

The BRAT

A Preliminary Report

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## The BRAT

It was a major breakthrough for Bell Laboratories. The top secret memo appeared at Director Kleindenker's desk, "Director - The Bell lab at Scranton has announced the perfection of the brain wave reader and transmitter. The BRAT is scheduled for demonstration tomorrow at 0900 hours in the #2 conference room - Porter".

The director shook his head in disbelief as he slowly re-read the memo. He knew about BRAT, of course, and about the enormous sums of money his agency had funneled into the top secret project. He considered the whole idea a boondogle. He knew the Soviets were working on a similar project and perhaps were even testing it. He chuckled as he remembered the innocuous explanation he had given to the press corps about the microwave bombardment of the American embassy in Moscow. It had pleased him that the Soviets would waste money on such a foolish endeavour, but now...? The director shook his head again, "Could such a thing exist?" He smiled smugly and thought, "What a coup! What will the president say when he hears this? I'm sure to make points. Maybe I'll get a department! Aha! Those boys in the pentagon will be eating out of my hand. Justice at last." He sighed heavily, "If it were only true. Tomorrow will tell."

Unable to relax in anticipation of the next day's events, the director telephoned his wife in Maryland and muttered something about press business. He then told his secretary that he would not be going home but would be spending the night in the 'protective custody' room. His secretary replied that it would take a few minutes to relocate a Soviet defector who was presently quartered there.

In twenty minutes the director was in the posh 'protective custody' room, laid back and studying classified documents of the BRAT project which was subtitled, "a joint effort of the Bell Laboratories and the Johns Hopkins' Neurological Research School".

The director finally stretched out on one of the beds but was unable to sleep.

His mind raced and he thought:

"Is it true? Could I possibly read a mind? What will it be like? Is it extra sensory perception? The documents say the reciever will become aware not through sight, sound, touch, taste or smell, but through the direct imposition of alien brain waves. Wierd. Will thoughts just pop into my head? How can I percieve without benefit of written or spoken symbols?"

The director pulled the pillow tight over his head, but his mind raced on. He recalled an episode of Star Trek and how a princess from a distant planet read minds. The recieving thought waves came to her as spoken words. "But this cannot be", he interrupted himself. "Spoken words could no more represent a sixth perception than they could represent sight or touch. I, trying to imagine mind reading, am like a man blind-from-birth trying to imagine sight. Can any amount of explanation give to the blind man an inkling of what sight truly is?"

His thoughts shifted to his situation and he worried about getting a good night's sleep before his big day, but his mind burned bright:

"How can I become aware of somebody's thoughts without an identical language code and how can I have an identical language code without identical experience?" (He rolled over.)

"What happens if the sender has thoughts for which the reciever has no words? Or worse yet, what happens if the sender has thoughts for which the reciever has no thoughts? And what good are thoughts if they are ineffable?"

The director tried to think thoughts without words, but was unable to decide one way or the other if he had succeeded. He passed into a fitfull unconciousness still struggling, trying to imagine thoughts without words, words without thought, thoughts without words.....

He bolted up in bed when special-projects-officer Porter shook his shoulder and announced that it was already seven-thirty. The director glanced at his watch, looked quickly around the room placing himself, and began talking with Porter.

Director: "Are you sure it's ready."

Porter: "So I'm told, sir."

Director: "I still can't believe it. Have they actually tried it out?"

Porter: "Not at full capacity, sir. Today is the first time Dr. Shammer will push his equipment to the max."

Director: "Has anyone outside the agency been told? the intel committee? a nosey senator?"

Porter: "Not yet, sir."

Director: "Good, keep it that way. I want to sit on this thing until it works, then I'm gonna tell the president myself. Got it?"

Porter: "Got it."

Director: "Good, let's get a cup of coffee before we hit the conference room. I've got a few more questions before I see the BRAT in operation."

