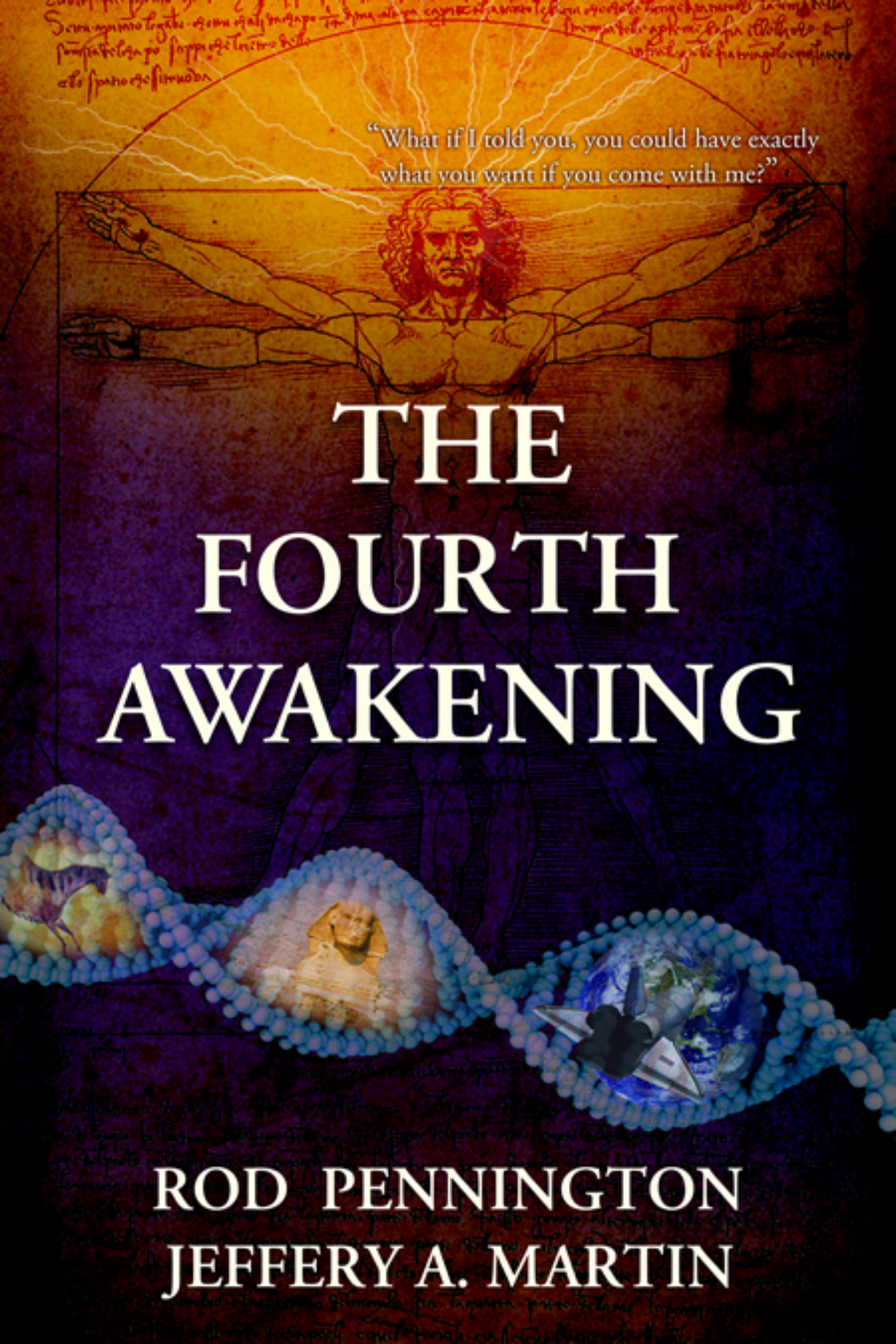


*Scia quanto grande è il potere della mente umana. Se tu capisci la mente, capisci la vita. Se capisci la vita, capisci il mondo. Se capisci il mondo, capisci il tuo destino.*

"What if I told you, you could have exactly what you want if you come with me?"



# THE FOURTH AWAKENING

ROD PENNINGTON  
JEFFERY A. MARTIN

## THE FOURTH AWAKENING

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# THE FOURTH AWAKENING



Rod Pennington

&

Jeffery A. Martin

*INTEGRATION PRESS, LLC*  
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## CHAPTER EIGHT

*“Not creating delusions is enlightenment.”*

BODHIDHARMA

PENELOPE STARED AT Walker looking for a tell or change of expression that would tip his real thoughts, but couldn't find one. If he was lying or pulling her leg, it wasn't on his face. “Where is Dr. Altman now, and the staff for the Hermes Project?”

“They are working at a secret location.”

“Why secret?”

