

Myths and Misinformation

William Newton Thetford and the Central Intelligence Agency

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Introduction

Between October 1965, and May 1975, Doctors William Thetford and Helen Schucman, both psychologists, scribed **A Course in Miracles**, a self-study spiritual thought system that Thetford once summarized as a "Christian Vedanta." The **Course** consists of 1286 pages offering a Preface, Text, a Workbook, a Manual for Teachers, Clarification of Terms and Supplements.

In the 1990's, a malicious myth full of deliberate misinformation began to circulate that the CIA had promoted the **Course** as an experiment in behavior modification. Two fundamental questions thus challenged a few students of the **Course**. Before or after Doctors Thetford and Schucman began to scribe the **Course** in October 1965, did they work for the CIA? If so, did their work for CIA have any relationship to the **Course**? The purpose of this article is to explore those questions.

For those who prefer to skip or only scan the details, a review of documents and interviews with the scribes' colleagues provides clear answers.

From 1951 to 1954, including a brief assignment to the Mid-East for three months in 1953, Bill served as a Senior Psychologist at CIA in Washington, D.C. During that period and thereafter, Bill worked almost exclusively with John Gittinger, a CIA psychologist, to help refine the Personality Assessment System (PAS). The PAS was a test that sought to describe personality traits and predict behavior.

Between 1955 and 1958, Bill served as a research psychologist for the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology. Organized by the Cornell Medical Center in New York City, the Human Ecology Fund employed Bill's sophistication with the PAS to direct a cross-cultural study of Chinese in New York City.

From 1958 to 1965, Bill was a Professor of Medical Psychology at the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. He hired Helen Schucman to assist him and serve as the Senior Psychologist for the Neurological Institute at Columbia University. In addition to their heavy teaching load, Bill and Helen fulfilled Columbia University's contract with the Human Ecology Fund or Psychological Assessments Associates, to help John Gittinger improve the psychometric and intellectual rigor of the PAS.

The operative theme is "intellectual," not "behavior modification."

Indeed, John Gittinger testified in an interview with the author in 1997 that, in the CIA culture of stringent "need to know" and functional compartmentalization, neither Bill nor Helen was ever associated with CIA operations such as Project BLUEBIRD or MK-ULTRA. Instead, their aim was to help create perhaps the most sophisticated personality test in the world.

The final version of the PAS was completed before October 1965, when Bill and Helen started to work on **A Course in Miracles**. For the next decade, they feared that public knowledge of their work on the **Course** might imperil their professional academic standing. For that personal reason, they therefore considered their work on the **Course** even more confidential than the PAS. **No one at CIA knew about or cared about the Course. In fact, in the late 1990's, when a friend described the broad principles of the Course to John Gittinger, he expressed surprise and said that, besides a few papers for the Human Ecology Fund, disbanded in 1964, and a final paper for Psychological Assessments Associates in 1968, he had wondered what Bill and Helen had been doing.**

Those conclusions notwithstanding, it would be hard to appreciate their work with CIA without some understanding of the growing importance of **personality assessment** in the political, social and professional environment of intelligence between 1938 and 1962.

In 1938 our national system for gathering and analyzing foreign intelligence was a patchwork of under-funded, under-strength government agencies. The Army's Military Intelligence Division (MID) had twenty officers and forty-eight civilians at home and forty officers and seventy-three civilians abroad, a total of a hundred and eighty-one "professionals." Army counter-intelligence operations at home and abroad consisted of three officers and eighteen agents.¹ Intelligence was such a stepchild on the General Staff that the art of personnel selection for those jobs had been reduced to bureaucratic simplicity. Too many of those officers, considered otherwise poorly qualified by their superiors, had been relegated to a convenient career backwater: intelligence. In the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), although the naval attaches system produced excellent reports about foreign military and political trends, many reports never reached senior staffs, languishing instead in musty file rooms. In sum, the national secret services were woefully unprepared for keeping track of threats to national security.²



Gen. William J. Donovan

Increasingly conscious of war drums beating ever more urgently in Europe, on June 26, 1939, when Bill Thetford was sixteen years old, President Franklin D. Roosevelt concluded that all information about espionage, counter-espionage and sabotage should be coordinated. He designated the heads of the FBI, MID and ONI to serve on a committee to coordinate their activities. Over the next two years, the FBI tried to expand its outreach across the broad field of intelligence. However, on July 11, 1941, dissatisfied with inter-agency bickering over unresolved bureaucratic authority and only marginal improvements in actual intelligence, the President asked William J. Donovan, a combat veteran and a distinguished lawyer, to become the new "Coordinator of Information."

Fifty-eight years old, Donovan had won the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal in recognition of his combat service in World War I. He quickly focused his experienced, competent energies on what would become the first principle of personnel selection for the secret service: seek help from the best experts in their field.

For example, Donovan selected Dr. James Phineas Baxter, President of Williams College, as head of the Research and Analysis Division in the Office for Coordination of Information (COI). Dr. William L. Langer, distinguished Professor of History at Harvard, soon succeeded Baxter. As one writer put it later,

"From the beginnings of COI before Pearl Harbor to the termination of OSS (Office of Strategic Services) after V-J Day, the

Research and Analysis branch was the very core of the agency. The cloak-and-dagger exploits of agents infiltrated behind the lines captured the public imagination; but the prosaic and colorless grubbing of Dr. Langer's scientists, largely overlooked by the press, provided far and away the greater contribution to America's wartime intelligence. From the files of foreign newspapers, from obscure technical journals, from reports of international business firms and labor organizations, they extracted pertinent facts and figures. With infinite patience, they fitted the facts together in a mosaic of information--the raw material of strategy".³

Four days after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy. Six months later in June 1942, the Office of Coordination of Information was designated the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) with expanded authority for gathering strategic intelligence. However, it was not until December 1942, that OSS became an independent organization, reporting directly to the President. By the end of the war in 1945, people officially on the rolls of OSS numbered 30,000. The old Research and Analysis Division had expanded to draw heavily on the entire university and corporate systems of America for help in teasing strategic significance out of a flood of information about weather, terrain and the enemy, especially profiles of enemy leaders. Indeed, in those years most Americans considered it a duty and a privilege to help defeat fascism. The official list of 30,000 official employees was reinforced by an incalculable, worldwide army of volunteers. (In France alone before D-Day in 1944, an estimated 20,000 partisans worked directly or indirectly for OSS!) It has been estimated that the entire operation had cost the American taxpayer around \$37 million a year for three years. (In today's dollars, that would be close to a billion dollars a year.)

Anticipating a continuing need for OSS, in 1943 General Bedell Smith, Chief of Staff for General Eisenhower, asked General Donovan to outline his ideas about a post-war organization. A year later, a central theme in Donovan's proposal was that a more economical organization should focus on strategic intelligence and policy, leaving operational responsibilities to appropriate Cabinet Departments. Unfortunately the proposed plan was leaked to the press. By early 1945, the ensuing public debate darkly forecast "an all-powerful intelligence service that would spy on the post-war world" and fed a maze of bureaucratic jealousies among military agencies, the FBI and the OSS that still lingered from pre-war battles for "turf." The death of President Roosevelt in

April 1945, removed from the debate the one man with the balanced vision of post-war need and the political credits for answering that need.

Determined to return quickly to some semblance of pre-war "normalcy," President Truman announced the termination of OSS, effective October 1, 1945. Research and Analysis, still under the direction of Dr. Langer, went to the Department of State. Secret Intelligence (SI) and Counter-espionage (X-2) went to the War Department under the title of "Strategic Services Unit." Its principal function was to disband the entire, worldwide OSS espionage network. Thousands of veteran OSS employees were either dismissed or drifted away in disgust. Even the dedicated Dr. Langer lingered at State for only six months. However, senior officers in the Pentagon savored their bureaucratic victory over an organization whose members they regarded as a motley crew of Wall Street stockbrokers, Ivy League eggheads, soldiers of fortune, ad men, newsmen, stunt men, second-story men and con men. That spirit of rivalry and mutual contempt among various intelligence agencies would continue unabated for the next sixty years.

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By January 1946, it became clear to the President that competition with the Soviet Union for global political power was destabilizing the process of post-war settlements everywhere. Ever since 1917, American leaders had been apprehensive about Russian Communism. Those apprehensions were revived between 1945 and 1948 as the Soviet Union seized power in much of Eastern Europe and initiated the Berlin Blockade. In response, guided by the Marshall Plan and the Truman Doctrine of "containment" (expressed publicly by George Kennan in the July, 1947, issue of Foreign Affairs), the United States and its European Allies were sending billions of dollars in economic and military aid to Europe.



George F. Kennan published his doctrine of containment in the July 1947 issue of Foreign Affairs.

In early 1946, the obvious need for strategic intelligence called for an interim bureaucratic device. The President named the Secretaries of State, War and the Navy to a new "National Intelligence Authority," to be chaired by the Chief of Staff to the President. That committee soon spawned a Central Intelligence Group (CIG). Within the next year, it became painfully clear that the CIG could not begin to cope with the new challenges of the "Cold War," the label that Bernard Baruch and Walter Lippmann gave the emerging worldwide competition between the Soviet Union and the United States for political influence. Hoping to better manage American assets in that conflict, President Truman reorganized the government. In July 1947, the National Security Act created a unified Department of Defense, a National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency.

Within three years after 1947, three events signaled the end of the United States' near monopoly of post-World War II power: Chinese Communist victory against the Nationalist army in 1949, the Soviet Union's detonation of their first atomic device in August 1949, and North Korea's attack on South Korea in the summer of 1950. Convinced that the Communists had shifted to a policy of military aggression, President Truman expanded his doctrine of "containment of Communism" by committing American military forces to South Korea to block the North Korean push southward. The Cold War had suddenly turned hot. By December of 1950, General Douglas MacArthur's Eighth Army had thrown North Korean forces back across the

38th Parallel and had crossed into North Korea. At a critical moment as the Eighth Army approached the Yalu River, the People's Liberation Army of China launched a massive counter-offensive.

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As the global total cold war gathered momentum before 1950, it became clear that the young Central Intelligence Agency desperately needed help. An extraordinary network of civilian universities and government agencies had provided OSS with a steady stream of raw intelligence to guide the total war against Nazi Germany and Japan. In contrast, CIA in 1947 was treated like a stepchild, its very existence unknown to most Americans, its experienced leadership in short supply, its actual and legal authority still unclear and its relatively small staff of former OSS professionals scattered across Washington. Suddenly, the new CIA needed more than old files from the OSS. Their greatest need was for personnel. During hearings on the National Security Act of 1947, the new Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, the brother of the Secretary of State, said,

"The new intelligence entity should be directed by a relatively small but elite corps of men with a passion for anonymity and a willingness to stick at that particular job. The Agency must have a corps of the most competent men which this country can produce to evaluate and correlate the intelligence obtained..."⁴

How could the leaders of CIA find a reliable method for evaluating and recruiting such career-oriented people? Personality assessment must have seemed very urgent. As early as 1923 at the age of 30, a meeting with Carl Jung in Switzerland had persuaded Dr. Henry A. Murray to consider psychology seriously as a career. He had already taken his medical degree at Columbia College plus an M.A. in biology in 1919. To complete his scientific education, he took a PhD in biochemistry at Harvard in 1927. In that same year he agreed to become Assistant Director of the Harvard Psychological Clinic. Between 1927 and 1938, he developed his fundamental ideas about personality, especially a notion that human beings could not be understood as isolated from social context. He thought that humans could best be defined by the dynamics of their struggle with key relationships to achieve a complex medley of "psychogenic needs." To that end, he thought they would often project fantasy images, an imaginary world of their own that they would treat as reality. He called those projections "apperceptions" and developed a test, which he labeled the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Thanks to his seminal work

on personality, he became the Director of the Harvard Psychological Clinic in 1937. In the next year he published *Explorations in Personality*. Five years later in 1943, Donovan called for Murray's help and he became a Lt. Colonel in charge of the selection of secret agents. During the war, he was tasked to evaluate the personalities of foreign leaders and, with other psychiatrists, wrote a remarkably accurate "Analysis of the Personality of Adolph Hitler."



