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Cryonics: Thawing Out Ted Williams

Randall Willis

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FORM C
COLLEGE SCHOLARS PROJECT APPROVAL

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Mentor

CRYONICS = "THAWING OUT TED WILLIGMS"
Project Title

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PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE SENIOR PROJECT TO THIS SHEET AND RETURN BOTH TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR. THIS PAGE SHOULD BE DATED AND COMPLETED ON THE DATE THAT YOUR DEFENSE IS HELD.

DATE COMPLETED April 26, 2005

Thawing Out Ted Williams

**Randall Willis
College Scholars
Spring Semester 2005**

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Nicodemus said unto him, How can a man be born when he is old?
Jesus answered;

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

John 3:1-21

Robert

Robert Murphy watches his Labrador retriever swim the waves to fetch the pink canvas Frisbee. It sinks before his old friend can reach it. He feels the last rays of a late afternoon sun as it dips below the distant horizon. He whistles to the dog. It's time to go home.

The old dog is thirty yards out. He hesitates. Max will not give up and swims desperately in a circle searching for the lost prize. *You can get it Max. Just one more time, pup. Then time for supper.*

The yellow Lab is in trouble. Robert senses exhaustion. It has arrived like a venomous snake in the black of a godless night, jaws agape, two white ghost fangs poised like ivory daggers, frozen in that cruel instant before plunging into and paralyzing its unsuspecting prey.

Robert staggers down the bank. He wades frantically into the water. *Max! Max! C'mon boy! C'mon.*

Robert swims the waves. But Robert is an old man, and forgets he does not have the strength and endurance of days long past. Too soon he slips below the surface as

quietly as the sun disappears beyond the horizon. When Robert screams for help, he is answered by only muffled bubbles and mute fear.

Robert knows he is drowning.

He screams like a blind, deaf and dumb child at the murky deep.

No one hears.

He looks up and can barely see Max. At first he feels relieved to know his old friend still swims. But then he knows Max will not find the shore until Max finds him. Frantically he kicks and tries to climb to the light. His boots are heavy now.

And then he calmly sinks. Thoughts begin to flood his brain. His mind floats in carefree joy.

Max has made it! Max drops the Frisbee at his feet. The dog shakes and wags and shakes some more. Robert is soaked. He chuckles and bends over to give Max a hug. Good boy! Good boy!

Robert cannot remember when; he has never been happier.

But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 7:1-29

Robert and Ted

Robert Andrew Murphy III suffered the last memory of his first life cycle July 25th, 2003 at age ninety-three. He is not dead. He waits. Mindfully unaware.

Officially, Robert is neurosuspendee patient A2002-6b. His vat mate is none other than baseball Hall-of-Famer Ted Williams. They dwell in a 20 foot high stainless steel drum that resembles a giant Coleman thermos. It is a Dewar filled with liquid nitrogen. It has been their home for almost fifty years.

Sometimes they get mail addressed 7895 E. Acoma Drive, c/o Alcor Life Extension Foundation, Dewar Chamber Four, row b, Scottsdale Arizona, 85260.

Ted Williams still has many fans. The man known as “the Splendid Splinter” held the National League batting record until 2046 when genetically enhanced post human cyborg clones were permitted to play— one hundred years from the date Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier. Expect only an autographed picture in reply. Ted never was much for writing long letters.

Sometimes they receive visitors. On Saturdays, for fifteen EuroCanAm dollars, the public is allowed to file thru the twenty thousand square feet sandstone building. The small fee implemented in 2024 helps to defray the rising cost of liquid nitrogen. The demand began to exceed the supply as 20th century Baby Boomers started kicking off in droves. Worse than lemmings they said.

A small politically correct unobtrusive sign sits out front in the 110° F Arizona heat on a pretty little green square of grass.

Welcome to Alcor Life Extension Foundation

Robert and Ted exist with one thousand two hundred and twelve uniquely unobtrusive and terminally polite residents ranging from a one week to one hundred and three years old.

Some like Robert Murphy now spend hours, even years playing fetch with their dogs. Of course, occasionally he gives Max a rest, letting him take a turn tossing the Frisbee. But it always ends up the same way, the same time. The same God damn sunset. The cold deep.

Ted Williams is either at the plate cracking the bat or at a bar cracking open a brew, occasionally on someone's head. He likes the ladies almost as much as he likes to curse. And the Splendid Splinter does a lot of cursing!

After the first vitrified decade, he figured out how to have multiple organisms while hitting home runs. It's amazing what you can do when you don't consciously try to put your mind to it.

Everyone makes as much noise as they want. Well. They think they do, anyway. The point is no one ever complains about anything. Sing in the shower. Cook your meatballs with garlic. Ride Thunder Mountain all day. Write a poem and etch it in a clear blue sky. Suffer on the Cross, if you like. Whatever makes you feel alive.

Cryonically preserved brains— no matter what you think, or what you think you think, no one minds!

Robert and Ted are comfortably detached from their old man bodies, their old man aches and pains, the humdrum and boredom of old man routines and the stale musty-piss Old Spice old man smell they used to inflict on grandchildren. They are happy, sad, deep in love or lost in the wasteland of loneliness, taking a risk or lying still in quiet anticipation. They are everything and nothing. They are free; thank God thank God thank Martin Luther King Jr. free! Free at last!

Millions of never ending synaptic moments. Everywhere and nowhere. Their universe is nothing more than a personalized neural net of past memories and experiences. A boundless finite playground. Thoughts unfettered by physical constraints of the corporeal.

Who needs heaven?

*How great thy soul, since each one of us from his birth
has an angel commissioned to guard it.*

St. Jerome

Scott and Michelle

Dr. Scott Irvin felt uncomfortable. It wasn't the crowd of microphones pushed around the podium on which he stood. He looked out over the assembly of reporters, past the TV cameras, and glimpsed the silhouette of the human-like beast that over the past two weeks was haunting his nightly dreams.

He raised his left hand shielding his eyes from glaring television camera lights and the intermittent flash from cameras clicking like exclamation marks. Instinctively, with his right hand he pointed in the direction of the apparition, above the confluence of questions, objections and occasional laughter. In the back of the room on the wall directly behind where it stood, he saw a circle the size of a large pie plate that glowed with a faint amber hue. It was inscribed with lines, numbers (of the devil?) and symbols too faraway for Irvin to discern clearly.

He made a mental note to check it out after the news conference. It would have to wait until the media had its frenzy of questions answered.

Dr. Irvin was wondering if anyone was going to ask something original. It felt like he had been fielding the same questions for an eternity.

—When do you plan to begin reanimation?

—Do you think Williams will be brain damaged?

—What if it doesn't work?

—What kind of enhancements will he get?

—How old will he be?

—Do you think the Boston Red Sox will want him cloned?

