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No Brainer

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Background

Harlan MacDavies Sandovar was the first person, and may well prove to be the last, to be subjected to the now controversial Brattleboro Protocol, in which such drastic procedures were conducted upon the physiology of the human brain as to raise ethical concerns in every sector of the scientific community, and indeed well beyond the borders of science into the nation as a whole and humanity at large.

In the era of the Brattleboro experiments, not long past, medical science had progressed in many areas, but a clear functional geography of the brain remained elusive. Indirect means had been employed for decades, notably functional MRI and related scanning technologies, but these methods disallowed normal activity and interactions. Lying motionless inside a giant donut-shaped electromagnet permitted only the most perfunctory psychological testing, which left a considerable gap between the science of fine brain anatomy and the subjective reality generated by that organ.

Alternative approaches were often put forward by various physiologically oriented neuropsychologists, who conjectured that by disconnecting certain sections of the brain, using some hypothetical procedure, a research subject could be studied in his natural habitat, as it were, performing a variety of human behaviors and submitting to an

array of standard psychological tests. Presumably, it should soon become obvious exactly which mental functions are performed by specific sections of the brain.

Somewhat comparable research had been done, on a very crude basis, through hemispherectomies, callosotomies (the slicing of the corpus callosum), and other putative remedial surgeries performed in the removal of tumors and repair of damaged areas of the brain from stroke and disease. In such cases, however, a prolonged conscious interaction with the subject, before and after the affected functions and faculties were impaired, was nearly always impossible. Tumor removal and callosotomy are a one-way street. Furthermore, the "before" state of such a brain was by definition pathological and therefore wholly inadequate for comparison with the subsequent post-op state.

In the long run, a method for the temporary and systematic deactivation of sections of the brain had never been found, and was widely considered something of a pipe dream. The determined neuropsychologists of the Brattleboro Institute, however, eventually hit upon a technique which could do just that—switch off functional sections of the brain without harming the patient, and then switch them back on again.

Technology

After their prompt and well-deserved Nobel, doctors Bruce Jacoby and Hiram L. Myer set up the laboratory in Southern Vermont and prepared their landmark study of Harlan MacDavies Sandovar—the Brattleboro Project. The foundational technology invented by the two doctors was a new form of stereotactic bio-magnetic-encapsulation, which is now popularly known, to the annoyance of neuropsychologists everywhere, as "shrink-wrapping."

By means of this encapsulation process, a temporary magnetic boundary could be set up enclosing specific regions of the brain. This was possible because of the brain's inherently electromagnetic mode of functioning, whereby its own role-specific boundaries, based on the topology of long-term neural pathways, tended to "snap into alignment"

with an enclosing field. This resulted in tremendous accuracy in mapping, by encapsulation, the various operational sections of the brain.

Soon after this technique was perfected, Jacoby & Myer discovered that, once magnetically encapsulated, the enclosed brain region could be deactivated, rendered fully inoperative, by simply reversing the polarity of the field. Furthermore, since the encapsulation field was itself bi-stable, this meant that although a very powerful electromagnet was still required to set up the initial encapsulation, it could be maintained in its present polarity by means of a very small circumcranial coil that would fit inside a baseball cap.

Using these techniques, sections of Mr. Sandovar's brain could, in theory, be turned on or off like a desk-lamp while he was fully conscious and interacting with the experimental team. But the ultimate breakthrough, hitherto completely unexpected, as so many leaps of fundamental science tend to be, only emerged after several weeks of preliminary experimentation had taken place.

It happened that during one of Sandovar's preliminary sessions with the MRI machine, modified of course to generate the required bio-magnetic-encapsulation field, a team of R&D technicians had been working on a second MRI machine in the next room. Unaware that a live subject was undergoing the encapsulation protocol nearby, they happened to switch on their partially-assembled MRI for a few seconds. As luck would have it, the second MRI was facing in the opposite direction, and a reversed magnetic field briefly pulsed through the field being tested on Sandovar. The result was a kind of magnetic bubble inside the primary target in Sandovar's brain, a stable field-within-a-field, if you will. Once the researchers realized what had happened, they were able to design a new dual-magnet MRI device that could generate a primary outer encapsulation with a second region of encapsulation inside. This inner field served as a kind of "exclusion" area, a portion of the brain that was left "on" while the surrounding volume was switched "off."

