

A Proposal for Research

In August, 1987 FMBR wrote a proposal to study the material purporting to have been channeled from the Challenger astronauts. Internal evidence suggests that this material is valid and of great potential value. FMBR was not able to find a sponsor for such a study.

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PROPOSAL FOR RESEARCH

CHALLENGER PROJECT

FOUNDATION FOR MIND-BEING RESEARCH
August 20, 1987

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I. Introduction.

The Foundation for Mind-Being Research proposes a study of material purporting to have been channeled from the Challenger astronauts. Internal evidence suggests that this material is valid and of great potential value. The material needs to be studied in detail, however, and, to the extent possible, verified. If proven valid, the material and future readings through the same channels will provide a unique opportunity to study in depth the phenomenon of channeling and its significance.

Should the material be found to be valid, this fact by itself will be of major importance. The existence and validity of such unconventional sources of information must lead to a major revision of man's view of the reality in which he lives. This cannot help but affect the way men see the manifold problems that beset them -- from their relation to the natural and sociological environments to the role of government and the threats to world peace. It is not too much to say that this material, if proven valid, may make mankind a little wiser. It is evident that the world needs all the wisdom it can find; it is our hope that this project will, in some measure, advance that goal.

We propose a two-phase program. In Phase I, we will seek to validate the current material, and to establish it and the channels as a basis for further study. After completion of Phase I, and if the material still appears valid, a detailed program for Phase II will be proposed. During Phase II, we will address the channeling phenomenon itself, and will explore its philosophic and metaphysical implications.

II. Background.

IIa. Available Channeled Material.

We have in hand the transcribed records of eleven channeling sessions by Jeanne Love purporting to be communications from the Challenger astronauts subsequent to the Challenger disaster. The material totals perhaps 25 hours, and was recorded in the period from Jan. 29, 1986 (one day after the disaster) to Nov. 21, 1986, inclusive. We also

have the transcript of one session of about 2 hours length obtained through a second channel, Regina Ochoa, on January 28, 1987, also purporting to be from the astronauts.

IIa.1 Preliminary Confirmation.

Some preliminary analysis has been done by comparing the material with publicly available information. We have not found any discrepancies. Rather, there are several items which have been verified by information that became public after the date of the channeled material -- in The Presidential Report of the disaster (ref. [1]), in NASA's response to the Presidential Report (ref. [2]), or in various news reports. The following examples are illustrative:

A. Time and Manner of the Astronauts' Deaths.

The channeled material of May 15 and 17, 1986, and later material, all insisted that at least some of the astronauts lived and were conscious for a period after the initial explosion.

As late as mid-July, NASA claimed that the crew had no awareness of the catastrophe. Even as late as July 18, 1986, in an article by Kathy Sawyer, staff writer for the Washington Post, a NASA spokesperson is quoted as saying: "intercom voice tapes from the Challenger crew cabin, restored by IBM engineers, indicate the seven crew members never knew anything was wrong before the space shuttle was engulfed in a ball of fire and broke apart. Preliminary analysis of the tape shows the crew was unaware of the events associated with the tragedy." The article states that this was the first time NASA had commented, publicly, on the astronauts' final moments even though the tapes had been recovered about six weeks after the tragedy -- perhaps in mid-March. The delay was attributed to the difficulty in restoring the tapes after their long immersion in salt water.

The first public indication of anything different was given in a NASA report released July 28, 1986 and reported by AP, dateline July 30, 1986, SPACE CENTER, Houston. This report was by Dr. Joseph Kerwin, the astronaut-physician who investigated the cause of the crew's deaths for NASA. He acknowledged that some of the astronauts did survive the explosion and might have remained conscious for at least a few seconds afterwards. (He assumes the cabin lost pressure and asserts that they probably lost consciousness rather quickly from this cause.) He asserts that "Analysis indicates that these accelerations (e.g., those caused by the explosion) are survivable, and that the probability of

major injury to the crew members is low." Dr. Kerwin said, further, that some of the crew were "alert enough during the fall to activate emergency air packs."

According to AP report, dateline July 29, 1986, SPACE CENTER, Houston, NASA associate administrator for space flight, Rear Admiral Richard Truly said that, "until last week it was believed the crew had not sensed the disaster," and that an exclamation on one of the tapes could indicate "there was a moment of awareness."

Further on this topic, the UPI, in an article, dateline Aug. 2, 1986, Washington, D.C., quoted former astronaut Robert Crippen as saying that NASA "screwed up" by prematurely saying the astronauts were unaware of the rapid chain of events that led to the shuttle's destruction and their deaths. The article quotes him as saying further that: "In my mind, they lost cabin pressure and made a desperate effort to at least turn the PEAPs (personal egress air packs) on."

B. Flight Recorders and Tapes.

In the channeled material of May 17, 1987, it was stated that "there were several flight recorders on board."