“If you want to do research on the government's nickel you have to play by their rules. Every federally funded research project can be taken over at any time and for any reason. But you already knew that.”

Penelope ignored his comment. “And you were afraid they would seize your work?”

“They had already done it once; we were all hoping it would be cancelled so we could get it away from the government and into private hands.”

“So you admit you intentionally manipulated Senator Horn to take control of the project.”

“I suppose from your viewpoint that is how it would appear.”

“What in the world does that mean?”

“A group of enlightened people wanted the project out of the hands of the government and it is now out of the hands of the government. To your mind it would appear to be manipulation to mine it is a perfectly

logical outcome.”

Penelope shook her head and sighed. “Where is this group of enlightened people now?”

“We took everyone involved with the basic research and moved them out of reach of Homeland Security and the guys at Ft. Meade.”

“I see. So they are all fine?”

“Of course they are.” Walker was a bit taken back. “Do you actually think I would hurt any of them? What kind of a person do you think I am?”

“Oh, I don’t know. The kind that wears an orange jumpsuit and is handcuffed to a table in the high security wing of one of our nation’s most secure prisons.”

Walker pondered her comment for a moment, and then started laughing. It was a throw your head back, straight from the belly laugh that filled the room. He laughed so hard tears glistened in his eyes. “You do have a point. But you need to understand this is all being done for your benefit.”

“What?”

“If I had shown up at your door and said I needed you to write a story about a highly classified government project and that, by the way, Homeland Security is looking for me. What would you have done?”

“Called 911.”

“Exactly.” He let her process this tidbit for a moment.

“So, you’re saying you intentionally allowed yourself to get captured just so you could meet me under the right circumstances?”

Walker smiled.

As she gathered her thoughts, Penelope closed her eyes and drew in a large draught of air through her nose, feeling it tingle in her forehead before descending down her spine. While only in this relaxed state for a matter of seconds, she felt the tension leave her shoulders as her body relaxed. When she opened her eyes she found Walker staring at her with a wry smile.

“How long have you been able to do that?”

“Do what?”

“That was pretty advanced Integral yoga.”

Penelope was stunned. How could this man possibly know what had just happened to her? “I just closed my eyes for a moment and relaxed.”

“You must have an excellent teacher.”

Penelope was nonplussed. "I almost always meditate alone and I don't really have a teacher."

Walker drew in a breath to speak but thought better of it and smiled instead. "That makes what you did even more remarkable."

The two stared at each other in an awkward silence for several seconds. "Can we get back to the Hermes Project?" Spence asked.

"Okay."

"Where did it start to go wrong?"

"The day Homeland Security got involved."

"Explain."

"Dr. Carl Altman was doing some remarkable research on expanding human consciousness using sophisticated direct brain stimulation interfaced with fMRI technology to monitor..."

"fMRI?"

"Sorry. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging. I don't want to go into too much detail, but the short version is he was able to track different brain activity and was, and is, working on ways to stimulate or cause different sections of the brain to relax or synchronize in certain ways."

"No drugs?"

"Nothing sinister, Ms. Spence."

"Penelope."

"Michael." They both nodded their agreement.

"Dr. Altman was getting mixed results, depending on the person who was involved in the testing. Those who had studied yoga or were creative did better than those who were less flexible in body and mind. He had a couple of people who showed completely unexpected results, and that was enough to get the attention of someone at Homeland Security."

"What kind of unexpected results?"

"In due course Ms... Penelope. At that point the government stepped in and turned the project over to us. At first it was welcomed by Dr. Altman because it meant more funding and better equipment." Walker paused, his face grew more stern, and he shook his head. Penelope noticed the change.

"What?"

"I wish I had found Altman before Homeland Security. I could have financed the entire project and avoided a lot of pain and aggravation."

"What did Homeland Security do?"

"They wanted to use Dr. Altman's techniques to 'improve the quality'

of our law enforcement people. He was able to take a sample group of trainees fresh out of one of Homeland Security's training academies and basically teach them techniques to help overcome fears, control emotions, and exhibit more self-control."

"So far, I don't see any problems with this."

"Hang on, we're getting there. Then someone came up with the bright idea of sending Altman the best of the best. People from Homeland Security's various elite SWAT, tactical, and counter terrorism units, who already had these skills, to see what would happen. That was when the wheels started to come off. These people had spent so much time grounding themselves in objective reality that they were not ready to have their consciousness radically altered in the ways Hermes was experimenting with. It was an unmitigated disaster."

"And these were already well-trained law enforcement officers and special agents?"

"Exactly."

"Did any of them leave the facility?"

"No."

"Were they a threat to the civilian population in any way?"

"The only threat they presented was to themselves."

"I don't understand."

"I know. Let's just say there are doors in the mind that need to be opened voluntarily, and that should never be forced open until it is time."

"Time for what?"

