

Behind the Jet-Propelled Couch: Cordwainer Smith and Kirk Allen

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In 1978 I began to pursue the question of whether Paul Linebarger, aka Cordwainer Smith, had been the patient in “The Jet-Propelled Couch,” a psychoanalytic case history written by Robert Lindner. Over the past quarter-century I’ve accumulated more information and ideas on that question than I can fully present here. Instead I’ll use the format of a FAQ – a list of “frequently asked questions” and fairly brief answers.

1.) Why are you doing this?

a) As a follow-up to one of the most famous case histories ever published. Robert Lindner’s book, *The Fifty-Minute Hour*, has sold several million copies since its first publication in 1955 and has remained almost constantly in print. The book’s most fascinating case, “The Jet-Propelled Couch,” has been reprinted in magazines and anthologies, has been dramatized on live TV, has repeatedly been optioned for a feature-length film, and even provided the basis for a Stephen Sondheim musical that (like all those potential film versions) was never completed.

b) The case study has been of special interest to sf fans ever since its early reprinting in the *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Its protagonist, a patient called Kirk Allen, experienced what struck many fans as the ideal psychosis: he spontaneously found himself living a heroic life as “Lord of a planet in an interplanetary empire,” far in the future (*Fifty-Minute Hour*, 250). Fans have remained so intrigued that they’ve repeatedly tried to figure out the patient’s true identity. A set of urban legends about “the real Kirk Allen” has become solidly established in the field.

c) One of those legends is that after he was “cured,” Kirk Allen became a highly original and influential science fiction writer, under the pseudonym Cordwainer Smith. As a reader and fan, I had been much impressed by Cordwainer Smith’s science fiction even before that connection was proposed. As a psychologist, I was intrigued by the complex life and personality of Paul Linebarger, the man behind Cordwainer Smith. As a fan *and* a psychologist, I wondered whether the case history of Kirk Allen could provide insight into the stories of Cordwainer Smith, and conversely, whether the later life and career of Paul Linebarger could cast new light on Robert Lindner’s analysis of Kirk Allen.

2.) Who originated the idea that “Kirk Allen” was Paul Linebarger/Cordwainer Smith?

That identification of Kirk Allen was first published in Brian Aldiss's 1973 history of sf, *Billion Year Spree*. But Aldiss didn't take credit for the idea. As he said in a footnote (179), "I am indebted to Dr. Leon Stover for evidence that 'Kirk' is, in fact, the pseudonym for . . . Cordwainer Smith." And who is Leon Stover? He's an anthropologist, a China expert, a science fiction scholar, an occasional collaborator with Harry Harrison. Back then he was a friend of Brian Aldiss, and so he explained to Aldiss in a friendly conversation how he knew that Kirk Allen was in reality Linebarger/Smith.

3. Why not ask Stover where he got his information and be done with the whole issue?

I did ask, early on. Stover responded with a cordial but ambiguous letter, telling me little except that he felt bitter toward Aldiss for unexplained reasons. In subsequent letters, Stover said his remark to Aldiss about the Lindner-Linebarger connection had been intended as a private confidence, and he sternly ordered me not to mention his name "at all" in my research. He implied that I was reaching for secret government stuff and had better back off.

So I backed off, for a while. Over the years I wrote to Stover a couple more times, but his responses only left me more confused about what he knew and how he knew it. I began to wonder whether he'd ever known anything at all about the real Kirk Allen. Finally, several years ago, he relented and identified his principal source: Robert Lindner himself. For a time Stover had been a graduate student at Harvard under a leading Sinologist, John K. Fairbank. As Stover told me, "At all events, it was at a cocktail party in Fairbank's on-campus home that I met Dr. Lindner. This must have been somewhere in 1951 or 1952. And we did talk about SF and Linebarger in particular; but whether or not Lindner mentioned C[ordwainer] S[mith] as his patient, my memory is hazy. I think this was dropped as a confidence, considering the company I was in among the top China people, but I am no longer absolutely sure, and would rather not be quoted." A few days later, Stover wrote again to say about Lindner, "When I met him, he had not yet written the book [*The Fifty-Minute Hour*], but he obviously had already taken on CS as a patient since he mentioned him by name. I am haunted by the memory that he also used the term 'patient,' but I cannot be sure whether this is a false memory or not. If your own research bears out that fact, then I am willing to let you quote me to that effect, since the memory will then have been proved not to be false. At this distance in time I cannot be absolutely certain; and since this is such a crucial point, you will understand my wariness in reporting all that passed between Dr. Lindner and myself. I never thought it would be important; nor do I recall exactly what I told Brian Aldiss."