We have not found any discussion of such recorders, or of the material they may have recorded, in the Presidential Report, ref. [1], except for the inclusion in the list of recovered Crew Module Components in Appendix O of ref. [1]. There items 14 and 15 are listed as "OPS Recorder Magnetic Tape," item 16 is listed as "Recorder Magnetic Tape, Transport Unit PL," and item 175 is listed as "Video Tape Recorder Unit." We do not know if these items are the flight recorders. The Presidential Report does not indicate any content.

The first public discussion of the tapes seems to have been in the AP news story, dateline July 17, 1986, Washington, D.C. That article quoted a NASA statement acknowledging that the tapes had been recovered sometime in mid-March. The statement referenced the tape in support of the belief that the astronauts were unaware of the events leading up to their deaths. It was not until July 29, 1986, as referenced above, that NASA acknowledged that the tapes recorded human sounds after the explosion.

Most recently, as reported in an AP news item, dateline June 3, 1987, Washington, D.C., a federal judge, in response to a suit by the New York Times under the Freedom of Information Act, has ordered NASA to release

the cockpit tape. The news item said, however, that NASA is expected to appeal the court's decision.

C. Design for Safety.

The channeled material from May/7, 1986 is very explicit that "there are survivable accidents," even during launch, but that it would require a major redesign of the shuttle. The material asserts that, if the astronauts "had been suited on independent air supplies," and if there had been a parachute, they "would have survived."

The Presidential Commission, ref. [1], makes a large number of recommendations of ways to improve safety in the engineering design, the project management, and the NASA organization. Among other recommendations, the Commission, in discussing "Launch Abort and Crew Escape," recommended that NASA "make all efforts to provide a crew escape system for use during controlled gliding flight." While it is not clear if such a system would have helped the Challenger astronauts, it does confirm the possibility of improvement.

In NASA's reply to the Presidential Commission's recommendations, as reported to President Reagan and published in ref. [2], James C. Fletcher discussed the Commission's recommendations in the area of flight safety. In the area of "Launch abort and crew escape," the report states: "On 7 April, NASA initiated a Shuttle Crew Egress and Escape Review and a Launch Abort Reassessment Team. Among other things, these studies will assess options for crew escape during controlled gliding flight. Final reports are due on 1 October." Again, it is not clear if these studies directly address the Challenger event.

An AP article, dateline July 30, 1986, SPACE CENTER, Houston, quotes Tommy W. Holloway, chief of the Johnson Space Center flight directors office, as saying "I doubt very seriously that a bail-out system would have had any chance of working." Flight director John Cox is also quoted as saying that survival chances with parachutes would have been "improbable."

From these and other public reports, it is clear that the responsible authorities are indeed concerned with improving safety and providing a possible escape for the crew, at least under some conditions. This is clearly true whether or not it is judged feasible to provide escape mechanisms that might have saved the Challenger crew.

These excerpts from the channeled material, and their comparison with material that became public considerably after the channeling, illustrates why we believe the material is worth further analysis.

IIa.2. Other Confirming Material.

The material discussed above compares channeled material concerning some important aspects of the disaster with information that later became public. There are many other assertions in the channeled material that give even more striking insights into the disaster. Some have been partially validated by information received through private sources. The confirming evidence cannot be detailed since it has not yet been released to the public. However, we can say that we have found no instance where the channeled material has proven to be wrong.

IIb. Unique Aspects of the Challenger Disaster.

The Challenger disaster provides an opportunity that is very unusual in the history of physic research. It is in the following ways:

While in training, the astronauts had worked intensely as a cooperative group. We can imagine that this background, together with the shared trauma of the event itself, may have generated an intense collective pool of intention and psychic energy in the group. Indeed, the channeled material reflects this.

The disaster was highly public; it evoked a highly emotional response in a vast number of people. We can hypothesize that the resultant empathetic association could add further psychic energy to the event.

The principals involved, the astronauts, were a group of very intelligent, highly capable and technically trained people. They were people who could be counted on to report observations with clarity and precision. It seems quite possible that these characteristics would persist through the event and afterwards so that the group may remain informational sources of unusual clarity and insight.

These aspects may have created an environment for channeling which can be particularly conducive to meaningful research.

IIc. History of Comparable Research.

There has been a long history of investigations of psychic phenomena. Many experiences claiming to be communications from the dead have been studied. While many have proved questionable with some even being identified as probably fraudulent or hysterical, a few have stood up to critical analysis.

One historical investigation has particular significance here since it had many points of similarity to the Challenger disaster. That earlier research concerned the crash of the dirigible, the R101, on Oct. 5, 1930 during its maiden flight from England to India. Forty six lives were lost in that disaster, including the captain. The psychic Eileen Garrett [3-5] had predicted the catastrophe, and subsequently channeled much detailed information about its causes. Her main sources purported to be the captain and crew of the R101.

