



Digital Folklore

Down the Raccoon Hole (Deprogramming Conspiracies & Creepy Clown Lore)
Mick West, Benjamin Radford, and Brent Lee

<https://digitalfolklore.fm>

[Introduction]

Welcome. You've got... Digital Folklore.

[Opening Narrator... Todd]

This is the story of Perry Carpenter and Mason Amadeus.

Oh, and a talking raccoon named Digby. There's no time to explain. Together, they're on an adventure to unlock the secrets of modern folklore, interviewing experts, and delving into online rabbit holes, but as it turns out, they may be in over their head.

[Opening Theme]

Perry Carpenter:

I am Perry Carpenter.

Mason Amadeus:

And I'm Mason Amadeus.

Perry Carpenter:

And this is Digital Folklore.

[Opening Scene – Perry's is dreaming... spooky sounds in the background of someone rattling doors. Trying to get into (or out of) some unknown place. Lines from an interview Perry did with Mick west a couple years ago filter in]

Mick West:



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I think too often people kind of lump in all conspiracy theorists together. If you're a conspiracy theorist, then you're a little bit crazy. I really don't think that there's very many people, if any, who are truly lost to reason, because everyone changes given time. My name is West and I specialize in how to talk to people who believe in a conspiracy theory and how to help them escape the rabbit hole. Really, conspiracy theorists and conspiracy theories both span a spectrum. Everybody has a position on that spectrum where they think that everything that's lower than that position is a perfectly reasonable conspiracy theory and everything that's on the other side of it is a silly bit of misinformation or disinformation or nonsense or craziness, and it's usually a fairly sharp dividing line.

To get drawn down the rabbit hole, you essentially have to consume enough information to change your worldview, and usually this requires a good degree of spare time, but if you reach a critical mass of conspiracy theorists where there's lots of people around you who believe these things, then it's really, really easy to get sucked into that because it becomes, in a way, the default position, so how can we actually have a good conversation with someone who believes in conspiracy theory, and how can we then most effectively engage with them in a way that has a good outcome? If you think of someone automatically as being on your side, you view a conversation as working together rather than if you see the person you're talking to as stupid or crazy or as being brainwashed or something like that. If they tell you something, you want to ask them why they believe that thing without coming across as confrontational.

You can't just say, "Why do you believe that ridiculous idea?" You ask them, "Where can I learn more about this?" And then you can get to talking about what is a trustworthy source and what isn't, and then why they think that. Lead them towards figuring out the answer for themselves. Rather than telling them the answer, guide them towards it. There are certainly people who you can't reach that day, or maybe even that week, or maybe even that month, but I think the key place that we can find hope is in the knowledge that people do get out of the rabbit hole. People who seems to be once completely unreachable have eventually become much more reasonable rational people who no longer believe in these conspiracy theories. This is something that I've seen time and time again.

[Perry is awakened by a phone ringing... he's missed a few calls while trying to sleep]



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Perry Carpenter:

God, I don't feel like I slept at all. Huh?

Siri:

You have one new voice message.

Mason Amadeus:

Hey, Perry, it's Mason. We're going to need to do something. Digby's getting worse. Now it's, I don't know, some kind of extraterrestrial parasite infesting the people who are behind this. I don't know. I've given up trying to follow, but man, you wouldn't believe the amount of packages he's been ordering. It's like everything from supplements to radiation detectors. Oh, and the latest fun development is that at least once a day, I've got to fight him off the WiFi modem because he keeps trying to put it in a Faraday cage and I can't get any signal and I can't do this anymore. We need to find some kind of professional at this point, so I'm going to look online, but if you have any ideas, can you call me and let me know? Thanks. Bye.

Siri:

End of new messages.

Perry Carpenter:

Right. Well, I guess I know what we're doing today.

[Montage of sounds from Perry getting ready in the morning... teeth brushing, shaving, making coffee, etc.]

[Perry calling Mason... phone ringing]



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Mason Amadeus:

Hello?

Perry Carpenter:

Hey, get ready. I'm coming by to pick up you and Digby.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, thank God. I'm about to lose it over here. He's been pulling all the furniture away from the walls to check for microchips in the baseboard.

Perry Carpenter:

If you can just hang tight for a little bit. I remembered something that might help.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh?

Perry Carpenter:

For my cybersecurity podcast, I interviewed this guy named Mick West, all about conspiracy theories and deprogramming, and I had a dream last night. Somehow he worked his way into my dream because all this conspiracy stuff, but I remembered that he sent me an address for this place that specializes in helping people with situations just like Digby.

Mason Amadeus:

That would be awfully convenient right now.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, but the thing is, this place, it's a bit sketchy and it's very far away.



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Digby:

Hey, I'm going to have to take out this drop ceiling.

Mason Amadeus:

No. No, Digby. No, wait.

Digby:

They could be hiding anything up there.

Mason Amadeus:

Digby. Perry. Hi. Honestly, I don't care how sketchy or far away it is. This has to stop.

Perry Carpenter:

All right. I'll be there in 15 minutes. Tell Digby something like, we found the secret headquarters or whatever. He'll eat it up, I'm sure.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. No, that's a good idea. I'll see you soon. Dig- Digby. Digby!

[Later... sound of the Volkswagen slowing to a stop]

Perry Carpenter:

You see that too, right?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I do. Is this the-



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Perry Carpenter:

The GPS says this is it. The little pin icon is right on that door.

Mason Amadeus:

Next to the-

Perry Carpenter:

Yup.

Mason Amadeus:

Next to the clown. Great.

Perry Carpenter:

He's looking right at us.

Mason Amadeus:

He's staring right at us.

Digby:

Are we at the layer of the hive?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, buddy. Yeah, I think we're here.

Digby:

Excellent.



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Mason Amadeus:

Tell you what, you hang here. Perry, and I'll go up real quick, make sure everything's on the level, and then we'll come back and get you, all right?

Digby:

Be careful. Don't make eye contact for longer than three seconds.

Mason Amadeus:

Right.

Digby:

And if they ask your full name, don't even think it too loudly.

Mason Amadeus:

Yes, of course.

Digby:

And I need both of you to wear these. They're mind shields.

Mason Amadeus:

This is extremely literal, huh?

Digby:

They aren't perfect, but they will make it harder for them to steal your thoughts.

Mason Amadeus:



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Yeah. Hey, I'm not trying to start an argument again or anything, but don't you think they're going to notice if we walk up wearing literal tinfoil hats?

Digby:

No, no, no. Remember, their senses don't work like ours.

