

John Lilly, Ketamine and The Entities From ECCO

by Adam Gorightly

In the early 70's, John Lilly was introduced to the drug Ketamine by Dr. Craig Enright in the hopes of alleviating the pain associated with Lilly's chronic migraine headaches, which he had been suffering like clockwork – every 18 hours – for most of his often-adventurous life.

Lilly, at the time, was at Esalen Institute conducting seminars when one of these massive migraines hit him. In situations such as these, Lilly withdrew into privacy, to suffer alone through the many endless hours of severe discomfort. It was at this time that Enright suggested to Lilly that he enter into the Esalen isolation tank and receives an injection of Ketamine, in the prospect that it would in some way cure him of his affliction. Lilly in the past had tried a similar experiment with LSD, but it proved unsuccessful, and the terrible headaches persisted. In the earlier LSD-assisted experiment, Lilly attempted to reprogram his human bio-computer in such a way as to eliminate the faulty circuits that were causing him such distress. The experiment failed, but now once again Lilly the Scientist was searching for an answer and a cure to his malignant malady.

As Lilly floated in the isolation tank fluid, Enright injected him with 35 milligrams of Ketamine (K). Within a few minutes, Lilly could actually visualize the migraine pain moving out of his skull, to a point levitated there in apperceived space, Lilly felt no pain whatsoever for some twenty minutes, until it once again reentered his head. When Lilly began moaning and groaning in his water-filled sanctum of pain, Enright injected him with another 70 milligrams. This time Lilly felt the pain moving farther away, twelve feet this time. Thirty minutes later the migraine lightning bolt of pain came rushing back, lodging itself once again into Dr. Lilly's head. Enright reloaded his syringe and shot the good doctor up with 150 milligrams. This time when the pain vacated Lilly's head it kept on going and didn't come back; clear over the horizon, never to be seen again. An hour later, after the K wore off, Lilly climbed out of the tank, a new man.

A month later, when the regularly occurring migraine failed to rear its aching head, Lilly was amazed. During his psychedelic research of the early Sixties, Lilly was one of the early pioneers in charting the inner landscapes of the human brain with LSD inside his self-developed isolation tank. Within those dark, still waters of the soul, Lilly ingested heroic doses of acid and delved deep into his mind to imprint and re-program his mental circuits toward enlightenment and self-realization. But where LSD had failed in defeating the migraine problem, Ketamine had now apparently succeeded.

A week later when Doctor's Enright and Lilly met at the Esalen isolation tank, they agreed to join forces and conduct a joint research into the effects of Ketamine as a possible programming agent. The movie *Altered States* was based on one of their initial experiments. On this memorable occasion, Enright injected himself with a measured dose of K and – with Lilly observing – began a strange odyssey into the primal/archetype regions of his psyche. Unbeknownst to Dr. Lilly, Enright had reprogrammed himself "to return to the prehomimid origins of man." Enright, in this programmed "altered state", displayed all the typical features, movements and sounds of an Ape Man; hopping around in a crouching position, grunting, growling, ranting and howling, gesticulating and shaking frantically his arms. While all of this high weirdness was going on, Lilly assumed that Enright was having some sort of seizure. Though in close proximity with each other throughout the entire experience, the separate realities they were experiencing were of entirely different natures. Enright's reality consisted of a confrontation with a leopard, which he drove away with all his arms flailing, grunting and wild gesticulations. Finally Enright climbed up into a tree (that Lilly couldn't see) and stared down at his friend and colleague from the branches above.

From this experiment, Enright and Lilly drew three important conclusions: "First, one's internal reality could differ radically from the external reality in which one was participating, even with regard to prominent features of the physical environment. Second, the person might remain active physically in the external environment, in a manner not

responding closely to one's internal experience of this activity. And third, one could remain totally oblivious to this disparity." Given these conditions, Lilly and Enright agreed that it would be a good idea at all times to have a "safety man" monitoring the experiments; to observe the proceedings and insure that those under K's influence could do no physical harm to themselves and others. With both men being trained physicians the obvious choice to fill these roles were themselves, alternately switching positions as "safety man" and "explorer".