The last question always drew a few chuckles. Maybe it was a mistake announcing Ted Williams would be the first Alcorian resuscitated. If it was up to Irvin, they would have kept this absolutely secret. He had enough to worry about.

It was no secret the story and famous legendary adventures of the Splendid Splinter on and off the baseball field; the infamous legendary misadventure of his cryopreservation in 2001 received considerably more press during the intervening years. How unfortunate the neuro option (the preferred method of choice during the Ettinger Era of Medical Time Travel) corresponded with the beginning of the Thirty Year Iraqis War of Independence. Subconsciously, the brutal beheadings of random hostages were associated with Alcorian disarticulated neuros.

It took years to overcome the devastating PR from the high profile case of Ted Williams. The unfortunate legal circus served only in the end, to tarnish Williams' legacy. The end failed to justify the means, at least in the public's mind.

Dr. Scott Irvin had enough to worry about than defend indefensible mistakes and myths.

It was not a secret the Resuscitation-Reanimation Rate, or "R&R" as it was affectionately known in cryonic circles, was less than 100%. However, a 98.7% success rate with small mammals such a dog, was enough to get the go ahead from the President's Council on Bioethics.

The fact that reanimated primates had a tendency to exhibit aggressive behavior was known only to a few members of the Alcor research team. One chimp had actually cannibalized another. A consultation with a leading evolutionary neuroethnologist led Irvin to believe such behavior was not outside the realm of the human species either. While no longer necessary, ancient instinctive triggers for aggression including self-preservation and reproduction lurked in the foundation of man's brain. Therefore, a provision was made to suppress any of these primeval tendencies with designer neocortical supplements and cerebral implantable nanochips should they rear the ugly sides of their heads in Williams or Murphy.

Although, Williams and Murphy would be the first of their kind to have that particular cross to bear, thought Dr. Irvin. Unlike him and the rest of humankind arbitrarily classed as Version 1.0 Humans, they would become the Romulus and Remus of a new breed— Version 2.0 Humans, more widely known in cryonic circles as Post-Humans.

Reanimated bodies— made from scratch; remanufactured brains— using the original. Robert and Ted would be restored like WWII fighter planes from the 20th century. They would fly again.

This time, one small step for Mankind; one giant step for Man!

—Ladies and gentlemen ... I have time for one more question. As you know, we are scheduled to begin in three days, and I have a flight to catch!

As Dr. Irvin spoke, despite the inescapable blinding lights, that familiar rainbow wave of phantom lines scintillated across his field of vision. The migraines were getting more frequent. The right side of his head felt like a toolbox of screwdrivers being drilled from the inside out. *God damn! A hell'uv a time for a headache*, he thought.

Michelle Mikailah, standing off to Dr. Irvin's right, noticed the Alcor medical director painfully wince, pitch slightly forward grabbing the podium with two hands to steady himself. She turned placing her left arm around his waist, and held him fast. Simultaneously, with her right hand she pulled the mic to her lips, and addressed a hushed throng.

—Ladies and gentlemen, I am Dr. Irvin's personal assistant. I am sorry. There will be no more questions. We do not want to keep Ted Williams waiting! We do not wish to resurrect his wrath, only his brain!

The gentle attempt at humor effectively disarmed the crowd.

Michelle rewarded them with a demur smile. Irvin slowly cocked his pulsating head in the direction of his saving angel.

—Didn't know I had a personal assistant, Irvin mumbled trying not to vibrate, like he was standing on an unstable cliff, afraid he might trigger a rock slide.

Despite the wretched discomfort smashing his brain, he could not help but notice the tall attractive auburn haired woman pressed against him. High cheekbones and eyes were as blue as the Colorado sky he recalled from boyhood. She was slender, but obviously fit. *She smells heavenly. I wonder if those breasts are enhanced?*

—*No. They are mine.* She whispered in his ear pressing and impressing her bosom on him.

—*Come with me Scott!*

—Who in God's name are you? Have we met before?

Scott felt like his head was going to crack open.

—I think I am going to vomit, he said.

He heard an echo of self-pity in the tone of his voice and felt ashamed imposing his feelings on this Good Samaritan, *whoever she is*. She held and guided him by his arm off the podium and towards a side door exit.

Comforting, her gentle touch. Pain has a way to make one cooperate; kindness is more effective, he thought. *God, I'm willing to do anything to get rid of this pain*. Her hands are beautiful. She certainly radiates confidence. I can trust this woman.

—Don't suppose you carry any analgesic software? I forgot to have the prescription for my thalamic nanochip renewed. Scott tried not to sound whiny.

—Scott, if you want to get out of Washington alive and back to Scottsdale, you *must* come quickly! We'll take care of your headache, later! Michelle told him with unhesitating, unmistakable urgency

—Why should I come with you? I don't even know you! Scott replied.

Michelle stopped and faced him, looking squarely into his ice blue eyes.

—*It's your choice*, Dr. Irvin.

—Can you get me to my plane... ah... er?

—Michelle? Michelle replied.

—Michelle, Scott said attempting to sound dignified and into control.

—No problem, replied Michelle.

—Are you absolutely sure? Scott's headache was beginning to abate.

—Yes Scott. Have a little faith!

Michelle smiled. He hadn't really changed much over the years. Still the skeptic!

Gabriel. Raphael. You owe me big time!

Humans and free will; Humans and free won't.

What's an angel to do?

I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

John 11:1-54

John

The morning sun lingered behind the east ridge. Beyond distant pale blue mountains, a round moon faded translucent white.

At the beginning of each new day, Father John Jay Hampton knelt before one of two marble statues, winged angels, classic Greek beauties obtained from the courtyard of a 16th century Roman Catholic Church approximately ten kilometers west of Firenze, in rural Tuscany.

One statue held her arms outstretched, welcoming all who willing to receive her embrace. The other fashioned to hold a small scroll in one delicate hand seemed to look directly at anyone and everyone within the shadow of her serene gaze. For over five hundred years the two angels had looked beyond the pain and frailty of their supplicants.

Sometimes he felt guilty that he possessed two incredible works transcending the world of art. *How many mothers had wept in their shadows? How many prayers had they patiently heard? Who transformed two inanimate blocks of Tuscan marble? What was his story? No one will ever know. It doesn't matter.*

He felt humbled and strengthened when with them. He felt the presence of God.

John Jay named one *Truth*; the other *Beauty*.

A Princeton graduate, Hampton studied philosophy in the beginning. However, an introductory course in medieval philosophy changed his life. He became interested in the life of St. Augustine. He identified with Augustine's passion for literature and the

ancient Greek philosophers. When John Jay Hampton read Augustine's sermons, he felt like the saint was alive and talking directly to him.

Plato gave me knowledge of the true God, Jesus showed me the way.
—Augustine

Those thirteen words changed his life, forever.

Five years later, he successfully completed a Doctorate of Divinity.