Mason Amadeus:

Right.

Digby:

So, as long as you don't think too hard about the mine shields, they won't be able to see them.

Mason Amadeus:

Okay, right. Yep. You ready to do this?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, I guess so.

Digby:

Wait, each of you take two of these.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh my God. Supplements, really?

Digby:

No. They're a special blend of prophylactic nootropics that will help suppress your brain's beta and theta waves.



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Perry Carpenter:

These are just caffeine and fish oil, and they smell God awful.

Digby:

All natural, no chemicals.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. Okay, cool. Here, down the hatch.

Perry Carpenter:

Stuck to the back of my throat for a second.

Mason Amadeus:

All right, let's go. Digby, just sit tight.

Digby:

Okay. But if you are not back in 20 minutes, I'll blow the place wide open.

Perry Carpenter:

What is that?

Mason Amadeus:

It's just an old Walkman. Don't say anything. Roger that, Digby.

Perry Carpenter:

Yes. We'll report back soon.



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Digby:

This is our only shot, but be safe.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. Don't worry, Digby. We got this.

Perry Carpenter:

I don't know what I like less dig, be being so extremely committed to this conspiracy stuff or the way that clown is looking at us.

Mason Amadeus:

To be fair, we look ridiculous.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, he has no right to judge. He's in a freaking clown costume.

Benjamin Radford:

Nice hats.

Mason Amadeus:

Hello.

Benjamin Radford:

Can I help you?

Perry Carpenter:



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We have an appointment.

Benjamin Radford:

Oh yeah?

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, for the deprogramming.

Benjamin Radford:

Ah, yes, yes. They're still with the last group before you. They should be done soon. Then you can go in.

Mason Amadeus:

All right. So, who are you?

Benjamin Radford:

Security.

Perry Carpenter:

And the clown costume is?

Benjamin Radford:

Well, look, people aren't too eager to mess with someone who's standing in a dark alley at night wearing a clown costume, are they?

Mason Amadeus:

Valid.



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Perry Carpenter:

Are you like, an actual clown? Did you go to clown school?

Benjamin Radford:

No.

Mason Amadeus:

Okay. What's your name?

Benjamin Radford:

Ben. Ben Radford.

Mason Amadeus:

What do you do besides, I guess, clown security?

Benjamin Radford:

Well, for one thing, I'm one of the world's few scientific investigators of the paranormal and weird claims. I've written a dozen books, give or take, got a Master's degree in public health, a Master's degree in education, and also a degree in psychology, so I do stuff like that. I'm also a member of the American Folklore Society as well as the International Society for Contemporary Legend Research.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, holy smokes. And you're what, moonlighting as clown security.

Benjamin Radford:

Please stop saying clown security. Right now, I'm embedded. I'm doing research.



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Mason Amadeus:

Fascinating.

Benjamin Radford:

Hi, I'm Ben Radford, author of a dozen or so books. I'm a folklorist, a researcher, investigator, and doer of weird things, so welcome to the show.

Perry Carpenter:

One of the things that I love about you, and then love about your show and your work is the skeptics angle that you take on things. I'm interested in how do you get into that as a career, and then the unique way that you do it, because I think that you have a much more approachable tone than some of the other members of the skeptic community. How do you end up giving a career to investigating all this fun stuff that you get to investigate?

Benjamin Radford:

It's an odd story. How did you end up here? In my case, like most people, I was always interested in weird things. I was a kid. I was growing up, and I remember being 8, 10, 12 years old, and I'm seeing these TV shows, and this is before podcast, kids, so this is how old I am, these TV shows and radio shows and movies and things on mysterious topics. There was in search of, and all these sorts of things, and I was fascinated. I'm like, oh, this is so cool. There's aliens landing in crops and making circles, and they're abducting people, and there's Bigfoot out there, and the Lochness Monster.

I grew up in this tiny small desert town in New Mexico, which I actually don't live too far from there now, and to me, growing up as a kid, these mysteries seemed very far afield. They're all, it's in Scotland. Where's Scotland? I don't know. It's cold. I don't know. It's up there by England. I didn't know, and it seemed like all these mysteries that I was hearing, all these dramatic, sensational stories about were in these far off places, and I was like, oh, I want to go investigate. I want to go find Bigfoot. I'm wanting to get into researching these things, and so I buy a lot of used books, and so I would get my allowance and I



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would go to a used bookstore not far from the elementary school that I went to, and I would come home with just stacks of books under my arms.

These are books on UFOs and ruins and mysteries and psychics and all these sorts of stuff, and I'm just reading these and I'm fascinated by them, and it's very authoritative because it's a book and the person's name is on the cover. They wouldn't publish if it weren't true because I assumed in my 10-year-old naivete that, well, of course it's true, some publisher, it's printed. Look at that. It's literally printed on the page. I had this sort of aspect to it. For several summers, again, in my early teens, I would read all these books and I was just fascinated by them, and I really believed them. I was like, oh my God, this world is so crazy and wild. There's all sorts of things, but I gradually became disillusioned because I realized that there was very little actual investigation.

Most of the books I was reading, all these fifties, sixties, seventies, sort of dramatic, sensational pulp books, they all had these breathless, dramatic, sensational stories, but there didn't seem to be anybody that was actually investigating them, and when I read closer at these books and the TV shows and things like that, it was clear that it was mostly what I now recognize as folklore. It was stories, it was legends, it was friend of a friend who said this. It is said that. And I'm like, hold on here. I want to know for myself, I don't want to just take someone else's word for it, some random publisher or some random author who I've never heard of, who I'm being presented as being factual. That sort of led me to a degree in psychology and sort of looking at the different ways in which people can misperceive things and misunderstand things, and then that sort of got me on the path of doing these sorts of investigations.

Perry Carpenter:

That makes sense how you wound up writing a whole book about creepy clowns and getting into creepy clowns, because that is just another one of those phenomena.

Benjamin Radford:

Yeah, and the clown one was kind of interesting because I had written several books before that, including on lake monsters and mysteries and things like that, and I had actually backburnered it. I was like, there's a book. I recognized that there were lots of people who were interested in clowns, and of



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course in pop culture, the evil clown trope was everywhere. Pennywise, The Joker, John Wayne Gacy. Just all over the place. The Harlequin figure, Punch and Judy, this and that. Killer Clowns from Outer Space, and yet there was very little actual research done as far as I could tell on the social and cultural significance of that and the history of it. I want to do something that's new and fresh. Again, I was certain that somebody else had already done this book and I didn't need to do it, but the more I looked into it, no. I guess I'll do it. That launched me into the evil clown research.

