

Archives of the Impossible, Rice University

Oral history interview of Edwin C. May, online via Zoom

Interviewer: Christopher Senn, Houston, Texas

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Christopher Senn: So, let's just jump right in here and start at the beginning, I guess.

Edwin C. May: Okay.

Christopher Senn: You have written about how you were first introduced to the subject of parapsychology and I was just wondering if you might be able to talk about what you found so captivating whenever you first discovered the field.

Edwin C. May: Well, probably I'm unique on a number of levels for the researchers in the field. I was in my early 30s before I even heard anything at all about parapsychology. I was a physics guy working in a cyclotron laboratory and doing physics. In 1971, my boss, who was the director of the lab, a guy named John Jungerman, came to me and said "Ed, hey, you're good with hardware. Why don't you come with me? We're gonna try an interesting experiment." Oh, okay, fine; no problem, and yet there was a pendulum, and you can adjust it so that it's timed, it goes back and forth to whatever you want depending upon how short it is or how long it is, and he had adjusted it so the pendulum was fixed or going back and forth roughly equal to the beat of a human heart. Kaboom, kaboom, kaboom. And on the bottom of the pendulum, he had a bright mirror, and in those days, you could measure the position of that mirror as it's swinging back and forth to a quarter of the wavelength of light, high precision, with laser a ferrometer. So, he was shining a laser on this pendulum that's going back and forth, and what he wanted to know was, could people – and I thought this was really bizarre, obviously can't work – can people focus their attention remotely on this swinging pendulum and change its motion. Sort of a psychokinesis experiment. Well, the first thing we found out, which later plagued us through the rest of my career, actually – when you have a very sensitive thing like that, it's very sensitive. What that means is, it's sensitive to everything else, including maybe its psychokinesis. So, we spent a lot of time and a lot of money. We had to get a big slab of concrete because once it's stable, Newton said once at rest, it stays at rest. So, we had the pendulum sitting on that, but that wasn't enough, so we put the whole thing on a bunch of rubber tires, almost floated it in midair. Long story short, we could never isolate it from the environment, and what we ended up with, the world's most expensive, overly built seismometer. We could measure trucks going by on the freeway about 2 miles away, so we gave it up. I thought yeah, right, this is bullshit, I mean, you know, forget it. Then I'm 31 years old and not married and any of that stuff, so I'm bored over the weekend, and Dr. Charlie Tart, Charles Tart, a well-known psychologist there at Davis and did the pioneering work in altered states of consciousness. I saw a flyer, says hey, come, we have a seminar for the weekend. It was a guy named Bob Monroe, who I'd never heard of, talking about something really bizarre, which I also had never heard of - out-of-the-body experience. Well, I have out-of-the-mind experiences a lot, but never out-of-the-body, so I don't know what's going on, so I go there, and I listen to this kind of 50-ish looking – from those days 50-ish looked really old. Now it looks like babies. "Why, you can't be a professor at university; you're only 51," you know. So, um, I listened to this guy talk about bizarre stuff, like getting out

of his body while he's asleep and going and pinching his girlfriend on the butt and raising a welt on her butt. So I bought the book called *Journeys out of the Body*, and on my bookshelf somewhere I've got it still. Read the whole thing in 2 nights and said okay, if this business guy 50 years old can do it, I'm a physicist; I can do anything, I'll try it. So I gave it a good college try for 2 nights and nothing happened. I said yeah, it's BS. That's it. long story short, I ran into, a fellow giving a talk at Berkeley named Charles Honorton. I don't know if you know of him at all.

Christopher Senn: I'm familiar, a little.

Edwin C. May: Yeah. He was my mentor. He was talking science about ESP, extrasensory perception, and I'd never heard of that, "huh, really?" But he was saying all the right stuff, so I went up to him afterwards and, you know, bless his heart, stranger comes up and invites him for dinner. He accepted. We went for a dinner. He was in Berkeley, so we went someplace nice, fish place in Berkeley, which is still there, Tadich's, and he had answers to every single question I had. And that started a long relationship with Chuck as my mentor. With our project when I became director of the research, I funded him to go to Edinburgh to get his PhD. He never graduated college; very bright, very clever fella. Unfortunately, he passed away before he got his degree. He was a little short guy and had a defective heart from birth, and so it, it took him out at the end. But that started it, and I don't know if you've ever heard of Public Law 480?

Christopher Senn: No.

Edwin C. May: Nobody has. It's truly amazing. In the 50s, I believe is when it started. I'm not sure of this. Public Law, meaning it passed by the House and, and the Senate – signed into law, actually – that allowed certain countries in the world to pay their debt to the U.S. in local soft currency. So, like in India, particularly, they could pay their debt to the U.S. in Indian rupees, which could not be used anywhere else on the planet. So, at the time, the U.S. owned \$1.2 billion in Indian rupees that were actually worthless outside of India. If you wanted to apply for a grant, and you put a cover sheet on it that said "oh, uh, not to worry; we're funding this research on Public Law 480 funds," they wouldn't even send it out for review. Funded; go do it. Because they wanted to spend the money, you know, what the hell. So, I knew guys that spent 6 months or 8 months in a five-star hotel in Bombay doing their research, but you had to pay your way to India. You couldn't buy a ticket to get there. So, I have a long, long, long association with India from the late '50s and in 1964 I met, while he was a student there, Gangadharan was his name. We all called him Gangs for short. He was doing school in nuclear chemistry, and I was doing school, graduate school, in nuclear physics, and our experiments were very similar. Long story short there, we became really close friends, long before he was married, and I went to India my first time in 1971, I think it was, and he and I played tourist for 6 weeks, went one end of India to the other. I mean, in Srinagar, far north in Kashmir, all the way down to Kanyakumari in the very south, and I just fell in love with the country. 1974, '75 timeframe, I went to India for a year and worked as a consultant to the Bhabha Atomic Research Center in Bombay doing trace element analysis, and we had, uh, the reason Public Law 480 comes into this, we had thought of doing a very interesting thing 'cause we were using nuclear physics to do trace element analysis, which is just minor, minor, tiny, tiny bits of material. We have these techniques to find out a few parts per billion, let's say, of stuff, and it turned out that, which I

