

properties of space-time in the strong-field, high-velocity regime and confirm predictions of general relativity for the nonlinear dynamics of highly disturbed black holes.

II. OBSERVATION

On September 14, 2015 at 09:50:45 UTC, the LIGO Hanford, WA, and Livingston, LA, observatories detected

the coincident signal GW150914 shown in Fig. 1. The initial detection was made by low-latency searches for generic gravitational-wave transients [41] and was reported within three minutes of data acquisition [43]. Subsequently, matched-filter analyses that use relativistic models of compact binary waveforms [44] recovered GW150914 as the most significant event from each detector for the observations reported here. Occurring within the 10-ms intersite

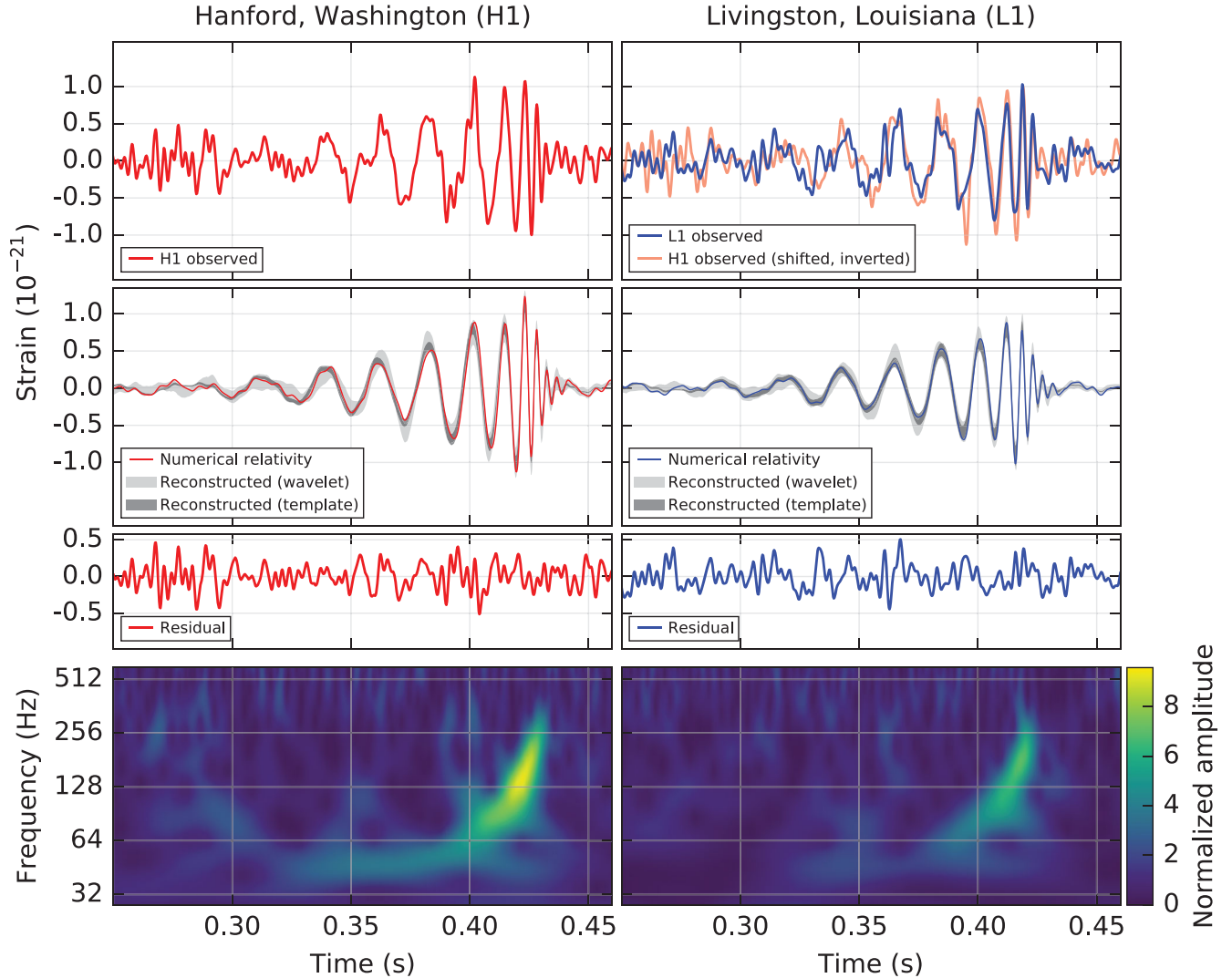


FIG. 1. The gravitational-wave event GW150914 observed by the LIGO Hanford (H1, left column panels) and Livingston (L1, right column panels) detectors. Times are shown relative to September 14, 2015 at 09:50:45 UTC. For visualization, all time series are filtered with a 35–350 Hz bandpass filter to suppress large fluctuations outside the detectors’ most sensitive frequency band, and band-reject filters to remove the strong instrumental spectral lines seen in the Fig. 3 spectra. *Top row, left:* H1 strain. *Top row, right:* L1 strain. GW150914 arrived first at L1 and $6.9^{+0.5}_{-0.4}$ ms later at H1; for a visual comparison, the H1 data are also shown, shifted in time by this amount and inverted (to account for the detectors’ relative orientations). *Second row:* Gravitational-wave strain projected onto each detector in the 35–350 Hz band. Solid lines show a numerical relativity waveform for a system with parameters consistent with those recovered from GW150914 [37,38] confirmed to 99.9% by an independent calculation based on [15]. Shaded areas show 90% credible regions for two independent waveform reconstructions. One (dark gray) models the signal using binary black hole template waveforms [39]. The other (light gray) does not use an astrophysical model, but instead calculates the strain signal as a linear combination of sine-Gaussian wavelets [40,41]. These reconstructions have a 94% overlap, as shown in [39]. *Third row:* Residuals after subtracting the filtered numerical relativity waveform from the filtered detector time series. *Bottom row:* A time-frequency representation [42] of the strain data, showing the signal frequency increasing over time.