A Mystical Trip that's High on Helium
Sunday, Jun. 12, 2005

He has made great films (Aguirre: The Wrath of God and Fitzcarraldo) about men who follow
their obsessions into the South American jungle. Now Werner Herzog has a real-life visionary
in his viewfinder. Graham Dorrington, seated behind Herzog, above, is an English scientist
who dreams of building and flying an airship--not a giant Zeppelin but a small vessel shaped
like a white diamond. Handsome and haunted, Dorrington has traveled to Guyana to make the
damn thing fly.

Director Werner Herzog in The White Diamond
COURTESY OF WERNER HERZOG FILM

As his fiction films and documentaries show, Herzog is also an adventurer with a mystic bent.
He is both enrapt by this land's riotous beauty and bound to honor its secrets. When the
airship finally flies, Dorrington says he is "high on helium," and in a symphony of pristine
images and gorgeous choral music, The White Diamond achieves its own ecstasy. Here
Herzog proves that films don't need to make things up. The world is full of miracles, if only
you know where to look. --Richard Corliss

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