

Modern Aliens

*an interview with Adrian Randall, who is making a documentary about alien encounters,
conducted by Matthew Weiss*

Matt:

Tell me a little about yourself.

Adrian:

I grew up in Seattle with my mom. I went to a big public high school that had a lot of smart kids in it, and it was a very good public high school, but it was also located in a lower income neighbor, so there was this dynamic there. My mom is an acupuncturist and does psychic work. From a young age, it was self-evident to me that ghosts and spirits existed, and that there were worlds beyond what one could see with the human eye, and that some people could tap into these worlds. And “god” was just a convenient way to express the fact that something else was out there.

These days, I say I believe in the concept of lower powers over higher powers. Like vibrational frequencies that affect people. I got into Buddhism for a while at the end of high school and the beginning of college. And it’s not that I regret it, although: I think Buddhism, Zen especially, has a lot of offer, but lacks any serious spirituality, and prevents access to that. It’s not really a pragmatic way to order your mind. And later I talked to my mom and she was like, Yeah, duh.

I think I got really disenchanted when I came to school, and I didn’t realize that for a long time. I was lacking some basic curiosity that I had had the rest of my life. You get wrapped up in Western egocentrism. I thought I was in an enlightened position because I was doing MCM or whatever. But that was total bullshit. You really need to get out there. Zen too just supposes that the individual is going to work and work and work and eventually break through. There’s an American Dream side to it. And it makes total sense that in terms of the United States, it came out of the 60’s, and free love, and the beats, and them just trying to be independent. So of course, they adopted the most radical form of Eastern thinking. It’s not because of its utility at all. I really think that in order to live good lives people need some sense of spirituality. If they reject organized religion, which is fine, there needs to be some other access to it. And Buddhism and a lot of these things only go half way. Yoga is a bit closer to it.

Matt:

So, what exactly did your disenchantment consist in?

Adrian:

I think it came out of the fact that I really thought I understood the world or something. I had access to this really powerful knowledge, this theory which explained things that I always wanted to express, and now I could express them. And I was with a cadre of people who also understood this theory. But theory relies on esoteric knowledge. Psychoanalysis is a good example. There’s esotericism in every discipline, but especially in places like that. At the same time, this theory changed my life. And I want to say: it’s not that I considered myself better than

other people, but I definitely felt that I had access to a certain type of knowledge that other people didn't have.

Matt:

Yeah, I think a lot of people go through this movement in which a lot of work gets done to internalize the world and the self, to the point of trying to come up with a complete theory of how everything everyone says to you makes sense. And in different ways, you can get to a certain point in regard to yourself, a momentary satisfaction, but even then there's all this work to be done afterwards. Once you have the theory, you have to take a second look at it, and deal with the fact that this is also the inside of everybody's heads, everybody's worlds.

If you start looking at the world with enlightened eyes, and see that people are doing weird shit, you naturally want to start asking them, Well, what theory do *you* have? Because you're looking at people in certain theoretical terms, but in actual fact, people's own "theories" use such a mix of different metaphors and ideas that it can seem like they don't have any theory at all. And because of that, there's always something left to do.

Adrian:

You have to get to the point where you can have an honest conversation with someone. And then they say something, and you say, That's so true, and that's exactly what this other person says. The thing is, most people are smart. Everyone's a really good philosopher, a really good processor of knowledge.

Matt:

So, growing up in animist circumstances, and being aware that the mainstream was monotheistic, did you experience any cognitive dissonance because of that?

Adrian:

It was cool. Sometime it was weird. When you're young, and you hear about this crazy stuff, like ghosts and spirits, you just have pure wonder. Then you go through puberty and meet other people, and they're like, that's weird man.

Matt:

What did you think ghosts *were*? Now that you're on the other side.

Adrian:

It was just self-evident. It seemed just kind of obvious. It made more sense that they existed than that they didn't. And when people didn't believe in them, I was like: Uh, well, your loss--or, That's less fun!

The thing is, though, if you talk about this kind of stuff in a group of, say, ten people, at least one or two will bring up their own experiences. And that happens everywhere. It's sign between people.

