual experiences described in The Mesilla Files have anything whatsoever to do with those scientific realities remains unknown.

There is currently no evidence that Mesilla contains a doorway through time.

There is no evidence that the Old Desert exists in another temporal dimension.

There is no evidence that Sheriff Ortega traveled into the past—or the future.

But there is enough uncertainty in our understanding of the universe that I am reluctant to dismiss a question merely because it sounds strange.

The better approach is the one I've advocated from the beginning:

Don't begin by asking whether an extraordinary explanation is true.

Ask:

What would have to be true for it to be possible?

Then look for evidence that those conditions actually exist.

At the moment, we don't have that evidence.

But considering some of the material Dylan tells me Danny Ruiz has recently uncovered, I suspect we're going to have several more opportunities to ask the question.

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QUESTIONS WITHOUT EASY ANSWERS

The interesting question isn't always whether something is true. Sometimes the interesting question is what would have to be true for it to be possible.