Dr. Henry A. Murray (1962)
(photo by Associated Press)

Murray was only one example of Donovan's faith in science and technology to tilt the war towards a final victory. Just as Einstein and others conquered nuclear fission, other scientists dared to seek the limits of theory and practice in the field of human behavior modification. For example, Dr. Winifred Overholser, head of St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, led a committee of OSS scientists to find a truth drug for eliciting truth from captured enemy agents and leaders. By the spring of 1943, after rejecting mescaline, several barbiturates and scopolamine, they discovered that marijuana opened minds and mouths to an extraordinary degree.

Those experiments led them inexorably to questions of ethics, questions that confronted post-war judges at Nuremberg. Those judges wrote what became known as the Nuremberg Code on scientific research. In the name of national security, scientific researchers must obtain the voluntary consent of all

subjects, must be sure that any risks were justified on the grounds that no other way was promising and must conduct no tests where death or serious injury might occur. Unfortunately, wartime had let the cat of biochemistry out of the bag. Richard Helms, a graduate of Williams College, the man who had interviewed Adolph Hitler in 1936 and a Donovan recruit, became an enthusiastic supporter for the potential utility of drugs for mind-control, behavior modification and interrogation. He would carry that enthusiasm into CIA in 1947.⁵

Before Dr. Henry Murray left his OSS duties in 1947 to return to Harvard as a lecturer, he joined a group of colleagues in the Schools and Training Branch of OSS to write a unique book, a set of lessons from their experience with agent selection during the war. Called *Assessment of Men*, its later title was *Selection of Personnel for Clandestine Operations: Assessment of Men*. The book was Murray's legacy to the next generation of psychologists who would guide personnel selection in CIA.

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In 1947, the broad field of psychology had been in existence about a hundred years. Through that century the clinical aspect had focused primarily on psychoanalysis for treatment of "personality dysfunction." Until the end of World War II, psychoanalysis was considered the exclusive prerogative of psychiatrists; that is, medical doctors. By the late 19th Century, those "alienists" had come to believe that the human mind could be mapped as precisely as human anatomy.

Denying that fundamental thesis in the 1920s, pioneers like Carl Jung fostered new models of the mind and alternative approaches to personality assessment and treatment. Until World War II, most psychiatrists with medical degrees considered such theories to be inferior stepchildren of traditional psychiatry. However, those new schools of psychology and a flood of trauma victims from World War II encouraged graduate students to become "therapists" with a Ph.D. in psychology. Their search for more scientific clarity about human behavior intrigued CIA leaders, who asked, "Could such theories and tests offer a better guide for personnel selection than the ambiguous interpretations of traditional Rorschach and Thematic Apperception tests?"



Edgar Gardner Murphy

In fact, in 1947 psychologists were just beginning to explore the roots of personality.⁶ Data on the relationship between nature and nurture was skimpy and conclusions were only tentative. Proposals for further research far exceeded reliable answers. Gardner Murphy asserted, "Neither in content nor in method can we be said to have solved the essential problem of the starting point from which a psychology... of personality could be written."⁷ Murphy thought that personality was "...apparently definable as a system of tensions or impulses or acts of will."⁸ He thought those tensions might somehow be correlated with physical tensions, but a relationship between the two systems was not known. Professionals only knew that a human was a changeable biochemical system. Indeed, psychologists speculated that personality must be a "multi-dimensional trend phase of a complex developmental process."⁹ In pursuit of that idea of the human as a "work in progress," Murphy wrote further,

"At the present moment psychologists are still living in the intellectual climate supplied by nineteenth century physics. In a future psychology of personality there will surely be a place for directly grappling with the question of man's response to the cosmos, his sense of unity with it, the nature of his esthetic demands on it, and his feelings of loneliness or of consummation in his contemplation of it.... If we are serious about understanding all we can of personality, its integration and disintegration, we must understand the meaning of

depersonalization, those experiences in which the individual self-awareness is abrogated and the individual melts into an awareness which is no longer anchored upon selfhood. [However]...even in our efforts in relation to field theory, we have not found it really feasible, in view of our own thought forms, to define the non-individualistic or perhaps super-individualistic aspects of human experience and conduct. To plead for closer study of less sharply defined individuality would be utterly fatuous.¹⁰

"[Thus] we have had to look upon the individual organism as an isolated datum; [In that context we regard]... the sharpness of the definition of the individual as the first step in the sharpness of a logical definition of ...[individuality in terms of social context].

"[Nevertheless], there is no more reason to believe that the methods of the mid-twentieth century are final... than to believe that Galileo's methods and results were final.... Like our predecessor, we shall rectify mistakes not primarily by the minor readjustment of the lines of the argument but by recognition of the fundamental limitations of the whole present system of conceptions. It is preparation for this destruction and rebirth of knowledge to which serious research should be directed."¹¹

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By 1949, John Gittinger, senior psychologist at the Central State Hospital on Oklahoma, agreed with Murray that Freudian psychoanalysis was too narrowly focused on the individual. Instead, based on his work with patients at the hospital between 1948 and 1949, he theorized very roughly that each person shapes his personality before he is twenty years old by his success or failure to "cope with life." In 1950, he joined CIA to direct the tiny, new Assessment and Evaluation staff.



Dr. John Gittinger

In 1950, perhaps gripped with a sense of urgency as North Korean armies pushed United Nations forces back to the Sea of Japan at the Pusan perimeter, John Gittinger searched for patterns of responses to the new Wechsler-Bellevue Intelligence test. At first he simply wanted to diagnose whether a person was an introvert (Internalizer) or an extrovert (Externalizer). Building on general but too often impractical ideas of Freud, Jung, Henry Murray, Harry Stack Sullivan, Wechsler and others, Gittinger sketched the preliminary outlines of a new conceptual model of personality development, which he called the "Personality Assessment System" (PAS). It was a maddening process for him because other psychologists at CIA thought his rethinking of the significance of ten Wechsler-Bellevue subtests seemed downright radical. Later he recalled that no one would listen except a few younger psychologists like Bill Thetford. As early as 1951 Gittinger began conducting an informal seminar about the PAS with members of his staff.¹² By then, the Cold War, the Korean War, the field of psychology and the personnel needs of CIA had set the stage for Dr. William Thetford's quiet entrance.

Part One: The Preparation of Bill Thetford (1923-1950)

During the first twenty-seven years of his life, in what way did Bill's personal and professional development prepare him for his future encounter with CIA, Gittinger and the PAS? Given the focus of the PAS on childhood development, Bill's early life offers clues. When he was born in 1923, his parents were Christian Scientists. However, Christian Science lost credibility for them after his sister, who was two years older, died when he was seven. The tragedy would challenge their sense of psychological and metaphysical identity. Nevertheless, over the next forty-two years, the seeds of his "divine discontent" would revive Bill's faith in some of those ideas.

Right after his sister died, Bill contracted rheumatic fever and nearly died, too. One day he heard a telephone conversation between his mother and a doctor. Essentially, the doctor said that Bill had a fifty-fifty chance of surviving; if he did, he would probably be an invalid. Bill was seven, very sick and confined to bed. In his unpublished autobiography, Bill wrote:

"After hearing this, I made a decision that I was not going to be an invalid and that I was not going to die. It's very hard to describe what I was doing, but I decided I just wasn't going to pay any attention to what the doctor said. At some level I seemed to be aware that it was up to me. In retrospect, I could say that I made a specific choice to live at the time. After that I was out of school for three years and stayed home, while my mother tutored me."¹³

Thus, for the first ten years of his life Bill was relatively isolated, thrown on his own resources, an introspective child to whom the world, his world, was a world of ideas, fueled by his imagination. When he was ten, grade school and high school challenged him to change his identity as an introvert to become an experimental extrovert.

"I went back to grade school when I was ten. I had learned to walk again and also had a postural problem. My joints were lightly twisted by the rheumatic fever, so when I learned to walk again I was sent to a public school for crippled and cardiac patients. The bus would come around every morning and pick me and the other kids up. The school was all on one level so I didn't have to climb steps.

"I remember we had rest periods after lunch. That was my reunion with peer groups, kids that were sick and crippled. I remember adjusting to this reasonably well, but it was difficult because of my absence from school for three years. They put me in fourth grade and I got a lot of double and triple promotions in grammar school, which is why I entered high school when I was twelve. I didn't feel a great deal of stability in all this. Everything seemed very vast, but I never thought about it in terms of spiritual choices.

"Rather, my choice was to try to be normal in high school. That seemed very important, because I didn't want to stand out as different. So I tried to act as if I had not been out of school or sick or had problems. I probably thought I had been a typical kid in most ways before that new sensitivity to other people's opinions, and suddenly I realized I wasn't. Instead, I had a feeling of leaving one life behind and starting another at the time. Something about my illness seemed like a death and a rebirth. It was the end of my childhood - the end of one period of my life - as if a new persona emerged in my life.

"I started reading books because I didn't have anything else to do. As a result, I had well developed reading skills far beyond my age level. And even though I couldn't participate in athletics, everything else seemed to go along well. However, I was very much aware of the fact that eventually I would have to support myself. I had to think about that seriously. I couldn't imagine going to work in business as most people seemed to do. That seemed just awful.

"In addition, my father always worried that I might end up on the public dole, which only added to my concern. He was born in southern Illinois as one of ten kids on a farm. They were coal miners, and very poor. He later got a job in the telephone company and became superintendent in the building and construction department - a good job in those days. My father was very concerned about having this sick kid. I don't think he thought that I was likely to be well enough to do very much. Obviously I could not do much physically, and that was the only thing he knew.

"There was no education premium in my family. Later, when I got my Ph.D. he asked what I was going to do with it. He thought, 'You hang it on the wall and then you make a living.' It didn't seem very practical. I grew up in a very practical, concrete, lower middle class

family. Survival was the main thing. Culture was irrelevant."

At the age of 16 in 1939, Bill Thetford entered DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana, a fine Liberal Arts college with high academic standards. He thought that it was a good place for him because it wasn't too far from Chicago and, with a four-year full tuition scholarship and the help of his family, he thought he could swing it financially. He wrote:

"Going away to college became a little difficult after I joined a fraternity. The idea was that you could have a support group away from home. So in freshman year I became a pledge in a fraternity house. It was awful. I had led a rather quiet life, but here something was going on at all hours of the day and night. It was very difficult to stay focused trying to be one of the boys and also a scholar. Somehow I got through it. The Second World War started during this period."

When he graduated from DePauw in January 1944, a few months before he turned 21, World War II was entering perhaps its most critical phase. He had been rejected by the draft because of his rheumatic heart condition. He had also been accepted to medical school; so he could have been deferred if he wanted to be. He wrote:

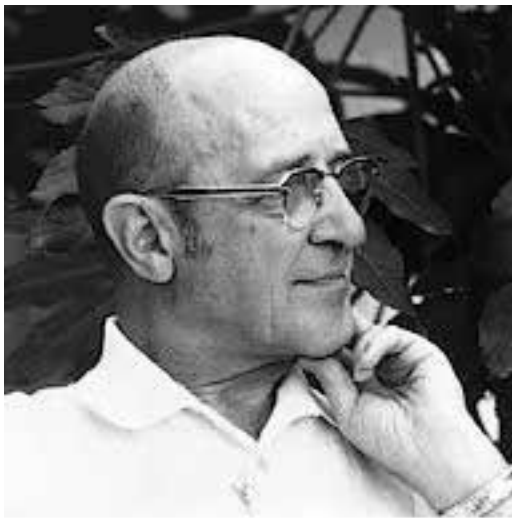
"Medical school started in September at the University of Chicago. However, I didn't have any money to go to medical school, so the whole thing was a fantasy. I thought if I worked for several months, I might have enough money to get through the first year. So I got a job at the University of Chicago as an administrative officer of the University. It was with the scientific team doing atomic research, which at that time reported to the University's administration.