Matt:

I love the idea of people coming together to catalogue extraordinary occurrences.

Adrian:

Yeah, there's this body of knowledge that exists in no archive, just through this network of people. And there's definitely some embarrassment that goes along with it, and because of that, I'd gotten less in touch with it. But now I'm moving back.

Supposedly, I saw a ghost when I was a kid, according to my mom, and responded to it. And we had a poltergeist, and had to move out of our house because there was a poltergeist. Young kids are constantly able to receive this kind of information. And animals, and so on. You get indoctrinated. You learn to see what you want to see. This is what detective stories are about. The evidence can be right there in front of you, but if it's not part of your axiomatic framework or schema then it's not there, it doesn't exist.

In terms of the poltergeist, there was this man, and he was there for a while. And we got a dog, and so he disappeared for a while. There were seances. Once night I woke my mom up and told her that the man was back. My only memory of the house was being really scared at night, having nightmares, and the dog was barking a lot. Eventually we moved out of the house.

There's also past life stuff, and that's really interesting. But you can't force yourself to have these experiences. I feel like sometimes, for example, I've seen things before they happen, but I don't really know.

Matt:

So, here's a question. There's all sorts of beliefs you can imagine people having, and they have their similarities and differences. But there's certain questions that seem to cut especially deep like, Why is there something rather than nothing? And monotheism can answer, There's one god! We don't *need* this intermediate stuff, these spirits, to explain it. So with that in the air, how did spirits fit into any existential crises of that type that you might have had? As in, how did they manifest themselves in crisis circumstances? As bad spirits?

Adrian:

I remember having one or two existential crises when I was younger. I had one where I thought my life was meaningless. It came out of watching a lot of kid's TV shows. They were having all these adventures. They had a purpose, had a narrative going on. I felt like life wasn't cool, and these people were living in this perfect fun environments, and I wasn't. I remember my mom talking me out of it. It was in elementary school.

It seems to make some sort of sense that I was less upset with myself and more with the 'world' I was living in. Hence those weirdly promotional stories about kids who got depressed after watching Avatar

Matt:

Nowadays can you see your life as a movie? In the good ways.

Adrian:

It has less to do with movies, in the narrative sense like, I'm going somewhere, and more with movies as a different type of reality, like dreams.

Matt:

Right, like a scene in a movie. Stuff happens in a scene, but the scene has a quality of its own. Some emergent thing. It happens every time there's a change in the weather. Everybody starts acting differently.

Adrian:

Yeah, the weather changed, I got completely sick. Or when it's really grey out, it gets very noir. I think we're just searching for those moments. I think that's what propels you forward. Opening up new worlds that shatter your perceptions. I think that's where fantasy and science fiction come from too. That's why I like those kind of movies a lot. Even something like Wes Anderson's movies. Now we can be like, that was such twee indie bullshit or whatever, but I think when it comes down to it, it's about this other life that fits you in a weird way. It seems magical. I could be entering this moment, where I could be living that, and music's playing in the background. And I'm part of this other thing that's going on. *American Beauty* too. It's like another world you can tap into.

Matt:

Let's talk about aliens.

Adrian:

I watched *Contact* a lot when I was growing up. And *Star Wars*. And *Men in Black* is one of my favorite movies. I think the paranormal is exhilarating, a third dimensional break. That's crucial. I think you can have those breaks intellectually with whatever kind of material your working with. And this world kind of opens up.

Matt:

But how should we talk about aliens? As in, you can make a case for supernatural phenomena, that we're tuned to certain frequencies, but that there are also higher levels of organization that are out there. Our brains look for patterns in things, and sometimes people can see larger patterns. And it's meaningful, but not necessarily recognizably communicable. For example, a corporation is there, even though it's made out of people.

In the case of aliens, though, sometimes there are different kinds of truth claims. *Alien Aliens*, for example, on the History Channel, is entertaining, but when they actually use history, it becomes ridiculous. One could make a very reasonable point about continuity between our contemporary concepts of aliens and the concepts of gods and spirits and celestial things. But in that case, the space ships would be beside the point.

