



BACK FROM THE VOID

by ZOE SEVEN

The following text is excerpted from the forthcoming book Back from the Void: A Modern-Day Shaman's Odyssey Continues by ZOE SEVEN, available in 2004. See www.zoe7.com for more information.

It's about 2:00 am, and I hear the sound of wailing sirens as I'm waiting in the emergency room for a nurse to tend to me. I sit there terrified as the walls continue to dissolve and the people around me shape-shift into horrible-looking monsters. Apparently, I have finally done some serious damage to my brain with my experiments, as I cannot seem to hold a coherent thought pattern in my mind for more than a few seconds. My brain feels as though it has been cooked, and I keep forgetting what it is I am thinking about in mid-thought. Likewise, I am experiencing Tourette's Syndrome-like symptoms, as I cannot seem to stop making these weird mouth/throat/respiration noises or keep myself from suddenly speaking my thoughts out loud, cursing and all. Fucking weird. On top of that I cannot stop from repeatedly crossing my legs, standing up, and sitting down. I'm experiencing extreme bodily discomfort, and all of these feelings make me want to jump out of my skin.

Delusional thoughts that border on insanity stream through my consciousness as my plight with discomfort continues. One of these thoughts is that the "Keepers of Reality" are coming to escort me out of physicality, as I've broken certain laws dealing with the secrets of existence (related to life and death), having seen "things I wasn't supposed to" while doing my experiments as depicted in *Into The Void*. Apparently, through my experiments, I'd ripped apart the fabric of reality—or at least my reality—having learned too much about the mechanics of space-time and creation. Therefore, I needed to be removed from the three-dimensional framework. And the Keepers of Reality would arrive at any moment to take me away.

It was the year 2000, and I had ordered through the Internet what are sometimes referred to as "research chemicals." I got some 2C-T-7 and some 5-MeO-DIPT (both of which are now Schedule I compounds, but back then they were not specifically scheduled). During this time, I had recently finished writing my book *Into The Void*. One thousand books had

just arrived from the printer, and my small apartment's living room/home office was filled with boxes. With my first book completed and printed, I thought I'd get a head start on another series of experiments that I figured would go into the second book of my trilogy.

At the time, I unfortunately did not have a scale that weighed in milligrams, only one that weighed in grams. Not wanting to be derailed from my curiosity, I decided to "eyeball" 10–15 milligrams of 5-MeO-DIPT so that I could try this new compound. But what actually happened—when I later retraced where I had gone wrong—is that I ended up ingesting about 80 milligrams of the compound; and the average dose should be more like 6–10 milligrams. I had initially ingested about half of the 80 milligrams, not realizing that I had "measured" way too much. I waited an hour to notice the effects, but felt nothing. Another half an hour went by, and since I was clearly not feeling *any* effects, I ingested a second dose. Unfortunately about five minutes after having taken the second dose, I began to feel the effects of the first one coming on strong.

At first, the effects of the 5-MeO-DIPT felt rather pleasant, similar to the effects of MDMA (a.k.a. "Ecstasy"), but without the "heart opening" psychological aspect; only the physical and tactile sensations were present. However, it very much felt as though I was getting higher and higher as the intensity of the effects kept climbing and my senses became more acute, especially my sense of touch, my hearing, and my vision. What's more, I felt as though I was vibrating full of energy. It was as though I was being electrified.

Since I knew it would be a few hours before the effects subsided, I decided to try and keep my mind off the experience and involve my attention with something else. Hey, I had experienced bad trips before and I thought this was simply another one I'd have to ride out. "No problem, Z," I thought to myself, "Just keep cool." Since I was feeling quite restless, I decided to watch some TV to help ease my nerves. Again, I did not want to freak out, although I was beginning to—and in a big way. So I flicked on the tube, but as soon as I settled on a program, the news commentator started to morph into a grotesque-looking Mr. HYDE kind of character. Which in





my state of mind freaked me out even more than I was already. So I shut off the TV. I then tried to listen to some thumping, upbeat music—Rock 'n' Roll—as opposed to the expansive ambient acoustic landscapes that I usually use in my experiments. I was beginning to hallucinate big time, and I was hoping that such music would help ground my senses in physicality.

*...Swallowing colors of the sound I hear.
Am I just a crazy guy? (You bet.)
Mama's gonna' worry, I been a bad, bad boy.
No use sayin' sorry,
it's something that I enjoy...
Flying high again..."*

But after listening to a few bars of OZZY OSBOURNE, I felt worse, so I shut that off as well. I didn't know what to do. By this time I was feeling really messed up and scared. My face was pale white, my mouth was dry, my heart was beating really fast, my pupils dilated, my pulse was raising, my adrenaline was spiking, and my stomach felt as though it had been kicked in. On top of that I was feeling extreme anxiety, restlessness, and worst of all *fear*, even terror. I felt like an animal that was cornered and knows it is about to be killed.

