

Book Title: Agents in my Brain: How I Survived Manic Depression
Author: Bill Hannon
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This is an insightful book written by a man who suffered from manic depression since age seventeen. This man, Bill, is very descriptive in his explanation of how one roller coaster from mania to depression and back again. This book is divided into chapters, and each chapter is a different major episode in Bill's life. An account of doctor visits and medication trials were included in the description of each different episode.

Bill describes in detail his manic episodes where he thinks he is being sent coded messages from the CIA. He explains each episode in great detail about everything he would do during his manic episodes from writing letters to his friends to getting fired from jobs because he could not concentrate. Bill knows something is wrong, but the doctors only say he is depressed.

Bill's explanation of how he felt, what he did, and what he thought was reality, and made me feel sorry for him and his life. I could not imagine going through life being completely happy one minute, and the next minute thinking the CIA was sending coded messages to me through a variety of medias. I have a new respect for people suffering from any mental illness because they really believe things that are unrealistic to "normal" people to be real in their world.

Bill's major problem with his manic depression is his doctors. From the time of his first episode through the end of this book, Bill saw a number of doctors, psychologists, and psychiatrists. He felt trapped, he knew something was wrong, but the doctors only told him he was depressed. Bill became discouraged when the doctors would not help him. He often referred to anything a doctor said or did that did not help him as "bad medical practice."

Bill believes that his savior was medication. When he explained something positive happening, he would say, "Let's hear it for medication." I am not one that thinks everyone needs medication. However, Bill's actions before he took the right medication and his actions when medicated showed how medication made life "normal" for him. Since the doctors did not believe anything was wrong with Bill, aside from depression, Bill researched drugs on his own, and experimented with different combinations to find what made him "normal." He does not recommend people to experiment with their prescriptions, but he was left with no choice because his doctors did not listen to him.

I would recommend this book to anyone. Bill makes manic depression real. Any reader can better understand what a person with manic depression goes through in his/her day-to-day living. Finally, there is a book written by someone who lives with manic depression everyday, not by a doctor who hears what happens to the person.