didn't know, when a woman gives birth, the placenta, is an enormous filter of the woman's blood before she gives birth. Now that placenta at birth is free tissue. Aha. We thought of doing trace element analysis on the placenta that might give us a pre-warning of something horrible, like a cadmium spill or some other horrible chemical from large metal, steel. And in those days, Indian women in the villages, particular, were born, raised, married, give birth, and die within about a few square kilometers. So, this would allow us to determine – oh my God, in this patch, look out; we've got a cadmium leak from somewhere. We gotta go find it. So, in the middle of that before we actually got it started, I wrote Gangadharan. I said hey, I've just now stumbled into psychic stuff and I'm not sure I believe it, but I've read, uh, every, all the English language literature I could find on, on weird stuff in India including biofeedback work, which I'd done a lot of anyway, and we're green and so on. And so, I said I'd like to come and study yogis, and he said “fantastic.” I've got a lot of good connections here and a naïve white guy trots off to India for a year. So, I vocationally ran around India lookin' for weird stuff, and I found a lotta weird stuff. Unfortunately, all of it was fraud. And not very good fraud at that. But, wisdom of age, I realized that a white guy's the wrong guy to be doin' this because they will tell you what they think the white guy wants to hear. It's really a big problem. But during that process, before email, I wrote Chuck a regular postal mail, and I said “Chuck I'm really bored out of this. I've been here a year; I can't stand it anymore. I gotta get outta here. How 'bout if I come to your lab and work with you for 8 months before I have to go back to teaching, and it was a ten-page letter, you know, with all these questions, how 'bout if we do this and we do this and we do this.” I got a letter back from him with one word in it: yes. Which was completely not useful at all. So, I fly from India at, at the end of my year, and I fly to New York, and I end up doing 8 months of work at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn, where they were in the dream laboratory at Montague, all men, Stanley Krippner and Chuck Honorton and Alan Vaughn and others. I wrote a lot of very funny stories there. The lab was in the basement of a hospital, and that was a division of the psychiatry department, and they called it the Division of Parapsychology, so we'd answer the phone: "Hello, Division of Parapsychology. May we tell you who's calling?" And there would be this cognitive dissonance on the other end of the phone; had a lot of fun. But I saw more psychic stuff there happening than anywhere else, and certainly in India, and during that time, I ran into a guy, um, Ingo Swann. And Ingo, we hooked up really well. He was working the classified program and he couldn't tell me about classification even though I had many clearances before that during my summer programs at the Rand Corporation, and he said “we're doing this funny thing and you're a physics guy, right? You know what?” He says “I'm working with a bunch of dumbass engineers,” end quote. Ingo was never shy of being blunt like that. He said, “We're doin' some psychic work. Didn't you do that something with the with the heart rate thing?” I said yeah. “Would you like to help doing some of the similar kind of work?” I said sure. So he went back to SRI and leaned on poor Puthoff, which only Ingo could lean as heavily as he could, and got me my job. And that's why I ended up at SRI.

Christopher Senn: Would you say that was when you knew you wanted this to be your life's work?

Edwin C. May: Well, that's a funny kind of a thing. I'd never had a job. I was a post-doc in physics. Started off at \$15,000 a year, which in 1970 was a big pile, in 1968 was a lot of money. But it decreased \$1,000 a year for the next 3 years. So, a lifetime career; are you kidding me? Nobody had a lifetime career in those days. So, I didn't know that, really. There probably

was a cathartic moment that happened. I got my clearances renewed, and Hal called me into his office and showed me some stuff which is now in Volume 1 of the Stargate archives that Pat Price had done, and I said “is this real?” He said yeah. I said oh my God! This means there's a giant hole in our understanding about physics. This is fantastic! He said “yes, but you can't talk about it.” Okay, fair enough, and so I got my clearances renewed, activated again and I couldn't tell anybody, my wife or anybody else, and so Chuck Honorton called me, panic on the phone. “What the hell's going on here? We had FBI guys showing up, as, asking all kinds of questions about you and your job. What is going on?” I said oh yeah – lying through my teeth – everybody at SRI has to have a clearance, and I think they're just doing a background investigation. Whew, dodged a bullet. So then, then it became such an important issue for me, that how could I not spend as my career – well, I didn't think of it long terms 'cause we were having money issues and, God, it might go out of business next week. No, as long as the money's there, and, and I think, I don't know, you can check this, but I believe it's true, and I may have told you in Paris that I do hold a unique position. There have been people in the field that have and associated with the field longer than I have, for sure, but I think I'm the only one that had a 20-year career at industrial scale wages with no other job but researching parapsychology. I don't think there's anybody on the planet that can do that. So I had that. Here's my legacy, erg.

Christopher Senn: And, and we have around 18 boxes here of –

Edwin C. May: Well, there's more coming your way.

Christopher Senn: Excellent, excellent.

Edwin C. May: You know, right now, California is on fire.