Adrian:

Ancient Aliens seems to rely on a causal form of history that's supposed to make sense. As in, Oh that explains Stonehenge, the pyramids, etc. And the scientists have to say, Hey, you

aren't even looking at the real craziness, which is that we were actually capable of building that stuff! There's also a very Western-centric thing. It's all about these primitive people, often not in Europe, not white, doing really insane feats.

There is a real question there, though. There's something in the human mind, some drive, which is causing people to build incredible things. And it's based off very abstract notions that result in real physical monuments. There's this idea that change and progress happens because people believe really crazy things. People didn't build churches because they wanted to build churches, but because they really believed in god, and so had to move in that direction. For that matter, eschatologists were the most progressive people in the pre-Enlightenment era. Newton was an eschatologist. He was reading the bible literally. That's the most incredible thing. What is the logic of the calculus force that's motivating this? It's much harder to determine. War too. Now we just call it ideology, but it's something much crazier and much bigger.

Ancient Aliens is really fun to watch, but to me it's more of a testament to people trying to grapple with how human societies and their architectures exist. Why do we build this stuff, what motivates this sense forward? Why aren't we living in huts? It's not just because we're greedy. It's not just about capitalism.

I got into aliens because I had this idea: Okay, we still don't know the origin of consciousness. Why is it that I look in this mirror and I'm me and you're you. That's always going to be trippy. You can just stand in front of a mirror and be like, I am Adrian, I am Adrian, and you can do that every morning. We also still don't know the origin of the universe. And the more you think about consciousness at night, you do ask, How is it that something comes from nothing? If this began, did something come before it? Is it possible for our brains to understand it? Can science give us the answers? Maybe we won't ever know. But it happens that we encounter aliens who have the answer and understand it. But they say they can't tell us what it is, but they say there definitely is an answer.

Matt:

Is that because their brains are just better?

Adrian:

Yeah, or they have some extra little bit, that somehow would allow them to conceptualize it. Maybe mystics are able to do it. I don't know. Maybe wallabies are able to do it.

Matt:

Or robots. And it would be unsettling because we also have this desire to experience the answer. Maybe humans can have these really transcendental experiences, or maybe we're limited to just understanding some theoretical principles. And in the latter case, the principles might not lead to a simulation that we can run in our heads. So, we'd get a computer to do it and look at the read out and probably say, We'll, that's not as fun.

Adrian:

Yeah, I mean, consciousness “makes sense.” It’s like a feedback loop, like looking into a mirror. It’s me that’s me that’s me. Really complex input and output. And it explains the hierarchies of consciousness. We’re smarter than rats, etc.

Matt:

But then there’s also the experience of being here rather than there. People these days can definitely conceive of self reference, and there’s been a lot of work done in the past century on mathematizing it. And it can explain self-consciousness. But the idea that there is experience at all before self consciousness goes beyond that.

Adrian:

Yeah, what is that? Babies?

Matt:

Probably, all of the universe is consciousness in that sense. It’s just experience that gets organized

Adrian:

It’s like energy.

Matt:

Yeah, what else would it be? But then, what does that mean for your thought experiment? Because if that’s what the universe really is, just experience, and we organize it differently, there’s nothing an alien race can tell us more about experience itself. Since it’s still just experience. Maybe they could organize it more highly, but they’d come up against the same philosophical argument just at a higher level. Imagine we’re part of the world-brain and the world-brain is thinking, Oh look it’s so amazing to be here. But it couldn’t know anything more about experience itself than we do. It’s not about collecting patterns at that point, but patterns themselves.

Adrian:

Maybe I’m looking for causality. And it’s really just experience. But I’m still looking for an explanation¹.

Matt:

Yeah, that’s the caveat to all this. You always have to keep looking.