It would be difficult to overstate the profundity of this refinement of the technology, which gave rise to our contemporary Compound Stereotactic Bio-Magnetic-Encapsulation Field Generator, or CSBMEG, now generally known as a 'BME.' With a compound field, researchers could not only turn on and off specific parts of the brain, but they could also leave targeted

regions turned on while turning everything else off. Suddenly, the dream of generations of neuropsychologists was realized.

In effect, a researcher could use his BME to outline any section of the brain on a 3D rendering and then (figuratively) seal it off (hence the aforementioned Saran wrap epithet) to isolate exactly that section. He could then toggle this section—or the rest of the brain—on and off, so the selected portion was either deactivated, or was the only part of the brain which remained activated. With a research tool of this novelty and precision, innumerable profound and unprecedented discoveries could be made.

Brattleboro Project Protocol

Over the course of the Brattleboro Project, the first phase was the simplest, in which various numbers and combinations of segments of the brain were disconnected, leading up to the ultimate tests during which, in effect, virtually the entire CNS would be operating on the limbic system alone.

The final phase of experiments involved dividing each hemisphere into a dozen or so primary regions, treating the corpus callosum as a distinct body straddling the center line, and then switching these sections off one at a time in precise sequence until the entire brain was shut down. During lengthier trials, researchers would note the patient's response to various questionnaires and conversations, involving both conceptual and perceptual experience, and an assessment would be made of the overall functionality of his conscious mind. At some point, it was expected, linguistic skills would be lost. Indeed, consciousness itself might be lost, but it was not clear when, and for what reasons, these things would take place. Indeed, this question was the main focus of the last few experiments.

Clinical Report (synthesized narration)

Harlan Sandovar lay on a gurney, loosely strapped down so he could be wheeled into the BME. Nurse Kettle had inserted his I.V. and attached EEG and ECG patches, and now a large bundle of colored wires ran from

the gurney to a life-signs monitor on a wheeled stand. She stood to one side, watching the flashing numbers and bar-graphs that showed Harlan's current physiological status.

The two principle investigators, Dr. Jacoby and Dr. Meyer, stood by the master control panel, a large desk covered with knobs and sliders, under an array of color display panels. The largest panel displayed a detailed diagram of Harlan's brain, brightly lit and pulsing with fine dotted lines to indicate which encapsulation regions had been mapped so far.

"Well, Mr. Sandovar," said Dr. Jacoby, "we're ready to begin. Are you?"

"You bet," said Harlan. He was a jovial man, and seemed to enjoy the attention, and perhaps even the strange experiences brought about by turning pieces of his brain on and off. Nurse Kettle looked at him with a maternal smile.

"Then let's get you into position," Jacoby said. He and Meyer wheeled the gurney under the massive inverted U of the BME. They latched the gurney in place, and then stretched elastic straps around Harlan's head and shoulders. Once the encapsulation was complete, of course, in subsequent sessions he could be removed from the BME and sit normally in a chair, wearing the field-control baseball cap, while they interviewed him and administered various psychological tests.

"Are you comfortable?" asked Dr. Meyer.

"I feel ready for the luge," said Sandovar. "Where's the ice?"

"We're very grateful for your participation, Mr. Sandovar," said Dr. Jacoby. "We'll get you out to the Olympics as soon as possible."

Everyone laughed politely, but stereotactic compound bio-magnetic encapsulation was a new discipline, with potentially serious consequences, and they were all well aware they were entering uncharted waters.

"Hey," said Harlan.

"What?" said Jacoby.

"I trust you guys," said Harlan. "Let's learn something new."

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A few minutes later, Harlan Sandovar's brain was shutting down, one precise region at a time. Meyer confirmed each disconnect on the big brain map, while Jacoby watched their experimental subject, maintaining

a light conversation with him as the subject's internal machinery gradually turned off.

When his left hemisphere went dark, Harlan began to hum a little tune, and he joked with Dr. Jacoby about his evident lack of musical prowess. Later, without prefrontal lobes, he began to tell surprisingly off-color and inappropriate jokes; Nurse Kettle blushed and turned away.

As the researchers switched off more and more of his brain, Harlan Sandovar remained perfectly conscious, but his dialog with Dr. Jacoby became increasingly peculiar (yet interesting). Toward the end, normal verbal communication became impossible, and they switched over to an interpreter mechanism that converted faint neuroelectrical impulses for processing by a speech synthesizer, thereby enabling whatever verbal impulses there might be to emerge in a raw, uninflected voice. This speech interface was based on a complex decoding system that Sandovar had spent several weeks learning, explicitly so that he might be able to communicate with the researchers when there was virtually no conscious connection to his musculoskeletal physiology.