Less than ten years after that, Father John Jay Hampton was the spiritual leader of the Reformed Episcopalian Church of Ground of All Being, inspired at the turn of the century by Bishop John Shelby Spong. And now, as President of the World Ecumenical Council of Christians, Muslims and Jews, he faced his first major crisis. He believed Alcor and other cryonic organizations should not be formally condemned by the Council. Father Hampton did not agree with their objectives. However, he was more opposed to fundamentalist elements fomenting violent political opposition. The priest silently prayed:

*Father, give me strength; give me the wisdom to do what is right.
Give me courage to carry out Thy will. I am your humble servant.
Help me find a way to keep open the Gates of Heaven, for those in their
arrogance are deaf to your song.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior*

He stood up slowly. Everyone has a cross to bear, he thought. This was not the first time the Church had faced a crisis. But who would have believed Christians, Muslims and Jews would speak with one voice? But then, who would have ever believed science would offer an alternative to death? Perhaps with previously unimaginable medical advances humankind is actually capable of incredible life extension. Why not?

When has God ever stopped physicians from playing God?

Human nature *will never change*, he thought.

And human-cyborgs *will never enter* the kingdom of God.

If Alcor succeeds, the Resurrection of Christ will be rendered meaningless.

Thousands of sermons— meaningless. Christianity— meaningless! Hampton had faith that God would never let that happen. Death was part of life. Death was not to be feared.

He remembered a conversation he had with his dad, a classic Hell-Fire & Brimstone Southern Baptist, complete with a full head of thick, wavy grey hair— Moses reincarnated! On his death bed in St. Mary's Regional Cancer Wellness facility, in a hospital room designed by someone who obviously had never died, little John Jay asked his father a question that made his father smile thru his pain.

—Dad? Dad. If you die, and there is no heaven or angels, then all that stuff you believe, well..., would that make God a liar?

That broad big smile missing a few teeth always made JJ think of a piano keyboard. Meanwhile, his father, studying every freckle, every feature of the little man boldly standing before him, briefly deliberated then delivered his reply.

—Well son,... I believe thar's a Higher Power, what I call God, my God. And I expect to be a goin' to Heaven and be with yer Nanna and Grampy, whar I can git all the ice cream I want any time I feel like it, and sing Amazin' Grace with a choir of angels!

He saw little JJ begin to tear.

— Now hold on there a moment, son! I ain't dead yet, so save those tears! His Daddy looked away for a moment, and noticed a red cardinal sitting on a branch outside the window of the hospital room. He coughed and spit into a nasty shred of Kleenex, then continued through the hiss of the oxygen mask.

—Now supposin’ that little birdie over thar flies away. He goes somewhar, don’t he? Right? Maybe back to his little nest or somethin’. Maybe to Florida. *But jist cause we cain’t see whar he goes, don’t mean it don’t exist.*

He saw JJ start to squirm. He chuckled and reminded himself keep it short. JJ was the only one who would rather listen to him pontificate and lecture as punishment, rather than a good ol’ fashion git it over with spanking.

—Now JJ, you’re sayin’ *what if* thar’s no heaven, no Pearly Gates, or streets paved in gold, or Jesus waitin’ fer me? Well, . . . *what if* after all my preachin’ God ain’t waitin’ fer ME?

—*Then JJ, I guess it would be one hell’uv a joke! And I wouldn’t miss it fer the world!*

—But don’t you let those “what ifs” drive you crazy, JJ! I’ll be thar’ readin’ yore letters, jist like I promised. An’ every sprang, when those freckles comes out, that’s whar I’ve kissed you in return, when yer sleepin’ an not lookin’!

Before JJ’s first tear could fall, That Cough, and smell of bloody sputum, and all the beeps, and sound of the doctor yelling, Clear! Clear! Clear! But nothing is very clear to an eight year old. It wasn’t clear when the doctor said, I am sorry Mrs. Hampton, but your husband didn’t make it. Make it? Yes. No! He didn’t. But he’s in a better place!

Any place has got to be better than this place, thought little John Jay. The Room. As far away from the nursing station as possible. No one in a hospital likes dying people, little JJ concluded. *What’s going to happen to us? What’s going to happen to me?*

I guess some things never really do change, thought Reverend Hampton. I wish I knew what was going to happen now. *Dad, talk to me!*

What if “Ultimate Technology” has its satanic Singularity?

Man’s humanity forever lost? Reverend John Jay Hampton shook his head.

The new battle for God had begun. *Why is He always hard to find when you need Him the most?*

John crossed himself, stood up, turned and calmly walked the stone path that led to his two thousand square foot cabin. The St. Andrew’s Fellowship, a wealthier group of men and women within the church had offered him a luxurious penthouse apartment overlooking Central Park in New York City. The plan was to display opulence, power and prestige rivaling the Vatican.

John politely refused.

He was a great admirer of the integrity of the late evangelist Billy Graham.

Also, Father Hampton was greatly influenced by the Franciscan Order. Like St. Francis Assisi, he spurned the riches of the material world. His disposition exuded the joy of spiritual maturity.

Father Hampton believed in predestination. He believed he was chosen for a reason to lead the Council. And now it was clear what he must do.

Over the past five years, despite their diametrically opposed beliefs, Father Hampton had developed a friendship and respect for Dr. Scott Irvin while serving on various government committees examining the ethical, legal, moral and philosophical aspects of cryonics. It was time to make a phone call he had hoped he would never come.

—Scottie, its JJ.

—Hey! JJ! What’s up man? Catch my press conference or CNN?

—Scottie, I’ll get right to the point...

—Hey! That would be a first! Scott asked a flight attendant to bring him another double Crown Royal on the rocks. Holding his hand over his cell phone, *psst! Michelle! Would you like another?* Scott felt his hand vibrate. What was that, JJ?

—*Listen up Scott!* An extreme right wing “Christian” militia group, known as “The Sons of Thunder” have been pushing the Council to take action against Alcor.

—So tell me something I don’t know, JJ!

—*Listen* Scott. You don’t have all day!

Scott leaned over Michelle sitting in the middle seat between him and some poor mother with a crying baby, and grabbed his drink off the flight attendant’s tray. He swirled the ice, then took a large gulp enjoying the aroma of the whiskey and mild burn as it slid down the back of his throat.

—OK. I’m all ears. He took a sip; he looked at the angel beside him and wondered if she had a boyfriend. She rested her head on his shoulder, pretending to sleep. As he felt the mild rush from Crown Royal, he also felt a mild rush of heat in his loins. He loosened his seat belt.

—Scott,...you know those dreams you were telling me about?

(Mild boredom) Ya. Ya...

—That Circular rune, with the symbols?

(perking up in his seat) Ya?

—*The Sons of Thunder*. I have been informed by a reliable source in the Christian Intelligence Agency today; you will be killed by one of their assassins at your first press conference when you get back to Alcor.