Adrian:

¹ Addendum by Adrian: Also, I think we still have to deal with the same issue, which is that the scientific phenomenon of our if-a-then-b reality has yet only found an exegesis in mystical terms, which by and large leave behind our everyday reality. So any “rational” conception of the universe is, shall we say, always already insufficient. Which is more than just saying something like “we are all stardust” or “every object is surreal,” both of which are true, but act to expand our conceptions of reality rather than confound them.

Yeah, I meant the thought experiment more symbolically. Like, consider the 4th dimension. What is it? What are the known knowns the known unknowns? It's about really humbling yourself in terms of what we can conceptualize and experience. Because clearly there is something interesting and rare, very, very rare, about what we're doing right now. And that's exciting. I feel like, with human beings, that energy, that experience, gets more and more subtle and chaotic.

Matt:

Yeah! Like for example, let's say gravity is real as an abstraction. And we say planets are affecting me, here's some equations. And it turns out that gravity is something about deformations in space time. And that's what it is. Or it's gravitons. Or something vibrating. Whatever. But we also we use gravity as a "metaphor." Someone can have gravity. A room can be grave. People can orbit around other people.

Adrian:

A work can have gravitas.

Matt:

Yeah, and we say those things are metaphors, but in a sense, they have to come from the same source. When you follow that intuition, what can you learn? We certainly wouldn't have had the one concept without the other, and yet both are here simultaneously. Gravity is like an archetype, a pattern that can be differently instantiated. And you get to the same point, Why is it those patterns and not other patterns, even if we unified all human and non-human phenomena in a single conceptual schema! This is the single biggest issue there is.

Adrian:

Yeah, when are we not using metaphors anymore? When I say I believe in angels, what does that mean? That I believe there's good in the world?

Matt:

You want to paraphrase it.

Adrian:

And then you want people to say, I literally believe in angels. I literally believe that there is some spirit behind me that's guiding me. I literally believe that Jesus was the son of god. But even that, you can never approach a true literally.

Matt:

So for you, people's experience with aliens, alien encounters--how do they relate to metaphor?

Adrian:

That is the whole question. They really confound this classic binary between belief and knowledge. Belief and experience. The idea of aliens has emerged out of phenomena that to the people who observe them at the time were prior to that impossible in some sense. These were things they'd never seen or heard of before, but they were real things that were part of their experience. Just the same as a table. Or a comet coming out of the sky.

So these are real phenomena that are occurring, but we aren't able to trace it. And so we have to consider what's beyond them. Hence comes belief, this wonderful and sometimes insane abstraction of what we've observed. How did this weird object get here? What's the story behind this? Is this what I want to write my book about? How did a grand piano end up in an abandoned lot in Erie, Pennsylvania? Mysteries. But we have no way of conceptualizing it.

So there's UFOs, extraterrestrials. But what's the logic of their existence? Is it at all worth saying that they are here, doing a thing, for this reason? And even the craziest ufologists, none of them are really able to say what specifically the aliens are doing. The biggest question for them is *why?* *How* is not even the question. Because how is *way* far out. It's both a void and an incredible ripe area for the human imagination.

Matt:

What sort of conclusions in general do people draw from this?

Adrian:

For most other people especially since '47, around Roswell, it's been all about government cover-up, essentially. So in a way, it comes down to people being able to ratify their distrust in the government, a government that knows things we don't know. The alien itself is almost too much. How would you even really begin to think about it?

And so, we can meet that halfway with the government as an intermediary. Because we know that the government is doing stuff we don't know about, and we probably wouldn't like it if we did. That's essentially what all ufologists want. Total government transparency.

There are some semi-serious organizations, like SETI, which looks at radio transmissions using distributed computing. But there's this whole other group of people who are basically countering the government's denial of alien activity. The first person to really look at this from a cultural studies perspective came up with the idea that these people are sort of acting politically, realizing their own political potential in demanding freedom of information.

But the government can't just deny it, because then they're just denying it. It doesn't matter whether they tell the truth or not. And they're never telling the whole truth.

Matt:

Maybe they should just claim there are aliens. It would unite the globe.