After a while, the entire brain display was dark, except for a thin stripe of light across the narrow gap separating the two hemispheres. The view from below showed this to be a broad band interconnecting the two halves of the brain. No person had ever survived for long with such an extreme reduction in brain anatomy. Without all these higher centers of the CNS, only a dysfunctional vegetative state was possible.

There was a soft thump from the speaker. "What is that?" said the transcollator vocal system, in a metallic monotone.

The doctors looked at each other in surprise. This was more than anyone had expected.

"Harlan?" said Dr. Jacoby.

"That," said the machine connected to Harlan's corpus callosum.

"I'm sorry," said Jacoby. "I'm not sure what you mean. What is that?"

"I'm that," said Harlan, through the transcollator.

"With whom am I speaking?" said Dr. Jacoby.

"Har-lan," said the transcollator.

"Are you aware of what is happening right now?"

The transcollator was silent for a moment and then said, "Lab. Brain. Off."

"Excellent," said Dr. Jacoby. "Is it possible for you to tell us what part of your CNS is now operating?"

"Yes," said the transcollator.

"What portion of brain anatomy is that?"

"Cor. Pus," said the machine, and after a pause, "Cal. Lo. Sum."

Jacoby stared at Sandovar, seemingly unconscious on the gurney, and then at his partner. Meyer was shaking his head in amazement.

"Is this really possible?" said Meyer. "We're talking to just the corpus callosum?"

Jacoby pointed at the big brain map panel. "That's the only part still lit up," he said. "We've deactivated everything else." He shook his head. "The real question, though, is how the hell can the corpus callosum be talking to us? How can it possibly have enough resources to manage language, even with the transcollator?"

"Beats the hell out of me," said Meyer.

"Are. We. Done?" said the transcollator.

The scientists both jumped. Mr. Sandovar should be a vegetable now, having effectively been subjected to a double hemispherectomy. All the vital sections of his brain were shut off: both hemispheres, his frontal lobes, parietal lobes, cerebellum, and even the upper portions of brainstem, right down to the medulla.

Jacoby frowned. "Well, no, Mr. Sandovar, not quite, if it's all the same to you. We'd like to find out a little more about what conscious faculties are still operational."

"Rath. Er. Not," said the transcollator.

Meyer and Jacoby looked at each other. "How so?" said Meyer.

"Diff. Ic. Ult," said Sandovar's corpus callosum.

"Are you in pain?" asked Jacoby.

"Not. Pain. Strain."

"I see," said Jacoby. "Then are you asking us to turn everything back on?"

"On. Yes." After a second, the transcollator said, "Or. Off."

Jacoby was writing furiously in his notebook, while Meyer fingered the control panel, reluctant to stop so soon after this astonishing session had begun.

The transcollator said, "Chaos."

"What's that?" The doctors exchanged concerned glances.

Harlan didn't speak; the audio system remained almost silent, but for a faint hiss. But the hiss was growing louder, like the noise between FM stations.

"Are you still there?" said Meyer, his finger poised over the switch that would end the experiment.

"Giv. En. Ex. Ist. Ence." Harlan said. The hiss grew louder.

"Are you asking us to stop the protocol?" said Meyer. Jacoby was still writing.

The hiss grew louder still. Then Harlan's words emerged again, fainter than before. "Of. Per. Son Al."

"What's that?" said Meyer. "Are you still with us?"

"God," said the machine, and the hiss continued to increase. Faint words and phrases seemed to whisper within the noise, but nothing either scientist could recognize.

"Harlan?" said Meyer. "Are you OK? What's happening?"

The hiss from the transcollator was quite loud now, but the voice buried within was so faint they didn't dare turn down the volume.

"Harlan!" said Meyer, again reaching for the termination switch.

Far off in the hiss, Harlan said, "Out. Side. Time."

"What's that" said Meyer.

Jacoby said, "Something about time?"

The hiss had become too loud to tolerate, and Harlan's words were almost totally inaudible, so Jacoby turned down the audio system until the hiss could barely be heard. He switched on the print interpreter, and a small white rectangle blinked in the center of the language display panel.

"I hope it can pick out what he's saying," Jacoby said.