Christopher Senn: So, moving on to the next question, you just talked a little bit about, some of the research you did in India. Just going through the collection that you've sent us, one of the things that I feel like is better represented or better reflected in the collection here at the archives than in a lot of the published work about the cognitive sciences program is how you were tasked with evaluating information that was being conducted in the Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China, and –

Edwin C. May: And elsewhere.

Christopher Senn: – and elsewhere, and were there any times that you found any of the information coming out of these other nations' research programs particularly fascinating?

Edwin C. May: Yes. There was a number of times. Not so much out of Russia. You know, I'm not really close friends with our former colleagues, former enemies in Russia, and they will not share anything. A colleague of mine who is an American citizen now, used to be in the Russian army, said once classified, nothing is ever declassified in Russia. And I've shown them all kinds of formerly really top-secret stuff which is now no longer classified, and they don't reciprocate. Although, I do have one answer I think that tells me what's going on to some degree, and this book, uh, ESP Wars. It was the forward by General Nikolai Sham, who was then the deputy director and the second in command of KGB in his last years, and we became pretty

good friends. I was at his 80th birthday party and he wrote the forward for this book and so on, and he told me, he said, “We spent a huge amount of money at 40 different research institutes to try to build offensive psychotronic weaponry, and we could never get them to work.” And I said, “Well, Sham, had you been able to get them to work, you guys woulda had won the Cold War.” So we had some more vodka. So, I don't know about that, but in China...let's see how to start this. Oh, yeah. And the Chinese, because we weren't collecting that data, other sources of intelligence would send us stuff, and our job was to do foreign assessment which was the bailiwick in which it was conducted. And people say “Hey, is this real?” Oh, geez, they were claiming that young Chinese kids who were trained by Qigong masters. Qi is that internal energy in Chinese tradition. And they were trained, and they could do all kinds of marvelous stuff. Like, if you take a Chinese character blind from everybody and put it on the front of a phototube and put it in a black bag, when the kid guessed the thing correctly, the symbol correctly, they got a huge spike in light. In other words, it was sorta like remote viewing something makes it glow in the dark. Now, if that's true, it's really interesting, so we spent, I don't know, \$25,000 and put together a single photon counting system, we had some of the best remote viewers, and we'd put the slide in front cooled with dry ice so the noise was really low and we could detect single photons coming off this thing. Nada with good remote viewing.

Christopher Senn: Hmm.

Edwin C. May: So I then found out, really interesting, one of the people on the project whose name will be familiar is Wanda Luke. And Chinese friend of mine who is actually in Houston right now, whose name is *****, I'll see if he'd be interested to talk to you guys. He's, quite fluent in English. I suspect he's an American and Chinese citizen, quite fluent in English. He arranged, way back when, in the early 90s for Wanda and I to get invited to the Chinese, Society for Somatic Science, in Beijing, and that was, uh, we found out later, the civilian arm of the Red Army.

Christopher Senn: Yeah.

Edwin C. May: And their conference that we were invited to, unfortunately, we were guests of honor And I really mean that we don't wanna be a guest of honor there. We were sitting in the front row and our host was an English speaker from Beijing University and she assigned her best students to sit between us, 'cause none of the talks were in any other language but Mandarin and we didn't have translation, so she would mutter something under her breath and oh dear, complete waste of time, we're sitting there bored, and the problem was, we couldn't get up and leave. We're the guests of honor. We're in the front row, and there's like 300 people in the room. Oh geez, and we were in a different hotel than all the other participants were, and we had been briefed before going, 'cause she had clearances and so did I, that, you might find listening bugs in your room. She found them in her room, and I found 'em in my room and we were briefed on what to do which was completely ignore them. And of course, not having any kind of conversations about them, and we had basically free run of the city. They fed us too much and we went to the Chinese Opera, we could ride around on the Metro and have a good time. They took us out to the Great Wall of China, they were really nice to us, but they wouldn't let anybody ask any questions, and we couldn't talk with these people, except one night. And they arranged for me and Wanda to go to the other hotel, and there was a room, maybe 40 or 50