"Robert Maynard Hutchins was the University's Chancellor then. He had appointed Lawrence Kimpton as laboratory director of the atomic bomb project and chief administrative officer of the laboratory. I worked as one of the ten administrative officers on the project. Eventually I got promoted to faculty payroll and was given a private office and secretary. I didn't go on to medical school as planned, because I decided that I really should finish my commitment to this project. So I stayed there until the summer of 1945, when the war ended, and I was feeling there was no need to continue.

"It was then that I thought I should do some graduate work in psychology, since I wasn't sure I was up to medical school, or whether I

even wanted to do it. The faculty was very nice and said if I wanted to get a Ph.D. first, they would reconsider me for medical school later. I thought, "Well, okay." I wanted to see what it was like to get a Ph.D., since I didn't know what that was about. In fact, I didn't know much about anything, but I thought psychology was interesting.

"In the fall of 1945 Carl Rogers, the noted psychologist, had appeared on campus at the University of Chicago. He was just getting started. I knew some of the graduate students from Ohio State who had come with him. I had met them during the summer before he arrived. They told me about Dr. Rogers and what he was doing, and I thought it might be interesting. His professional premises were founded on his theory of "unconditional positive regard" - or perfect love - and he taught that unconditional positive regard was an essential prerequisite for client-centered therapists. I now realize what he was really emphasizing: that total acceptance in our relationships meant expressing perfect love."



Dr. Carl Rogers

Forty-five years old in 1947, although he would become a leader in the new field of transpersonal psychology, Carl Rogers seemed to disagree with Gardner Murphy's yearning to include a cosmic sense of an undifferentiated self in the definition of personality. Instead, Rogers believed that the attainment of a fully differentiated self was the key goal for personality development. In his view a child raised in a social environment of unconditional positive regard had the greatest chance for developing a growing openness to experience and an existential lifestyle, living each

moment fully and allowing the sense of self to evolve from experience.

Bill Thetford took his first course from Rogers with about a hundred graduate students. Rogers made him his teaching assistant during that course. Bill told Rogers that he wasn't fully qualified, but he was offered a research assistantship anyway. He became the first person who was not imported from Ohio State to work with Rogers on staff. Bill thought it was strange because he didn't even have a master's degree, was younger than the others and thought the juxtaposition of the atomic bomb and perfect love within a month was rather dramatic:

"However, I was not burdened with religious beliefs or concerns at that time, at least not on a conscious level. I had grown up in a somewhat lukewarm WASP family where my father and mother would say, "It can't hurt you to go to church on Sunday," although I noticed that they didn't go themselves, so that there was no impetus for doing this kind of thing. "



Bill Thetford

Early in his work on the Ph.D. Bill had an experience that hovered in his

mind for many years:

"I remember when I was a graduate student working on my Ph.D., I used to wonder at times, "Why am I doing this?" Once when I asked myself that question, I got a very clear answer. "You won't know for many, many years, but when you do, it will make you terribly happy.

"I just accepted it. In an odd sort of way there was a part of me that was familiar with the idea of inner communication, but I didn't know quite what to do with it. It wasn't something that was discussed in the academic setting I was in, so I just put it aside. I didn't deny the experience, but I didn't try to explain it either."

During his work with Rogers, in 1948 he published a professional paper in *American Psychologist*, "The Measurement of Physiological Responses to Frustration Before and After Client-Centered Psychotherapy." He also did Rogerian therapy for about a year for at least thirty hours a week, but he knew that Rogers' approach to psychology wasn't what he wanted to do indefinitely:

"Eventually I got a Ph.D. One of the reasons I wanted to get a doctoral degree was that it is sort of like a union card. I didn't really know anybody well who had ever gotten one, and it seemed very doubtful that I was going to get one. So I was quite amazed when it happened. At the same time, my parents were going to retire to Florida. My mother was not well. She had multiple sclerosis and they needed to get out of the Chicago area to a better climate. They were leaving, and somehow in the spring of 1949 I felt that I should get my Ph.D. before they left. When I did, they still didn't know what I was going to do with it. I thought it was a big deal, getting a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago at the age of 26. I thought it should have been appreciated; but it wasn't and I was obviously disappointed.

"However, my doctorate in psychology opened up a whole different life for me, and this time I really felt comfortable. Carl was an important part of it, but I liked the whole atmosphere of the University. I liked the people and I found the whole thing very exciting, Chicago is supposed to be cold, but I didn't find it cold at all. I made a lot of good friends and was feeling good for the first time.

"That was a big shift in my life - a very big shift. There seemed to be very little relationship between different parts of my life. I'm sure there was some, but early childhood seemed to have nothing to do with

later childhood and later intellectual development. When transitions occurred, there seemed to be a discontinuity. Yet at the time I was not aware of it happening. In retrospect, I certainly see that in my life I appear to have lived several different lives.

"When I was finishing my dissertation, an anthropology graduate student, whom I didn't know too well but occasionally had lunch with, asked me what I was doing about a job. He seemed to take an interest in whatever was going to happen after the dissertation was finished. I wasn't all that interested. He mentioned a position at Michael Reese Hospital with Dr. Beck. My friend was very persistent and said I should write to Dr. Beck and offer him an interview, which I finally did."

Michael Reese Hospital, not far from the University on the south side of Chicago, was the major Jewish training hospital in Chicago. Dr. Samuel Beck was the head of the psychology department. Other famous people who were there at the time included Franz Alexander, Thomas French, and Emmy Sylvester. It was considered the big psychiatric center. Samuel Beck had a grant from the NIMH, the National Institute of Mental Health, to do a study on schizophrenia and the Rorschach Test. He had hired a well-known psychologist, but it had not worked out for some reason, so there was an opening:



Dr. Samuel Beck

"When I met Dr. Beck, who had a very strict way of talking, he asked, 'What have you done in the Rorschach?' I said I hadn't done anything with the Rorschach, that I had never even taken a course in it. He said that that was wonderful, that I hadn't been spoiled by any false teachings! He wanted to know about my research for a Ph.D. I told him I was doing a study of psycho-physiological measurements before and after Rogerian psychotherapy using galvanic skin response, heart rate, and respiration. The results indicated change did occur in the people who had therapy as opposed to a control group. We discussed tolerance, frustration, and so forth. I said I wasn't sure I had learned anything since I had taken only the minimal number of courses to get my doctorate. Nevertheless Beck was very impressed. He thought the whole effort to find psycho-physiological measurements of the autonomic nervous system was just terrific. He thought it was real science. So he hired me in 1949 because I didn't know anything about the Rorschach and because I was a scientist. And there I was the only non-Jewish member of the psychiatry staff. I actually got a job there because I wasn't qualified.

"It was an interesting environment because of the whole question of acceptance in reverse. Would I be accepted in the closed circle?

Actually I was, and they even explained the Yiddish jokes to me. It was a very interesting place. It gave me a chance to learn about personality tests and measurements, and I learned about the Rorschach directly from Beck. It seemed a very unlikely way to start a career, but it worked."

Bill worked with Samuel Beck for two and a half years. During that time (1950-1952), Bill completed research for and published eleven professional papers, of which seven were about children! His first paper, entitled "Aspects of Personality Development in Normal Children," was published in *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* in 1950. In that year he also collaborated with others in a fifty-seven page study on "Normal Personality As Projected in The Rorschach Test," published in *American Psychologist*. Before he left Michael Reese Hospital in 1951, he submitted five more articles including two on fantasy projections in children, perhaps inspired by introspection about his own personal experiences.

By the time all had been published in 1951, Bill had moved to another job. Beck was no longer chairman of the psychology department and the grant had run out. Bill finished up what he was supposed to do on the grant and realized that he couldn't think of any other place he really wanted to go in Chicago, since the hospital was the most interesting research center in the area. At the age of 27, he was still not sure of what kind of psychology he was going to do, but he had certainly given considerable thought to the pitfalls and consequences of childhood:

"In terms of experience and skills, I had worked with Rogers and had joined the American Psychology Association (APA) when he was president in 1947. By the time I got my degree in 1949, I was already an APA member. Rogers and Beck had given me some clinical training, and I had studied typology with William Sheldon in Chicago. I had also worked with the sociologists who did the analysis of class structure: upper class, middle class, and related strata. I knew a lot of people in the field because it was a very small one. I even took a class from Nathaniel Kleitman in physiology, which was held right after lunch, and I would doze off. I heard he was a great expert on sleep, but I could never stay awake in his class."

Writing about Bill when he was 27 in 1950, one of Bill's colleagues said, "An independent but socially involved person, Bill had a high sense of mission. He was typically well organized, systematic, self-disciplined and

socially effective, if often aloof. Although he could be intensely individualistic and unconventional, he was rarely revolutionary, preferring to dedicate his practical, pragmatic nature to improving, not dismantling, organizations and procedures. He was very conscious of his own needs, which he usually kept under effective control. He was equally perceptive of the needs of others but was not likely to be dominated by them. As a manager, he was thus concerned but relatively dispassionate, sometimes appearing detached or even unsupportive if others failed to meet his high standards. He was typically ahead of or on top of events, confident of his ability to cope with most situations and able to prepare for those that promised to be challenging. He rarely got caught off guard or over his head."¹⁴

Part Two: Full-time Employment by Central Intelligence Agency (1951-1954)

Bill Thetford's relationship with CIA may be divided between an initial period of full employment (1951-summer, 1954) and periods of contract employment thereafter (1954-early 1970s). In 1950, Bill was approached by a representative from the Central Intelligence Agency who suggested that the crises of the Cold War and the Korean War confronted CIA with a challenge as exciting as OSS had faced during the Second World War. He said that CIA would be exploring all kinds of innovative things for assessing people's capabilities under stress. He mentioned the eminent Dr. Henry Murray, with whose book on personality, *Explorations in Personality*, Bill was already familiar.



Harry Stack Sullivan

The offer must have seemed coincidental, perhaps even fated, because Bill was already intrigued by the work of Dr. Herbert "Harry" Stack Sullivan. Sullivan had received his medical degree in 1917 from the Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery. Through the years, like Henry Murray, he had developed a theory of personality based on relationships and, like Bill Thetford, had explored personality development in childhood as a process of avoiding anxiety and threats to self-esteem. In 1936, he had founded the Washington School of Psychiatry, of which he remained the director for the next eleven years. In 1937 he had founded the journal *Psychiatry* and the New York-based Alanson White Institute that became a leading independent

psychoanalytic institute by the late 1940s.

Attracted as a patriot and a scientist by the challenge to serve his country in the CIA and the prospect of attending the Washington School of Psychiatry, Bill went to Washington in 1951 to serve for the next two and a half years as a senior assessment psychologist on Dr. John Gittinger's Assessment and Evaluation Staff in the Office of Training. To him, it all seemed quite improbable. Among his ulterior motives was a hope that he might go to Europe and do some sightseeing:

"I hadn't done anything like that. It seemed unlikely, though, because I would only be doing assessments. I believed that once you were in a slot in "the organization," no one wanted to let you go. However, the main reason I went to Washington was because I wanted to go to the Washington School of Psychiatry. Its essential philosophy was to focus on interpersonal relations rather than upon many of the psychodynamic components of Freudian psychology, and this was of keen interest to me. There I studied with Herbert Marcuse, Clara Thompson, Dexter Bullard, Margaret Rioch, and Ernst Schachtel through an accommodating schedule that did not interfere with my full-time duties as a senior psychologist with the CIA."

Up to that point, Bill's experience with psychology troubled him because it seemed to be mostly imaginative spin, unsupported by a comprehensive theory. To some extent, his classes at the Washington School of Psychiatry reassured him. However, lectures and discussions at CIA with Gittinger captivated him. He was especially intrigued by the Personality Assessment System. Briefly, the PAS assumes that in early infancy a child is inherently susceptible to certain styles of behavior and that personality develops simultaneously and continuously in three dimensions: intellectual-perceptual, emotional-procedural, and social-interactive. Bill thought its potential to assess and predict behavior was so accurate that, for the next two years, he eagerly worked with Gittinger as a friend and colleague to further develop and refine it.