Meyer shook his head. "We should turn him back on."

"Just a few more seconds. He seems incoherent now, but if he's got anything left to communicate, it could be worth months of further research. We may not be able to put him through this again."

Nurse Kettle pointed at the monitor with Harlan's vital signs. They were not good. Harlan was fading fast. "He's not going to maintain his autonomics," she said.

The print panel suddenly lit up with letters, random syllables.

"A few seconds more," said Jacoby. Meyer frowned and Nurse Kettle shook her head.

Then, amid the nonsense, a bit of syntax appeared. "MAN WASTES PINES."

"What does that mean?" said Jacoby.

"I have no idea," said Meyer. "We should turn him on now."

"Wait, there's something more," said Jacoby.

Two more words blinked across the display. "WASTES PINES."

The life monitor started beeping and whistling, and Nurse Kettle grabbed Jacoby's arm. "We're losing him," she cried.

"OK," said Jacoby. "Turn it all back on."

Meyer hit the switch, and a complex series of readouts appeared on the main control display. One by one, Harlan's brain functions were reactivating, and corresponding lights appeared across the brain-map panel.

The life system alarms continued, and Nurse Kettle fretted with Harlan's I.V. and checked the electrodes glued all over his head and torso. "He's not responding," she said.

Jacoby scanned the displays, watching Harlan's CNS coming back to life, piece by piece. The real Harlan lay motionless on the gurney, like a man in a coma, which, in effect, he was.

Then another big section of the left hemisphere lit up, followed by various nodes in the left parietal region. The life monitor stopped beeping. Nurse Kettle sighed loudly. Harlan's chest began to rise and fall more vigorously. Both scientists took a deep breath.

"I think he's back," said Jacoby. Meyer nodded.

"I thought we were going to lose him," said Nurse Kettle.

"What was that last bit he was saying?" said Meyer.

"Something about god, or trees, or something. Just verbal noise."

"He got pretty incoherent," said Meyer.

"What did we expect?" said Jacoby. "He was operating on nothing but the corpus callosum. It's incredible there was any linguistic function there at all. I still can't believe it."

"He didn't sound much like Harlan," said Meyer.

"No, but that's not surprising. The corpus callosum was a woefully inadequate brain resource for his psyche to work with."

"Still," said Meyer, "we turned off everything else, and his persona remained, in between the hemispheres." The scientists looked at each other for a long moment.

"Maybe that's where he lives," said Jacoby.

"In the corpus callosum?"

"Right. Maybe we were really talking to his essential self," Jacoby said. "The I inside. I wish he could have stuck around longer in that state."

"It's too hard on the subject," said Meyer. "We can't do this to people, even volunteers. We have no idea what the long-term effects might be. And if his left hemisphere hadn't come back on line when it did, he probably would have died."

Jacoby nodded grimly.

"It was a close call," said Nurse Kettle, looking down at Harlan's body, entangled in tubing but now resting in deep sleep. "He was lucky."

Clinical Report #2 (synthesized narration)

Over the next few weeks, Harlan Sandovar was found to be in perfectly good health: mental, physical, and emotional. The temporary loss of 99% of his brain function had done no harm, and he was enthusiastic about continuing the research.

The final and most paradigm-changing experiment of the Brattleboro Project took place 22 days after Harlan's first interaction as an activated corpus callosum. The end state of the protocol this time around was the complete deactivation of Harlan's brain, including his corpus callosum.

Harlan Sandovar was brought into the BME laboratory feeling quite chipper, and he appeared to be delighted to participate in another session of brain deactivation.

Once Nurse Kettle had adjusted all the monitoring electrodes, Dr. Meyer latched the gurney in position under the BME coil, and Harlan said, "Have at it, boys."

One by one, the doctors switched off every major portion of Harlan's brain. Then they deactivated the minor regions, and finally nothing but the corpus callosum remained lit on the brain-map.

"Ready?" said Dr. Jacoby.

The transcollator was already routed through the audio system, and

the same hiss was rising in intensity. Harlan's mechanized voice said, "Set. Go."

Jacoby nodded to Meyer, who pressed another button on the control panel. The bright stripe on the brain-map dimmed and extinguished. Nothing but the dotted lines delineating Harlan's brain regions remained illuminated.

The transcollator said something like, "Noth. Ing," and then the hiss faded slowly away and the audio became silent. Harlan's brain was entirely off.