—Bullshit! The effects of his third double and a single were beginning to make him feel a little batty.

—*Listen up* Scott. I have been told you will be killed by an assassin sent by a member of an extremist group that believes you are under the influence of the Devil. If you attend the press conference scheduled in the morning, you will be killed. I suggest you make other plans for tomorrow. My security people will be there undercover and should have no trouble identifying an agent from the Sons of Thunder. In the meantime, I strongly suggest you beef up your security, Scott. Scott?

Scott set down his empty glass on the seat tray and looked at “the beef.”

—Funny you should mention that, JJ. I actually have a Homeland Security agent assigned to me ... sitting right beside me! And beside her, some lady with a screaming kid I am sure would keep any assassin or terrorist away!

—Scott! This is *no time* for levity! Have you been drinking?

—Hell, no JJ (in a sheepishly unconvincing tone). Well... maybe one or two. It's these damn headaches I've been getting, JJ!

—See the neuroelectrophysiologist tomorrow, Scott. *Anything!* Makeup some excuse to stay home...like, “I've got a headache,” or something.

JJ always had a subtle way to make a point. Usually, his sarcasm pissed him off, but not tonight. Well... JJ, he thought, I have a pretty good excuse sitting beside me.

Scott stole a whiff of auburn hair, and then said, I'll discuss that with the security agent. But JJ, I'm not one to back down from a threat.

That, thought JJ, was definitely the alcohol talking. Scott, *how do you know for sure* that "agent" is not an assassin from the Sons of Thunder? When and where did he show up?

—Actually, "he" is a "she." JJ, all she told me was that she was "my guardian angel." Alcor security checked her out. She listed as having clearance from the highest government authority. Look, if she wanted to, she could have easily killed me by now.

—Scott, if she is CIA, have her show you her ID. I'll have my people check. You go home, and stay home until I get there. The Sons of Thunder will not harm me, even though I have offered Alcor a measure of support. They have sworn an oath to protect me at the cost of their lives. After all, as President of the WEC, I am their spiritual leader whether they like it or not.

—Exactly how do they plan to destroy Alcor?

—One Alcorian at a time, Scott. One at a time. The Lord will watch over you. Have faith, Scott. God bless you, my friend.

As JJ hung up, Scott looked out the window in time to see the surface-to-air missile hit the starboard engine.

*COME TO THE EDGE.
No, we will fall.
COME TO THE EDGE.
No. We will fall.
They came to the edge.
He pushed them, and they flew.*
Apollinaire

Michelle

The missile exploding the engine on the wing of the Suborbiter sent an eerie Hiroshima flash through the pressurized windows from one side of the aircraft's fuselage outside the other. The sudden violent jar initially felt like moderately severe turbulence. People started pointing out their windows. The waves of "Oh My Gods" were soon drowned out by screams and the "I Don't Want to Dies."

Everyone became infected by the panic. The flight attendants tried faking calm. Only the pilots, Michelle and the baby (wondering what the fuss, was going on) beside Michelle, truly were in complete control of their emotional states.

The wing remained intact. Fortunately, it was made of an incredibly strong composite, one of the first highly successful commercial products of molecular nanotechnology,

—Good Evening, folks! This is your Captain Bo Sitler speaking (in his best Chuck Yeager reassuring baritone despite-all-hell-is-breaking-loose voice). As those of you sitting on the right side of the airplane can see, we've had a little'ol problem with the engine. But rest assured, folks, this baby will fly with just the left engine alone! Plus we've got back-up twins mounted on the tail section. So sit back and relax folks! We're expecting an ETA into Phoenix about fifteen minutes from now, or around 10:30

Mountain Standard Time. The temperature is 80 degrees with a light breeze out of the southwest. I going to keep the seatbelt sign on as we start our descent.

Thanks for flying American Airlines! We know you have your choice of airlines; next time you fly, we hope to see you again!

Then the second missile hit, and blew off the entire left wing.

The aircraft hesitated a brief moment before it began its fatal plunge. Wing lift from the right spun the Suborbiter into a left graveyard spiral. It plunged like a heavily weighted badminton birdie.

Scott clutched Michelle tight. *At least we won't be alone when we die.*

His life did not pass before him.

Strange, he thought. I should be afraid.

Scott's eyes held Michelle fast. Even in the mad chaos of the few seconds he figured they had left together, he felt like the luckiest man in the world. If he was going to die, what could possibly be better than a last memory embracing a woman like Michelle?

Michelle remained silent. She was happy snuggled in the arms of a human being. It had been forever, she last felt as loved and needed.

Passing fifteen thousand feet, the first Cirrus designed parachute deployed.

Passing ten thousand feet, the second.

What at first felt like the sudden impact of hitting the ground, had eased into a terrifying, quiet descent. The fear of death was replaced by the fear of the unknown; the sudden registration of an inextricable situation completely outside the reality of any previous experience anyone could have imagined.

—Ladies and Gentlemen, this is your Captain speaking. Captain Bo Sitrer.
(Scott wondered if they were all dead). Hope all of you have some stock in the nanotech division of GM— Cirrus Aerospace! Don't worry, folks!

—As some of you can see looking out your windows, the left wing is damaged and the right engine is...well...gone. Don't worry, folks! The chutes are strong enough to hold five times the weight of this aircraft. Momentarily, onboard computers will fire up the twin turbines and guide us into Phoenix. We apologize for any of you that may have a connection.

Once again, thank you for flying American Airlines; we know you have your choice of airlines, next time you fly, we hope to see you again.

Scott wondered if an actual real Version 1.0 real honest-to-God human being was flying the plane, or just some sophisticated voice modulated computer program some Silicon Valley geeks dreamed up in their spare time.

Well, ...who cares he thought? As long as we land safely in Phoenix.

Thank God the FAA forced the airline industry to modify all aircraft with the latest antiterrorist protection. Anyway, what good is a gun in a cockpit if the plane loses its wings other than to kill yourself before they need a snow shovel to scoop up your remains?

God, people have come up with stupid ideas, thought Scott.

His arm still around Michelle, Scott took his left hand and just to reassure himself he was alive, felt her breast thru the cashmere sweater. *They're hers alright.* His hand

lingered exploring the soft warmth and with two fingers discovered her nipple, and aroused him.

Michelle responded without surprise and gratefully, kissing him lightly on his neck, gently placing her hand between his legs, expertly fondling him through a very thin pair of beige micro fiber pants incapable of hiding his desire.

He still wasn't convinced he hadn't died; she was a fantasy come true. Clearing his throat, he took his hand and placed it over hers, thinking the lady with the baby would not notice *his* little soldier.

—*I thought angels didn't do that kind of thing.*

Michelle nibbled on his ear.