**President Dwight D. Eisenhower
and John Foster Dulles**

However, in late 1952 other senior managers in the CIA Office of Training didn't share Bill Thetford's enthusiasm for the still highly theoretical PAS. They were soon under pressure to test, select and train candidates for a CIA career. In January, 1953, after Dwight D. Eisenhower was inaugurated as President, he and his new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, added a "New Look" to Truman's "containment policy." It was the doctrine of "massive retaliation," the threat to use nuclear weapons to oppose any Soviet aggression. The New Look increased the demand for accurate strategic intelligence and professional agents.

To facilitate the recruitment of new officers, in January, 1953, the Office of Training invited Edward A. Rundquist, Chief of the Army's Personnel Research Branch, to come to CIA to replace Gittinger. Rundquist was a narrowly focused "technician," who had written the basic text on aptitude testing and personnel classification for allocation of Army recruits to the appropriate branch of service. He was interested in sets of skills, not personality theory. He soon showed that he regarded Gittinger's evolving PAS as too speculative and therefore a waste of time.

In fact, Gittinger was delighted to turn over the management of the A & E (Assessment and Evaluation) Section to Rundquist. That would release Gittinger for more time for research on the PAS. In the summer of 1953, at

Rundquist's invitation, Dr. Marshall Heyman also moved from the Army to CIA as Chief of the Evaluation Branch. Unlike Rundquist, Heyman immediately took an interest in Gittinger's PAS, participated in the informal "Gittinger seminars," and later told the author that he met Thetford in October when Bill returned from a brief trip to the Mid-East.

Soon after the arrival of Rundquist, Bill Thetford began to think about moving on from CIA:

"When I started work in Washington in the fall of 1951, I already felt that I really couldn't stay too long with the CIA. To me that would be a disaster, although I didn't have any idea of what to do next. I was about to announce my resignation in 1953, when the head of the whole training program asked me to please reconsider. I wouldn't have to stay in Washington, I could just take some time off from what I was doing and they would send me to the Middle East for the summer. I would be put in charge of a group of foreign service type specialists who were there to observe things firsthand. I was assured that when I came back I could do whatever I wanted.

"Since this offer to travel was what I had always wanted to do, I went off in June of 1953 and came back in October. During that summer I traveled all over the Middle East, visiting Jordan and Egypt, Israel, Cyprus, Syria, Turkey, Greece, and Iraq. I came back through Europe where I had several weeks of vacation. It was quite a trip. When I got back to Washington in October, after several months of fun and games, I thought I really couldn't resign just yet. So I stayed on until June 1954."

Having received a Ph.D. in chemistry from the California Institute of Technology, Sidney Gottlieb joined CIA in 1951. Gittinger assessed him for a career in CIA. The accuracy of the assessment, using the still primitive PAS, astounded the thirty-three year old Gottlieb, whose primary field of interest would become the use of drugs for behavior modification. As a member of the A&E staff, Bill Thetford may have met Gottlieb, but Bill had no experience or interest in drugs.¹⁵



CIA Director, Allan Dulles

On April 13, 1953, CIA Director Allen Dulles ordered Gottlieb to begin a defensive project called MK-ULTRA, aimed initially at countering Russian and North Korean mind-control techniques against American businessmen and prisoners of war. MK-ULTRA would continue a traditional OSS and CIA search for an effective truth drug, including LSD and other methods to manipulate people from whom intelligence might be secured. That kind of exploration of the human mind had gone on for eight years in other projects from Dr. Overholser's 1943 search for truth drugs at St. Elizabeth's Hospital to Project CHATTER in 1947 and Projects BLUEBIRD and ARTICHOKE in 1951. In 1954, Gottlieb moved his experiments to the Army's chemical experimental facility at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland where an estimated seven thousand G.I.'s volunteered (and others didn't) to participate in over 150 projects. By that time, the defensive charter for Gottlieb's MK-ULTRA would expand to cover a wide range of operational objectives including drugs to:

- "... promote illogical thinking and impulsiveness to the point where a recipient would be discredited in public;"
- "...increase the efficiency of mentation and perception;"
- "...prevent or counteract the intoxicating effects of alcohol;"
- "...promote the intoxicating effects of alcohol;"
- "...render the indication of hypnosis easier or otherwise enhance its usefulness;"

"...enhance the ability of individuals to withstand privation, torture and coercion during interrogation and so-called 'brainwashing';"

"... alter personality structure in such a way that the tendency of the recipient to become dependent upon another person is enhanced."

Part Three: The Institute for Living (1954-1955)

Even though Bill didn't have a job lined up in June 1954, he decided it was time to leave CIA. It was actually the first and the only time he ever looked for a job. He applied to the Psychological Placement Bureau of the New York Unemployment Service. He didn't know why he went there, but when he said he was looking for a job in New York, the head of the service said, "They want you in Hartford. That's where you have to go, the Institute of Living."¹⁶ Founded in 1822, it was one of the first mental health institutes of its kind in the United States:

"I was reviewed and hired in the autumn of 1954 as Director of the Psychology Department at the Institute of Living in Hartford, the largest private psychiatric hospital in the country. I stayed there for a little over a year. Carl Pribram was there doing research on monkeys, along with a lot of other well-known people. Although it was really a very fancy set up and very nice, I didn't know what I was doing in Hartford, which seemed like a strange place to be. It was a sizable city with a small town feeling about it, which was okay."

In 1955 Dr. Harold G. Wolff was treating Allen Dulles, Jr. the son of Allen Dulles, Sr., Director of the CIA. Dulles, Sr. asked Wolff if he would perform cross-cultural studies on Chinese. To do that research, Wolff and his associate, Dr. Lawrence Hinkle, created the Society for The Investigation of Human Ecology, Incorporated, to be financed by the CIA. Partly because of Bill's connections with CIA (he had stayed in touch with John Gittinger continuously after he left CIA in 1954), his top-secret clearance was still intact. Because he actually knew something about neurophysiology, Wolff invited him to Cornell University in New York City as head of the psychological research part of the program. Although he never wanted to be a professor, because he claimed that he had nothing to profess, Bill accepted the Cornell appointment. It was his first academic appointment as an instructor and soon after as an Assistant Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry. He worked there with Dr. Harold Wolff for nearly three years:

"Harold was a world famous neurologist, one of the founders of psychosomatic medicine. He was chairman of the Department of Neurology at Cornell Medical College, and was a great authority on headaches - particularly migraines - as well as pain sensation and stress

reactions and disorders. We published a great deal. Wolff was editor of the Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry and published some of our articles there. It was a big productive period. People would come to see the famous Dr. Wolff. Even Margaret Mead would sit on a broken-down lab stool waiting for Wolff to emerge in his white lab coat. He was precise and very austere. He sought an image of a Nobel prize-winning scientist in his revolutionize-the-world laboratory. He didn't make it, and of course he had migraine headaches.

"My office was on the sixth floor of the New York Hospital in the neurology wing where he was. I was supposed to look like a scientist and wear a white lab coat. I was surrounded by water and gas jets and lab equipment. I didn't use them, but I had to look as if I belonged there. Wolff and his assistant would come tearing by about 11:30 to catch the elevator on their way to lunch. I would see this streak of white going by and occasionally hear, "Dr. Thetford!" That meant I was to stop whatever I was doing and run down six flights of stairs of the hospital and join them for lunch.

"Lunch for Dr. Wolff meant a cup of black coffee and a piece of pie. He always wanted to get down there early so he wouldn't have to stand in line, since he couldn't stand waiting for anything. At first, I thought he really meant for us to have lunch, but that was ridiculous. I could never eat anything because Wolff would start interrogating me the minute I sat down. "What have you learned this morning in terms of highest integrated functions?" "Are you going to change this and get our next publication out by tomorrow?" He used to go on and on like that, so I would never eat lunch. I was used to working under high pressure, but I wasn't used to that sort of thing. I did turn things out pretty fast, though, and I could type quickly. When he wanted something he would say, "I'm leaving in a few minutes, would you please prepare an abstract for the International Biological Psychiatry Congress. I'll have to have it in fifteen minutes." I would go to my typewriter and dash off whatever he wanted. I would tap into some inner source and put it into some sort of English. I learned to make it sound super scientific."



Dr. Harold Wolff

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As a matter of fact, that's how Bill found an apartment one day.

"I was looking around for something on the East side that would be within walking distance to the hospital and medical school. I wanted an old townhouse with high ceilings and a garden. I wanted all that for under \$200 a month, of course. One day, after knocking off one of Dr. Wolff's little meeting-time abstracts, I thought, "Good, he's gone. I can relax a bit." I had been trying to find an apartment in the Times. The Saturday night and Sunday edition ads ran through Tuesday, so Wednesday was usually a very "off" day. It happened to be Wednesday morning.

"But this inner voice, a kind of inner prompting, said, "Look in the paper today." I thought, "That's silly, there's nothing in it on Wednesday." I didn't really acknowledge inner promptings then, but this inner dialogue was going on and I was very much aware that I should look in the Times. I was resistant, but finally I did look, and there was an ad for an apartment on the East side, on 78th Street, a townhouse with a garden. It sounded wonderful, and I called. Apparently I just got through to the owner or occupant, Paul Lynn, a

well-known television and movie star. I had never met him, but I recognized his voice. He had just gotten up and plugged the phone in, so I was the first one to talk to him about the place. I dashed over in a taxi, and found the apartment was exactly what I wanted, at \$165 a month! I lived there for 18 years. It was a perfect answer to my housing in the middle of Manhattan, just off Central Park near the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I couldn't have asked for a better location, it was wonderful.

"At the time, I didn't pay much attention to the fact that I had experienced this inner prompting, because that would be unscientific. I couldn't acknowledge that. However, I did make note of it and thought it might be intuition, so I could talk about it a little, but not too much. Yet I didn't know what to do with it, and I certainly couldn't account for it. This was not the first time this sort of thing had happened to me, but it was a major example, and I couldn't ignore it.

"Then my father died suddenly. I had moved to New York in September and he died in November. My mother had died the year before. I had to take care of my father's funeral arrangements. When I got back to New York it seemed like madness - really high-pressured madness. We were publishing constantly, every month. Many research reports and articles were coming out with my name on them. I was in the difficult situation of trying to adjust to a new job, a new life, and my father's death. Suddenly I realized that I was alone and I was going to be doing whatever I did without a family."

At the Washington School of Psychiatry Bill had taken many classes in personality analysis when he first explored the Personality Assessment System with his boss at CIA, John Gittinger. When he went to New York, he was still so interested in the field that he went to a training analyst from the William Alanson White Foundation, the counterpart of the Washington School of Psychiatry. In a way, the White Foundation was an extension of the Sullivan School in Washington. Bill found it very lively and interesting:

"I stayed with Harold Wolff at Cornell for about two-and-a-half years, primarily doing research. Because our research project was supported by the CIA, a lot of top secret activities were going on. I was also working with some Chinese, who had not returned to their homeland after the Chinese Revolution. They were stranded in this country, which was part of the whole idea of the cross-cultural stress

studies. It was legitimate at one level, but the CIA wanted to know something about these people. So the project was serving multiple purposes."

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That was when the CIA asked Bill to go on a mysterious trip to the Orient and come back on a freighter with Harriet Mills.

"I was still trying to settle my father's estate, but went off to Asia to find Harriet. She had been confined by the Chinese. A daughter of Presbyterian missionaries in China, she was born and also grew up there, then moved to New York City with her family. She had been a graduate student at Columbia University, where she worked on her doctorate before going back to China to do some field research. Of course she spoke the language and wanted to stay on, but ended up being one of the last Americans to leave. The Chinese government suspected anyone with her background and qualifications, which is why she wound up in jail. Finally they gave her a trial and expelled her from the country. So I was sent by the CIA to talk to her about her experiences.