of these people, and a translator, bi-directional. And long story short, what they said was “Our Qigong masters, when they are in a state of high Qi, get 90 percent hit rate.” So, unfamiliar with the way I normally behave, I was well behaved and diplomatic. I said, “Oh my god, we only get 30 percent like that.” And I said, “What’s going on?” Beside the title of this conference is “Can we measure external Qi” So I said “If the master's in a state of high Qi, how do you know that?” Well, since we can't measure that, we do is we ask the master when he thinks he's in a state of high Qi. Fantastic, that's exactly what I would do. How does the master know that he's in a state of high Qi? He looks at the data. And they do not understand that circularity argument. He only counts the data when it's good. “Oh, I'm in a state of high Qi there. No, not here. Yeah, over here I really am.” And I had to write that up and it's probably in one of the...I sent you our final report on the Chinese adventure, and we talked a lot about that. As a backup story, in 2018, no, it was 2019, maybe. I was invited, **** set it up for me again, to come to Hong Kong for a seminar, 3-day, and there were five westerners. Me and Glenn Hitchman and, and a bunch of other people you may not know, and otherwise it was at Hong Kong and much to my surprise, I thought Hong Kong was in part of China, it has not ever been part of China. And in fact the Chinese people that showed up for that had to get a visa or different money and everything else, that's part of the stress that's going on in Hong Kong right now. I would not go there 'cause it's a mess, and the fellow that organized this conference is a guy named Bingo Wu. A delightful man, he's very wealthy. I'm not quite sure where he gets it. His interest is medical care for orphaned children. He's a very nice guy, and he arranged all this, and we were staying in this hotel, and I guess I can tell you one story about that, which was a little scary. There was a British citizen named Simon, and I think Cheng was his last name, I'm not sure, he's a British citizen. Speaks of course, fluent English, and he is Britain's liaison from parliament to China in trade issues. Big guy, nice man. And so, one of the things, one of the things that happened with this conference was they were gonna show these, they brought in 100 kids, 100 kids from China who had all been trained by Qigong masters and they were superstars. Oh, okay, sure, right on. Well, two things went on. One is we went up to an outdoor basketball court and they divided the kids into two groups of them, and there was a contest, and we were supposed to be the judges of the contest and what they did was, they would blindfold the kid and they, the guy at the free-throw line was to try to sink the ball. Except the kids were doing this, peeking out underneath their masks and we, well, we're not going there, and I got pictures of that all. But the other thing that they eventually wanted, there was a researcher from mainland China that had shown, definitively, teleportation. And it looks like a really nice thing. They have a box labeled with A, English Letter A, and inside that box was some object. I don't remember what the object was, but they also had a video camera inside the box, very clever. And then there was Box B, which was empty with a video camera inside it. And then a Chinese kid, one of these Qigong trained kids is sitting there, and he is to arrange, somehow, for the object in Box A to disappear from there and appear in Box B. Boy does that all sound really cool, and all of us are going “Oh, wow, this is really neat.” Well, the researcher said, “Well, gosh, the problem is for some reason, the video cameras quit working, but the object would appear in the next box.” Well, the problem is, the kid was left alone. So, in front of everybody, this guy offered me a job. He said, “How would you like to run this laboratory and do this thing right. You guys clearly know how to do it. You'll have the money you need.” And again, I was diplomatic. I said, “Look, China is known for its excellence in research. The last thing in the world you need is an elderly white guy. I'm happy to interview people for you, but I'm not going to take that job.” Simon came up after

me and, afterwards, and he said, “Ed, I would never allow you to take that job,” and I said, “Why?” “Because you'd like to leave China one day.”

Christopher Senn: Sure. And I suppose this does play into some of the cultural differences -

Edwin C. May: Huge.

Christopher Senn: – in your work. Were there any times that it seems some of these cultural differences being reflected in the research, were there any times that may have shifted your own perspective any?

Edwin C. May: Yes, it has, but in the wrong direction. I mean, I could go downtown, to downtown Mumbai and climb up on a box and swear I saw swami thinking on to climb up a rope with a pink elephant in his arm and vanish, and I would get sworn affidavits of other witnesses. It's really hard to do that. So, when you have a cultural system like in India and the same problem in China...oh, when Wanda and I were there for that conference, we had a Chinese newspaper, daily newspaper in English, and we could read them, and there was a, a guy from the conference who was a Qigong master, and he was gonna demonstrate to the crowd external Qi, huzzah! Now, if you go online and look at videos of Qigong people doing these very...people bouncing off Qigong masters, you know, coming at 'em, it doesn't do anything it just has this kind of forcefield around 'em. The problem is no Chinese citizen would ever insult a Qigong master, run into 'em. And that's a huge, huge problem. There also in India. So, what happened to this one guy, he says, cameras running, he jumped down off a railroad bridge in front of the speeding freight train, and he goes “huzzah!” Of course, they peeled him off the front of the train dead, with a spatula. He gets A for credit. So, you know, there's a lot of that stuff. I guess, I wanna tell ya another story which is related to the cultural issue. In 2010, there's an organization, a very famous organization, Jeffrey went and did his graduate work there. The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture. In fact, Jeffrey got me invited to a conference there. Okay, so I show up. I'm the resident materialist, and I showed him my presentation, my love for India, blah, blah, blah, and was married in India and all that stuff. And they're out nailing my arms to the cross throughout all this stuff, and I'm talking about promissory materialism. And one of the young monks, must have been 30-something, totally fluent in English, said in his talk, he said, “Look, I support Ed here.” There was a lot of statement that he says, and promissory materialist, do you know what that means?

Christopher Senn: No.

Edwin C. May: Very simple. If you say, “Ed, you're a materialist, you can't write down the equation for love, can you?” Nope, not even close. But I promise you, that sometime next Thursday at 2 in the afternoon and maybe 1,000 years from next Tuesday at 2 in the afternoon, I will have an answer for you.

Christopher Senn: Okay.

Edwin C. May: And actually Sonali and I have done a very careful look at that promissory materialism through our published work and it has not yet ever failed. That doesn't mean it might

not fail in the future. So, I ended up befriending this monk, and we're still in dialogue. I said "Look, Swamiji, I love your philosophy, but ya gotta go beyond the text of 5,000 years or 2,000 years to modern times. Those guys didn't know about brains, they didn't know about genetics, they didn't know about this, that, and the other thing. And if you're right, and I so wish you could be right, it's got to be understood from that framework." And he says, "I completely agree with you." So, we have an exchange of emails every once in a while, still. Yeah, it's pretty interesting, but that's another cultural issue here. But it's rare to find somebody in the culture that rises above it, like this guy did.

Christopher Senn: Well, thank you for sharing that. So there's such a breadth of material, that we have here in the archive and that you've written about in your books. And were there any, looking back on any of the research projects that you did at Stargate and then seeing the remote viewers who applied your research. Is there anything that's particularly memorable or any operations that you played a role in that you can talk about that you're particularly proud of?

Edwin C. May: Oh, absolutely. Virtually all of it. Oddly enough, you know, I've seen some spectacular psychic abilities and you never get jaded over that. There's one story, one of our viewers, I was doing an experiment for the Bial Foundation. Do you know about them?