Mason Amadeus:

I'm curious if in your research for that, when you were looking at the more contemporary stories of bad or creepy clowns, if you had one that is your favorite for some reason, whether it's just a particularly creepy one or if it's just really dumb, a story from when they resurged at some point in popular media.

Benjamin Radford:

It's interesting. I was often asked when clowns went bad because there was this notion that clowns were good, and then Stephen King, and then the Chiodo brothers with Killer Clowns from Outer space and this and that. At some point there was this cultural event or this Thanos snap finger, I don't know. There was a time when clowns suddenly turned evil, and that was one thing that I had first believed. I assumed that, yeah, it's like, when did clowns go bad? And then I sort of realized that you're asking the wrong question because clowns were never good. In America, there was this notion that clowns were good because of the influence of, for example, Bozo the Clown, Ronald McDonald, so a whole generation of Americans grew up with ostensibly happy, good, burger pushing-

Perry Carpenter:

Like the rodeo clown type thing.

Benjamin Radford:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was against that background that evil clowns sort of came out. When Stephen King came up with Pennywise, he wasn't doing this subversive thing like, oh, clowns are good, now they're



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bad. If you look at clowns elsewhere, for example, in Europe, clowns were always this ambiguous characters. In many places around the world, they never had this assumption that many Americans did that clowns were inherently good. They're like, yeah, clowns, they're like fairies. Sometimes they're good, sometimes they're bad. You don't mess with them, and this and that. That sort of touches on your question as to, the bad or the evil clowns. I would say probably, one of the more interesting sort of evil clowns that I came across was the Northampton Clown, and we can talk more about that later, but he basically spawned the scary clown panic of 2016.

Perry Carpenter:

Tell us a little bit, because we did have the recent clown panic, the one that everybody's thinking about with the creepy clown standing around, just making people unsettled. Tell us a little bit about the story of that, and then you do mention this trickster angle. I'm sure from your psychology background, you're thinking just some of the psychology of creepiness and uncanniness and things that fit into that, but what made that become the thing that it did, as it became this new panic?

Benjamin Radford:

Well, yeah, there were a couple things going on. Basically, the topics that I cover in the book, it's one of the last chapters, is what are called phantom clowns, and these are evil clowns that are, and again, this goes right into folklore because it's essentially a folkloric phenomena, but it bled over and bleeds over into mass media and things like that. The phantom clowns actually begin in the 1980s, and we could talk for a couple hours on this. I'll try and sort of give you the overview, but basically in the early eighties, there were reports of scary clowns driving around trying to abduct children either by themselves or sometimes in white vans, because of course, vans are a popular folklore motif, and as you might imagine, this panicked teachers and parents because oh my God, right? There's somebody trying to abduct kids, and not only that, but they're also clowns, so there's that added layer of, oh, and by the way, they're clowns.

There was all this panic, as you might imagine, and parents and everyone's freaking out, so they called the police. Police investigated. No sign of the clowns. There's nothing there, no witnesses or anything



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else like that, and yet, the kids kept telling these stories, and they kept saying a week later, and the story actually spread from place to place in typical folkloric fashion, and over the course of several months, and in fact, several years between '81 and '84, '85, these sporadic ports of these clowns, but again, there was never any evidence of them. None were ever arrested. There was never any evidence. For the most part, adults didn't see them. These were stories and rumors that circulated among children and from children to the parents and teachers. Loren Coleman, in his book, *Mysterious America*, is credited for being the first to write about these phantom clowns, and there were later reoccurrences.

For example, there was some in Honduras, in England, and elsewhere, so the phantom clown panic, as usual, they emerged, they reached a peak, and they sort of faded away often around Halloween, which probably won't surprise you. In any event, so that's the history of these clowns. As a folklorist and someone who's written about these sorts of weird things, I knew that typically around Halloween there would be these panics, these moral panics. There's ones about tainted Halloween candy, which Joel Best has written about and others as well, the Halloween sadist legends and things like that, and this sort of tied in with that. It wasn't really until 2013 when that blended with social media and you had what was called, Northampton Clown. There was a guy in Northampton, England who dressed as a clown, and it's interesting. He didn't threaten anyone. He was intentionally creepy though.

He would stand waving to people silently as they drove by on the streets, usually at night or in parks. Again, he wasn't threatening anybody. He didn't have any weapons, but it was just intriguing enough to go viral, which is exactly what he was expecting and exactly what happened. Sure enough, the Northampton Clown had its own hashtag, people reporting seeing the clown, taking photographs of him, sometimes with him, but nobody knew who he was. He would just sort of appear late at night and do these sorts of things, and hand out balloons now and then, and sort of fade away. It later turned out, because as I'm sure you know, England is full of security cameras. There are more security cameras in England than anywhere else in the world as far as I know. It's harder to get away with that sort of thing in the UK, and sure enough, people eventually tracked him down, but it wasn't the police, because keep in mind, that dressing as a clown isn't illegal.

Even though he was sort of unnerving people and making people wonder what's going on, this and that, he wasn't doing anything illegal, so they call the cops, they're like, "What do you want me to do?"



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Anyway, it turned out that it was in fact a local young filmmaker who was trying to get some publicity, and they actually spawned copycats. There was another case in the Staten Island Clown. There was a case of a year or two later where once again, you had an evil clown that was seen in the Staten Island. Again, not threatening anybody, but just clowns out of their context are inherently creepy. For the most part, the scary phantom clowns sort of faded away. The real life ones. I'm not talking about the Joker and Pennywise. I'm talking about sort of real life, viral video, actually somebody in a clown costume, although not necessarily clowns. It's important to make that distinction. Just because you buy a clown mask doesn't make you a clown, which is a point that many clowns pointed out to me. Just so we're crystal clear, buying a mask doesn't make you a clown.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, that's fair. I can see how they'd want to protect that.

Benjamin Radford:

Yeah. Yeah, because there's a whole honorable tradition and makeup and designs. There's a whole clown industry and subculture that I respect. That wasn't the particular angle that I took for my book, but I am aware of it and I respect it. Against this background, we have the 2016 Phantom Clown Panic, and it was odd because my book had actually been published, I think in March of that year, and then around Halloween was when this clown panic, just shortly before Halloween is when this clown panic emerged. I actually had people who were like, "So Ben, where were you the other night? Because there was an evil clown." It was like, "Were you behind that?" I'm like, "No, this is not a publicity stunt." I could have predicted it just because I've researched it, but I wasn't behind it. Just for the record, I had nothing to do with it other than trying to explain it to people.