This account by Stover left several points unresolved. As of 1951 or 1952, only one Cordwainer Smith story had appeared in print, the real identity of Smith was known to very few in the sf world, and Robert Lindner had probably not even begun to draft "The Jet-Propelled Couch." Further, it seems hardly likely that Dr. Lindner would have told an unknown young graduate student at a cocktail party that Paul Linebarger had been his patient. But Stover was already aware of Paul Linebarger's reputation as a prominent China scholar. (Fairbank and Linebarger had known each other since early in their academic careers.) And Stover had recently attended a meeting of the Hydra Club, a

collection of New York City sf professionals and fans, with his writer friend Harry Harrison. As Stover told me, “Somebody at the Club mentioned that CS was Paul Linebarger and, as a budding Asian specialist, I was able to elaborate.” That “somebody” was most likely one of the several editors to whom Linebarger had sent his early sf stories, with his real name in the return address on the first page. So Stover was primed to tell Lindner, as a fellow sf enthusiast, that he knew of a China scholar who had recently published a strange and powerful story called “Scanners Live in Vain.” Lindner would have been intrigued enough at this information to tell Stover he knew Paul Linebarger quite well. Thus when Lindner’s book containing “The Jet-Propelled Couch” appeared 3 or 4 years later, Stover presumably put two and two together, recognizing Kirk Allen as the man they had talked about.

Stover’s latest book, *Science Fiction from Wells to Heinlein*, contains what he has described to me as his “final confidence” about the whole matter. Lindner’s patient, he says, “quite evidently is Dr. Paul M. A. Linebarger (*d.* 1966), a distinguished political scientist and military adviser to the United States government. Dr. Lindner entered into his patient’s internally consistent fantasy world and, working within it, got him out of it far enough to allow him to resume his professional life. (Dr. Lindner confirmed all this when we met in 1950 at Harvard University, then his academic posting)” (145). For the historical record, I should note that Lindner never had an “academic posting” at Harvard, and that Stover’s “final confidence” is much more confident about what Lindner told him than in those earlier accounts to me. But at least Stover is now willing to go on the public record about Lindner as the direct source of his information about the Linebarger-Lindner connection.

4.) Why depend on Leon Stover’s admittedly unreliable memory? Why not ask Lindner or Linebarger, or look for documentary evidence that Linebarger had been Lindner’s patient?

Both Linebarger and Lindner died early, Lindner at age 41 and Linebarger at 53. Any documentary evidence of their connection has been destroyed. Lindner’s widow burned his professional papers two years before I first contacted her. Though multitudes of Linebarger’s personal papers survived his death, only a few pages about his many years of psychotherapy escaped the sifting of those papers by his widow Genevieve and then by the executors of her estate after she died. None of the pages that survived refer to Robert Lindner.

5.) Isn’t it possible that Robert Lindner made up the whole case – that there never was a real patient behind the pseudonym “Kirk Allen”?

It has sometimes been suggested that the case histories Lindner included in his “Collection of True Psychoanalytic Tales” (the book’s subtitle) are too neat, too dramatically structured, to be true. Lindner may have improved the narrative shape of the case histories, but there is evidence that the patients were real. Lee Weinstein (*NYRSF*, April 2001) has located detailed newspaper accounts of the case of Charles, only lightly disguised in Lindner’s chapter titled “Songs My Mother Taught Me.” Lindner’s widow

Eleanor told me she had met Kirk Allen on several occasions, though she couldn't remember much about his physical appearance and didn't know his personal background. Lindner's brother Harold, also a clinical psychologist, not only met Kirk but described him to me: "Stooped, lanky, tall, professorial in appearance, definitely gray-haired." All that except the "gray-haired" part would describe Paul Linebarger, whose hair was (according to his daughters and his medical records) brown. Serious readers will recall a key character in Cordwainer Smith's fiction, Mr. Gray-No-More. Perhaps Paul Linebarger's hair color had faded by the end of World War Two and then was somehow restored, or maybe Harold Lindner just saw him in the wrong light.

6.) Does Kirk Allen's biography resemble Paul Linebarger's biography?