Christopher Senn: No.

Edwin C. May: There is the largest pharmaceutical company in Portugal is called Bial Foundation, Bial Corporation, and the fourth-generation owner of that is very interested in ESP. I think he got his medical degree at Oxford, no London School of Economics, rather, and he's always wanted to do ESP work, but he can't do it under the auspices of his company. But he could do it, he spun off a foundation called the Be All Foundation, and every two years he takes 500,000 euros, which is not a lot of money. And in fact, they're just now evaluating a bunch of grants for every 2 years. And every two years from 1996 to a couple years ago, they gave me about a half of millions worth of research funds. But one of those experiments we had involving...we think that ESP is like any other sensory system in our body, and the big five that we're familiar with, actually it turns out there are a lot more now, but the big five that we're familiar with, all of them are sensitive to things that change compared to the same thing when it isn't changing. Astronomers, for example, looking through telescopes back in the day when we used actually do that, in fact, you go out on a dark night when it's clear, and you can see that the satellite moving a lot more easily than a star which is ten times brighter. 'Cause it's moving. And our visual system is exquisitely different in electrical engineering term, it's called AC for alternative current, it's really good. So all of our sensory systems are like that. Somebody walks in the lab there where you are wearing too much perfume or cologne, oh gosh, it cuts and then all of a sudden, you, the technical term is called habituate to it. You get used to it. And so, the system in your nose is sensitive not to how much was there, but how much has changed. So, since all the sensory systems we know about are that way, we argued, well, if ESP is, if the S in ESP is a sensory system, there must be some thing that it is more sensitive to than when, that are ESP when that thing, whatever it turned out to be, is changing compared to when that thing is not changing. We found it. And based on that, we had something like six or eight, seven or eight experiments in the lab. I put in a proposal and got this marvelous correlation with changes in entropy it's called. What's nice about changes of entropy is that is the definition of information.

So, how cool is that? That the more information, the raw information, I'm not talking about cognitive information, but there's the raw bits. That is proportional, not very strongly so, but significantly so, to the quality of the remote viewing results. So, what Bial funded me for, 3 years it took, we had a set of photographs, we had natural scenes, bridges and land, water interfaces, ponds and the like, like that. And one of our people, Nevin, Neven Lantz, we sat down in his office and he liked to work in what's called a stimulus response thing. For example, most therapists, and he is a therapist, know that when a very smart client comes to work, that client will do everything possible not to reveal why they're there and psychologists know that, and they have every little trick to fool you on that. One of them, it's a word association test. So I'd say to you, okay, Chris, when I saw a word, you respond to me. I say, tall, you say short; fat, skinny; you hate your mother. Oops. And that's very effective actually. So, we adopted that technique, it actually came from Ingo. And so I'll say to Nevin, "Okay, please access and describe a site, I'm gonna take you to in about 90 minutes from now, and access to that site is through the keyword 'target,' so when I say 'target!' to you, I want you to write down without even thinking about, the first thing that pops into your mind, and if I see you going, "hmm," I say "break." You can't ponder your way into the answer. Well, we're sitting there, ready to go, and I say, "Okay, you ready?" "Yeah." "Put your pen on the page." When I'm not on Zoom but face to face, when you put your pen on the page, that is a signal to me you're ready for the keyword. I say "target," and he goes, "It's a path and a tree. I'm done." Oh geez. I'm thinking, path and a tree, oh shit. I'm in deep trouble here. And it turned out he was 100 percent correct. And that is probably one of the most difficult problems when there isn't anything there per se. Because you, you tend to invent stuff in your head, and that's astounding. There was another story about that, but I won't bore you with it, but when we took Nevin to the feedback, I'm gonna tell ya about it, one of the things was a water tower here in Haywood. And they were constructing a park around it, and it was really awful and the pictures that I had of it... The pictures that we took and we expected, it took 18 months to put this target pool together, and this water tower had construction, it was a big mess, and that's the picture I had. Well, when that turned out to be one of the targets for Nevin, he started off by saying, "Oh, there's a chain-link fence there." And I think, "Oh, none of our targets have chain-link fences, and blah, blah, blah, blah..." And there's kind of a tower-like thing and all that stuff. We take him to the feedback, and in the time period from the time we took the original picture to the place when I was, when he was actually standing there, we had to look right through a chain-link fence. And both of us had got goosebumps. I mean, you know, those are researching issues. On the operational front, one of them really blew me away, two of them, eh, well, handful. One of them was, we tasked one of our viewers, wasn't Ingo, and it was, he was tasked with the following statement – "What can you tell us about the event of interest.?" That's all he was tasked with. No geographical coordinates, no nothing. And he said, "Oh, it's an airdrop nuclear test." And he was right. And I sent him back to it, it was in China, and he described something as roman candles going off. It didn't explode nuclearly. What happened to it, it hit the ground. It was supposed to explode, but it didn't, and when you set fire to plutonium, which was inside the thing, it does that. It's call pyrotechnic. And I've got pictures provided by the, the CIA when they actually burned plutonium to see what it looks like. He nailed it.

Christopher Senn: I actually specifically remember, seeing this picture in archives.