"Harriet was in Hong Kong and all transportation was blocked, except for one ship, on which I had booked passage. All arrangements were made secretly and undercover. I was not told where I was first going, which was Manila, before proceeding to Hong Kong to board the ship. I wasn't sure she would be there. Once on board, I discovered that there were only three or four passengers. It seemed obvious that it was a set up. Frightened and fascinated, I thought the only thing to do was to be as innocuous as possible. I was waiting at the breakfast table when she suddenly showed up. I was very relieved that she was there, and after a while she relaxed and began to talk to me. She said, "Look, I don't know who you are, but it doesn't make any difference." We had several weeks to talk. I felt guilty about secretly making notes about everything she said. At that point, I had no idea what kind of set up this really was, and I didn't know if there was somebody else on the ship with a covert assignment. Could I leave things in my cabin? I didn't know. Confused and inexperienced, I decided that I should not leave my notes lying around. So I used thin note paper and would jam it in my pockets.

"We arrived in Vancouver just before Christmas, and I was instructed to call New York when we docked, which I did. By that time, Harriet and I had become quite friendly and really liked each other personally. We went Christmas shopping in Vancouver. It was interesting. Harriet had not seen a Western city in years. She said, "Even if this is a decadent capitalist culture, it is sort of fun." So we had a nice time, and I saw her again in New York afterwards. I wrote up all of my extensive notes, and they became part of the testimony that Wolff gave later before the House Committee on brainwashing. She said essentially [then] that it really didn't matter, that she didn't have anything to hide. I was quite impressed..

"It had been a long wild saga and a confusing but interesting period for me. Everything was in shift. It seemed as if my professional career was being directed not by CIA but by some unseen force, as if I had been programmed to focus my energies and talents on personality analysis and assessment."



Although the Human Ecology Fund had funded Bill Thetford's work with Harold Wolff, available evidence does not suggest in any way that he was directly involved in MK-ULTRA's continuing efforts to design and support many, often bizarre operational projects of behavior modification. Indeed,

twenty years later, reporting on testimony before the Church Committee investigation of CIA "brain-washing" projects, The New York Times reported that Dr. Lawrence Hinkle, Harold Wolff's associate, testified that no one at Cornell Medical Center in the 1955-57 period had been involved in any way with "human experimentation."

At odds with Ed Rundquist about the value of the PAS, John Gittinger left CIA and moved to New York in 1955. For the next two years he worked with Bill Thetford and other psychologists to revise the scoring of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales to define an individual's personality traits and to predict his behavior with extraordinary accuracy. He drew on Bill and several other psychologists to focus on fine-tuning the PAS for use on Chinese. That must have added to the routine pressures of research and publishing on Bill. Wolff was very difficult to work with. He was very demanding and exacting. Few people stayed with him more than a short period of time before they were exhausted or burnt out. Even so, Bill liked Wolff in an odd sort of way, and they actually got along very well. In 1957 when he was 34 years old Bill received a chance to move on to a less hectic, more responsible position at Columbia University.

Another factor may have influenced Bill's decision. By then Sidney Gottlieb had been promoted to Chief of the Chemical Services Branch of the Office of Technical Services in CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology (DDS&T). Gottlieb begged his former mentor, John Gittinger, to return to the Agency as Chief of the Behavioral and Activities Branch (BAB). For the next two years Gittinger worked intensively with several psychologists, particularly Dr. Marshall Heyman, to further refine the diagnostic power of the PAS. The two men (Gittinger and Heyman) became such close friends that even while Heyman was on a two-year duty assignment (1959-61) for the Office of Training on Saipan, he remained in close touch with Gittinger. It was therefore reasonable for Gittinger to recommend Heyman as his replacement in 1961, when Gittinger was named Senior Psychologist in the Tokyo Station.

By the time Gittinger went to Tokyo in 1961, his decade of research on the PAS had equipped him to dictate the final drafts of classified manuals ("I" and "E" Series; the "Atlas" and the "Bible" of the PAS) on how the one-hour Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scales could reveal accurate and subtle nuances of personality. Back in Washington, Heyman, Richard York and others edited Gittinger's dictated materials based on their own research. Indeed, Heyman distilled Gittinger's several hundred pages of "Bible" and "Atlas" down to a single chart to show how the personality evolves through three approximately

six-year stages: primitive, basic and contact. Thus, the collaborative work of the two teams in Tokyo and Washington yielded an exceptionally accurate tool for assessing everyone from potential foreign agents to heads of state. Indeed, some psychologists later thought the PAS ranked with the discoveries of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung.

At that time CIA psychologists began to use the PAS conceptual structure as a guide to interpret observable evidence such as body language and overt behavior. Without giving tests, CIA could soon advise several Presidents about how to handle foreign leaders. As early as the Cuban Missile Crisis in October, 1962, CIA used the PAS to advise President Kennedy about the likely behavior of Nikolai Khrushchev under stress.

As if to reinforce theory with field observation, Heyman and Gittinger traded places in 1963. Heyman would remain in Tokyo until 1967 while Gittinger returned to Washington. By then, the accuracy of the PAS won for Gittinger and his Psychological Assessment Associates (founded in 1961) the role of the primary assessment agency for CIA World Wide Operations. Gittinger became one of the busiest men at the Agency. He and his staff were involved in evaluating tens of thousands of personality profiles for national security relevance. The PAS also served him well in the first critical step of defector processing. (Did the defector's personality validate his reasons for defecting?) However, during the seven years that Bill and Helen were scribing the Course after 1965, there is no evidence in either the autobiography of Bill Thetford or Helen Schucman that either of them was ever involved in those operational evaluations.¹⁷

Part Four: Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons Presbyterian Hospital



One day in 1957, an old friend from Chicago asked Bill if he would like a position at Columbia. He was told that they wanted someone like Carl Rogers, but Rogers was not interested. They wanted somebody to take care of getting grants every year from NIMH and to set up a doctoral training program. Bill wasn't interested in doing any of that and said so. However, he felt it would be impolite to refuse to meet the head of the Department of Psychiatry to see what was involved. Bill agreed to talk to him, but made it clear that he wasn't particularly interested in moving. They were prepared to offer Bill an Assistant Professorship, which he had already attained at Cornell. Bill said he would think about it if they wanted to make him an Associate Professor. He was sure they would say no because medical school hierarchies were quite rigid; you didn't get promoted from Instructor to Assistant Professor in one year, and then a year later advance to Associate Professor. Nevertheless much to Bill's surprise, they agreed and Bill was appointed to the faculty of Columbia University Medical School in the fall of 1957, as Associate Professor of Medical Psychology, College of Physicians and Surgeons:

"I arrived at Columbia in February of 1958 and was given some additional positions which I had not expected. I was put in charge of all clinical psychology for Presbyterian Hospital, as director of its Division of Psychology. It was in shambles. There was no Department of Psychology, and the people in clinical psychology were in a sort of loose federation. They had to be brought together and unified. It was an administrative nightmare, and involved not only Presbyterian Hospital

but also Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute, which were administratively separate but professionally interrelated. My responsibilities included all three of them - the Hospital, the University, and the Institute.

"It was a very complicated thing, and it never did work out very well although we made a lot of progress. I made it functional at least. I encountered an enormous amount of competitive jealousy and resistance of all kinds. When I arrived, my close colleague, Art Carr, who was instrumental in my being invited to Columbia, didn't seem to want me there. He didn't want to make any of the changes that were necessary. He felt threatened, and particularly more so when I hired help."

One of the first things Bill had to do was to hire a psychologist to work on a laboratory study sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Diseases. A grant had been given to Columbia as one of the sixteen collaborating institutions. He needed a psychologist who was knowledgeable in mental measurements and test construction for infants and children. Although, while working with Carl Rogers and Samuel Beck, Bill had studied aspects of child psychology enough to publish several papers, he did not feel qualified in the field of test construction:

"Since I didn't know that area at all, I went to a neighboring hospital and talked to Michael Smith, a psychologist who was eminent in the field. He said he would look around and call me. A week later I received a call from a woman who said, 'My name is Dr. Helen Schucman. I was told to tell you that I am the person you are looking for.'"

By the time Helen met Bill, she was a well-established research psychologist. She shared with Bill his earlier focus on children; before she joined him she had published a long, three-part series on "A Method For Measuring Educability in Mentally Retarded Children." Bill wrote,

"Helen liked precise, statistical kinds of analyses. She liked being able to design a program where you could consider variables carefully. She didn't care particularly what it was for, but liked the research design. As Helen sometimes put it, she could get away from the chaos of ordinary life in this work. She found a certain beauty and symmetry in this kind of statistical pattern, as one way of coping with the

universe.¹⁸

"When I met Helen, she seemed rather strange. She was obviously very bright, but a bit scattered. I had the feeling that her mind was going around in circles. There were a lot of peripheral non-sequiturs, but I was aware that there was a core that was very solid. She did not find the job offered to her very attractive in terms of location. Where her office would be was not clear at that point. The salary was not good, and there was nothing particularly appealing about the position. She had had a number of better offers, but she took this one because she felt that she should. I learned later that when she met me a little voice within her said, "Oh there he is; he's the man I'm supposed to help." Helen told me that's why she took the job. Of course I didn't know it at the time.

"I hired Helen for the research position in 1958 and she stayed in it for a few years. Later I was able to shift her more into teaching and training, which was compatible with her interests, although she never thought of herself as a clinician. She had never taken a course in the Rorschach, and didn't know anything about it, so I taught her. But her clinical skills were good and her psychodynamic insights were very profound. She was naturally good at interpreting the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and analyzing content on the Rorschach. She had an edge on the people who were trained. She became increasingly involved in clinical work as well as research grants.

Helen Schucman soon discovered that she had committed herself to help Bill bring harmony to chaos. As she stated later,

"The job was really ghastly. The hospital did not provide space for the project and it became increasingly clear that the 'upper echelon' regarded it more as a liability than an asset. When I was finally housed in a nearby apartment, I settled down to the dullest and most difficult situation of my professional life. The job was more than routine; it was actually oppressive. Besides, it was carried on in an atmosphere of suspicion and competitiveness to which I had not been previously exposed. As I got to know Bill better, I learned there were serious difficulties in the whole department, where funds as well as interpersonal harmony were depressingly lacking."¹⁹

John Gittinger and Bill had remained in contact after he left CIA. In fact,

their friendship and interests may have inspired Allen Dulles's offer to Harold Wolff for a contractual arrangement with Gittinger's organization, Psychological Assessment Associates, for continued work on the Personality Assessment System from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s. Although this made Bill somewhat uncomfortable, since it was still a CIA-supported endeavor, he respected Gittinger and the PAS so much that he felt compelled to help its continued development. When Helen Schucman joined Bill at Columbia in 1958, she also became involved in the PAS work. Thanks to her experience with child-development and her fascination with psychometry, her work on the PAS would become significant and greatly appreciated. Indeed, her fascination with a technical issue, the significance of deviations from a norm in the Wechsler Test, helped identify subtleties in a subject's personality and thus lend an unprecedented elegance to what had always been accepted primarily as an intelligence test.

Beginning in 1958, the Human Ecology Fund and later Psychological Assessments Associates gave Bill a succession of contracts under the following grant titles:

- (1960-61) Investigations of the Personality Assessment System in Patients with Psychosomatic Symptoms;
- (1961) Formulation of A Personality Theory;
- (1961-62) Personality Assessment System and Learning Behavior;
- (1962-63) Learning Behavior and Personality Traits;
- (1963-64) Prediction of Overt Behavior by Means of the Personality Assessment System;
- (1965-66) Prediction of Overt Behavior by Means of the Personality Assessment System (funded by the Geschicter Foundation, also under contract with the CIA);
- (1967-68) Brief Procedures for the Personality Assessment System Evaluation (Funded by Psychological Assessment Associates).