—*Why do you think God invented sex, Scott?*

Scott wasn't in a problem solving mood. It wasn't an Alcor medical director that held her angelic face in his hands, and kissed her desperately, passionately as if it were their last, not their first kiss. She responded by slipping him the tongue. Michelle gave him a devilish grin.

—*What kind of angel are you anyways, Michelle?* Scott said while panting like a dog.

Later that night at Scott's condominium on the golf course overlooking the second hole, with flaming steaks on the grill, the two of them were burning it up in bed. It started with verbal innocence. "Make yourself at home" followed by "I'm going to take a shower" (tainted by raging hormones), nonverbally translated into "*I want you now*" resulting in a trail of strewn clothes, including boxers and a brassiere leading into Scott's bedroom.

—*Michelle!* He was barely audible. On top and astride Scott, her breasts hung temptingly low, benevolently and gently, swaying with the rhythm of her pelvis. Scott lifted his head off the pillow.

Steadying her breasts with his hands, he lightly blew on each nipple, kissed them and watched with fascination as they reciprocated with a delightfully firm pink, driving his passion and pleasure to a level he had never felt before with a woman.

She reached down biting his shoulder, neck, sensuously licking with her hungry moist tongue tracing a line, deliberately hesitating, to the corner of his mouth; outlined his lips, and with grateful felicity, gave herself to him with a kiss. His body trembled with mind blowing joy; every inch of their bodies tingled with unleashed ecstasy.

He felt soaked in a shower of happiness. The terror of annihilation so acutely experienced on the flight earlier that evening vanished like the profound loneliness hid deep within the most secret part of his soul.

—*Michelle,Michelle, ... I feel like I've died and gone to heaven!* He heard himself say during the moment of shared rapture.

—*You have Scott,* Michelle whispered with a tender smile, like a mother tucking in her newborn babe.

The cerebral aneurysm causing Scott's increasingly severe headaches over the past two weeks ruptured; exploding with merciless pain— just as Michelle felt the satisfaction of his release.

For after all what is man in nature? A nothing in relation to infinity, all in relation to nothing, a central point between nothing and all and infinitely far from understanding either. The ends of things and their beginnings are impregnably concealed from him in an impenetrable secret. He is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness out of which he was drawn and the infinite in which he is engulfed.

Blasé Pascal

Scott

Scott saw himself in slow motion shoot up and burst like a multi-colored firework sending a shower of diamond starlets in all directions. He heard an Olympian clap of thunder.

Everything dark went in a brilliant coruscation of light. Scott looked back and saw him and Michelle making love. His view was unique— as if looking in from virtually every point, every angle from the inner surface of a bubble scrutinizing the two of them with eyes made of iridescent films of undulating shimmering oval rainbows. He was the child running naked in a meadow making the bubbles with a magic bubble wand, and watched them float high on the wind giggling with each new creation.

He was simultaneously every bubble— each its own separate universe, with him in the center. Never had he felt such freedom and infinite ecstasy

Scott heard Michelle's voice singing in the wind; *I am with you always, my love, now and forever...*

Strange, he thought. I should be afraid. (At least my headache is gone).

*With all your science can you tell me how it is,
and whence it is, that light comes into the soul?*
Henry David Thoreau

Robert

Robert Murphy III tumbled slowly like a dead astronaut in space. In the currents of the deepwater, he could not tell his position. He did not know if he was up or down, tilted left or right, or rotating leisurely like a Ferris wheel. Robert felt the vertiginous spin of physical motion; but he could not feel his useless limbs. He was beyond cold.

He wondered if Max had made it. His eyes searched the dark.

Strange, he thought. I should be afraid.

Submerged, he was unable to feel his wet tears on an anguished face as he longed for his friend; he sadly pondered the fate of his beloved Max.

Robert began to experience the unmistakable sensation of ascent like a diver returning to his ship. Little gaseous bubbles oozed from his flesh. He felt Rice Krispie crackles in both ears. Lungs expanded and came alive. He exhaled like an underwater volcanic vent. Robert noticed passing thru each thermocline. He steadily rose at a controlled rate to the surface.

Up was light. His heart quickened and fluttered. It was only a matter of time.

Robert sputtered and coughed as he broke the glassy surface of a pristine Rocky Mountain lake. Riplets of waves gradually formed larger and larger rings gently crossing the lake for a distant shore. The light was disorienting yet paradoxically reassuring with comfort of warmth, and promising start of a new day. Robert felt overwhelmed by a strange mixture of hope and curiosity.

He choose hope.

He let his mind relax in the ecstasy and expectation of life— *his life*. It did not matter why or how. It was beyond his ability to understand.

He lay on his back, floating gently on the surface without effort like a tourist on vacation on the Dead Sea. Everything in the universe at that moment in space and time was in perfect harmony with everything he ever knew or felt. So like a child in play, in wonder and in love with *being*.

Whatever suffered to be; was no more.

Robert dreamily gazed at a wisp of a cloud curling, swirling in the wind. He watched a young bald eagle, wings outstretched sail effortlessly. He closed his eyes and imagined the tender lake breeze lift him high.

*The question from agnosticism is
Who turned on the lights?
The question from faith is,
Whatever for?*

Annie Dillard

Ted

Any other self-respecting baseball player would have stepped back from the plate and taken a moment to regain his composure. But not the mighty Ted Williams! Some people thrive under pressure. Some people have the right stuff.

WBOS (Red O'Sullivan announcing): Bottom of the twelfth
inning— two out and bases loaded— the count three balls and two
strikes— Williams pops a foul ball over the Boston dugout— McGrath
is unable to make the play— foul tip and off the facemask of umpire
Bernie Giacobbo! He's done one hell of a job today, folks!
Williams takes an easy swing like it's just another day in the park—
sets up in his stance— all he needs folks is a single to win the game
and hit for The Cycle! He's homered, doubled and tripled. The
young rookie on the mound shakes off one, and then another sign
from catcher Rusty Swenson— checks off first base— delivers The
Pitch over the plate! Lowandoutside, but, WILLIAMS SWINGS
THE BAT AND THIS GAME FOLKS IS.....HISTORY!!
Ted Williams has WON THE GAME!! WON THE GAME!
WHOWOULDHAVEBELIEVEDTHEBOSTONREDSOX HAVE
WON THE PENNANT!!— THEY ARE GOING TO THE WORLD
SERIES!! And that ball Williams hit, folks, is... OVER THE
GREEN MONSTER! MY GOD THAT BALL IS STILL SAILING!
THE SPLENDID SPLINTER HAS DONE IT AGAIN! And folks, I
think even the Babe is smiling down from heaven at this one!
THE BOSTON RED SOX ARE GOING TO THE WORLD SERIES
and will be playing the New York Yankees!! THE RED SOX HAVE
WON IT 6-5 in the bottom of the twelfth!