"Time for them to be opened."

"That's very Zen but not very enlightening."

"Actually it's very enlightening."

"Let me guess. This will make sense later, after I've opened a few more doors in my own mind."

Walker smiled again.

Now Penelope was convinced that Michael Walker had zero appreciation for sarcasm. "What happened next?"

"That was when Senator Horn cancelled the funding."

"I see. One thing still confuses me."

"Only one?"

Penelope laughed. Maybe he had a sense of humor after all. "Where does Senator Horn fit into all of this? What did he object to in the

Hermes Project, and why the personal animus towards you?"

"Well, there was a completely unexpected side effect."

"What was that?"

"Me."

"You?"

"Yes, me."

"Care to explain that?"

"When people are around me they begin to act differently."

"I can believe that," Penelope muttered under her breath.

"What does that mean?"

"I'm a non-violent person who has only known you for fifteen minutes, but I've already had the urge to strangle you a couple of times."

Walker chuckled and shrugged.

"I'm assuming other people have a different reaction to being around you?"

"Yes. There are those who are already on the path and I seem to illuminate it in a way that makes their journey easier. If you continue to spend time around me you'll start seeing the effects."

"So you think I'm on the path to enlightenment?"

"We all are, in one form or another."

"Okay. I still don't see the problem with Senator Horn."

"Because of some of the things that have happened, he considers me at best a cult leader and at worst a false prophet."

"A false prophet? Why would he think that?"

Walker sighed and leaned back in his chair. "You have to understand that we were doing some very high-end research on the functionality of the human nervous system. Our results were so stunning that two schools of thought formed. The first was that this was too important to keep secret, and the other that it was too dangerous to release. That argument is still raging."

"That doesn't explain the personal animus Horn showed toward you."

"One of the people at Homeland Security wrote an evaluation of the project, and he speculated that I might be an outlier or an extreme deviation from the mean."

"You and every other billionaire. Why is that a problem?"

"When the senator asked him to name previous outliers he gave some examples that really upset Horn."

"Who did he name?"



“Moses, Jesus, Mohammad, Buddha — pretty much all of these types of religious leaders throughout history.”

A short whistle escaped from Penelope’s lips. “I’m guessing Horn didn’t take that too well?”

“That would be a mild understatement,” Walker said as he rubbed his chin. “It was meant to be illustrative, that down through history there have been some that see the world differently and who attract followers. He could have made the same point with secular or lesser known examples. Horn went out of his mind and immediately accused me of trying to play God.”

“Were you?”

“Of course not. But after he read that report he never trusted me again. He became hyper-paranoid about me and my contact with the governments of Europe.”

“Why?”

“The EU Division of Walker Industries is the largest non-government provider of military parts and equipment on the continent. This caused Horn to wonder where our loyalties might lie.”

“Why would that be a concern to Horn?”

“Horn is a literalist when it comes to the Bible. When we had oversight hearings he liked to quote various verses. Revelations, especially 13:1, was one of his favorites: *“I saw the beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.”*

“What does that mean?”

“According to Senator Horn, it represented the wealthy and powerful Europeans.”

“How in the world did he arrive at that?”

“The Common Market in Europe originally had six members, with France blocking the British entry, but effectively they were the seven ‘heads’ or leaders. Guess how many royal families there currently are in Europe?”

“You’re kidding me?”

“Nope. There are exactly ten ‘Crowns’, or royal families left in Europe.”

“That’s a bit of a stretch.”

“That’s what I told him, but he is a man of strong convictions. He feels there are other reasons to distrust the Europeans.”

“For example...”

“Senator Horn firmly believes the past 60 years of peace in Europe has been enforced by American guns and that they are still a powder keg waiting for someone to light the fuse.”

“What do you think?”

“I’m with you. I think it’s a bit of a stretch. But he does have some valid points. In all likelihood, the worst reaction to the new awakening will come from Europe.”

“The new awakening?”

“Yes, the Fourth Awakening.”

“The Fourth Awakening? What is the Fourth Awakening?”

“We’ve reached one of those points you wanted me to tell you about.”

“Tell me what?”

“You said you wanted me to tell you when we reached a place where your mind would not be able to understand what I was telling you. We’ve reached one of those points.”

Shaking her head, Penelope said, “Fine. Are there any other things I should know about Senator Horn?”

“There are all sorts of things you should know but we’ll take this up further when we get outside.”

“Outside? What do you mean outside?”

“We’re leaving now.”

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### About the Authors

**Rod Pennington** has five previous novels published including *The Linz Trust* and *The Quicksilver Solution*. He has also sold two screenplays.

**Jeffery A. Martin** is an scholar specializing in higher states of consciousness. He is the author, co-author or contributor to over twenty books in addition to numerous other scholarly and non-scholarly publications and media.

Both are frequent and talented public speakers.

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