After coffee and conversation the two men headed for conference room two. The large room was like most others in the agency complex, windowless with a single door. Warning statements were posted everywhere and uniformed guards checked everyone who entered and exited the room. The director recognized only Dr. Shammer from Bell and Dr. Lui from Johns Hopkins. Others assembled to witness this venture were unknown to him. He noticed odd pieces of equipment in different areas of the room. Porter excused himself, saying only that he had agreed to assist Dr. Shammer with his demonstration. At nine o'clock sharp, Dr. Shammer broke off his quiet conversation with Dr. Lui, mounted a platform and began to speak.

He expended a few sentences clearing his throat of formalities then explained:

"Gentlemen, the BRAT is a new generation microwave emitter, reciever and processor, which incorporates facets of this nation's newest technologies. In lay terms it works something like this."

As he spoke he chalked on a blackboard, flipped through flow charts and proudly pointed at pieces of outlying machines.

"The active brain produces minute charges of electrical impulse, approximately 3.4 times 10<sup>5</sup> impulses per second. This number only represents impulses in the two frontal lobes, of course. Those are the only two were really interested in. These charges can be detected at a distance, computer enhanced, sent over microwave and impressed precisely upon an inactive brain. It's really very simple and very efficient. No mouth, no ears or no interpretation to get in the way. Pure communication."

"You can think of this process as something like a big xerox machine. The mind to be read is the original print. The BRAT is the copying machine and the recieving brain is the blank paper upon which the copy is printed. (Dr. Shammer paused and took a drink of water.)

Now, the sending brain is aware of nothing. In the past, the sender has reported minor concentration disturbances during the process, maybe a headache, but nothing lasting. However... (Dr. Shammer sighed.) the recieving brain must be as inactive as possible. The brain must be cleansed of as much indiginous brain function as possible. This emptying process involves a combination of several scientific techniques which ultimately reduce the recieving brain to a comatose, deathlike, state."

Dr. Shammer pointed to a chart and explained his dilemma. He continued:

"The more active the recieving brain, the more likely it is to recover. However, on an active brain the imposed brain wave message will be

innacurate due to interference from indiginous brain wave activity. On the other hand, a brain in a deep coma, though it is less likely to recover, will recieve a much mor accurate brain wave message. Remember the xerox. It's similar to having a blank piece of paper to copy on, rather than a paper full of print."

"As of yet we have only tested fully on active brains and here the results proved inconclusive. The active brain was unable to distinguish between native and impressed brain waves. Today, however, you in this room shall witness for the first time brain wave transference using an active brain sender and a recieving brain with virually no brain wave activity."

Upon his last word several televisions in the conference room were turned on.

Dr. Shammer continued:

"You see before your eyes Mr. Ivanovich, a recent Soviet defector. It is his brain that will serve as the sender. The camera taking pictures is mounted behind a two-way mirror and our defector is unaware of his his participation in this demonstration."

The director observed the candid movements of a bored, red-faced man staring at his lit cigarette, as the doctor talked on:

"Mr. Ivanovich will shortly be questioned by John Porter who will attempt to make the sender's brain emit waves important to this agency. At this time the agency is unsure of Mr. Ivanovich's loyalty. If all goes well this will determine the defector's true stripes."

Dr. Shammer pressed a button and the single conference room door opened, giving passage to three men in medical garb pushing a draped table. Dr. Shammer removed the drape cloth and revealed a bound, wired and pitiable figure on the table. The doctor regained the group's attention and said, "Dr. Lui will now explain the procedure used to achieve our inactive brain state."

good. The brain is responding very well and any minute now he should be able to speak to you." The implants were quickly removed and an antidote was injected into a motionless arm. All looked promising. The director felt excited, queezy in his stomach, anxious to learn an unknown secret. Relief swept the room when at last Cpt. James began to blink his eyes. He was helped to a sitting position. Bewilderment was in his eyes.

He opened his mouth and spoke.

*Hope this is science fiction! When said Technological  
consciousness was uninteresting? You write very well.*