Basically in August 2016, in Greenville, South Carolina, there were reports of children once again that were almost being abducted. Not being abducted, but almost being abducted by clowns, and most of the reports were from children, just as we saw in previous years and even back in the eighties in Massachusetts and elsewhere, and when the adults were asking about, "Well, what happened?" The kids would say that there were clowns living in the woods behind these apartment buildings. This is



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more urban than you might expect. And yet, behind this one apartment building, there were a cops of woods, and so the story went, if you followed a trail into the woods and Hansel and Gretel motifs were coming out, you would finally find, not a house of candy, but a house of clowns where allegedly a bunch of clowns lived together in some sort of clown commune, who they were sitting around waiting for children to abduct.

Again, this is straight out of Stephen King. Stephen King in fairytales. Once again, as with the previous Phantom clown panics, there was never any evidence of this. Just kids are saying this. Every now and then, you have an adult who would say, "I saw something in the woods," because once you tell people to look for anything weird, whether it's Bigfoot or UFOs for us, they're going to see it because they've been psychologically primed. When these rumors circulate in this community, and everyone's talking about it because why wouldn't you? Child abductions folded in with scary clowns, so every now and then, there would also be a parent who would say, "Yeah, I saw something. It was in the woods," and at one point they were actually firing weapons. They were firing guns and bullets into the woods. Fortunately, nobody was hurt, but this was taken pretty seriously.

This happened, and again, I'm following this in real time. It was fascinating to me, having written bad clowns and having done research on this. I would wake up in the morning with a Google alert, and every morning I'd wake up, what weird clown ... is going on today? Sure enough, so exactly has happened previous years, the sightings spread and spread and spread. It wasn't just in South Carolina, it went to other cities, in Atlanta, Michigan, this sort of snowballing effect. What began to happen was, that even though there were never any clowns or anyone else arrested or identified in the original case, other people would see these news stories and they would dress up as clowns, and basically, do copycat hoaxes.

Mason Amadeus:

Ostension.

Benjamin Radford:



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Ostension, exactly. People would, they'd see on the news, oh, did you hear about these crazy clowns? Yeah, that's crazy. Hey, I got a clown mask in my closet. You want go cruise Walmart and scare some old ladies? Yeah, let's do it.

Perry Carpenter:

I was really expecting and fearful that a lot of that would turn into clowns just being shot.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

Benjamin Radford:

Yeah, that was one of the concerns, because with ostension, anytime you're acting on a legend, there's the chance that someone's actually going to get hurt. Look, if you're acting out Bloody Mary, go in your bathroom, light a candle, say Bloody Mary 13 times or a hundred times, take your pick. The chance of Bloody Mary actually coming and harming you are close to zero. However, if you're dressing as a clown, whether or not you have bad intentions and you're running after kids in a park, that going to get you killed.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah. It's not the wisest move in the world.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

Benjamin Radford:

Right. Exactly. You had this fascinating blend of, so in the 2016 clown panic, you had some hoaxes. You had people who were basically faking clown sightings. You would have people who would say, "Yeah, I



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saw a evil clown. A clown knocked on my window at midnight and ran away," and people would investigate, and that didn't happen. They later admitted it didn't happen. There was one woman, I remember I wrote about, who was late for her job at McDonald's, ironically, and the reason she was late, she said, was that a clown, as she was getting into her car, a scary clown came at her with a knife. Fortunately, she was able to fight him off, but it made her 20 minutes late for work. She later admitted that this was of course, a hoax. There were hoaxes. People who were faking not only clown sightings, again, just a flat out hoax that they later admitted they made the whole thing up, but then you also had copycats. You had people where they would hear about these stories, and again, they would perform it. They would like, hey, everyone's making the news. It's a low risk, high yield prank because if you're successful, you make national news.

Mason Amadeus:

Right.

Benjamin Radford:

You've got John Muir on ABC News talking about you or CNN. There's a clip of you. If you're in trouble, you're arrested. Okay, 17-year-old in the clown mask. What are you going to do with me? That also morphed into, for example, viral videos. There were actually what were called, clown lockdowns. In Alabama, for example, in other places as well, schools were actually locked down, and what would happen is that people dressed as clowns, typically students, which won't come as surprise to anybody who went to high school. They're like, "I don't want to go to math class today. Hey, I have an idea." They would put on a clown mask or do a little clown thing, and they would put something on TikTok or Instagram or any social media.

It's like, "Hey, I'm going to come shoot up the school. I wouldn't open the school on Monday," and it's interesting because the police have to take that seriously because unfortunately, in America, there are school shootings. They're just dovetailing onto this phenomenon. There was this interesting dynamic where the police couldn't ignore the threat because technically it's a threat against the school. If you are in charge of protecting school security and you ignore a threat against the school and it happens, you



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lose your job. You are public enemy number one. On the other hand, you could be 99.7% sure this is bullshit, so there was this tension. What would happen is that the schools would be concerned about it. Again, probably often recognizing that there was any truth to it, but they got to be better safe than sorry. The police take the same tack, and then what happens is that, parents who might otherwise think this is all silly, it's legitimized by the police and by the schools because they're like, I didn't think this was true. This all seems silly to me, but I got an email from the school saying that they're shutting down the school. Oh my God, there must be something to it, this self-legitimizing aspect of the whole clown phenomena. Anyway, so that launched, that went again from about August or September, and it sort of rose right around Halloween, then sort of peaked by November, and then it sort of faded away. That was the basics of the 2016 scary clown panic.

Perry Carpenter:

You, as I look at your work, and I've heard you speak on different shows, or read a little bit of your stuff, or hopefully more than just a little bit of your stuff, it seems like, when you really evangelize for a skeptical approach to things, you're not doing this maybe the way that some people might personify or try to make the skeptics view very cartoonish or polarizing. It seems like you go in with a lot of respect for people who have certain different beliefs or who are reporting things, and you are very, very curious about the way that you do it. Can you talk about that? Because you do seem to be the friendly skeptic in a lot of ways.