By the time he rounded first base, Williams allowed himself an almost imperceptible smirk while looking directly at a disgusted and dejected infielder. He glanced up towards the direction and trajectory of the ball he had just crushed, only half expecting to catch a glimpse.

Ted had fighter pilot's eyes— like the eyes of a hungry hawk that once it has spotted its prey, would not fail to kill. He never got tired of the rush, and then the intense satisfaction. Better than sex, he once told a reporter from the Chicago Tribune.

They say a major league hitter like Williams can actually see the seams of a hardball from the moment of release by a pitcher. Williams had no trouble spotting his home run ball. Normally, he didn't give a good hit a second thought. For him, it was routine. But this time was different.

By the time he rounded second base, he could clearly visualize the ball flying over the *Black Horse and Rose* pub just outside Fenway Park's left field and the Green Monster. He could even smell the leather and sweat— every ballplayer's cologne.

By the time he rounded third base, *he was the ball.*

High above the red brick townhouses and cobblestone streets of Boston, he felt the rush of the cold October wind as he hurled into the beyond.

Strange, he thought. I should be afraid.

Some men never live in fear.

Ted Williams was enjoying the ride! Curious, he thought. Flying without wings.

He looked down a second time before his path took him thru a fine cool mist of rain destined never to reach the ground. He saw the shallow greens and deeper blues of the ocean off the South Florida coast. A content old man sat in

the back of a forty-five foot twin screw diesel Grand Mariner, buckled in a chair, rod in hand, fishing for marlin. Looks like fun, Williams thought.

In the course of time he looked up and forward. Momentarily blinded in a smothering cloud of freezing ice and snow, he shot up thru the clouds like a comet, and entered the cosmos a star.

Williams scanned the infinite.

He imagined playing in the World Series— for the second year in a row.

And with an irrepressible snarl, he screamed at a silent universe.

When he finally stopped screaming long enough to take off his baseball cap, scratch his head and take in three deep breaths like Coach had always told him if ever he felt tense, Ted regained his composure, rubbed the disbelief out of his eyes and mumbled,

“What the fuck?!”

*Science conducts us, step by step, through the whole
range of creation, until we arrive, at length, at God.*
Marguerite de Valois

The Reverend and The Doctor

Williams' brain had taken quite a beating prior to vitrification. It was anticipated during the rewarming phase, the quantum-nano electroencephalogram (QN-EEG) scanning for neural activity would likely demonstrate abnormal fluctuations in the hippocampus as the core cerebral temperature, or CCT, rose above -20° F.

Below that temperature, no one was exactly sure of the amount of residual cerebral metabolic activity. Even at Absolute Zero, at least at the subatomic level, cellular activity persisted. No one knew with certainty and the current diagnostic tools available, if any kind of function— thinking— awareness— feelings of any type were being generated.

—No! Said the neuroscientists.

—Yes! Said religious leaders.

—*God only knows!* Thought the Reverend John Jay Hampton as he hopped in his rent-a-car at the airport, a bright yellow Hummer. *Always wanted to feel how one of these babies drove! Not too shabby.*

John was deep in thought, wondering how Scott's bastard children were doing. They had enjoyed some lively debates both in public forums and at private dinners. He remembered their last conversation over lunch two weeks ago when Scott invited him to attend the announcement of Ted Williams' and Robert Murphy's second lifecycle.

—Scott, do you realize you are supervening natural God-given evolution? John Jay queried.

—So, Scott nonchalantly replied. I thought you Christians didn't believe in evolution.

—Don't try to change! You know exactly what I'm getting at...eugenics! Plain and simple. Creation of a master race of so-called Posthumans. Post Humans are going to be nothing more than programmed Zombies by the time you get through adding all the technological enhancements. I mean good God, Scott. You're even planning to track them with GPS using nanochips attached to their brains !

—Look JJ, we are not claiming they will be better than anyone else. Just because Ted Williams will benefit from state of the art medical technology does not make him, or me, a God. We are simply *resuscitating* him, fulfilling our mission and promise made to our Alcor members beginning back in the last century, 1972 to be exact. As Galileo once said, "I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason and intellect has intended us to forego their use."

Scott then tried to explain to him in non-nanotechnical jargon, above a CCT (cerebral core temperature) of -20° F, how one hundred trillion plus neurons began "comparing notes" and, at some point during the rewarming phase, Level I and Level II Dennett Modules began their intra-cerebral chatter.

Scott also had given JJ access to the latest developments and progress updates on Williams and Murphy from Alcor thru a Bluetooth wireless linking Scott's ePC to his ePC. Whatever it took to help him understand.

An ePC was the latest product on the market from Microsoft. The “e” stood for epidural. The tiniest computer ever developed, about the size of a mustard seed but shaped more like a Toadstool mushroom, was anchored on the outmost layer covering the brain, just over the frontal cortex on the analytically dominant side of the brain. This device linked Alcorians and Alcor’s LAN to World Wide Web belonging to the Immortalist Institute.

Its main purpose was to share the latest developments and innovations in all of the emerging fields— part of so-called “Ultimate Technology.” The telos of ultimate technology was known as the “Singularity.” The Singularity represented that point on a near vertical line of exponential growth in scientific knowledge marking the moment when all the rules by which mankind had lived, changed.

The rebirth of biotech hybrids Williams and Murphy, the first of the Immortals, was eagerly anticipated by some, feared by others. But no matter, for all concerned, it would indicate disease and death had finally been conquered.

—*Scott! Enough! I get it!* The Singularity is to Science what the Rapture prophesied in the Book of Revelation is to Christianity. *But Scott, is that the kind of Immortality we want? Where does God fit into the equation?*

God said to Abraham, "But for me, you would not be here." "I know that, Lord," Abraham answered, "but were I not here, there would be no one to think about you."

—Traditional Jewish tale

Reverend John Jay

John Jay Hampton mentally slapped himself to get his mind focused on driving. The sooner he got to Scott's house, the better he thought. The Reverend's mind, like his Hummer, was in overdrive as he tried to pass a white Ford Econoline. He overtook the slower van with ease. He did not see the side door of the van swing open. He did not feel the rocket propelled grenade hit the Hummer broadside. He did not see the smile on the face of a soldier from the Sons of Thunder as the Hummer burst into flames.

The blast instantly ruptured both of John's eardrums. He could not hear the vehicle crumple and crash as it plunged over a guardrail rolling helplessly down at ninety foot ravine.

Strange, he thought. I should be afraid.

As the Hummer tumbled, John tried to remember if he took out insurance when he signed the rental papers. *Last time I rent a Hummer. Nothing but an oversized lemon.*

As the airbags dutifully deployed, John Jay worried about getting late to Scott's house. He looked forward to meeting Michelle. The tone in Scott's voice when he talked about her intuitively suggested to JJ there must be something special developing between them.