Yes it does, and in quite interesting ways, as long as we keep in mind that Robert Lindner was professionally obliged to disguise his patient's identity in any published discussion of his case. Among many similarities, I'll mention only a few of the more significant ones here.

a.) **Occupation:** Lindner describes Kirk Allen as a "research physicist" working at a high-security "government installation in the Southwest." According to the standard rules of case history disguise, the patient was therefore almost certainly not a physicist but probably some other kind of scientist. What was Paul Linebarger doing during the period when Kirk Allen was being treated in Baltimore by Robert Lindner? If my approximate dating of the case is correct, the treatment began while he was working as an Army Intelligence officer in the basement of the Pentagon – which happens to be a high-security government installation southwest of Baltimore. Linebarger was by training a political scientist, but in his pseudonymous self-descriptions for book jackets, he sometimes called himself a "government scientist," implying that he was a physicist or something similar. Despite the differences one might expect between a physicist's work and that of a political scientist, Lindner's description of Kirk's job is remarkably similar to Linebarger's description of his own job at the time. Lindner quotes Kirk's referring physician as saying, "Allen's a section chief and the biggest part of his job is to evaluate and correlate reports of the research people under him and then send on digests of his section's work to the divisional head" (224). In a 1947 letter, Linebarger described his recent Pentagon service this way: "For over a year, I was the Summary and Reports Officer, office of the G-2, China theater" – i. e., responsible for digesting intelligence information on China and sending it on up the military hierarchy.

b.) **Family and early background:** Some of the most remarkable similarities or coincidences fall into this category. For instance, in the case history, Kirk's father is described as a retired naval officer who became a "Commissioner on one of the mandated islands" in the South Pacific. He later retained his naval bearing and his title, Lindner says, usually being referred to as "the Commodore." Given the rules of disguising case histories, it's a sure thing that Kirk's father was never in the Navy and was never called "the Commodore." But Paul Linebarger's father had served as a U. S. Federal Judge in the Philippines (roughly equivalent to "mandated islands") before Paul was born, took a medical retirement after six years, and was for the rest of his life referred to by family

and friends as “the Judge.” The same people called Paul’s mother “Miss Lillian”; in the case history, the adolescent Kirk has a sexual relationship described as “tantamount to incest” with a governess named “Miss Lilian” (242). Lillian Linebarger’s married name, before she divorced her first husband and married Paul Linebarger Senior, was Kirk – information known to very few, but useful to a therapist wanting to give a patient a memorable code name for his files. Kirk Allen is described as having grown up in Hawaii and Polynesia; Linebarger spent much of his childhood in China, with brief periods in Hawaii and elsewhere in the Pacific. Kirk was traumatized by the sudden departure of his favorite nurse/caretaker when he was around six; Paul Linebarger suffered a similar loss at a similar age. Kirk supposedly learned a Polynesian dialect as his first language; Linebarger learned Chinese from the time he was five or six. Linebarger and his mother and brother lived in Honolulu for a time in 1919; so did Kirk and his parents.

c.) **Other clues:** Robert Lindner reported various specific details about Kirk Allen besides his occupation and family history. Again, as psychotherapists from Freud onward have practiced case-history writing, such specific details are often altered to lead readers *away* from the scent rather than *toward* it. But fans have instead treated these details as direct “clues” to Kirk Allen’s identity. The most frequently cited “clues” of this kind involve Kirk’s reading patterns in early adolescence. Lindner tells us that Kirk responded with a shock of recognition when he discovered protagonists bearing his own name in (i) a novel by a famous English author, (ii) a fictionalized “volume of semiphilosophical reflections by an American stylist of the ’twenties,” and (iii) a “long series of strange and adventurous tales” by an American author about an “all-conquering [science-fictional] hero” (243-244). Kirk then proceeded to develop a massive delusional system in which he became that hero and extended his adventures through time and space.