The linguistics panel showed an occasional random consonant where text might appear.

The three researchers then conducted a complete battery of tests to confirm that Harlan Sandovar was indeed in full vegetative coma.

Meyer was about to suggest that it was time to start switching things back on, when the linguistics panel lit up and a large burst of random letters appeared.

The audio system was utterly silent, and then Harlan's voice came through the speakers in high fidelity.

"Hey guys!" he said.

All three researchers jumped and spun around, looking to see who spoke.

"I see you," said Harlan.

"You what?" said Jacoby, stunned.

"Peek-a-boo," Harlan said. His body lay motionless on the gurney, eyes closed, barely breathing. Nurse Kettle was frowning while she fiddled with Harlan's adhesive electrode patches.

"Where are you?" said Meyer.

"Right here, you silly," said the transcollator. The voice from the speaker was extraordinarily clear and realistic.

"But your eyes are closed," said Meyer.

"Not all of them," said Harlan.

Ever the scientist, Meyer held out his hand in the traditional V for Victory sign. "How many fingers am I holding up?" he said.

"Two," said the transcollator.

Meyer started to change his finger positions, but Harlan's voice said, "Three, one, all five," as fast as Meyer could move his hand.

Jacoby stared at his associate in shock. "But there's no CNS at all!" he said.

Meyer shook his head. "How is this possible?"

The transcollator said, "Anything is possible."

"But where are you?" Meyer asked again.

"Where aren't I?" said Harlan.

"Are you inside this laboratory?" said Meyer.

"Outside, too," said Harlan. The voice sounded almost giddy, bubbling with more than the usual dose of Sandovar's characteristic humor.

"Are you OK?" asked Nurse Kettle. "How do you feel?" The scientists scowled at her intrusion into the protocol, but didn't interfere.

"Feel?" said the transcollator. "Bliss."

"Bliss?" said Meyer. "What's bliss?"

"You're such a kidder," Harlan's voice said.

Jacoby looked up from his notebook. "Last time, in the corpus callosum, you said something about god. We didn't catch your meaning."

"Oh yes," said the transcollator. "I remember that."

Meyer was trying to silently mouth the word "memory?" to Jacoby, but the other scientist ignored him. Meyer mimed slapping his own forehead and walked around in a circle, shaking his head.

"What were you trying to say about god?" Jacoby said.

The transcollator was silent, and the researchers noted again the total absence of hiss from the audio system. Then it said, "I was unhappy."

"Why unhappy?" said Jacoby.

"My corpus callosum is a pretty crappy substitute for a whole brain," Harlan said. "It was a big strain to hang onto it. Kinda threw me into a funk about the human condition."

"Really?" said Jacoby. "And you feel better now, with no CNS at all?"

"Gosh yes," said the transcollator. "What a relief!"

"To not be trapped inside the corpus callosum?"

"To not be trapped at all."

"By the equipment?"

"No, physiology. The whole thing is a trap. It's just a really, really big one." The audio was silent for a moment. "Until you start shutting it off, of course. Then it's like a prison, and then a cell, and then a cage that's shrinking around you."

"That sounds horrible," said Meyer, coming back to the gurney. "I'm sorry we put you through that. You should have mentioned it afterward."

"I didn't remember much," said Harlan.

"So what would you say about god now?" asked Meyer.

"Ha!" said the machinery in Harlan's hi-fi voice. "That's a good one."

"What do you mean?" said Meyer.

"What would I say about god! What the hell can anyone say about god?"

"Do you think there is one?" said Meyer.

"Sure!" said the transcollator.

"What makes you think so?" Meyer asked.

"It's me," said the transcollator.

"What is?"

"God. It's all that's left. Duh."

The scientists exchanged glances. Jacoby said, "You think you're God?" He rolled his eyes at Meyer.

"Think I am?" said the machine. "No need to think. And by the way, I saw you rolling your eyes."

Jacoby looked around the room. "How is that possible?" he said.

"Like I said," said the transcollator, "Anything is."

"Fine," said Jacoby. "Philosophically. We need to know—physically—how you can see us. I wasn't even looking toward you just now."

"It's not philosophy," said Harlan.

"But you have to admit, Harlan, what you're saying sounds pretty extreme. Are you sure you're OK? You've never even talked about god or philosophy with us before."

"I'm quite OK," said Harlan. "And I'm not Harlan anymore. Just a pinprick of me is Harlan."