JJ felt like he was a stuntman in an old time silent movie. He could envision the entire scene. An oversized yellow box on wheels rudely bashing down trees as it turned over and over in a dramatic plunge! Unfortunately (perhaps fortunately) he could not

envision the Hummer slamming into the dry creek bed at the bottom of the ravine, exploding like a home made roadside bomb he had seen so often on the six o'clock news sending another poor slob to Kingdom Come.

It had dawned on him too late he was being followed.

Right before impact, he wondered how the Sons of Thunder, or whoever the hell sabotaged the Hummer, knew he was on *that* flight, and in *that* rented car, exactly at *that* time.

Last God damn time I use Orbitz!

He was forced to think the unthinkable. *No way! Not Scott!* But then, eliminating the President of the World Ecumenical Council of the three largest denominations in the world would take the focus off the arrival of ol' Scottie's little pet project. *Ya...pets! That's all Murphy and Williams would ever be! Pets!*

The dream is to find an open channel. What, then, is the meaning of it all? What can we say today to dispel the mystery of existence? If we take everything into account, not only what the ancients knew, but also all those things we have found out up until today that they didn't know, then I think that we must frankly admit that we do not know. But I think that in admitting this we have probably found the open channel.

—Richard P. Feynman

Scott and Ted

Scott woke up with a headache. This one felt like there was a tight band around his head. He reached up with his hands. There *was* a tight band around his head that possessed the familiar feel of gauze.

He stared straight ahead. A bright light surrounded by soft white seemed to beckon. Then he realized he was looking at a fluorescent light and ceiling tiles. Scott turned his head and recognized the chrome railing of a hospital bed. He felt the coarse starched pillowcase rub against his cheek.

A nurse emerged from the bathroom with a bedpan. Scott relaxed, but felt strangely uncomfortable. He had seen this woman before, but where? She was tall, attractive with auburn hair and eyes as blue as the Colorado skies. The nurse caught his gaze.

—So, I see you are back in the land of the living, Dr. Irvin! She had a pleasing voice with a charming British accent. Would you like a spot of tea, dearie? I bet you'd rather 'av a cold one, wouldn't you luv? Let me give your roomie back his bedpan, and I'll see what we can do.

The nurse scurried over to the patient in the bed next to Scott.

The patient was a young man, perhaps in his early twenties Scott thought, with an aura of energy and seemed full of life. His side of the room resembled a florist shop. On the wall hung a Boston Red Sox pennant and a light tan baseball bat made of wood. Scott had only seen such a bat once before— Cooperstown, NY. In addition, several autographed pictures of baseball players hung clustered in a variety of frames and covered almost an entire wall. He was sitting up intently staring at a monitor clutching the controls of the latest version of PlayStation.

—Where am I? Scott rasped.

—You're in the neurorehab unit, luv, the nurse responded.

Scott could not take his eyes off the highly animated young man. Obviously, he was quite agitated. A steady stream of fucks occasionally punctuated with “Strike? No God damn way!” culminated in angrily tossing the controls on the floor.

The young man was not oblivious to Scott's stare. Just as Scott acknowledged whose presence he was in by an audible gasp, the Splendid Splinter cocked his head towards Scott and out the side of his mouth snarled, “What the hell are you looking at?”

The nurse came to the rescue.

—Now there, there Mr. Williams. Its just a game. That's the third one you broke this week. Would you like me to get you another one, dearie? Just take a little sip of water with your Haldol and down the hatch. Now that's a good boy!

Ted let out a grunt which meant yes, get me another control or I'll break the monitor too.

Scott looked up and followed a little spider as it industriously began constructing a web in the corner nearest the window. He pursed his lips, took in a deep breath and exhaled slowly. He ruminated for a moment thinking *Oh what a tangled web we weave!*

He tried, but could not think how or why he ended up in St. Mary's neurorehab unit. He vaguely remembered being at a press conference, but nothing else. He did not know his friend the Reverend John Jay Hampton was dead. He did not know Robert Murphy's reanimation was only a part success; Robert remained in a coma, intubated. An army of specialists could not explain why.

Scott began to cry. He could not help it. He hit the call button.

No response.

He hit it again, and again and again...

Pete would take the baseballs from a basket next to him. One pitch would follow another and Ted would swing and swing. The middle of the night. Vinnie would rundown the line-drive results in the outfield. No one around. Ted would hit the ball and hit the ball and scream at the top of his well developed lungs.

Whack.

“Ted Williams! The greatest fucken hitter that ever lived!”

Whack.

“Ted Williams! The greatest fucken hitter that ever lived!”

Whack.

“Ted Williams! The greatest fucken hitter that ever lived:”

—from *Ted Williams, Biography of an American Hero*
by Leigh Montville (2004)

Ted, Scott and Michelle

Dr. Scott Irvin was worried about Ted. He had been losing his appetite and also his interest in just about everything; including his passion for Major League Baseball, the PlayStation XXII version. He had no interest in the real thing. But he did like to hold a bat. Some nights he would even take it to bed with him.

This was the last office visit he would have with his illustrious patient before a review in front of the President’s Council on Bioethics. With Robert Murphy in a persistent vegetative state, the cost, notoriety and behavioral problems with Ted, the future of the program, the very survival of Alcor was in jeopardy.

—Well Mr. Williams, how are we feeling today?

—You’re the doc. You tell me.

It had been the same routine for weeks. Upping the antidepressants and twiggling the cerebral nanochip hadn’t helped. Ted had also developed some disconcerting alpha

wave intrusions during stage IV sleep. Perhaps sleep deprivation was causing his depression and irritability. Then again, he was having difficulty relating, especially to women.

—They just aren't as eager to have sex like in the old days.

Sometimes Scott wished he had lived back then. Life was so much simpler compared to the one he knew. But then again, he might not have met Michelle, or at least someone like her. Na, he reasoned. No way. There could not have possibly been anyone like her! Nor would there ever be anyone like her in the future.

Since his near death experience, they had drawn close and were dating on a regular basis. Scott had developed faith, and never failed to attend church with Michelle. He would often think about JJ and pray for him. Why he lived and JJ died he would never understand.

The future of Alcor and medical time travel? Scott didn't know. He really didn't care anymore.

What excited him these days was a joint venture with physicists at MIT. Looked like time travel into the past could be more than a theoretical possibility. And soon. It might offer a solution, or at least a humane option for the rest of the brains suspended in liquid nitrogen. Especially if the government was bent on their destruction. Ironic, Scott thought. Now the church completely backs Alcor. "The sanctity of life, all life, must be preserved." That was their latest rallying cry. At least it kept JJ's organization united. Scott considered in a way, the memory of his old friend was kept alive.

Interesting he speculated. I shall someday see him again. Either with time travel into the past, or perhaps in heaven. Who knows?

Scott put his hand on Ted's shoulder and looked directly into his unhappy eyes.

—Ted, I've got an idea...