Edwin C. May: Yeah, it was just stunning. And there's a handful of us. I think the bottom, net, net, net, if you were to ask me, what makes you think ESP is real. The problem that most of people in the world of parapsychology, well, they resort to the, to the inferential statistics. And we can argue about it and well, you don't accept this or that, blah, blah, blah, BS. The thing that convinces me is the following. Over time, from 1973 to 1995, our two groups, the one at SRI, SAIC, and at Fort Meade, Maryland, combined. There were 504 separate intelligence collection missions by remote viewing, by SRI team and so on. Those missions, 504 of them, were spread across 19 different federal agencies of the usual suspects; CIA, Defense Intelligence Agency, Army, Navy, Marines, you know, you name it, secret service and so on, including the CIA. Of those federal agencies, 17 of them returned for additional missions. End of story. Including the CIA who claims it didn't work publicly, came back 43 times. Hey, if it wasn't working, what the hell are you doing? The all-time record was held by a joint task force here in or Alameda, near where I'm living at the moment, they were doing drug interdiction. So, the task would be, well, we've learned from other means, the boats leaving Hong Kong or Singapore full of bad stuff and it's coming, we want to know 1 week from today, where can we go pick it up and board it. They came back 172 separate missions. So, you tell me it's not real. I tell ya to bugger off.

Christopher Senn: Sure. And that gets into the next question. You speak of a lot of the different agencies that you worked with through the years and one of the things that stuck out and was really impressive as I was looking through and processing the material was just how many very high-level politicians and military leaders that you interacted with there's even mention of a former president and senators, congressmen and -

Edwin C. May: The intelligence agencies within, actually the army, assistant chief of staff for intelligence, that's the top intelligence guy in the Army, and the same in the Navy, and same in the Air Force. This program had, you know, virtually no funding. Twenty million dollars is chump change for military intelligence programs. I mean, it doesn't even, \$20 million doesn't even put a satellite in orbit, let alone analyze it, okay. So, how in the world is something as controversial as this stuff, with almost no funding get the attention of presidents, vice presidents, heads of executive branch agencies and so on all the way down into the congress and have the support of what we did. I've had conversations with, who was the guy, just passed away? It was, oh, John Glenn. John Glenn was a good buddy of mine, and I was in Senator Cohen's office with Glenn and some other people, and as he was leaving, he said, "Ed, this is really great stuff. If you have any problems, give me a call, and I'll fix them." I said, "Oh gee, thanks, Senator, I really appreciate it." He finally left office and we were looking around for somebody to support us, this book, he wouldn't do it, the end of the day, and I tried to get ahold of him, but all of these senators have a bubble of, of loyal staffers around them, they will protect the, the principal, or what, what they think is protecting the principal, so I never got to talk to John after that. But he was a major supporter at just the right time.

Christopher Senn: Were there any others? I mean, you interacted with so many people from both parties.

Edwin C. May: Republicans were the major supporters of us.

Christopher Senn: Okay.

Edwin C. May: And, you know, all four of these volumes have a forward by a former Secretary of Defense, William Cohen. And for a while, it's gonna sound like name dropping, but it really wasn't, funny story there. I was still at SRI, and I did a call from a guy named Jim Dykstra who it turned out was Senator Cohen's chief of staff on the Senate Select Committee for Oversight for Intelligence. He calls me up and, "Hey, Senator Cohen's interested in your work, and would like to arrange for him to come to California and talk to you. And I said, okay. I'm a little lowly employee. I go running down to my boss and say "Hey, the ranking republican on the Senate Select Committee is coming to review my program, that's fantastic." And my boss made a big mistake. He said, "Oh, well, fantastic. We'll brief him on all the wonderful things SRI can supply the intelligence committee and they'll, they'll throw money at us." And I said, "Well, wait a minute, he's coming to review my program." And my boss said, "Hey, your program's small potatoes compared to what I'm gonna offer this guy." And I said, thought to myself, "Oh yeah?" I was read in on a particular clearance level, which I won't mention, but no one else at SRI was. Other people in the program were, but I was, and so I called up Jim Dykstra, and I said, "Jim, this is really nice. I'm only gonna be able to brief, uh, Senator Cohen at this particular level and there's no one at SRI beside myself that's read in on that program. After pleasantries, would you please excuse, excuse all the rest of SRI management out of the room?" Which they did. Ooh, were they mad at me, and I said, "Yeah, I don't have control over that. Not me." And that developed a nice relationship with Senator Cohen, and I'd lie, I'd call up Jim Dykstra and I'd say, "Hey, Jim, I'm coming to Washington anyway, can you give me 15 minutes with the senator.?" Of course, I was lying, and later over dinner, I told him, he said, "Of course I knew you were lying, that's no problem" He said well, "How about Wednesday at 4:15.?" I said, "Okay, I'll be there." And I'd click, make reservations, fly to Washington, be there. And we developed a personal relationship, and in fact, when Cohen was leaving the senate...he's a big, tall guy. He said, "Ed, I'm leaving the Senate." I said, "Look, Senator, you and I are in different parties..." but I called him Bill, everybody called him Bill. I said, "Look, Bill, we're in separate parties and if you want anything in my skillset, can help you in any project you want to do, I will do it for \$1 a year." Gave him big warm hug. Okay, time goes by, 20 years, and I wanna ask him about, 'cause I don't know if you know that, I was on the cover story, unfortunately, of a Newsweek article, terrible article. In there was the first time someone outed Senator Cohen with his interest in psi. Because -he was a major interest, and I was terrified, 'cause I didn't want Cohen to think that I had outed, which I had not. I protected the relationship really closely. So, Angela Ford knows him really well, and so we set up a meet, and I flew to Washington, and we meet, go into the basement, uh, into the ground floor of his, uh, office up in the second floor. We were waiting for his chief of staff to come down and escort us up there, and you get a clue when you talk to the reception, who was the low person on the totem pole. "I'm here with Angela Ford, to meet with Senator Cohen," and she said, quote, "Oh, Bill is expecting you." So, we go up, we're sitting in a beautifully appointed conference room and a big, long table. I sat at one side of it and Angela sits on the other side, and there's an empty chair at the head of the table, and Cohen walks in. "Ed, it's so good to see ya." "Nice to see ya, Bill." Shake hands. He goes over to Angela and gives us a big warm hug. And I put my hands on my hips, I said, "Hey, look, Bill, I'm from California, where the hell's my hug?" "Oh, okay." Big warm hug. So, I said, "First thing, the reason I wanted this meet, Bill, is to guarantee you that I did not out you." He says, "I don't care. I'm happy to be supportive." "Really?" I said. "Oh, we're doing this Stargate