Although some of their work was proprietary to the CIA, Bill and Helen published academic papers about the Personality Assessment System in psychology journals between 1958 and 1971. They included such titles as "Measurement of Personality Traits Resulting from Interaction of Ability and Environment" (1962, Human Ecology Fund); "The Personality System" (1962, Human Ecology Fund); "The Personality Theory of John Gittinger," (1962, Human Ecology Fund) 210 pp.; "Theoretical Formulations Underlying Research" (1962, Human Ecology Fund);" and "Multi-trait, Multi-level

Personality Assessment" (1963, Human Ecology Fund).

In an interview with the author in 1997, Gittinger stressed the fact that Bill Thetford was never involved in CIA operational activities. Bill only gave substantial contribution to the PAS. In addition to introducing both Gittinger and the PAS to his students in New York, Bill attended frequent group meetings in New York during both the Cornell and Columbia periods (1955-73) to help clarify the PAS. Gittinger recalled that he and Helen were the only respected academics who were qualified to write publicly about the PAS. As far as Gittinger was concerned, their writing was an important vehicle for giving respectability to the PAS among professional psychologists in the non-CIA research community.²⁰

By 1962, Bill's work at CIA on the PAS in 1951-54, his probable collaboration with Gittinger in New York to revise the PAS for use in a foreign culture (based on his 1955-57 cross-cultural research with Chinese immigrants under Harold Wolff) and his intensive work with Helen on the PAS since 1958 had given him a decade of research on the Personality Assessment System. In addition, he had taught his New York students the basic conceptual structure of the PAS and its utility for assessment.

While thus helping to synthesize a decade of work on the PAS, Bill tried to get a better position for Helen at the Medical Center. She became the Chief Psychologist of the Neurological Institute, which became their central headquarters. By making her his assistant, a lot of things were accomplished. It was a promotion for her and it was a basis for recommending her for an academic appointment. Also, the shift brought them together administratively, making coordination easier for Bill. Indeed, they began to spend a great deal of time with one another, and had lunch together every day. They worked on all sorts of projects. In addition to their joint work on administration, they were engaged in many other time-consuming professional activities at the time. For example, in 1965 Howard Hunt and Bill (Associate Editor) began to edit the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* for six years. Helen often assisted Bill to edit articles for the journal. Thus, between 1958 and 1965, the personal and professional workload on Bill Thetford became a heavy burden:

"Perhaps because my workload had increased so much just before we moved to our new offices in 1965, I had the feeling that we were in a treadmill operation that could go on indefinitely, trying to get research and training grants every year and trying to plan through administrative channels. Things were constantly changing and were

always in a state of crisis. We did a lot of complicated juggling with a number of variables. Although it worked well enough to make it possible to be there, I kept feeling that it was important to be there for some reason -- I wasn't sure why, but there seemed to be some meaning to what otherwise might appear to be just a lot of chaotic confusion.

"As if this weren't enough, the stress of the work situation in which we found ourselves at Columbia Medical School had become unbearable. We were living in a continuous state of anxiety among professional colleagues who seemed to be chronically hostile and paranoid. There was nothing solid, and there was a great deal of tension.

"Then, too, the relationship between Helen and me not only became very close but also very turbulent. It was unpredictable all the time. Temperamentally, Helen and I were very different people. She was a very intense, rather agitated, nervous person. I tended to withdraw during periods of stress, and she tended to become more verbal and assertive at those times. And there was certainly a great deal of tension frequently in our style, our ways of relating, and our ways of dealing with problems in the department and with each other.

"At the same time, we wanted very much to do the very best we could to help resolve the situation. Despite these personality differences, we worked quite effectively together in a large number of areas. But still there were areas in which there was a great deal of friction. And the whole difference in style frequently became a problem for each of us. So it was difficult for both of us in many ways, yet it never occurred to us not to work together. That was a very important aspect of it. We knew we had to work things out together and we knew that we meant each other well, even if we didn't know how to do it. "

Part Five: Doubts About Career and Western Psychological Models of Human Behavior (Spring, 1965)

In his brilliant exploration of America's Fourth great revival and awakening, Dr. William G. McLoughlin observes that American culture was suffering from a crisis of legitimacy in the 1960s,

"Our norms did not match our daily experience....Our system was under pressure to adjust its institutions to its central value system in order to alleviate strains created by changing social relations. The ferment of the sixties began ... to produce a new shift in our value belief-system, a transformation of our world view that may be the most drastic in our history as a nation. Today the end of the world seems closer than the millennium. The Vietnam War has brought serious doubt about our mission and manifest destiny. The welfare state has bogged down in inertia and bureaucracy. There is more crime and cynicism than faith and optimism.... There is a striking new interest in the wisdom of the East as that of the West loses its power to give order and meaning to life."²¹



In the spring of 1965, it is likely that the broader chaos of American culture and international relations reinforced the stress of Bill's personal and professional relationships. Despite his breadth of experience in his chosen field

over the previous twenty years, culminating in his contribution to the Personality Assessment System, he had to face the fact that the PAS had limits. It did not account for the spiritual dimension of personality or fulfill Gardner Murphy's 1947 challenge to explore the relationship between what Carl Rogers' had called a "differentiated personality" and the undifferentiated cosmos. Now Bill began a period of intense introspection about his career and his life, especially his experience with intuition:

"That was a major transitional period for me, a transition from chaos. By April 1965, I was looking at professional achievement and recognition, wondering if that was important or significant. There was a shift from a sense of self as a scientist to at least some openness to spiritual direction. Although religion was regarded largely as superstition and just wasn't discussed, I read Hugh Lynn Cayce's book *Venture Inward*. For some reason I felt it was something I would like to read, which was atypical of my interests and patterns at the time. When I did read his book, I didn't think Hugh Lynn Cayce was making up this story, although it was preposterous by ordinary standards. I believed in telepathy anyway, as I had had my own experiences with that. Yet I had a feeling that all these improbable things he said about his father, Edgar Cayce the noted psychic, were true. If they were, I would have to think about this whole thing differently, and open my mind to other possibilities like Hugh Lynn's accounts of major healings at a distance, paranormal experiences, and the possibility that the 'Lost Continent of Atlantis' had once really existed.

"I knew that if I accepted any of this, then I would have to rethink all of this very seriously, and would have to change an awful lot. Although I wasn't sure at all how much of this was true, I was also aware that I might need to find out. So I arranged a trip for Helen and me to do just that. We went down to Virginia Beach to visit the Association for Research and Enlightenment (ARE), the organization established to preserve and study Edgar Cayce's life and readings. Helen was impressed with Hugh Lynn Cayce and the people there. I thought that trip gave her permission to do what she did later."

The Coming of A Course in Miracles (Summer, 1965)

"A lot of things happened during that summer of 1965. Helen had been having a lot of visions and dreams of an underwater treasure chest containing a black book with the symbol of Aesculapius -- the Greek

god of healing -- on the cover. The symbol is the familiar caduceus with two snakes entwined around it, commonly used by the medical profession. The black cover was identical to the binders we later used for holding A Course in Miracles manuscript. I remember at one point, just before September 1965, Helen said to me, 'You know, one of these days Bill, I'm going to do something very unexpected.' And I remember saying, 'Well, do you have any idea what that could be?' And she said, 'No, I don't. But it will be something very unexpected.'

"During part of that summer we were also both traveling. Perhaps as a means of clarifying her thoughts on emerging spiritual themes, Helen began writing a series of letters to me. Here are a few brief excerpts:

"Saturday: 'Dear Bill: I hope you will bear with this, because it may be important to both of us. This morning I kept saying sort of without intention, 'I am a channel.' Which seemed to mean something at the time, but the channel got clogged up. It's not open yet... '

"Sunday: 'Dear Bill: One evening we were walking, and my husband Louis pointed out a brain injured boy about twelve or so who was being pushed by his parents in a carriage. There were other disabled children there, too. As we walked, I suddenly and briefly got a sense of everyone walking happily and very much together on the same path. Like on a ladder. We're not all on the same path yet. But we will all make it home eventually...'

"Tuesday: 'Dear Bill: I'm not sure I want to write this, but have an idea I'm obeying an order. These orders are rather stern and the main feeling I get is that I wouldn't dare to disobey them... '"

In September of 1965, Bill wrote:

"My boss Dr. Lawrence Kolb, chairman of the department, became disturbed by pressure from the Presbyterian Hospital and the accounting department because the psychology department was losing a great deal of money every month, according to their cost accounting system. He didn't know how to handle this, but tried to do a juggling act without coming to terms with a number of things, including the fact that money coming in from the hospital to pay for psychology was

being used for other purposes. Since he didn't want to acknowledge this and was on the spot, he suggested that I go to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and find out how they made money on psychology, while we lost money on it. I knew the answer to this and so did he. I thought it was a charade, but it was an important thing to do.



"The fact was that the Mayo Clinic had an upper middle class population that could afford to pay high or necessary fees. It was very different from Presbyterian where we were dealing with a multilingual population, many of whom were Hispanic. Patients in our clinics couldn't possibly pay anything, at least anything to speak of. Yet we were supposed to be devoting our services to such clinic patients, who by definition could not even afford the fees.

"I invited Helen to go to the Mayo Clinic with me, as I thought it might be helpful for the two of us to get away. Before the trip, she started having some very vivid imagery. One of the images she had was of a Lutheran church, which she described in great detail. Helen's vivid description of this church with turrets and towers gave a clear picture of what it was supposed to look like.

"Before we left on the trip, she wrote that she was convinced we were going to see this church from the airplane before we landed. Helen felt it was important to see this church, to demonstrate that she wasn't losing her mind. It all seemed rather strange, and I didn't think we were

likely to see a church from the air or the airport.

"On the flight, Helen became increasingly nervous as we approached Rochester for our landing and kept looking out the window. When she saw no church, she was extremely upset. I suggested that we rent a taxi to see the Lutheran churches in the area, to find out if there was anything that remotely resembled her church. We hired a driver and asked if there was anything exactly like that, but he mentioned a lot of other churches so we went to look at them. I think we saw about 25 churches, none of which bore any resemblance to Helen's imagery. She really was quite upset. We had to spend all next day talking to the people at the clinic. There was nothing to do but go to bed and forget the church.

"In the morning we went on a grand tour of the Mayo Clinic and found out how they did everything. It was beautifully done. But all the things that could be done in an upper middle class hospital in Minnesota were obviously impossible to do in New York City in a clinic setting. They were also so extremely efficient that even their examining rooms were equipped with identical equipment in the same drawers so a doctor using anyone of them would know exactly which drawer to open for material or what was needed.

"At the end of a long day, as I waited for Helen in the lobby of the hotel, I went over to the newsstand and saw this little booklet on the history of the Mayo Clinic. I leafed through it and there was a picture of a church, exactly as Helen had described it. It was a Lutheran church, but it wasn't there any more. The Mayo Clinic had been built on the site of this church, which had been torn down. I thought it was exciting. I showed Helen the booklet and told her she wasn't crazy after all.

"She had a very mixed reaction. She felt partly a sense of relief, but she really didn't want to hear about it. It was obviously too close for comfort. She didn't want to be psychic, and she never wanted to be called a psychic. It was typical of the usual discomfort and ambivalence that Helen suffered in most situations. She found it very difficult to be totally comfortable.

"On our flight back from Rochester to New York, we had to change planes in Chicago. In the waiting room Helen spotted a young woman whom she thought was in serious trouble. As I looked around,

it seemed that everyone in this waiting room looked uncomfortable, and I couldn't see any difference between this particular woman sitting far off in a corner and other people. I certainly wasn't tuned in to her. All I wanted to do was to get back to New York and have some peace and quiet. Helen, very atypical for her, tuned into this young woman and said she was sure that she was really in trouble. She said, 'I'm going to go over and talk to her.' I said I would just stay where I was. Helen soon came back and introduced the woman, whose name was Charlotte. She was leaving her family -- two young children and her husband -- and was going off to New York for the first time in her life. Having never been on an airplane, she was terrified of flying and also frightened about going to New York. She was really just running away. So Helen arranged for Charlotte to sit with us, and also promised to find her a place to stay in New York. When we were on the plane I asked Charlotte, 'What would you have done if you had not encountered us?' She said, 'I would have gone to the Lutheran Church in New York City and somehow they would have found a place for me.'