The R101 investigation, and the work done with Eileen Garrett in connection with it, provides an interesting precedent.

III. Objectives of Proposed Research.

As indicated, we propose to conduct the investigation in two phases. Only Phase I is being proposed at this time.

IIIa. Phase I Goals.

The goals of Phase I will be as follows:

1. To verify, if possible, the channeled material by comparing detailed information contained in it with information from conventional sources -- family, friends, colleagues, NASA, published material, etc.
2. To validate, if possible, the two channels that have been used so far, Jeanne Love and Regina Ochoa, as sources of reliable information.
3. If validation is obtained, to consider how best to use these channels in Phase II studies, and to assess possible directions for the Phase II research. If the material and sources are validated, to prepare a detailed plan for Phase II.

The results of the Phase I study will be reported to the sponsor. As appropriate, the results of Phase I may be made public. The sponsor will be notified in advance if and

when this is done and, with his concurrence, his support will be fully acknowledged.

IIIb. Phase II, Directions and Possible Goals.

As indicated, detailed planning of Phase II will depend on the success of the Phase I study. It will depend, also, on consultations with the sponsor and others who may be able to offer useful insight and responsible advice.

There are a number of directions possible in Phase II. To illustrate the variety of possibilities, Phase II could address the following questions:

1. What is the source of the information in the channeled material?

While the material appears to be from individuals who have died, this is not the only possible explanation. Even if we are able to exclude totally any question of fraud or unconscious wish-fantasy, there are other logically possible sources:

Other nonphysical entities masquerading as the spirits of the astronauts. For example, an "over-soul," representing a collection of spirits.

The collective consciousness, or Jungian collective unconscious, of mankind or of some subgroup.

Instead of a specific entity as the source, the channels could be accessing the "Akashic records," which, according to esoteric tradition, contain data on all past and future events.

The channels could have contacted the astronauts across time, or through a temporal displacement of some kind.

This possibility is difficult since some of the channeled material includes events after their deaths. The hypothesis, therefore, requires some rather tortuous additional assumptions. However, the possibility cannot be entirely dismissed.

The channels use some form of unconscious, extended ESP (telepathy) to obtain information from people all over the world with personal knowledge of the astronauts, of their prior lives, and of the events surrounding them and their deaths.

The simplest explanation is that the sources are what they claim to be, the discarnate astronauts themselves. We acknowledge, however, that these other possibilities exist. A study of these possibilities might be a useful direction for investigation.

We emphasize that any explanation among these possible alternatives would still be enormously significant. A proof of the validity of the information, regardless of its source, would have enormous impact on man's view of himself and of the reality in which he lives.

2. What information or viewpoints do the channeled material offer to the world of the living? How should it be regarded?

The material obtained so far asserts that the astronauts feel a strong obligation to be of service to the living. They also seem to feel that important errors are being made in man's view of his reality, many of which are not fully recognized by the living people in authority. If the material can be validated, it will offer a viewpoint which is substantially different from that of most of us. Perhaps this viewpoint will prove important, even vital, as it affects the way man views his life and its problems.

3. What can we say about the conditions "beyond the threshold?" Do souls evolve after death? Towards what goal?

These questions have been addressed in much research based on other material or sources. However, the special conditions of the Challenger disaster, may create a special opportunity. Indeed, the transcripts have much to say about the post-death experiences of the astronauts.

4. If we regard channeling simply as a source of information without regard for the source, what conditions facilitate the information transfer?

This topic can be resolved into a number of subsidiary questions addressing the physical environment of the channel, whatever conditions can be identified for the source including motivation, the nature of the questions asked, how the answers are recorded and analyzed, etc.

It is not clear whether answers would be generally applicable or specific to the particular channels and

sources being studied. Nevertheless, answers would provided a basis for other studies of the channeling phenomenon.

No doubt there are other topics that can also be considered. However, these will suggest the range of possibilities.

IV. Method of Approach, Phase I.

As stated, the primary goal of Phase I is to validate the material and the channel. This will be done by comparing the channeled material with information obtained from more conventional sources.

IVa. Conventional Sources.

The alternate, more conventional, sources that can be used to check various statements in the transcripts will include the following:

Official sources, including NASA, press reports and magazine articles.

Friends, colleagues, etc. of the astronauts -- the channeled material mentions various friends and acquaintances. These references will be followed up as appropriate.

Their families -- clearly, this will require great tact and delicacy; we have no desire to reopen old hurts. Nevertheless, these people are probably the best source of much of the information needed.

IVb. Procedure.

The available channeled material is extensive. To keep the investigation within reasonable bounds, we will restrict it in a way that will offer the highest probability of success.

To the extent possible, the information needed to confirm or deny the channeled material will be sought by letter or telephone. Where necessary -- probably where family is concerned -- a personal visit, or visits, may be made.

In addition, some literature searches will be undertaken, but only when clearly relevant to the investigation.