archives thing, so we're looking for someone to write a forward for it.” “Done, I'll do it, whatever you want.” That's what, that's what happened.

Christopher Senn: Along these same lines, moving on, whenever the program was finally declassified, you were actually called upon to testify before Congress about –

Edwin C. May: There were, there were a couple things about that. First of all, all the research was declassified in 1989, early. The rest of the program was not really declassified and even today, not all of it has been, but the vast majority of it was, with the CIA released on 14 and eventually 15 DVDs, and now you can go online and search for anything that you want out of it. In fact, there's a big problem for the publishers here, what's the point of publishing this in a book if you can get all the material online? Well, the answer is very clear, we've organized this material in ways that no one else could, and we very minimally edited it. Now, if somebody misspelled my name, then we'd change that or something of that nature. Normally, classified documents, just flipping one here to find one, we left all that stuff in there, said, released by the CIA, you know, on such and such date and it has a number on it. Let me get Volume 4 here though. Everything in Volume 4 is practically classified, 700 pages. Like a good doorstop. I'll tell ya, the things that was so upsetting about the publisher, these books do not lay flat, and they didn't. When you bind something, you wanna have more space along the binding so it'll lay flat and you can read it, here you can't. It's a big pain, and I'm gonna show ya, see, I don't know if you can see it. The very top, right above the word secret. If you enter that big, long number into the CIA site where you can search for that number, you get the document. That document, now we've cleaned it up and what happened was, I think they just threw...I mean my material that they released was tantamount to outright silly because there would be...if I have a classified document and you're cleared, and I'm gonna transfer this document to you, there's what's called a transmittal slip. It says Edwin May, my Social Security number, here's the number of the document, it's Document 1, it's Document 4 out of 8, and then transferring, Christopher Senn, and that transmittal slip. It has no classified information at all. Tons of transmittal slips have been released by the CIA, completely stupid. The other thing which is completely stupid is that they paid almost no attention to how they redacted things. There are multiple copies of all kinds of stuff and these volumes, we're able to, the one that's really nice, there was a memo by a guy named Duckett at the CIA asking the then director, William Colby, to support the founding of this program, and there are many copies of it, and all of the copies have William Colby's name blocked out. Except we found one that didn't. Okay, and guess what appears in these books, that one, of course, and it's legal. Moreover, how really stupid, they redacted, not Duckett's name, which they should have, they redacted his signature but left his name. Duh, come on guys, get real.

Christopher Senn: So, changing up. After the program, so you said the program was terminated in '95, after the program, you worked with, did some research working with, groups in other countries, such as Germany and South America, just a couple of examples that I saw in the archives. Was there anything particularly different about the research that you conducted after Stargate from while you were with the American government?

Edwin C. May: Good questions. Well, it was frustrating for the first 10 years of the program. The various agencies were not interested in fundamental research. They were

interested in spying because they had a cheap way of getting spying and for the most part they used it for, in conjunction with other assets to determine whether it's real or not, although I do have a story about that. One of our remote viewers, actually it was the same remote viewer that did the pyrotechnic or explosion thing, the bomb. Very good remote viewer. Spontaneously out of his head, and he wasn't tasked this, gave me an 18-page report. This was long before 9/11, describing in some gory detail that at the State of the Union Address, a plane would be, with Reagan as president, would fly down the Potomac and, and veer off at the last minute and crash into the capitol and kill everybody in the government minus one or two people. So, I took this stuff and it was all kinds of stuff in 18 pages, quite a long detail. So I went to our on-site defense intelligence agency guy named Jim Salyer, he has long-since passed away, and Jim was very funny but very, he was a master's degree geneticist with GS15, which was high on the feeding pole. He read this, and he said, "Are you handing this to me officially?" I said, "Jim, what the hell do you mean by that?" He said, "If you're handing this to me officially, then I will treat it as real and god help you if it's not." Oh, my god, and I'm not lying to you Chris, I took it home with me and had the worst 12-hours of my entire career. What should I do with this? And it turned out I didn't hand it to him, and the only thing of that 18 pages that was correct and not known in advance was that Reagan would have a British Prime Minister woman, Maggie Thatcher and she would be wearing a pink hat, standing on the podium at this, at the State of the Union. At no other time, I think, in our history, have we had joint heads of state talking about, from that same point for that particular time. And what appeared in that document, 2 weeks in advance, was there would be a foreign state standing next to Reagan when they died, when this plane crashed into it, and she'd be wearing a pink hat. That was the only part that was right in the 18 pages. It's a scary story.

Christopher Senn: Yeah, for sure. So, we're coming up on an hour, here, and a couple of questions to leave off. First of all, what would you see as the most important enduring legacy of your work with the Stargate program?