"At that point, everything came together, and Helen heard a very clear voice saying, 'This is my real church, helping your brother who is in trouble, not any physical edifice or building.' We helped Charlotte find a place to stay and a short time later she returned to her family."

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"The Mayo Clinic experience had a very great impact on both of us. It was preparation for Helen, who was learning to listen to her inner voice and recognized that this was a spiritual journey of some sort. All of this weighed very heavily on me -- as was the conflict that was part of the relationship Helen and I shared. One day I found myself making a rather impassioned speech to her, which was very uncharacteristic of me. I told her that even though I felt we could go on working this way indefinitely, was it really worth it? 'There must be a better way of living in harmony rather than discord, of looking at all this differently,' I said, 'and I am determined to find it.' I was aware that a lot of the difficulties had to do with attitudes, although I wasn't quite sure how changing attitudes could change the job. I was very surprised when Helen agreed with me and said that she would help me find another way. It was a turning point for both of us. And it was the beginning of a joint commitment, which the two of us made. We didn't really know what we had committed ourselves to. But we were aware that we were somehow

involved in a collaborative venture, and that it had great impact for both of us."

In retrospect, Bill believed that his spiritual journey began when he made his impassioned speech to Helen that "there must be a better way," and when she agreed to help him find it. Her inner voice began actually dictating *A Course in Miracles* the following month. It seemed to him that the trip to the Mayo Clinic had been a central part of the preparation. He had experienced another kind of preparation. In 1963, he was put on the space planning committee in the Department of Psychiatry in connection with a new building under construction: the Black Building. Because of his work on the building blue prints, he was able to develop some space for two private offices in the corner of the psychiatric wing. It was a very desirable area and subsequently approved. When the building was completed in September of 1965, he and Helen moved into the new offices. As if on cue, *A Course in Miracles* began the next month. Bill felt somehow –a month before the Course began--that an ideal place had been prepared for them.

Whenever Helen heard this inner voice, it was clearly identifiable. She prided herself as a research psychologist, and not as someone who heard voices or who had heightened visual imagery or who experienced all of these psychic events that occurred during the summer of 1965. It was extremely distressing to her. She kept feeling that maybe she was losing her mind. Certainly she couldn't reconcile all of this activity with her scientific predilections. And this became a particularly acute problem for her, as the early fall began.

Part Six: A Course in Miracles Begins (October, 1965)

"One night in October Helen called me and said, 'You know that inner voice refuses to go away. It keeps saying, 'This is a course in miracles, please take notes.' What shall I do? Suppose it's crazy. Suppose it doesn't make sense.' And she was obviously going through a great deal of anguish and agony at that point. I said the only obvious thing. 'Why don't you take down whatever it is. You can read it to me tomorrow morning in the office, and if it doesn't make any sense, no one else has to know about it. But at least we'll know what it is.' So that's what we did. The next morning Helen came in, and she read that beautiful introduction to the Text, which says: 'Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.'

"It was obvious we were tuning into something that could hardly be regarded as crazy, no matter how unexpected it was. Part of my role with Helen in this was giving her support and reassurance when she felt frightened by these psychic experiences, as well as by other things that frightened her as the 'project' continued. At some level I believed the reality of certain kinds of psychic experiences, having previously had some in my own life, such as finding my apartment. And there were other experiences of that kind. I remember when I was a graduate student working on my Ph.D., I used to wonder at times, 'Why am I doing this?' Once when I asked myself that question, I got a very clear answer: 'You won't know for many, many years, but when you do, it will make you terribly happy.' I just accepted it. In an odd sort of way there was a part of me that was familiar with the idea of inner communication, but I didn't know quite what to do with it. It wasn't something that was discussed in the academic setting I was in, so I just put it aside. I didn't deny the experience, but I didn't try to explain it either. Things of that kind had happened frequently enough for me not to be totally surprised by Helen's experiences. As I look back, there were a lot of experiences that were similar, odd experiences that I couldn't explain.

"So when Helen started hearing an inner voice, I knew it wasn't something that she was making up. In her attempts to gain attention, Helen had a strong self-dramatizing tendency, but I knew this wasn't that. It didn't fit that category at all. This was something that was quite authentic. She was frightened of it, but acknowledged it as having the

kind of authenticity that was not characteristic of her own ideas. Yet she was also actually indifferent about it, despite its very compelling quality. And contrary to what some might think, Helen said she did not hear an external voice. What she heard really was a part of her mind that was clearly separated from her ordinary ego consciousness or awareness. And in taking down *A Course in Miracles*, it was almost as if there was a tape recorder that she could turn on or off. All she had to do was listen attentively to what was said, and record it in her shorthand notebook, which is precisely what she did. But there was no external voice of any kind. It was simply a very distinct thought impression that came through. And while the Course came in a form that I never anticipated, I did regard this as the answer to my question that there must be another way and that I was determined to find it. It seemed to me, to the extent that I valued being a scientist, that I should look at all evidence before dismissing anything, any of this. There was an initial, 'Can this be true? Or is this totally preposterous?' But as I read the material, I recognized that Helen's ego self in no way could have written what I was reading. It was totally alien to her background, to her interests, and to her mode of conceptualizing abstract ideas. There was simply no way that the ego part of Helen could have done this.

"After Helen heard the voice saying, 'this is a course in miracles, please take notes,' she was encouraged when we typed up the material and it made sense. And as the material developed, a great deal of it became increasingly beautiful. Hundreds of pages are in iambic pentameter, Shakespearean blank verse. When we discovered that, it offered an additional dimension to the beauty of the concepts. It was almost as if we were being given words and music at the same time. Helen certainly responded very much to the literary quality of the material. That was important to her, and very important to me, too. Fortunately, too, Helen felt that it was her function to take this down, even though she couldn't really turn it off. Yet at times when she would try to stop it, she couldn't sleep, or would wake up in the middle of the night after a fitful tossing bout, and start taking down some of the material. It seemed as though she couldn't get any rest if she didn't do it. So that is how we began."

Part Seven: Columbia University Ego Versus Spirit (1965-1977)

In October 1965, Helen Schucman began to scribe *A Course in Miracles*. At the time, she and Bill were very busy with their daily routine of administration and academic responsibilities, teaching students and reviewing their papers and theses. When the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology was disbanded in early 1965, for a few years, they continued to be associated with CIA funding (The Geschichter Foundation and Psychological Assessment Associates). Although John Gittinger directed Psychological Assessments Associates, he was not aware of their work on *A Course in Miracles* until the mid-1980s when he read about them in *Psychology Today*.

For at least five years while Bill and Helen channeled the Course, they continued private research on applications of the Personality Assessment System to specific mental and physical health problems. For example, in 1967, they produced a thirty-two page paper on "Psychological Testing of Children" in a book edited by A.P. Friedman and E. Harms, *Headaches in Children* (Springfield, C.C. Thomas). In the same year, Bill Thetford collaborated with John Gittinger (and four other psychologists) on an eight-page paper entitled "Studies in Human Ecology" in a book edited by L.Y. Rabkin and J.E. Carr, *Sourcebook in Abnormal Psychology* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, pp 342-350). In 1968, they wrote a twelve-page paper, "Expressed Symptoms and Personality Traits in Conversion Hysteria," published in *Psychological Reports*, Number 23, pp. 132-243. In that same year they published another paper for *Psychological Reports*, "Personality Patterns in Migraine and Ulcerative Colitis." In 1969, they wrote an eight-page study for *Psychological Reports* called "Self-choices, Preferences and Personality Traits." In 1970, as Associate Editor of the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, Bill arranged for the publication of an updated version of their "Migraine and Ulcerative Colitis" study. In 1971, their last published article, "Motivational Factors and Adaptive Behavior" appeared as Chapter 17 in a book, *The Physiologic Basis of Rehabilitation Medicine*, edited by J.A. Downey and R.C. Darling (Philadelphia, W.B. Saunders)

Despite the time-consuming research required to produce those papers, the Course gradually began to dominate their time and energies. When asked later why she thought she had started to hear the Voice at that time, she said,

"I was given a sort of mental 'explanation'... in the form of a series

of related thoughts that crossed my mind in rapid succession and made a reasonably coherent whole. According to this 'information,' the world situation was worsening at an alarming pace. People all over the world ... were developing what to them were highly unexpected talents, each making his individual contribution to an overall, prearranged plan.²²

"I had apparently agreed to take down A Course in Miracles, which the Voice would dictate to me as part of the agreement, and my doing it was actually my reason for coming. It really did not involve unexpected abilities since I would be using abilities I had developed very long ago, but which I was not yet ready to use again.... Because of the acute emergency, the usual slow evolutionary process of spiritual development was being by-passed in what might be called a 'celestial speed-up.'... The feeling was conveyed to me that time was running out."

Under pressure from her teaching and student counseling, Helen initially resented being interrupted by her Voice.

"I would feel the writing coming on almost daily and sometimes several times a day. The timing never conflicted with work and social activities, usually starting at some time when I was reasonably free to write without interference. I wrote in a shorthand notebook that I soon began to carry with me, just in case. I could and often did refuse to cooperate, at least initially. But I soon learned that I would have no peace until I did. Sometimes, I refused to write for over a month, during which I merely became increasingly depressed. There was never anything automatic about the writing. It always required my full conscious cooperation.

"Evenings [were]...the favored time for 'dictation,' especially for additional "assignments." I objected bitterly to this and often went to bed defiantly without writing anything, but I could not sleep. Eventually, I got up in disgust and wrote as directed. Sometimes I was so tired that I went back to bed and fell asleep after taking down only a few paragraphs. However, I would be impelled to continue with the section before breakfast the next morning, perhaps finishing it on the way to work or at odd moments between work pressures during the day. I never knew when I started a sentence how it would end, and the ideas came so quickly that I had trouble keeping with them even though

I used a rapid combination of shorthand symbols and abbreviations I had developed during years of taking class notes and recording therapy sessions."²³

It soon became clear to Helen and Bill that the Course was a "collaborative venture;" that is, a prolonged, seven-year exercise in forgiveness through which, separated by their ego perceptions of each other, they would discover "the better way" that Bill had asked for in the summer of 1965. Working in adjacent offices in the new Black Building, Helen and Bill found more and more time during the day when she could dictate from her shorthand notes and Bill could type, then read back his typescript to check for mistakes. They followed that procedure for the next seven years, completing the twelve hundred pages of the Course in 1972.

HUGE C.I.A. OPERATION REPORTED IN U.S. AGAINST ANTIWAR FORCES, OTHER DISSIDENTS IN NIXON YEARS



What about Dr. Sidney Gottlieb and MK-ULTRA? Twenty years after the project had been started, in 1973, Richard Helms, Director of CIA, ordered the destruction of all MK-ULTRA records.

Nevertheless, on August 1, 1974, the New York Times published an astonishing revelation of many illegal projects that Gottlieb and his masters had funded through two decades of covert operations. Those revelations prompted Senator Church to begin hearings that investigated the sometimes comic, sometimes bizarre and often boldly illegal initiatives of Gottlieb, the Sorcerer..

Part Eight: Summary and Conclusion

A review of the careers of Bill Thetford and Helen Schucman confirms the fact that they worked (unknowingly in Helen's case) for the CIA at different times between 1951 and 1965, when the Society for The Investigation of Human Ecology was disbanded. With the exception of Bill's brief assignment to the Mid-East for three months in 1953, between 1951 and 1965 he worked almost exclusively with John Gittinger to help refine the Personality Assessment System. Even his major project at Cornell University, a cross-cultural study of Chinese refugees in New York, probably aimed at adaptations of the PAS for use with Chinese people. For seven years (1958-1965), when she was not engaged in her increasingly time-consuming academic duties, Helen also devoted her skills to the intellectual and psychometric improvement of the PAS.