Adrian:

That's exactly what Reagan and Gorbachev said in the 80's. They were trying to lessen global antagonism. They said that if we were threatened by aliens, then think of what kind of global cooperation would come from that exercise. Reagan also said that he saw a UFO once.

Matt:

How does thinking about aliens affect your relationship to the past and interpretation of what people were talking about? There's difficulties in explaining stuff we see now, and then there's difficulties in interpretation of what people said a long time ago, and so on.

Adrian:

Why is it that we don't have all these accounts of UFO's from thousands of years ago? Why are they visiting now when we have such a culture of rapid communication and conspiratorial beliefs, aliens in the media? Maybe someone just saw a weather balloon once and it started a feedback loop and it started sixty years and one hundred thousand UFO sightings. There's that, but then, have you ever been so far from civilization, like on a moonless night? The amount of stars you can see is insane. And you just look at that. Now we feel small, but back then it would be crazy. Lightning? Fire? Weird shit? Diseases?

There's lots of explanations of why people have created these narratives about what the government might be doing or how spirits work or any sort of cosmology floating around in our lives. Just in terms of the people I've talked to, it does reach a spiritual level for some people. There is an appreciation of the unknown.

There's academics, in a sense, and have a relatively clear idea of what's going on. One guy said that UFO abductions are the explanation of every kind of paranormal phenomena that people experience. Ghosts are products of abductions. It's just people's communication with something else.

For some people, though, mainly working class, it is a very spiritual thing. The aliens and ghosts come right along side each other. It's crazy too, though, the conspiracy stuff. It's really intense. Illuminati stuff. Like there's an order of beings that are running the world. The 1%/99% discourse has become part of the mainstream. But that's what they were saying all along. One part is controlling the world and making us slaves for them.

Matt:

So how does this all work in terms of your documentary?

Adrian:

For me, the foremost imperative is that the form meets the content. Essentially, trying to make a proof documentary, like many UFO documentaries, or the Ancient Alien documentaries, is problematic. Even their "skepticism" is in a truth-based framework. I just don't think that's possible. You can believe in or be astounded by certain things, like certain images, or people telling certain stories in those documentaries, but it's not getting into the deeper issues. How do I get across this idea, that there's a falseness that's here, that there's a holistic question about the capacity of the human brain?

The abduction stuff became huge after this book *Communion*, which was a New York Times bestseller, and a movie with Christopher Walken. The author, William Stribe, was a horror writer. He claimed to have been abducted and to have gone through all this horrible stuff. He was a storyteller. And he made a ton of money off it.

But abduction research is obtained by hypnosis, interview. And the interviewer is almost in the role of the therapist, going through the narrative with this other person, though it's something which clearly has only tenuous connections with verifiability. And then it comes down to making these fragments cohesive, making clear what's not there.

I'm going to work microcosmically. For me, for instance, I can say that I've seen a UFO. I was sitting on the sidewalk with a friend. And I could see this little light make a check mark sign and then it stopped for a quarter of a second and then shot up into the sky. That's fucking crazy. It had an effect on me then, but it's had more of an effect with me recently. I've talked to people who have had experiences that aren't explicable like that. I myself have no other explanation for what I saw that it was an extraterrestrial spaceship. What else was it? It was pretty high up. It looked like a comet, but no comet moves like that. It had a movement to it that no man made spacecraft has. It was out there, and that's exciting.

But when we start talking about abductions, I don't know where to go. Kind of because it's a lot scarier.

Matt:

How many people have you talked to?

Adrian:

For the documentary, eight maybe. Which isn't a ton.

Matt:

How do you find the people?

Adrian:

Well, not all of them are UFO people. Some are scientists and other people. I've made some posts on craigslist. They were done in different ways, sometimes face to face. I've only got two formal in front of camera interviews with UFO people. And others have been off the cuff discussions where the people didn't want me to record. And then, I called this one UFOlogist. And also, some scientists who are spiritual and study astrology and stuff.

Matt:

Who were the scientists?

Adrian:

They're just my friends!