Further details provided by Lindner about category iii have led many fans to assume Kirk Allen’s real name was John Carter, after the Mars novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Other fans have suggested other early SF series heroes and thus other “real names” for the patient. I’ll say more shortly about the John Carter possibility. But I want to emphasize first that Robert Lindner was not obligated to provide *accurate* clues to his patient’s identity. The information he provided about Kirk’s reading preferences should have reliably depicted the psychological significance of such reading for Kirk, but should at the same time have steered readers away from the patient’s real name. I suspect that Lindner intentionally provided certain details that would lead casual readers to draw the erroneous conclusion that the patient’s real name was John Carter. I suspect further that Lindner’s description of Kirk’s favorite sf books, as well as of his subsequent delusional system about being the commander of a future space fleet, were borrowed in part from Lindner’s own recent reading of Edmond Hamilton’s novel *The Star Kings* as a way to further disguise Kirk’s actual reading. (Edmond Hamilton seems to have recognized the similarities. In a later sequel to *The Star Kings*, titled *Return to the Stars*, the protagonist is told by a present-day psychotherapist that his recent adventures as a Star King were totally delusional—whereupon he returns triumphantly to the reality of his life in the far future.)

If Kirk Allen did not identify by name with John Carter, what was he reading that encouraged his fantasizing about himself as a science-fictional hero? Just to suggest the possibilities, I'll point to several books that loosely fit Lindner's descriptions, books that Paul Linebarger likely read with great interest, and that would have given him a basis for fantasized identification because their protagonists shared one of his given names or nickname.

(i) Concerning a novel by a famous English author: Linebarger was called "Paulie" (pronounced "Polly") by his mother, and H. G. Wells was his favorite author in early adolescence. In Wells's *The History of Mr. Polly*, the adolescent Polly (like Kirk Allen) "began to read stories voraciously, and books of travel, provided they were also adventurous. . . . He would sneak out on moonless winter nights and stare up at the stars, and afterwards find it difficult to tell his father where he had been. . . . He rammed and torpedoed ships, one against ten," etc. (12-14).

(ii) Concerning a fictionalized "volume of semiphilosophical reflections by an American stylist of the 'twenties": Emphasizing the "semiphilosophical reflections" part of that description, let's instead consider a British stylist of the 1930s, Olaf Stapledon. He was another of young Paul Linebarger's favorite authors, and the protagonist of his 1932 novel *Last Men in London* is named Paul. The book offers a combination of fictionalized autobiography and transcendent future visions that anticipates important elements of the Cordwainer Smith stories.

(iii) Then there's that "long series of strange and adventurous tales" about an "all-conquering [science-fictional] hero." Fans have struggled to come up with another series hero besides John Carter who might have had the same name as Lindner's patient; so have I. The possibilities are rather limited if we're talking (as Lindner apparently was) about a science-fictional series hero of the 1920s or early 1930s. Lee Weinstein independently came up with the same best-guess hypothesis that I did: the novels by Phil Nowlan, and the comic strips inspired by them, about that long-running SF hero, Anthony "Buck" Rogers. One of Paul Linebarger's middle names, which he used in his earliest pseudonyms, was Anthony. In a schoolboy essay he scornfully dismissed the Buck Rogers comic strips – but in a similar bid to impress his English teachers, he did the same to the much admired Olaf Stapledon.

Fans have usually focused on Kirk Allen's reading preferences in trying to figure out his real identity. As far as I know they've never pursued another "clue," the one that starts off the case history. When Kirk Allen is first referred to Dr. Lindner, Kirk's boss says he's been covering whole pages of his official reports with "funny symbols or . . . pictographs, I guess you'd call them" (224). These turn out to be Kirk's on-the-job notes about his visits to other planets. Any trace of these in Paul Linebarger's papers? No diaries of visits to other planets have survived, unless they're tucked away in some Pentagon sub-sub-basement — but numerous examples of Paul's pictographs do exist in his personal papers. As a teenager, Linebarger worked out his own secret alphabet, based on Chinese characters, in which he recorded diary entries that were critical of his father or descriptive of his early sexual explorations. He was fluent enough in this self-invented

pictographic code to continue using it occasionally throughout his life, right up to his final days. It would have been easy to make occasional coded notes to himself in the margins of his intelligence reports, during those long post-World-War-Two months at his Pentagon desk job before his return to academia. It would not have been surprising for his boss to be disturbed at finding such private-code messages scrawled across secret government documents.

7.) But what about the dissimilarities between Kirk Allen's life and Paul Linebarger's life?