The operative word is "intellectual." Their aim was to help create perhaps the most sophisticated personality test in the world. How, where and when that test might be employed by CIA was not their concern. It is not a stretch to say that the development of such a test had been an intellectual purpose of the entire history of psychology. The evolving success of the PAS in describing and predicting the probable behavior of foreign leaders brought John Gittinger to the apex of the American policy process: personal advisory contact with several Presidents. Several of his colleagues thought that the sophistication of his Personality Assessment System was equal to the achievements of Freud and Jung. Armed by the PAS with a deeper understanding of Krushchev's personality and his likely behavior under stress in 1962, President Kennedy dared to deal with the Cuban missile crisis on a personal basis.

In early 1953, it was for quite another purpose that Sidney Gottlieb had sought efficient methods for modifying behavior. By 1964 after eleven years of experiments, Sidney Gottlieb had failed to find any mind control drugs that could reliably control human behavior. As if to herald the end of MK-ULTRA's mission, its name was changed to MK-SEARCH. Heyman told the author that at that time, in the prevailing spirit of compartmentalization, Gittinger invoked the "need to know" rule to bar Helen Schucman from being told that her work was for CIA. Out of respect for Gittinger, the PAS and "need to know," Gottlieb never tried to involve either Bill Thetford or Helen Schucman in his search for a reliable truth drug at Edgewood Arsenal.

However, other considerations may clarify why Bill had greater interest

in explaining rather than modifying human behavior. For one thing, his childhood experiences had laid a firm foundation for his abiding interest in the development of children. Beginning in 1951, his friendship with and respect for John Gittinger would have reinforced his intellectual focus on the critical childhood years of personality development.

And then there were Bill's many personal experiences with his intuition. Before 1965, did he see them as echoes of his early exposure to Christian Science? The evidence is spotty but worth our scrutiny. At the age of ten, he had been conscious of distinct phases of his life. As early as 1945, when he had just started graduate school and asked, "Why am I doing this?" an inner voice had assured him that someday his work would make him very, very happy. In 1953 when he found his apartment in New York, he had sensed an unseen force guiding his life. Over the next ten years, perhaps because personal and professional relationships at Columbia University had generated relentless stress, he was drawn inexorably towards that mystical dimension for help. That interest flowered in 1965 after he and Helen Schucman began to scribe *A Course in Miracles*.

From 1965 until Gittinger and Gottlieb retired in 1972, Bill and Helen continued to write about the PAS, but there is no evidence that the CIA took any interest in the Course. Neither of them ever participated in experiments on behavior modification while they both were scribing the Course. From 1972 until they retired in 1977, Heyman was Chief of the Behavioral Activities Branch at CIA and Senior Psychologist at Psychological Assessments Associates (PAA). He told the author that Bill and Helen had no role with CIA during that period.

The question remains. Did their work with the PAS before 1965 have any impact on *A Course in Miracles*?

The answer is curious. We know that Bill Thetford was dissatisfied with what he called the imaginative spin of psychology, unrelated to a rigorous scientific theory. CIA funding over a period of fourteen years (1951-1965) made it possible for Bill and Helen to gain a profound understanding of the process by which a human being creates his own ego and personality in the first twenty years of life. Did the PAS finally satisfy his yearning for a cohesive theory? Despite his fourteen years of work with the PAS to describe how the human ego, the "differentiated self," evolves and dictates perceptions of personal reality, by 1965 Bill had to face the gnawing conclusion that some

other dimension transcends the power of ego in human choice.

Could the Oriental, if unscientific, vision of pioneers like Carl Jung and Harry Stack Sullivan be a basis for a coherent theory? After all his years of work on personality assessment, Bill concluded that there must be a better way. Could the egocentric "differentiated self" of the PAS coexist with the "undifferentiated Self" of spirit? From the spring of 1965 onwards, he and Helen gradually drifted away from the dynamic, structured PAS definition of personality. Out of their search for a better way came A Course in Miracles, a mind discipline and system of thought whose conceptual roots could be traced across six thousand years to the Vedanta.

Bill must have been challenged and finally deeply satisfied some time in the late 1960s when he read for the first time a section of the Text of the Course entitled "Self-Concept Versus Self."²⁴

"Concepts are learned. They are not natural. Apart from learning, they do not exist. They are not given, so they must be made. Not one of them is true, and many come from feverish imaginations, hot with hatred and distortions born of fear. What is a concept but a thought to which its maker gives a meaning of his own? Concepts maintain the world. But they cannot be used to demonstrate the world is real. For all of them are made within the world, born in its shadow, growing in its ways and finally 'maturing' in its thought. They are ideas of idols, painted with the brushes of the world, which cannot make a single picture representing truth.

"The learning of the world is built upon a concept of the self, adjusted to the world's reality. It fits it well. For this image suits a world of shadows and illusions....The building of a concept of the self is what the learning of the world is for. This is its purpose; that you come without a self, and make one as you go along. And by the time you reach 'maturity' you have perfected it, to meet the world on equal terms, at one with its demands.

"A concept of the self is made by you. It bears no likeness to yourself at all. It is an idol, made to take the place of your reality as Son of God.

"A concept of the self is meaningless. For no one here can see what it is for, and therefore cannot picture what it is. Yet is all learning that

the world directs begun and ended with the single aim of teaching you this concept of yourself, that you will choose to follow the world's laws, and never seek to go beyond its roads nor realize the way you see yourself.

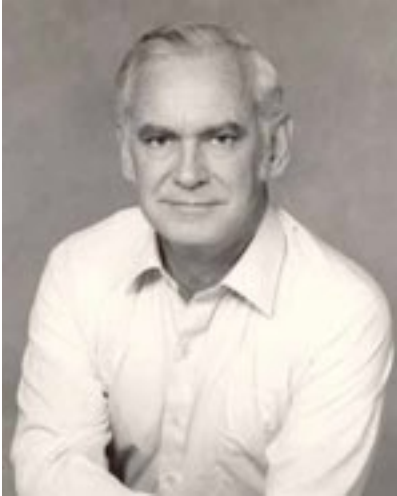
"You will make many concepts of the self as learning goes along. Each one will show the changes in your own relationships, as your perception of yourself is changed. There will be some confusion every time there is a shift, but be you thankful that the learning of the world is lessening its grasp upon your mind. And be you sure and happy in the confidence that it will go at last, and leave your mind at peace."

Thus did the Course tell Bill that even though the PAS could explain the process by which each person makes his own "self," it must be perceived as an illusory "self," suitable only for successive performances on the world's stage. The Course offered a process by which Bill and Helen might release themselves personally from their self-illusions and find inner peace. Unknowingly, they offered to the world a path to redemption from what Helen saw as a social and a metaphysical crisis. It is curious that Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford retired at about the same time. They had done their best.

Note On The Author (2009)

In what way was the author qualified to address questions about Bill Thetford's relationship with the CIA and the impact, if any, of that experience on *A Course in Miracles*? His qualifications derive from a thirty-year experience with the United States government, including a few years with CIA and a thirty-year experience with *A Course in Miracles* including an eight-year personal friendship with Bill Thetford.

Government Experience: His father was an Air Corps officer in San Antonio in 1926 when he was born. He grew up around mechanics and pilots and people of all ranks before he entered West Point in 1944. After he graduated in 1948, he spent the next fifteen years learning his trade from the tactical to the strategic levels. In addition to four years in technical schools, he served a tour (1949-1951) in the Philippines as a topographic engineer, making new maps of the Islands and studying guerrilla operations in an environment of Communist "Huk" hostilities; for a year (1952) he served as aide to a General whose responsibilities included representation at the United Nations; for the next eighteen months he attended graduate school at Harvard and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy to prepare for a teaching assignment at West Point (1954-1957); in 1957-1958, he wrote a doctoral dissertation and qualified as a paratrooper and Ranger. In 1958, he received a Ph.D. in International Relations and Economics from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. A one-year tour (1958-1959) in South Korea as an advisor to the Korean Military Academy stimulated his growing interest in the Far East, especially in what senior Korean officers and young cadets tried to teach him about their unique worldview. For the next eighteen months, he served as a company commander and Battle Group operations officer in the 82nd Airborne Division. In 1961-62 he attended the Army Language School to study Chinese, then attended the Command and General Staff College (1962-63) to learn how to manage an infantry division.



In the summer of 1963, he was ordered to Taiwan to complete his studies in Chinese (Mandarin) and to select a focus for "utilization" of the language. While he was there for four years (1963-1967), he met many CIA officers with a broad knowledge of Asian culture and languages. One officer in particular, sensitive to his fascination with Oriental thought and personality, taught him the intricacies of the Personality Assessment System (PAS). His language utilization tour (1967-1969) involved a two-year assignment to the Office of the American Consul General in Hong Kong. After serving in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for a year, he retired from the Army in 1970 with the rank of Colonel and spent six years writing about China in several "think tanks," including the RAND Corporation and BDM. From 1976 to 1979, he was Chief of the Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division of the Library of Congress. By that time, when he was 54, he had friends at all levels of government and was familiar with most prevailing ideas about uses and misuses of power from the level of combat command to the level of national security policy.

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In 1978, while in a Congressman's office, Milton Friedman, a Presidential speechwriter, gave a copy of the Course to the author. Milton then introduced the author to Judith Skutch, President of the Foundation for Inner Peace, who became the author's wife in 1984. From that time until the current writing, he was and remains a student of the Course. In the early 1990s he became Vice President for Administration of the Foundation for Inner Peace, publisher of the Course. With Dr. Kenneth Wapnick he was a co-director of the translation program, supervising the translation and publication of the Course in eighteen

languages as of 2009.

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The author first met Bill in January 1979, when he visited Tiburon, California. From that time until Bill's death in 1988, they were friends sharing not only a fascination with the Course but also similar careers in academia and government service. By 1979, Bill was no longer interested in the international political and economic power struggles of the 1970's and 1980's. However, he was still impressed by the descriptive and prescriptive strength of the Personality Assessment System. He and Bill often discussed similarities between principles of the Course and Oriental thought. Bill delighted in finding Course principles hiding in Oriental thought and customs. He once said that, although the Course uses Christian terminology, it was truly a "Christian Vedanta," its principles comparable to the 6000-year old Hindu Vedas.

1. Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, **The FBI in Our Open Society**, New York, W.W.Norton and Company, 1969, pp, 85-86.
2. Ibid., pp, 88-89.
3. Corey Ford, **Donovan of OSS**, Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1970, p. 148.
4. U.S. Congress. Senate Committee on Armed Services, National Defense Establishment: **Unification of the Armed Services, Hearings**, 80th Congress, 1st Session, Washington, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947.
5. See John Marks, **The Search for The Manchurian Candidate: The CIA and Mind-Control**, New York Times Books, 1979, Chapter One.
6. For an overview of psychology in 1947, see Gardner Murphy, **Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure**, New York, Harper and Brothers, pp. 914-927.
7. Ibid., p. 916.
8. Ibid., p. 917.
9. Ibid., p. 918.

10. Ibid., pp. 919-923.

11. Ibid., p. 927.

12. For Gittinger's personal memory of his early intellectual struggles at CIA, see his "Origins of The Personality Assessment System" in **The Personality Assessment System Foundation Journal**, Vol 1, Number 1, Spring, 1982, pp. 13-28.

13. Unless otherwise indicated, all italicized quotations are taken from William Thetford, **Unpublished Autobiography**, Foundation for Inner Peace, 1988.

14. Interview with Dr. Marshall Heyman, 2007. Dr. Heyman was a career CIA psychologist who joined the Assessment and Evaluation staff in 1953.

15. Ibid.

16. Thetford **Autobiography**.

17. Ibid.

18. Dr. Kenneth Wapnick, **Absence From Felicity**, Temecula, CA, Foundation for **A Course in Miracles**, 1991

19. Ibid.

20. See Interview With John Gittinger, Tiburon, California, May 9, 1997.

21. See William G. McLoughlin, **Revivals, Awakenings and Reform**, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1978, Chapter Six.

22. Kenneth Wapnick, **Absence From Felicity**, p.200.

23. Ibid., p. 202.

24. **A Course in Miracles**,Text, pp. 657ff