Benjamin Radford:

Yeah, I appreciate you saying that. Yeah, it's interesting. Skepticism is a big tent, and there are lots of people who call themselves skeptics. Oftentimes, they're not skeptics at all. For example, the ghost hunters guys. I can't tell you how many times I've seen them either in an interview or writing, "Well, we're skeptics". Are you? But people love to, it's the same thing with the premature science. Even if they don't genuinely respect science, they know that other people do. This is why pseudo scientists and ghost hunters, they all like to, "Well, we're scientific," even though of course, they're not at all. It's interesting



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coming from that tradition of skepticism and skeptical inquiry and for education, so you have people like the amazing Randy, the late Randy, who was a colleague of mine, and of course, he was around forever. Randy tried to walk that line. He would debunk people, but he didn't really embrace the debunker label, and nor do I, because my goal is to investigate. As a result of that, I'll often debunk claims, but I'm not trying to go into it trying and say, "This is clearly bullshit. Let me prove why." I think part of that goes back to my background in psychology, because I am so cognizant of the ways in which people can misunderstand things, misperceive things, fool each other, and most people that come to me with their experiences, they saw a ghost, they saw something weird, they had some deeply profound experience that they believe was supernatural [inaudible 00:32:41]. Most of them are sincere. They're not lying, and they're not crazy. They're not stupid. They genuinely believe that, and I can tell that. If I'm going to come to them and sort of dismiss it like, "Well, this is crazy. Everybody knows these things aren't real," then that's not going to help them at all.

In one of my books, Big If True, I begin with a section on a woman that contacted me because she believed that she was cursed, and this happened several years ago, and I won't go into the whole story, but basically, she said, this very heart-wrenching email, and I'm certain it wasn't a hoax. It was clear that it was absolutely true or she believed it was true, and so I was struggling with that because I don't want to reinforce her idea that she actually is the victim of a curse because it's almost certainly not true, and certainly based on my research and psychology and this and that. At the same time, if I had just emailed her back and said, "Curses aren't real. Get over it. Get a life." That's number one, not going to help her out. It's not going to help me out. It's not going to make skeptics look any good, and it's just counterproductive.

And so to the extent that I can, when I'm doing these investigations, whether it's crop circles or ghosts or psychics or psychic mediums, take your pick, I try and approach it from a genuine investigative point of view, where I'll go into a location and I'll say, "Look, help me understand what's going on. I'm not here to show you that you're wrong. I'm not here to say you're stupid. I'm here to help us understand what you experienced," and if I can offer them a plausible alternative explanation for what they experienced in terms of a haunting [inaudible 00:34:17], that helps them out and they can see that I'm making a



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sincere effort. I do try and do that. I am sort of known as one of the more diplomatic skeptics, which I take pride in because I think that's how you help people.

Perry Carpenter:

I think even in your books, when you're talking about doing scientific research in the paranormal, you're actually trying to give legitimate good, actionable advice to that community about here's how you could uplevel your game to potentially gain more credibility to not just give into pseudoscience or whatever the fad of the day is for trying to find these things, but here's how to apply a scientific process to the thing that you're trying to legitimately look for.

Benjamin Radford:

Yeah, I'm glad you brought that up. That's always been my approach is, in what I do, I've spoken to ghost hunting groups, I've spoken to Bigfoot groups. I say, "Look, I'm not the enemy here. I may be more skeptical than you are, but we're all trying to solve the mystery. I genuinely am." If there's a ghost somewhere, I want to find that out. If Bigfoot's out there, Chupacabra out there, believe me, I want to be the front of the line to find this out. That's one of the themes, and I'm glad, Perry, that you recognize that, is when I criticize these groups and these people that aren't doing good research, it's not because I think the topic is too stupid to look at.

It's not because I think this is too silly, it's because exactly the opposite, because I do take it seriously. I'm saying, "Yes, this topic is worth investigating. It's worth doing good research on," and because of that, do better research. That's the theme of, I did this book, Investigating Ghosts, and part of it is for ghost hunters to up their game. Say, "Look man, if you think ghosts are real, more power to you. Do better research, do better quality research, and if what you're saying is true, then you'll prove it, but the quality of the research that you're doing and the methodologies and research design, it's just so poor that of course, you're not getting good evidence." Oh, all right. I just got a text. They're ready for you.

Mason Amadeus:

Cool. Thanks for talking with us.



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Benjamin Radford:

Of course. It gets boring out here.

Mason Amadeus:

Right. We'll go get Digby, and then head in. Thanks again. Well, that was not what I was expecting. I feel like we say that every time we run into someone interesting-

Perry Carpenter:

Which we do fairly often.

Mason Amadeus:

You never know what you're going to find if you keep your eyes open.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, but I feel like we're constantly stumbling into weird situations these days.

Digby:

What's the scoop? Did they suspect you?

Mason Amadeus:

Oh no, they didn't suspect a thing. We're in.

Digby:

Excellent.

Mason Amadeus:



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We've actually got an appointment for you to talk to-

Perry Carpenter:

To talk to their leader.

Mason Amadeus:

Yes.

Digby:

I'll get this little hidden mic set up, and then once I capture enough evidence, we can take it back to the studio and blow the whistle on this once and for all.

Perry Carpenter:

Perfect, perfect, and because of your implant, they will not be able to mind control you.

Digby:

Oh, I didn't think of that. They're probably expecting human brain patterns. You are right.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah. Let's go. Let's come on. We'll escort you in.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, and one last thing. Remember, once you're in there, you need to play along. Okay? Whatever they say, just go along with it.

Mason Amadeus:



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Yeah, and we're going to be listening for any signs of trouble, so if something happens, we'll jump in and get you right out of there.

Digby:

Okay. I never thought I'd get to be part of something so earth-shattering and important.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, you're really one lucky raccoon.

Benjamin Radford:

Right this way. Wash your step little guy.

Digby:

Thank you, fellow human clown.

Mason Amadeus:

Oh, well this is a lot more well lit than I thought it was going to be.

Perry Carpenter:

It has like a dentist office vibe.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah.

Digby:

Of course it does. They need to keep up appearances.



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Speaker 10:

Hello, do you have an appointment?

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, we do. It should be under Digby Cooper.

Speaker 10:

Ah, Digby. Right this way.

Digby:

Yeah, sure. You two can hang out here in the waiting area with Brent and when Digby's all done, we'll bring him right back out to you.

Mason Amadeus:

Thanks. Good luck, Digby.

Digby:

I'll see you both again soon.

Perry Carpenter:

I guess we just pull up a seat and hang out with Brent over there.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, I take it. It's got to be that guy in the corner, right?

Perry Carpenter:



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Hey.

Mason Amadeus:

Hello.

Brent Lee:

Hi there.

Mason Amadeus:

I take it your Brent.

Brent Lee:

Hi, I'm Brent Lee. I am the host of Some Dare Call It Conspiracy, a podcast that aims to deconstruct and demystify popular conspiracy theories.