"But how did you see me just then?" said Jacoby.

"I'm everywhere," said the transcollator.

Jacoby started to speak, but the transcollator interrupted. "By the way, another little pinprick is you," it said. "And Meyer. And Miss Kettle."

The three looked at each other.

"You don't believe me, do you?" said the transcollator.

"Well, frankly, Harlan, it's pretty hard to swallow, in spite of your

inexplicable ability to see us. Or speak to us without using the voice synthesizer. And we're not getting any closer to understanding how you can function at all with your entire brain turned off."

"How's this?" said the transcollator.

The brain-map display suddenly lit up, showing all sectors fully activated. Jacoby and Meyer jumped back, staring in amazement. Nurse Kettle studied Harlan's life signs, but they all still showed deep coma.

"Just kidding," said Harlan, and the brain-map returned to normal. A moment later the entire display went black.

Jacoby reached for a reset button on the console, but before he could press it, there was a flicker on the right edge of the display. The Energizer Bunny appeared, banging its tin drum and turning its head from side to side. The bunny rolled across the screen and disappeared off the left edge.

"Believe me now?" said Harlan from the audio system.

"My god!" said Jacoby.

"It's just a cartoon," said the machine. "No need to get religious about it." The transcollator laughed.

"How did you do that?" said Meyer.

"Never mind how," said Harlan. "Watch this."

All the displays suddenly went black, but none of the alarms went off. The scientists stared in awe as a single image formed, spread across all the panels. It was a galaxy, bright and colorful, its spiral arms slowly rotating.

"What the—" said Meyer.

"Oh, and this is even better," said the transcollator.

This time the entire room went dark, all the displays and the ceiling lights, even the red button on the telephone. Then the galaxy reappeared, encompassing them. The room had no walls, and everything in it had disappeared but Harlan Sandovar's body floating where the gurney had been, and the three researchers, standing in empty space. The galaxy spun slowly all around them.

"Holy shit!" cried Jacoby. Meyer was reaching out like a blind man for something to grab onto. Nurse Kettle had gone rigid with fear.

"Sorry," said Harlan, and the room suddenly blinked back, with all the lights and displays working normally. "Didn't mean to scare you."

"You scared the shit out of me," said Jacoby. "Shit!"

"What the hell?" said Meyer.

"Oh god," said Nurse Kettle, clinging to the rail on Harlan's gurney.

"That was nothing, really," said Harlan.

"No!" shouted Jacoby, waving his arms.

"Don't worry," said the transcollator. "I'm not going to do it again."

"Thank god," said Jacoby. "Please don't."

"I think I should go back now," said the transcollator.

"Back?" said Meyer.

"Back into my body," said Harlan's voice. "It's been fun, but this isn't my time."

Jacoby looked at the loudspeaker. "You want us to turn everything back on again?" he said.

"Yup. Sure do," said the transcollator. "Not dying to wedge myself back inside, but it's the right thing to do. Maybe later."

Meyer had his finger on the switch. "You ready?" he said.

"Yowza. Go for it," said the transcollator.

Meyer pressed the button, and the inactive regions began to light up again on the brain-map, starting with the corpus callosum and working outward into the larger processes. The life monitor perked up and showed Harlan was returning to normal sleep state. A few seconds after the brain-map was fully lit, Harlan opened his eyes and looked around.

Meyer unlatched the gurney from the BME while Nurse Kettle unplugged the EEG and ECG cables. A few minutes later, Sandovar was sitting in a chair, wearing a bathrobe, smiling and looking unusually refreshed.

All three researchers clustered around Harlan's chair, examining his demeanor. "Are you sure you're OK?" said Jacoby.

Harlan nodded and continued grinning. "It was good?" he said.

Sequellae

The Brattleboro Project was shut down the following week, voluntarily, by the principal investigators. The BME machinery was repurposed for therapeutic and diagnostic applications, and Drs Jacoby and Meyer returned to private practice. Nurse Kettle took a position in an assisted living center. The final report by the Brattleboro Project's principal

investigators made only passing mention of Harlan Sandovar's extraordinary performance, and the conclusion of the paper stated what is now known as the Jacoby and Meyer Conjecture—that in fact the corpus callosum might be the ultimate seat of consciousness. The paper concluded with the even simpler assertion that "... nevertheless, once everything is shut down, nothing remains. A coma is simply a coma."

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