One determining factor in Lilly's decision to continue experimenting with K was its measurability. Unlike other programming agents he had used in the past, K's effects were extremely predictable, in that you could determine exacting levels of dosage to correspond with the desired effect one wished to experience; whereas other mind expansion agents such as LSD and psilocybin are often more unpredictable in regards to the facilitation of desired preprogramming. This brings to mind a possible correlation between Ketamine and DMT, where each of these drugs – administered at certain exacting dosages – apparently summon forth, to the percipient involved, extraterrestrial or other-dimensional entities. High doses of psilocybin have effected this response in some users – Terrence McKenna, among others – who have communicated telepathically with alien intelligences under the mushroom's otherworldly aegis. But psilocybin's effects are quirky. Perhaps this is why the measurability – and predictability – of K so appealed to Dr. Lilly. In this manner the scientific method could be followed to achieve the desired mind-bending results.

In later experiments, Lilly failed to heed his own advice, becoming so enraptured in his Ketamine exploration that he would forego the earlier agreed upon "safety man" and started working "without a net." This led to an almost fatal consequence when one sunny day, under the influence of K, Lilly climbed into his hot tube. When he realized the temperature was too hot, Lilly futilely attempted to climb out, but in so doing his muscles lost their strength and he collapsed into bubbling currents. Lilly was totally conscious at this point, but due to the effects of K, he was unaware of the external reality of his drowning body. He was conscious only of his internal world. As fate would have it, a friend of Lilly's, Phil Halecki – who found himself driven by a sudden sense of urgency – decided at this time to phone Dr. Lilly. Lilly's wife Toni fielded the phone call and, at Halecki's insistence, went to summon John, only to find him lying face down in the water, breathless and blue. Fortunately, Toni was able to revive her husband using mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, a technique she had learned only a few days earlier from an article in *The National Enquirer*.

Nonetheless, this close brush with the grim reaper's scythe didn't deter Lilly from further solo flights on K; it only reaffirmed his deeply held conviction that his life was being watched over by higher powers of an extraterrestrial origin. Lilly referred to this network of sublime entities as ECCO, an acronym for "Earth Coincidence Control Office." Lilly was positive that all of these fortuitous coincidences in his life (such as Halecki's life-saving phone call) had been arranged by higher forces; and that whatever unfortunate folly fell into his path along the road to knowledge, ECCO would be there to guide him safely through the tunnel to the light.

But ECCO was not there only to guide Lilly unfettered through his mind-bending research; these extraterrestrial benefactors were also there to test Lilly, to help him overcome his deepest darkest fears with psychic-shock therapy. One evening after a kick-ass shot of K, Lilly sat watching TV when an alien representative of ECCO appeared and – with some advanced form of psychic surgery – bloodlessly removed John's penis, nonchalantly handing it over to him. "They've cut off my penis," Dr. Lilly exclaimed. His wife Toni came to the rescue and pointed out to John that his penis was still intact. Upon closer examination of his male member, Lilly saw that the ET's had replaced his normal human penis with a mechanical version that could become voluntary erect when he wanted it to. An hour later, after the effects of the K wore off, John Lilly found his normal human penis in place of the mechanical one, exactly where it had always been.

Later on, as the frequency of his use on K increased, Dr. Lilly began having contact with another alien intelligence agency, which he called (SSI), short for Solid State Intelligence. SSI was a supercomputer-like entity, much in the same techno-mystical vein as Philip K. Dick's VALIS. But unlike VALIS, SSI was of a malevolent nature, at odds with ECCO. SSI's

apparent goal was to conquer and dominate all biological life forms on Earth. To combat SSI, ECCO enlisted Lilly in this archetypal battle of good against evil, charging him with the mission of alerting the world at large to these solid state beings of evil intent. To further confirm the dual existences of these two opposing alien intelligence networks, Lilly was given a sign, and message, in the autumn of 1974. Flying into Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Dr. Lilly saw the comet Kahoutek out of the southern sky. Momentarily the comet grew brighter. At this point a message was laser-beamed into Lilly's mind, which said: "We are Solid State Intelligence and we are going to demonstrate our power by shutting down all solid state equipment to LAX."

Dr. Lilly shared his foreboding message with his wife Toni, who was seated next to him. A few minutes later, the pilot instructed the passengers that they were being diverted to Burbank due to a plane that had crash-landed near the runway and had knocked down power lines, causing a power failure at the airport.