Perry Carpenter:

You have an interesting story of your own, of your journey with conspiracy. Why don't you give us the breakdown of that just to start off?

Brent Lee:

Yeah. Well, the reason why I do this is conspiracy theories is a subject quite close to my heart. I myself believed some really hardcore conspiracy theories for 15 years. From 2003 to 2018, I was totally consumed, I would say by conspiracism and the idea that some overarching secret society or network of cults was running the world essentially. It was a very long journey, and it starts in 2003.

Mason Amadeus:

Yeah, what was the tipping point, the beginning of that?



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Brent Lee:

See, it was 2003. We were on the cusp of war with Iraq, and the sentiment was that this was built on a lie, and the weapons of mass destruction claims were a lie, and I didn't trust why we were going to Iraq. I understood why we had gone into Afghanistan. 9/11 happened, and you can see that's an obvious outcome that someone's going to go to war over that attack, but Iraq was just out the blue, and I got to say this because it's context for, I guess why I eventually bought the conspiracy theory videos that I came across, which were 9/11 conspiracy theories, and they presented an argument that basically this 9/11 attack was an inside job by the American government and various intelligence agencies around the world, and basically, it was to start this war on terror, and eventually go to Iraq, and then to Iran, and further afield, and that sentiment, it really just spoke to me. That's where it kind of really starts, and then I need to find out, well, who are these people? And then this kind of secret society, Freemason, skull and bones idea. At the time, Bush had just beat Kerry, John Kerry, in a presidential race, and both of them were from Yale and both of them were in a secret society called Skull and Bones.

Mason Amadeus:

Right.

Brent Lee:

It kind of played into this idea that all the politicians were actually on the same side, and again, it's just a rabbit hole. You just keep going further and further, coming across new things.

Perry Carpenter:

But that initial push was sort of seeing something that felt incongruous, which was the invasion of Iraq that didn't really line up with any reason you could think of as to why, and then you start to find these alternate reasons that you find. Was it primarily online?

Brent Lee:



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Yeah, it was because it was 2003. There was no social media at that time. There was no Google video or YouTube, anything like that, but I'm a music producer, so I always used to use peer-to-peer software, software exchange, and we would download other people's folders or whatever, and obviously, I could come across music and videos and I like to download documentaries. It was something I liked to watch, and I just came across these 9/11 documentaries. I didn't know they were conspiracy theory ones, and I was just thought, oh, cool, I'll download them because I like to be informed about geopolitics, so let me download these, and it just presented full on conspiracies. I was just blown away by it. I thought I had uncovered a crime and that this community of people had uncovered this grand deception and that carried on for my whole journey.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah. Well, I think that the key phrase that you used there is that you believed you had uncovered the grand deception, kind of capital G, capital D in that phrase, and in reality, maybe once you start to look at things through a lens of being more detached from that, you see that there are deceptions and that there's opportunities that everybody jumps on, but there may not be the grand deception that the conspiracy theory might make you believe.

Mason Amadeus:

What I think would be really interesting is to talk about looking at all of this, your whole journey, getting deep into it retrospectively, how did it affect your life when you started getting into it? Did it affect the people you talked to? Did people stop talking to you? Did it affect your social circles?

Brent Lee:

As I said, it completely consumed my life eventually. Within the first few years, I had a big social circle. I was in a band. We knew all the other bands in the city, and we all hung out pretty much Monday to Sunday. When I started getting into this, I didn't want to not talk about it because it felt like this is really important for everyone to hear. You need to hear this massive crime. People are dying now over it because there's a war going on over it and you need to listen, and look, to be fair, not a lot of people



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want to talk about that when you're hanging out, partying, and gigging and all that. So, instead of talking to them, I just went home, and we would do a gig.

I would go home. That was it. I didn't go out afterwards, nothing. I'd go home and I'd watch whatever I wanted to watch. Like I said, I always say this, they never left me. I left them because no one really wanted to speak about it or really challenge what I was saying because they didn't know how to challenge it. I isolated myself. You always hear about conspiracy theorists being lonely, or is that what makes them susceptible to this? In my experience. No, it wasn't that. That ideology is what isolated me, those beliefs, those only wanting to talk about that stuff. That's what made me withdraw from all my friends, and it goes beyond that, beyond my friendships.

Perry Carpenter:

You weren't necessarily antagonistic or engaging in arguments with people or anything like that. You were just like, these people don't have the same level of knowledge in it doesn't seem like they want to, and so I'm going to go home and do more research.

Brent Lee:

Yeah, basically. I just would settle on, it's not really my job to wake people up. We can talk about it, but I'm not going force it upon them because maybe it's just not their time yet, and when it is, they'll know that the stuff I've been talking about, they'll come and speak to me then.

Perry Carpenter:

Have you heard from people in that circle after you've come out, and have you heard their perspective of how they viewed you and viewed those conversations?

Brent Lee:

I've spoken to a couple, and it basically does boil down to, look, they didn't know how to engage with me. They didn't know how to engage, so they just didn't know how to react to what I was talking about.



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Mason Amadeus:

I get the sense that it was sort of the gravity of this, if it was true, the gravity of it is huge, obviously, and if you're convinced it's true. Is that accurate to say that it felt like the most important thing while you were in it?

Brent Lee:

It probably started a bit like that, like a passionate hobby, but eventually, this is why I say it's like an ideology. It became my worldview. It was a new religion. I was looking for symbols and signs everywhere. Is that a Freemason symbol? Is this a pentagram? All that kind of stuff. I lived it. It consumed me. It totally took me over like a cult-like ideology.

Mason Amadeus:

And did it spiral out from the 9/11 inside job conspiracy into, well, it must've because you said you were fully into cults running the world and things like that.

Brent Lee:

Yeah. For lack of better terms, you could have called it a cabal today. I always think my beliefs are Proto-QAnon. It's the same stuff, but the big difference is that we didn't have a good guy. We didn't have a hero that was going to save us. At least, I didn't believe that there was a hero that was going to save us. We had to do it together, but back to falling deeper, how much deeper I eventually went. It started off 9/11 and moved to secret societies, and then these secret societies were passing down magic and spells, and that kind of led into the elites are satanic and they are also pedophiles.

That whole thing that Pizzagate and QAnon is talking about now, and that all goes back to people like David Icke and Alex Jones and William Cooper and Jordan Maxwell. These are the four people that I really started to follow back in those days and really consume all of their stuff, and by consuming all of that diverse stuff and having such an open mind and being creative, I feel like I just was able to, if not believe some of it, entertain it, and say, "Well, that's a possibility," even if it came to something like



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David Icke and the reptiles. I didn't necessarily think, oh, they're definitely reptiles, but I'll entertain the thought that the reptilian thing must mean something else.