Supplement:

Suggestions for Further Reading

A Philosophical Frame of Mind

Generally we strive to acquire one emotional stance, one viewpoint for all life situations and events: we usually call that being of a philosophical frame of mind. But rather than making oneself uniform, we may find greater value for the enrichment of knowledge by listening to the soft voice of different life situations; each brings its own views with it. Thus we acknowledge and share the life and nature of many by not treating ourselves like rigid, invariable, single individuals.

—Nietzsche¹

Cryonics is an emerging 21st-century medical technology, challenging the belief we have a single, finite lifespan

Central to the mission of cryonic organizations is marketing and selling the idea “medical time travel” is possible. The brain (or brain-body) is stored in liquid nitrogen. The hope is future medical technology restore the brain using a product of advances in nanotechnology— nanorobots. Mind and memories form in a newly restored or brand new body².

Alcor entered the national spotlight when the Boston Red Sox legend, Ted Williams died July 2nd, 2002³. Since then, Williams has reentered American folklore not just as a baseball Hall-of-Famer, but also as perhaps the most famous celebrity cryonically interred at the facility in Scottsdale, Arizona⁴?

¹ from *Human All Too Human* by Nietzsche
Section Nine: Man Alone with Himself (p257)

² Chapter Two: for additional information about Alcor, www.alcor.org

³ Leigh Montville’s *Ted Williams The Biography of an American Hero* is an enjoyable read to learn more about one of baseball’s greatest legends.

In life (or from Alcor's viewpoint "first life"), Ted Williams was a fiery, controversial personality. Controversy has followed him in death (or Alcor "biostasis"). He has been the subject of countless newspaper and magazine articles, TV documentaries and the butt of jokes, is a special favorite of late night TV talk show hosts. Ted Williams is even portrayed on a cable comedy show as a recurring crotchety old geezer, face protruding from a block of ice, who is wheeled out from a storage room at periodic intervals to render an opinion or judgment.

Ideas threatening cultural norms and religious beliefs may generate overt hostility. Angry rhetoric and advertising replace objective evaluation and thinking. The public often reacts with more than just a healthy degree of skepticism to new scientific discoveries.

What is possible and, what is impossible?

If you had the option to live forever, would you?

Cryonics claims it is the only science that offers that possibility. But should cryonics even be considered a legitimate science that deserves recognition? Or is it best to consider cryonics (at best) a proto-science, or (at worst) a pseudo-science? What is the difference? Do the public-at-large know, or even care? Michael Shermer's book, *Why People Believe Weird Things*.

Cryonics is a new face representing a modern flashpoint between religious and scientific fundamentalists. Fundamentalism as manifested by the three major religions of the world is not limited to Christianity, Judaism and Islam. *The Battle for God* by Karen Armstrong inspired the underlying theme of my short story.

The new battlefield for God: Cryonics and Christianity.

Secular movements like cryonics, the Immortalists, TransHumanist and PostHumanist are likely to grow and continue to gain increased popularity in the 21st century⁵. Venturists represent the spiritual branch of Alcor.

Religious fundamentalists believe in literal interpretation and biblical inerrancy. The Immortalist believes in the ultimate infallibility and success of science.

Cryonics challenges our concepts of life, death and the hereafter.

Cryonics challenges our sensibilities and established belief systems. Who can resist pondering the— *What if?*

What if it was possible to be placed in suspended animation, return in the future when medical technology has conquered disease and death?

When a brain is cryonically disembodied, what happens to the human spirit? If the body has a soul, what happens to it? Is and restoration of a human brain, its creative imagination, motivation, and intentionality⁶ actually possible?

Alcor maintains it medically resuscitates patients in “biostasis” for that purpose. They believe, given the spectacular rate of achievements of science during the 19th and 20th centuries, it is logical to conclude advances will be made that will make the it highly probable, if not inevitable, humans “frozen” today will be successfully revived at a future time⁷⁸.

⁵ To find out more, I recommend using Google or some other search engine.

⁶ Any book by the neurophilosopher Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, *The Mind's I*, *Brainstorm*

⁷ Eric Drexler's *Engines of Creation*

⁸ *The First Immortal*, James L. Halprin

Characteristic of the human spirit is the instinct to “strive, to seek, to find and not to yield⁹.” In the history of man’s quest for immortality, cryonics embodies that spirit as the latest attempt and technique to achieve that goal.

Cryonics redefines death and maintains they are saving a life when they freeze a head. Is it a denial of death or an affirmation of life? I highly recommend Ernest Becker’s *The Denial of Death* —a classic.

To learn more about nanochips, check out the May 2005 edition of Scientific American obtainable from www.sciam.com. The article entitled *Mimic the Nervous System with Neuromorphic Chips* lends insight into the state-of-the-art. To stay current with advances in cognitive neuroscience, I recommend a subscription to Scientific American’s newest publication, *MIND: Thoughts, Ideas, Brain Science*.

My chapter on Robert (p26) extrapolates the *reduction ad absurdum* cryonic belief some day atoms will be mapped with enough accuracy to rebuild a human being. If so, then given atoms do not cease movement even at absolute zero, what if on a quantum level neurosuspendees like Robert and Ted could still think. Dewdney points out in his 2004 book one of the eight things man will never be able to do is pinpoint an atom, rendering the cryonic dream an impossibility. We may know its velocity or position, but never both at the same time.

The chapters on Robert (p26) and Ted (p28) describe reanimation (rewarming) if their minds were capable of cognition.

John Jay’s discussion with his father (p14) is based on a true story told to me by a friend whose father was a preacher in rural Kentucky. His remark’s on facing death and the afterlife are reminiscent of Socrates’ discussion with Crito while awaiting execution.

⁹ From *Ulysses* by Lord Alfred Tennyson

John Jay's discussion with his father (p14) is based on a true story told to me by a friend whose father was a preacher in rural Kentucky. His remarks on facing death and the afterlife are reminiscent of Socrates' discussion with Crito while awaiting execution.

On earth, science and the world's major religions diverge. In deep space as viewed thru the Hubble telescope, they converge in a sense of wonder. The book *The Hand of God: Thoughts and Images Reflecting the Spirit of the Universe* was a continued source of inspiration as I wrote and the source of some of my quotes.

The Words of Jesus published by Chartwell books were the origin of biblical quotes.

My inspiration for the angel was my wife Cindy. I was asked if I read the book *American Angels*, or any book on angels. No I have not.

Scott and John Jay were my alter egos; Scott the scientist doctor with a localizing, analytical left hemisphere; John Jay, a deeply spiritual human being with the global, empathetic right hemisphere. Scott the atheist has the angel while John Jay is obliterated. Who knows how the mind of God works?

Scott believes in the infallibility of science; John Jay believes in the infallibility of religion.

Reality and truth may simply reflect which part of the brain is talking.