Apparently, because of the overdose, I had overwhelmed my reticular activating system, because everything I saw caused an intense emotion of fear, panic, and terror. I guess I had inadvertently tapped into the "horror mode" that seems to exist as a "program" in our minds. To give you a sense of this, even glancing at my wristwatch was a scary experience. It was as though my brain's processor had gone out of whack. Vomiting, I reasoned, would help my body get rid of the drug. I tried to make myself vomit, by showing fingers down my throat, but I could only manage dry heaving. You see, I had fasted for about eight hours before the experiment. My muscles were contracting so much that it was as though I was crunching my fists (which I wasn't): all my veins were clearly visible, especially those in my arms and forehead. The top of my head felt like it was frying—like on those old anti-drug television commercials: "This is your brain on drugs." Shit, they weren't kidding in my case! What's more, I simply couldn't calm down. At that point the only thing I could think of doing was jumping in the shower to see if the intense pressure I was feeling all over my body and heat on the inside of my head would somehow subside. But after a few minutes under the running water, it actually got worse. I kept going "higher" and "higher," with no sense that this "climbing" would stop anytime soon. And there was this "knowing" deep

inside me that if I didn't get to a hospital soon, I would suffer brain damage, hemorrhaging, or worse.

However, I had a small problem. I did not want to call an ambulance. Because I'd overdosed on a "drug," I knew they would send the cops (at least this was the case in Florida, where I lived at the time). You see, I was feeling very paranoid because of what I was involved in. I had just finished writing a book about almost every major entheogen available (although the described experiments with specifically *controlled* substances were all fictional, of course). And my living room was full of boxes that I was sure the cops would want to check, which were full of my books on "drugs." So I scratched the idea of calling an ambulance.

I thought of driving myself to the hospital, as luckily I lived no more than a few blocks away from a major one. But I had another small problem. My car had no brakes; talk about bad timing. I sure as hell couldn't walk myself there, because it felt like at any minute my head would explode like in that movie *Scanners*. I was in bad shape.

After debating with myself for a few moments, I decided to make a go for it. I hopped into my car and drove myself to the hospital v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y. Luckily I made it there without incident, and parked my car right outside of the emergency room. As noted at the start of this tale, it was around 2:00 am. But even so, when I went inside the emergency room lobby there were about twenty-five people waiting for their turn. I knew that I couldn't wait that long for my turn; I needed help quick. What's more, I felt like screaming at the top of my lungs, as I was completely losing it psychologically. The only thing that kept me from doing so was the realization that if I did scream, I'd never stop, and I would end up in the padded cell of some psychiatric hospital. I swear it felt as though I was one step away from total insanity. Then, I had another shock.

The person in the emergency room lobby taking down the names of the people arriving at the ER was a cop! I am not kidding. You can imagine what this did for my already messed up and paranoid state of mind. The visual distortions and delusional thinking continued to increase and were simply too much for me to take at moments. Everyone in the emergency room looked increasingly like bizarre cartoon people—mere caricatures of humans. To give you an idea of what the imagery was like, think of the distorting mirrors in a fun house—those that make one's legs look really long and upper torso really short. Or, the ones that make one's head





elongated and the entire body like that of a midget. That's what the people in the lobby, including the cop, looked like to me. In addition, it seemed as though everyone was just staring and laughing at me with these seemingly malevolent grins on their faces.

I told the cop that I had overdosed on a chemical that I had bought over the Internet and that I needed to see a brain surgeon quick, to discuss what I had done to my neuro-receptors. He saw that I was freaking out, but he remained v-e-r-y c-a-l-m, while asking me for my full name and telling me to take a seat and wait for my turn. I explained to him that he did not understand the gravity of my situation, that I was perhaps poisoned and that the reason I had come to the emergency room was because it was a FUCKING EMERGENCY! This couldn't wait! I felt like I was going to die. He took a long stare at me, frowned, and told me to sit down in a small area right behind him and wait while he called a nurse. I had brought with me the pages from Alexander and Ann Shulgin's book, *TIHKAL*, where the chemistry and effects of 5-MeO-DIPT are described, to show the doctor. I was sure he'd know what to do then. But as the minutes passed, there was no sign of a nurse. By this time I was *determined* to see someone about what was happening to me. Since I had consumed a lot of liquid before getting there, my stomach was full and I figured that if I vomited on the floor, then for *sure* they'd send someone over to take a look at me. I did, and two nurses came over immediately. I told them what had happened and they asked to see the pages from *TIHKAL*, grabbed a phone from where the cop was sitting, and called

poison control. "Finally," I thought to myself. But to my horror (or rather to my *added* horror), the people at poison control had never heard of 5-MeO-DIPT. They had no idea what the nurse was talking about, and they suggested that I drink charcoal, so that it could absorb whatever might be left in my stomach. I told them that what I *needed* was to see a neurologist and have a brain scan taken to ascertain the extent of my neurological damage, given the fact that I knew my brain was not functioning correctly and even felt like something warm had spilled over "in there."

An orderly came, put me in a wheelchair and took me inside the ER. There they gave me a gown to put on, and hooked an IV into me. Then they wired me up to an EKG and other medical equipment that monitored various body functions and brought over this pitch-black liquid for me to drink. But as soon as the liquefied charcoal came within a few inches from my mouth and nose, I wanted to vomit again. And I did. So the nurse said they'd have to shove these plastic tubes up my nose, through my throat and into my stomach so that the charcoal could reach my stomach walls and intestines and start absorbing the compound. Accepting my fate, I closed my eyes and the procedure began. As the thin, cold, tubes entered through my nostrils and slowly made their way down to my stomach, I could feel the ends of them scraping the inner walls of my throat. Trying to deal with the discomfort as best as I could, I shut my eyes even harder and began to question inwardly what was it that had happened to me in my life that led me to do the things I do. ☉



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