Right now, I'm trying to get in touch with this other guy who runs a big UFO network, one of the premier UFO investigation organizations that's run in the United States. But like, I can't have a documentary that's just talking heads.

Because of that, I've really pared down my original conception. I'm going to look at questions of film and technology. Did you know that Disney was hired by the government early on to examine UFO videos to see if they were faked? And that happens now too. In terms of discovering hoaxes, you have to go to people in special effects. There is a really close link. And

later, the government hired Disney to try and stop to the UFO phenomenon. They had a media campaign to destroy people's conceptions of UFOs. Because straight up denial doesn't work. I mean, it does at some level, but the main constraint of the US government was that they were worried about mass panic.

And so that brings us to movies, science fiction. I was talking to one guy who was into a complete range of different subversive theories, and he was into movies too. I asked if there were any movies that matched up with his conception of aliens and UFO's. Some people will say like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is what's going on, or *Contact* is what's going on, or *Star Trek* is how I imagine the future. And he said: Not really, maybe more with TV shows. A movie can do so much with the time it has. And he was trying to say that most films have to stick to a narrative in such a way that they can't really leave things open. But then, he said, probably Tarkovsky's *Solaris*. It was amazing that he could say that. It's really not about a literal explanation. That movie isn't about aliens really, it's about alienation. It's about trying to destroy something in your past and building something better, being haunted by this demon from the past. And there's times where you're just looking at this planet, and you're like, what is going on here?

In terms of my documentary, it's been pretty difficult, to be honest, because I really want to talk about the human brain and belief and imagination and concepts and abstraction and things that are hard to concretize. And it's hard to show those things in a film. And it's hard to show aliens, UFO's in a film.

Matt:

Even outer space is hard to really show. We've just developed a few simple conventions.

Adrian:

I was considering not showing space as space, but instead space as astronomy, just as constellations, space as scientific read-outs of space, numbers and charts, space as those crazy pictures of radiation of different frequencies. Shapes come out of nowhere. What sort of lens are we using? I was thinking the other day: what's the difference between a literary mystery and a cinematic mystery? How do you make a detective story really effective in a movie?

Matt:

Yeah, in literature, you can not mention things, but in movies it's just there.

Adrian:

A great example is *The Usual Suspects* or *Blow-up*. It's all about what's there in the image. It's not necessarily about figuring out the story. There's a serious question about the visual being the most important thing.

Matt:

In terms of technique, maybe it reduces down the question of how to make people forget things, not how to hide them. You can do that in a text. you can make someone forget what's happening in a story; because the story accumulates things, you can confused them, contradict

yourself, say something baldly, and it's all playing tricks with memory. You can do that in movies too by working with focus and attention.

Adrian:

But even more overtly, in lots of mystery movies, the title sequence will tell you how the mystery is solved before you're even in the movie. Visual cues will explain something that's going to happen. And you'll only really understand it if you've watched the whole movie first. It's the best way to hide it, because it's so overt, and you can do all this visual abstract stuff. You're not even looking for it at that point.

But one of my big questions right now is how to represent interviews. What is the story exactly? Maybe I'll have other actors speak the lines of the people I've had interviews with. That seems okay, but it's not really it. Then I was thinking, maybe I don't want to have any faces in the movie at all. And I would just have these different dialogues all intertwining together. But is that going to work for the whole thing? And what would the images be? Abstract images? UFO footage from youtube?

Matt:

Juxtaposition is still the most robust technique. Like a counter melody to play against the aliens.

Adrian:

Yeah. I know 9/11 is going to be a really important in this. Because here is an image that is alien, but we know it's true. And you can go back to it at any point and watch it. And it's utterly surreal. After a while, you can unearth things. These are flying aircraft in places they aren't supposed to be doing things they aren't allow to do by the system, and they're destructive.

They're blank spots on the map. Why do conspiracies come out of these things? People continue to talk about them, about JFK's assassination, about the moon landing. And I hear from the most discerning people I know that something was off about 9/11. I've watched the Truther videos, and I can't buy into that, but the experience of watching them is insane. There's the movie *Cloverfield*. It's a reenactment of 9/11 with aliens. And it's riveting because of the shaky camera thing. You feel like you're there, and you get flashbacks.