As his haphazard use of K intensified, so did the warnings of imminent dangers regarding the survival of mankind, provided by ECCO via 3D Technicolor images beamed into Lilly's mind. These visions were of an apocalyptic nature; scenes of nuclear annihilation seen from an alien's eye view in outer space. The world powers needed to be alerted of this impending tragedy immediately to enable them to avert widespread global devastation, ECCO instructed, or it would be too late. I find it interesting that ECCO's message to Dr. Lilly was much the same as those delivered to the early saucer contactees: our planet was on a collision course toward destruction; all atomic weapons must be dismantled if our planet was ever going to have a chance of surviving in the future. The only difference was that the enemy was us, not "them." Nevertheless, rampant technological progress was to blame for the sorry state of the planet, regardless if it was being facilitated by alien intelligences, or humans.

After three weeks of hourly K injections, Lilly decided that he would travel to the east coast to warn political leaders and members of the media of the threat posed by SSI. In New York, he phoned the White House to warn then President Gerald Ford about "a danger to the human race involving atomic energy and computers." A White House aide fielded the call and, although quite aware, of Dr. Lilly's impressive credentials, was not convinced of the urgency of the matter, and informed him that the President was unavailable.

A young intern who had been assigned to Lilly during this time figured the good doctor had finally flipped his high intelligent lid and attempted to have Lilly committed to a psychiatric hospital. Once again ECCO intervened. Lilly had friends in many high places one of which was the director of this hospital, who saw to it that his old friend was released in short order. When the intrepid intern attempted to commit Lilly to another psychiatric hospital, the same scenario unfolded, and Lilly was once again released. The young intern could only shake his frustrated head in disbelief.

Still following the lead of ECCO, Dr. Lilly continued his ever-escalating injections of K in order to remain in contact with the "space brothers". Soon, though, his sources started to dry up due to concerns by his connections that Lilly had gone too far of the deep end. Consequently this led Lilly in search of other long acting chemicals that would provide him with the same effects as K, but for a greater duration of time. During the experimental trial of another drug of similar nature to K, Dr. Lilly received a phone call from his wife Toni requesting that he bring her spare set of car keys, because she had locked her others in her car. Since she was simply down the road a bit, John jumped on his ten-speed and proceeded to peddle down the road to make the delivery.

When Dr. Lilly decided to ride his ten-speed bike down the road to meet his wife, the drug had not yet taken full effect. But midway through his trip, Lilly was zapped by its intoxicating magic and instantly felt quite wonderful with the wind blowing deliciously through his hair; it was as if he'd taken a trip down memory lane to the days of his free wheeling youth. Unfortunately, this flashbackful sense of euphoria came screeching to a disastrous halt when the bike chain suddenly jammed, and he was catapulted onto the harsh reality of the concrete pavement, puncturing a lung, breaking several ribs, and suffering cranial contusions. This bicycle crash resulted in several days of hospitalization, where Dr. Lilly was once again visited by the otherworldly representatives from ECCO, who told him he had a choice: He could go away with them "for good" or remain on the planet,

mend his body and concentrate on more worldly affairs. The good doctor wisely chose the latter. With this decision came a turning point in his life, and a conscious effort to focus his remaining years not only on more earthly matters – as opposed to the whims and wishes of ECCO – but to dedicate the rest of his life to his wife, Toni, and their soul mate journey together through physical time and space.

Many paranormal parallels can be drawn from the experience of John Lilly, one such being the so-called Near Death Experience (NDE), where Guides, as he called them (the two representatives from ECCO) appeared to Lilly much as figurative angels bathed in light do to others who have experienced NDE. Often, as the seemingly near dead hover before this subjective light, they are offered a choice much similar to the one given Dr. Lilly by his otherworldly benefactors from Earth Coincidence Control Center. *Should I stay or should I go?*

Not long after this second brush with death Dr. Lilly's close friend and Ketamine research partner, Graig Enright, was involved in a head on collision in the fog on coast Highway One. As Enright lay upon his death bed, he was visited by Dr. Lilly, who took Enright's hand in his, and made the following statement: "It's not so bad to die, Craig. I've been to the brink myself a few times, and I've seen over the edge. The Beings have told me on several occasions that I was free to go with them, but I decided to stay here and continue my work in this vehicle that everyone calls John Lilly; they showed me that I am one of them. 'You are one of us'. I know that you know this because we've been there together. Whatever you do, Craig, I love you." On the very next morning, Dr. Graig Enright shed his mortal coil.

Thus ends another chapter in Dr. Lilly's often adventurous life.