Perry Carpenter:

You brushed on something I think is really interesting. A lot of conspiracies are kind of an interesting sap of creative energy because there is this creative element of, well, how does this all link together? It's like solving a puzzle.

Brent Lee:

I think that's what kept me there because I am creative, and I didn't really think of any of these sorts of things while I was down there. This is all stuff I've been thinking of since coming out and trying to work out, what does creativity and intelligence and all this have to do with how susceptible you are to these beliefs? I think humans can just entertain stuff. This is part of my journey now, is trying to find out what the tie is with conspiracy theories and mythos or urban legends or folklore.

Perry Carpenter:

Well, there's an aspect where you feel like you're solving a puzzle or unlocking something, and it does make you feel really good. You've unlocked this bit of knowledge that very, very few people have been able to unlock. If you are intellectual or creative, then it feeds that feeling of, oh yeah, I'm exercising my mind, and here's the reward of that, as I now understand something that very, very few people do, and it gets me entrance into this other group of people who understand the same thing, and now we have a shared vision, and before you know it, it's where we go one, we go all type of thing.

Mason Amadeus:

And that intersection into folklore being that it's all people informally transmitting these ideas to each other and kind of collaboratively world building to create this story and make all these connections. Someone has this idea that something is linked to something else and they share that, and then someone's like, "Oh, but if that's linked to that, then this must mean this." And it's like, cognitive



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dissonance rewired into creative world building that is poisonous because it is creating all these inferences about the real world that aren't true.

Brent Lee:

Yeah, and riling each other up to believe it as well. You kind of egg each other on to believe these stories that are told around the campfire.

Perry Carpenter:

What happens when there's a crack in the facade? What goes on mentally, for people who were in the conspiracy at that point?

Brent Lee:

Well, for me, in the early 2000s and early 2010s, there wasn't really anything countering us. Anything that kind of countered what, say the conspiracy culture was doing was some mainstream debunk of 9/11 or something, and that's obviously going to be part of the conspiracy.

Perry Carpenter:

Easily dismissed.

Brent Lee:

Exactly. You don't even have to watch it, of course. BBC and CNN have created these debunks and that's, we wouldn't listen to any of that kind of thing, and to be fair, I feel like a lot of the debunking material pre-2018 has always been in a very condescending manner, not taking conspiracy theories serious at all. Which to be fair, some of them are a bit silly, so sometimes you have to laugh.

Perry Carpenter:

Right, but that doesn't change anyone's mind.



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Brent Lee:

I didn't really come across very much when it came to debunks that I even really bothered listening to or thinking that, well, they have a point, but I think there's so much more out there today, so much more that really does break it down, really does explain. It really does show the counter narrative. I'm super impressed, having gone through all of that and not having the resources which are available now.

Perry Carpenter:

What resources got to you? What was sort of the first crack in the armor of this conspiracy? What started you questioning those and moving out of them?

Brent Lee:

Sadly, it wasn't any other resources. It was experience. It was just seeing things not add up, but what really did it is between 2015 and 2018. It's politics. It's democracy in action. It's seeing it on social media, watching the people get involved and actually affecting change. The reason why that kind of broke something in me is because I thought all the democracy was a game. All of it was a game that we went out and played. We just participated in it because all leaders were selected, not elected from the outset, and it had nothing to do with what we did, but I saw three elections in our section of the world, in the west, all in succession kind of thing, that just went completely against what I thought was going on in the world, and that was Trump, it was Brexit, and it was Corbin here in Britain, taking over the Labour Party. These three things were just impossible to me. They didn't serve the new world order, and what I had seen and had witnessed was people power actually making those things happen. Whether we liked the outcomes or not, it doesn't really matter. It's just that I saw that happen.

Perry Carpenter:

Interesting. So, it was the action of people affecting change that was like, well, wait, if institutions are controlling everything, this wouldn't be happening.

Brent Lee:



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Absolutely.

Mason Amadeus:

I think another component of that though is that some of the people that you are listening to as trusted sources were now spouting this stuff that was too ridiculous to believe, like Alex Jones fully evangelizing the crisis actor theory, and you're like, wait, if this guy is saying this thing that clearly to me doesn't line up with everything else that he would be saying, then let's go start to evaluate this. Was it that reasoned or did you just start to somehow find things that you were questioning?

Brent Lee:

You asked if it was reasoned? Well, probably not because my actual idea of it all was that the Illuminati, for lack of better term, had actually installed these ideas as a psyop to destroy the truth movement.

Perry Carpenter:

So, it was the conspiracy kind of ate itself with more conspiracy, and then it all just exploded?

Brent Lee:

Well, this is it because I think the best way to describe it, to me, is that I saw a rabbit hole and I entered it and I kept going down into it, and then I got into the hole or earth, and then I found another rabbit hole, and I kept going, and now I've finally come out the other side. Took me 15 years, but I went all the way down one and finally came all the way out the other side.

Perry Carpenter:

I'm trying to think of a way of conceptualizing this because people that believe conspiracies are generally, they're not stupid people. They deserve our empathy and they deserve our respect in a lot of ways. Do you think that falling down a rabbit hole is like hijacking rational thinking? It's not necessarily that people are irrational, but somehow the loop of what rationality is has been turned in a weird



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direction, so everything connects or is seeking very rational connections, but somehow the beginning point has been poisoned or there's some key points that have been poisoned?

Brent Lee:

Absolutely. It's like, we don't understand the flaws or the fallacies that we might be using, but I've spoken to quite a few psychologists and other academics who are all in agreement, conspiracy theorists could probably make the best detectives if they had the right tools, if they knew how to actually drop the bias and use critical thinking properly.

Mason Amadeus:

We're kind of in a time now, where I feel like most of us have a relative or a friend who is believes pretty sincerely in some flavor of messed up stuff. Everyone's got a weird aunt or a wild uncle who's fallen down a rabbit hole. Do you have any advice on how to talk to people about that kind of thing or the best way to maybe not talk to them about it directly or just keep them involved? Or let's say that my aunt is super deep into QAnon and I'm asking you, "What should I do? What would you advise?"