Matt:

I think it's also like rehearsal for a lot of people. It gives you a a place to think about what you would do, how would you save yourself.

Adrian:

And you'd think that about 9/11 too.

Matt:

While you're falling asleep.

Adrian:

Things that probably won't happen to you, but it's impossible to say. You have to say it won't happen.

Matt:

People don't know how much of their guard to be on. Because it's hard to know what's possible. And people limit what's imagined as possible for different reasons.

There's also a scale problem. Like take the movie *Melancholia*. There's a moon hidden behind the sun. That we just didn't see. We're kicking ourselves now. That's it in an essence. But you see these people moving incredibly slowly in this impending way and they're moving just like the moon moves. As in, it's moving rapidly, but it's also moving really slowly. The movie is playing with this scale problem. And it's the same thing with alien life. They might exist at different scales than us. And how do we translate between scales?

Adrian:

People will post images to the internet with a picture of the universe and a picture of a rat's brain and be like, Hey these look the same. And it's a way of compacting this information.

Up at Ladd Observatory, which I highly recommend you go to, on the ground floor there's all these old clocks. Why? Because mapping the stars was all about understanding time. Being able to map a 24 hour day. You nail a telescope down and mark a point where a star passes and then 24 hours later the star passes again. Then you need to adjust the clock because the star is passing because the earth has moved. You've actually gone 24 hours in 4 minutes. And you need another clock. That point is connected to a little electromagnetic system that goes into a telegraph wire and goes into a clock. And that's how that time is produced. This is how it worked when there wasn't standardized time. Now they rely on a different vibration, atomic clocks. Anyway, the face of the clock has the twelve zodiacs signs on it, going around. The clock is the map of the stars.

Then there's the telescope, which was the first instrument to allow the human mind to become disconnected from the body. You look out there and you're in another space, and your body is down there. And if you have your eye completely wrapped in the eye piece, you feel this strange kind of disorientation. It's like a non-space, it's just the telescope, and yet. And the telescope is the precursor to the camera, to cinema. And it's all about your body being in one place and your mind being elsewhere.

But does that get back to the real question? Are extraterrestrials visiting planet earth? How many of them have been here? What are they doing here? And what has the government done? Who knows the most? There's all these thought exercises, but we're not getting to the real juicy bits: that somewhere someone in this world knows everything about JFK. Maybe some people know some really crazy things about aliens. All this stuff came out of people coming forward in the 80's and 90's, saying they'd been at Roswell, saying they saw them bring the alien bodies in, that they did the autopsies, saying I was there when this guy got in contact with the aliens, and that we signed a peace agreement with them. And it's like where is this coming from? We just can't rely on single individuals. You have this cultural feedback problem where if someone says all UFOs go in figure-eights, a person who said they saw another kind of UFO

might say, Well yeah, actually it was going in a figure eight. And that makes it so no one can realize that, say, maybe there's been two different alien races visiting, one from a thousand years in the future and one from thousand years in the past, and they're competing, or something.

Then, there's the question of schizophrenia. Look at how many movies are about schizophrenia. The *Matrix* is a movie about schizophrenia. That's what boundary it's pushing. It's a schizophrenic thought experience. And why are we doing that? Why are we having this conversation now as opposed to before?

It really comes down to looking at what you know and why you know it, what you believe and why you believe it, and what's the relation between the two, when they cross over. What happens when you believe in something you know, and know something you think you believe in. That's a practical element. And at another level, you really have to realize how important that imagination is. People want to throw away belief.

Matt:

Or pathologize imagination.

Adrian:

And that's crazy because then nothing would have happened to humans. We would just be doing whatever. Belief is so important. And that's why you go to the crazy people, because that's belief run amok. Of course, there are some pathological parts to that. But in the best case, I feel like it has to do with harnessing that power and not being consumed by it, and at the same time letting it fuel you at the same time. That's the most important thing for me.