Significant dissimilarities are indeed evident, especially concerning aspects of Kirk Allen's sexual and romantic life close in time to the start of his therapy with Robert Lindner. Some of these dissimilarities may be explained by the need to conceal the patient's identity especially from current or recent co-workers and friends, who would more readily recognize aspects of Kirk's ongoing relationships than his early history. But some case-history details seem so dissimilar from what we know about Paul Linebarger that if he truly was the patient, they violate the other part of the case-history writer's rules: the obligation to represent the patient's core psychological issues as accurately as possible. Such major discrepancies between Kirk Allen's psychological problems and Paul Linebarger's problems can best be explained, I think, by noting Linebarger's strong desire to remain active in Army Intelligence, combined with his awareness that certain kinds of psychological problems would be much more likely to get his security clearance cancelled than others. I won't go into such matters further here, but in a future publication I'll discuss in detail why he would have felt it necessary to misrepresent his sexual history and his current symptoms, and why Lindner would have been eager to believe the stories he offered instead. (Toward the end of the published case history, Kirk Allen directly confessed to Lindner, "It's all a lie, all of it. I've been making it up . . . inventing all that – that – nonsense!" [290]. But Lindner apparently didn't explore the pervasiveness of such lying throughout the course of treatment, or Kirk's reasons for doing it.)

8.) But what about John Carter as an alternative identity for Kirk Allen, instead of Paul Linebarger?

The most literal version of the "John Carter" alternative is to assume that Kirk Allen really was a nuclear physicist with the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, and that his name really was John Carter. I've heard from several people in the sf world – honorable and trustworthy people – that a friend of a friend told them that somebody named John Carter had claimed to be the patient, that he was a nuclear physicist, etc., etc. Such reports never reach the point of the "real" John Carter having had a father who was actually a Commodore, etc., etc. – but some fans still insist, via the Internet and otherwise, that the real Kirk Allen was a physicist named John Carter.

The main problem with this position, other than its reflecting badly on Robert Lindner's ability to disguise a patient's identity, is that it is factually untenable. As Lee Weinstein and I have found in our independent investigations, no scientist of any kind in

the Manhattan Project was named John Carter or anything close. Early in my research I did locate a physicist named John Carter, who was roughly the right age to have been Kirk Allen. But in our correspondence he insisted believably that he had never had any contact with Lindner, and was never in the right place at the right time to be analyzed by him. Further, this John Carter said, he had read the case history of Kirk Allen some time before I contacted him and had recognized that the “clues” seemed to point to the patient’s real name being John Carter. So this John Carter checked among his contacts in the physical sciences, trying to find another John Carter who could have been Kirk Allen – and he failed to do so.

9.) Couldn’t there have been a scientist with another name, somehow involved in the Manhattan Project, maybe in Oak Ridge instead of Los Alamos, maybe differing in other minor ways from a literal interpretation of Lindner’s “clues,” who was Kirk Allen?

Maybe. That possibility has so far kept me from publishing a scholarly paper on Paul Linebarger as Kirk Allen: the possibility that some day somebody not named John Carter will pop up, claiming to be the real Kirk Allen, and will make a convincing case for himself. Recently something like that appeared to have happened. Last year Lee Weinstein alerted me to a passage in a book by a Harvard clinical psychologist named Deirdre Barrett:

The most bizarre of the cases set forth by analyst Robert Lindner in his 1954 classic, *The Fifty-Minute Hour*, is a physicist with delusions that he is from a distant solar system. He is portrayed in the book as having been cured by analysis. In fact, for the remainder of his life, he experienced the same manic-depressive episodes. . . . I happen to know the postscript of this case only because I grew up in the government research town that housed the nuclear laboratory where this severely disturbed man had helped to develop the atomic bomb. His reputed analytic “cure” was a source of some amusement there because remarkably decorative maps of his planet of origin – drawn long after his analysis by Lindner – still hung on the walls of private residences and in the city art gallery. [*The Pregnant Man* xv]

Was this the real Kirk Allen at last? While Lee Weinstein pursued this apparent lead with his library research skills and among “outsider” art dealers, I got in touch with Deirdre Barrett by e-mail, then went to Oak Ridge for two days of intensive interviewing and archival exploration. The net result of our joint pursuit of this Oak Ridge physicist/artist, with the help of Deirdre Barrett plus the Oak Ridge Art Center Director, the recently retired editor of the local newspaper, and the combined efforts of Oak Ridge’s arts and sciences establishments: zero. Dr. Barrett’s memories of 25 years earlier remained firm with regard to seeing one planetary map, exhibited by a local collector at the Art Center:

I’m sure the note by the colorful map said its owner lived in Oak Ridge and had worked with the scientist who’d painted it. It described this scientist as periodically believing he was from another planet and always drawing maps of

the planet at those times. . . . I got the impression the scientist had worked in Oak Ridge but don't remember whether the card actually stated that or whether I assumed it because the owner [of the map] had long resided there. I'm a little vaguer on the indication that he'd been written about in a case study book, but I believe I asked the woman tending the exhibit what else she knew about it and she told me the owner said this scientist was in a famous book. [D. Barrett, personal communication, April 8, 2001]

But nobody else in Oak Ridge recalled the map, and Leah Marcum-Estes, the Art Center Director, found no trace of it in the Center's records. "Outsider art" magazines and books and dealers offered a variety of works depicting UFOs and aliens, but none by the man we were seeking.

Then Lee Weinstein came across another "alternate identity" for Kirk Allen – or maybe it was the same man who'd been Deirdre Barrett's map artist. A conversation on the Net among several UFO enthusiasts with backgrounds in physics mentioned having heard of an unidentified physicist who had worked at Los Alamos and whose desk drawers had been full of notes on his experiences as a UFO abductee to other planets. Somebody then identified this man as a specific Los Alamos physicist whose family background sounded like Kirk Allen's on at least a couple of key points. The UFO enthusiasts then concluded that he was the patient in the case of "The Jet-Propelled Couch."

Lee and I quickly joined forces in tracking down further information about this Los Alamos physicist. His name was not John Carter, but he appeared to be the best alternative to Paul-Linebarger-as-Kirk-Allen that anyone had proposed. He turned out to be still alive, nearly half a century after the case history was first published, so we were able to contact him directly. His response to our main question was clear: No, he had never been a patient of Robert Lindner. Well, we asked, had he perhaps been treated by another psychotherapist, whose description of him Lindner could have used in writing up the case history for publication? No, he had not been treated by any psychotherapist prior to the publication of Lindner's book. Furthermore (as we determined from other sources), he had never worked on the Manhattan Project and had not moved to Los Alamos until the early 1950s—too late, by any reasonable time frame, to be the patient Lindner described as being sent from there to Baltimore for a lengthy psychoanalysis.

10.) Is there any trace of Linebarger's treatment by Lindner in Cordwainer Smith's fiction?

Several CS stories involve psychotherapists – especially *Norstrilia*, where Old Earth's last clinical psychologist successfully treats the hero, Rod McBan. But by the time *Norstrilia* and most other CS stories were written, Linebarger had been treated by a series of psychotherapists, and it's impossible to identify a specific real-life model for any of his fictional therapists.

However, one of the broadest tropes of the CS stories may reflect Linebarger's experience with Lindner, as well as his later perspective on Lindner's transformation of his case into "The Jet-Propelled Couch." The CS future-history stories are often told as if from a more distant future, where the great events and personalities of that future's past have been transformed into legend. We are given to know that those legendary accounts of the central characters' lives are half-truths at best. Had he been the patient, Linebarger would have regarded Lindner's published version of Kirk Allen's symptoms and personal history in much the same way.

One other element of the CS oeuvre may be salient here too. Paul Linebarger's original title for his novel *Norstrilia* was *Star-Craving Mad*. That title is clever or silly, depending on your tolerance for puns, but it does *not* describe the contents of the manuscripts that eventually became *Norstrilia*. Rod McBan doesn't crave the stars; he isn't even particularly interested in leaving his home planet of Norstrilia to visit Old Earth; and he isn't mad, just a bit neurotic. The title does, however, encapsulate Robert Lindner's picture of Kirk Allen. In the form of a silly pun, it pokes fun at that picture. As a self-description of Paul Linebarger, it is at best an ironic exaggeration of his interest in SF and in astronomy.

11.) So what **are** your conclusions at this point?

Though I have yet to come across solid documentary evidence, I think the circumstantial evidence (including but extending well beyond Leon Stover's recollections) is strong: Paul Linebarger was Kirk Allen, or at least a substantial component of Kirk Allen. It's still possible that Robert Lindner combined two patients who suffered from apparently similar symptoms, better to conceal the identities of both and to make his main points about therapeutic technique more strongly. That other patient may yet pop up, and I'd like to hear about him if any reader knows him (or *is* him). Meanwhile, I'm working to finish my biography of Paul Linebarger. With or without the help of Robert Lindner, he became a great science fiction writer and a remarkable, fascinating man.

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