Brent Lee:

I'd say, "Look, you are the best person to do it, not some stranger on the internet." They don't trust me. I've realized that. A stranger on the internet could be an agent, could be deep state, so they can't be trusted, but you, you're the loved one. You have a relationship built on trust, a relationship built on love, and you both experienced this relationship, so you're the best person to do it if you really can do it, and I say can because I mean, do you have the energy and the time to actually do it? If you do, then I'm going to shout out Mick West. His book is the book that you need to go get first because it's going to teach you all of those things that you need to know of how to engage without enabling them, and it'll give you a good, good understanding of some of the key conspiracy theories that most conspiracists believe. You really need to put that energy in to learn what it is that they believe in, to understand why they believe in it.



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Now, if you haven't got that energy, that's also fine because it can take a lot out of you. That's just how it is. What I suggest then is, look, if they're anything like me, they might try to isolate themselves, so if you can't pull them out, keep them close, and then maybe just listen to Mick West. There's multiple ways of dealing with people, isn't there? Some people need that compassion, and I can do that compassion. If you want to go one-on-one, have a good faith conversation, hey, I can do that anytime. I got empathy because totally understand. Totally understand why you believe what you believe. I totally understand that your concerns are valid. If what you think is going on is going on, people should be paying attention to that. I get it. I'll have that conversation, but then other people, they're going to react better to being pushed, to being annoyed by me, so I'm like a splinter under their skin or the adjuvant in a vaccine. That thing that actually sparks annoyance to make it actually work. People have to take it differently.

Perry Carpenter:

That's a really good point.

Brent Lee:

At the end of the day, they're conspiracy theorists. I was a conspiracist. I kind of understand the things that made me stop and go, whoa, what's this? I want to do the same thing. I want to act like that first conspiracy theory video that they've watched about a specific thing that made them stop, go, what is this? I want to cause that cognitive dissonance as well.

Perry Carpenter:

That's such an interesting and good way to put that.

Brent Lee:

Yeah, and I think that as long as we can help them feel like they're not going to be losing everything about who they are at the end of that because if somebody says, "Oh, everything I believed in the world is gone, now, who am I as a person?" then they can feel really lost and they're going to want to hold



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onto that conspiracy even deeper, but at some point in their life, they fell down the rabbit hole and they did look back at everything they thought they believed and said, "Oh no, that was all wrong. I'm going to believe this set of things," so then coming back out, they should be made to feel or should have the liberty to feel like they've actually conquered something and are stronger for it, and I think so often people on social media and in the world want to point and laugh or point and deride rather than give them credit for the intellectual hurdles that they had to do in order to find the facts that would dispel all of those things that they believed.

Perry Carpenter:

Yeah, I think when you do come back out, you are free. You've got a perspective of the conspiracy world and the non-conspiracy world. I am so skeptical of everything, but in a good, healthy way. Even if I know someone generally tells me the truth, I'm going to look at him and be like, okay, are you telling me the truth this time?

Brent Lee:

Right. I will never swallow anybody, any mainstream source, any alternative source. Nothing. Really like, I'm free now. I'm living. That's the other thing. I said I was oppressed and I had all these thoughts in my head all the time just consuming me, but no, it's gone. It's all gone and I'm free and I actually, I can definitely see a lot more clearly now, and that's why I want to tell them, wake up, be free.

Mason Amadeus:

Awesome.

Perry Carpenter:

That's amazing.

Speaker 1:

Enough said. Phenomenal.



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Digby:

Thanks Doc.

Perry Carpenter:

Oh, Digby.

Digby:

Hey.

Perry Carpenter:

Dr. Sphynkyl?

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Yes, that's me. Hello.

Perry Carpenter:

I thought you were a vet.

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Everybody's got a side hustle these days. Anyways, little fella is all set now. There you go.

Perry Carpenter:

The flash drive?

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Yep.



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Perry Carpenter:

Okay.

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Don't put that in any computer that you want to keep working.

Mason Amadeus:

What's on it?

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Well, Digby here got himself a little tiny virus, like a computer virus? Yes, ran wild in that little implant of his.

Perry Carpenter:

And how exactly did he get this virus?

Digby:

I may have tried to torrent the movie, Goncharov, into my brain.

Mason Amadeus:

What? Digby!

Digby:

You guys left me all alone when you ran off to your little meme conference.

Mason Amadeus:



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You know that Goncharov isn't real.

Digby:

I know. Why do you think I torrented it? I had to see what it was.

Dr. Sphynkyl:

And what it was, was a virus. I had our IT guy look at it and he said it was like a Roman candle or something. Something like that.

Mason Amadeus:

Trojan Horse, you mean?

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Yes, that's it. Yeah. It was some kind of horse virus. It might've kicked around inside his brain, which obviously wasn't good, so we took the horse out and now it lives in that flash drive.

Mason Amadeus:

I don't, you know what? Nevermind. Thanks so much for helping.

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Of course. That's what doctors do, and I'm a doctor.

Mason Amadeus:

Right.

Dr. Sphynkyl:

Dr. Sphynkyl.



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Mason Amadeus:

Thanks. Thanks, Dr. Sphynkyl.

How about we all go home? I'm wiped.

Digby:

Yeah, me too.

Perry Carpenter:

Good plan.

Dr. Sphynkyl:

If I were you, I'd probably put a label on that flash drive.

[Transition to ending theme]

Mason Amadeus:

Thanks for listening to Digital Folklore.

Perry Carpenter:

If you like this podcast, tell two friends about it.

Mason Amadeus:

Or leave us a rating and review on Spotify or Apple Podcasts.

Perry Carpenter:

Or both.



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Mason Amadeus:

Or both.

Perry Carpenter:

Special thanks to our guests this episode, Mick West, Benjamin Radford, and Brent Lee. Check out the show notes for links to their work.

Mason Amadeus:

Thank you as well to our voice actors this episode. Digby was played by Brooke Jeanette of 13. Dr. Sphynkyll was played by Tucker Bettis of Pod Cube, and the desk clerk was played by Lindsey Reed of Spooky Spouses.

Perry Carpenter:

Special thanks as well to Matthew Bliss for editing the interview portions of today's episode.

Mason Amadeus:

Digital Folklore is a production of Eighth Layer Media, which is an evil global mega corporation poised to take over the world.

Perry Carpenter:

And speaking of that, join our discord to help us start a cult.

Mason Amadeus:

That might be a little bit too far.

Perry Carpenter:

Join our discord and don't help us start a cult.



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Mason Amadeus:

Perfect. Links in the show notes to everything. We'll see you next time.

[Post Credits Scene]

Mason Amadeus:

I kind of want to see what's on that flash drive.