Edwin C. May: Well, as you know, I'm in the twilight part of my career. What you have done, putting together for scholars is much more important than the research itself in some sense, that scholars 20 years from now, long after I'm gone who would sit there and say, "Oh my god, look what happened." 'cause what I think we're dealing with here, and I didn't invent this idea, Chuck Honorton did, by saying, look, humans have been wondering about aspects of, of everything for a long, long time. You know, what's the meaning of life, do we survive our bodily deaths, how can we communicate and interface with the environment, blah, blah, blah, blah... And what he told me once, and I think he was right, that we can't maybe have answered those questions with ESP research, but we are building tools and a toolkit that someday in the future they will go to answer that question, and we'd actually made progress in that. It's a model that my colleagues and I put together called decision augmentation, and that says that at any time in, particularly in medical research where you have a placebo and the drug and you get a result. Well, maybe that's true, but maybe not. Maybe the fact that psychics can, the people who are deciding who goes into which treatment group or control group, making that decision, by using their ESP, biases the result. And if that's true, that'll be a massive change in the way we think about problems. In terms of any kind of sociological research medical research, psychology research, parapsychology research, all the stuff that uses statistics to some result. It's gonna question that. It doesn't mean you should throw them out, but the bad news is, you have to

question it. The good news is, there's a protocol on how to determine what's going on. Is it actually a result of what you think or is it just somebody being psychic? And the model is called decision augmentation theory and I was at a BL conference and Jessica Utts, the statistician, was talking to, the whole conference was about placebo effect, and she showed two of my decision augmentation slides and said, you may not believe this, but you had better pay attention to it, 'cause it'll mimic what you like to have happen. That is, I think, the long-term legacy. Nobody will give a damn about remote viewing and spying, and I'm already bored with it, everybody else is.

Christopher Senn: Sure. Well, that's fascinating, and you bring up a great point, and I think this is a really good place to end with. This work in the archives that you've donated to us here at Rice, it's being processed. It's going to be here for decades, perhaps centuries.

Edwin C. May: Hope so.

Christopher Senn: And people in the future, scholars of the future, are going to very well be looking at this interview that, that we're doing right –

Edwin C. May: Wow. Hi guys from the future.

Christopher Senn: – that's exactly what I want to ask right now. What would you want to say to researchers who might be viewing this in 50, 100, 200 years, maybe?

Edwin C. May: God, Chris, well, an amazing question. No one's ever asked me. Thank you. In any new advance in science, for example, when Einstein came up with his, special relativity in 1905, there were cartoons of him in the newspapers of the day showing him with a dunce cap on his head, that he didn't know squat about anything, and much of parapsychology's in that role at the moment, and most people don't take it seriously. So one thing that I would say is, what I said earlier, that in the future, I hope people will take this seriously because it will not destroy all of physics, it will not destroy all the science that we have up to that date. New science never does that, it extends with the new science. We'll occasionally come up with a brand-new idea, but here, this is worthy of something 'cause it'll tell us about space and time that we just don't know how the hell can a random target being generated in India tomorrow, how does that work, to get from there then to here now. That is a huge problem, and it's a fascinating physics problem, and I don't have the skillset to solve that. Those guys in the future, you do, I don't, and, and there's a whole list of stuff. How the brain works, how we interact, is telepathy itself possible. I don't think so, but maybe the guys in the future will say yes, and here's a way to prove it, so I'm hoping that they'll take this stuff far more seriously than we currently have. Now, because of this stuff and what you're doing, they'll have some data to see this is not above reproach. There are stupid stuff we did in those days and made mistakes like any other program might've. But I want to close with the best evidence and most people think precognition is the worst thing possible. How could that be? And it challenges causality and my colleague and I published a two-volume set called Extrasensory Perception Supports Skepticism and Science. And one of the contributors was a philosopher from Australia who argues very compellingly that precognition does not, N-O-T violate causality. Wow. And some of the physics is going on, some pure speculation that makes my skin crawl about how it is possible to get information

backward in time to the present. That's a wide-open area for physics, and we put together this model called the multi-physic model of precognition and the model may be completely wrong, but what's right about it is, we divide the problem space into two chunks. How that information gets from India tomorrow to here now is only a physics problem. It doesn't depend upon me or whether I'm male or female or whether I'm a good psychic or not, that information has got to get to me. All right, so that's a physics problem, so that means physicists don't have to worry about what's going on in the head. Once it's to the head, how it gets there is an open question, but once it's in the head, that's a neuroscience question, that they don't have to worry about how it got there. Once it's got here, what detects it? What is the psychic retina that allows them information and bring it into consciousness? That will teach us a whole lot about the nature of our brains which we currently don't understand. How cool is that?

Christopher Senn: That's amazing. Well, again, thank you so much, for being here. Is there anything else you'd like to say before we close?

Edwin C. May: Yeah, you asked, that last question was really interesting, and another way to have worded it, just to be thinking about it, is this is a weak phenomenon which it truly is, weak. ESP is not a multimedia extravaganza between your ears, so if it's weak and unreliable and it's hard to do experiments and blah, blah, blah, why the hell bother with it? And that's an interesting question to answer, and I've already answered it by answering your question.

Christopher Senn: Sure.

Edwin C. May: It may, underscore "may" with asterisk or air quotes around it, inform us about things we really care about, our brain and physics and that sort of thing and how we interact with each other and the environment.

Christopher Senn: Sure.

Edwin C. May: Well, say hello to Jeffrey for me.

Christopher Senn: Certainly will.

Edwin C. May: Good.

Christopher Senn: Thank you so much, again. It's been a pleasure talking to you. It always is.

Edwin C. May: Well, thank you.