

WHOLPHIN^{NO.} 7.

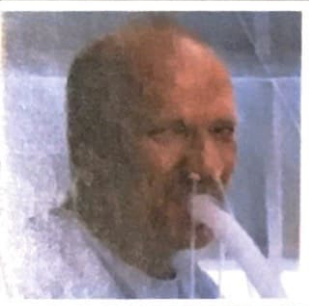
DVD MAGAZINE OF RARE AND UNSEEN SHORT FILMS

NO.
7.

UFOs

BUBBLEWRAP

ROTOSCOPED
ROLLERCOASTERS



FACE-OFF:
AMERICAN
GRAY SQUIRRELS
VS. BRITISH
RED SQUIRRELS

A HALLUCINOGENIC
POST-KATRINA NEW ORLEANS
MASTERPIECE

NACHO VIGALONDO

CARSON MELL

BUMPER
CARS



INSIDE:

WILLIAM
BURROUGHS
ADAPTED BY
GUS VAN SANT

BRAND NEW
SCENES FROM
SIERRA LEONE'S
REFUGEE
ALL-STARS



* A BONUS DISC WITH:

A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT IN
RETROCAUSALITY

BE A PART OF
THE VERY FIRST
INTERACTIVE

DVD
STUDY

7



WHOLPHIN

No. 7

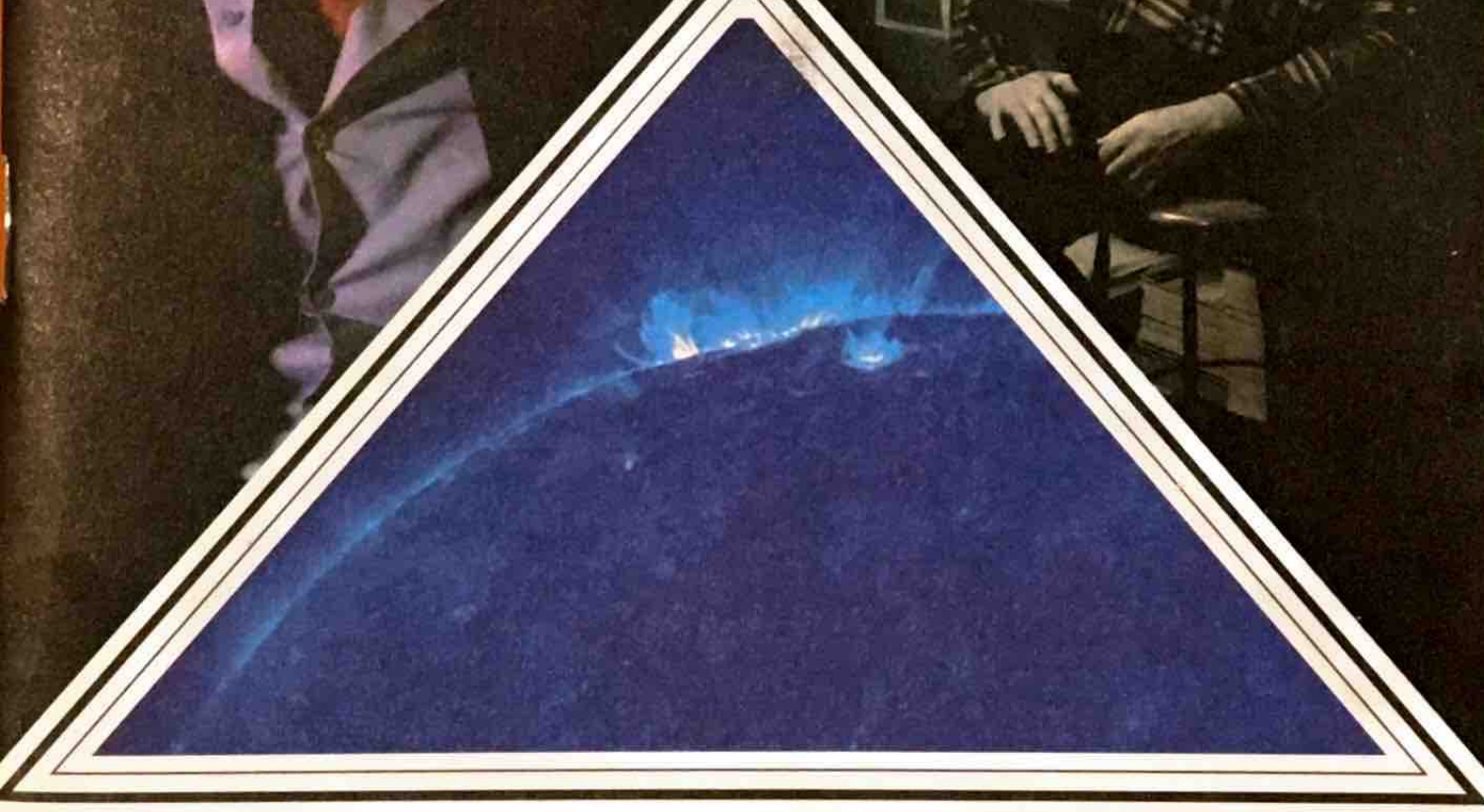
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WHOLPHIN
CONTINUAME



INTRODUCTION

On November 7, 2006, at around 4:15 pm, “Joe” (the name he later gave to CNN in his anonymous, shadowed-silhouette interview) was taxiing a United B737-500 jumbo jet out of gate C-17 at O’Hare airport with another mechanic when he “looked out the window... and noticed an object up in the sky. Dark gray object, sitting above the terminal complex.” He calculated that the object was between 500 and 1,000 feet directly above his gate, just beneath the clouds. He said it was round and although completely silent, seemed to be rotating “pretty fast.”

He made a call on his headset to Operation Center Sylvia, United’s Zone 5 control coordinator, who asked if he could get a picture of it. Two other United aviation mechanics, about to taxi an empty jumbo jet from the International ramp near gate D2 to the United Service Center hanger, overheard the call.

“At first we laughed to each other, and then the same pilot said again on the radio that it was about 700 feet AGL [above ground level]... The radio interrupted with chatter about the object and the ATC controller that was handling ground traffic made a few smart comments about the alleged UFO sighting above the C terminal.” They began taxiing toward United Concourse C. Just before reaching A-14 or A-13, both mechanics leaned forward and looked in the direction of Gate C17. They estimated the object was hovering about 100 to 200 feet beneath the clouds. It appeared “hazy” on its bottom and both ends, but clearer on top; even if they had not overheard the radio call, they said, it was “clearly conspicuous to the naked eye.” During the minute or so they watched, it never changed brightness, color, or shape, nor did it have any lights.

For over fifteen minutes, the UFO sat there, hovering, while

airline pilots, ground crews, passengers, and several passing drivers pulled over to the side of the road to stare at it.

Eventually, witnesses said, the thing shot straight up into the sky at a phenomenal speed, leaving a giant hole in the clouds. Joe told CNN, "It looked like literally someone had poked a hole in the clouds, just a round hole." It was, Joe insisted, neither blimp nor balloon, nor, as the FAA would later suggest, some mysterious weather phenomenon. "I've been at O'Hare for quite some time. And let's just say that I've never seen an object in my time that looked like this."

The airline employees later told reporters they were "instructed to write reports and draw pictures of what they observed," and then ordered not to discuss what they saw with anyone.

At first, United Airlines denied receiving any reports about the incident, as did the FAA. But then, after a *Chicago Tribune* reporter filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for the day's radio tower transcripts, both changed their story and admitted (I'm paraphrasing here), "Oh yes, we did in fact receive reports of an Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon over one of the nation's busiest airports, but we didn't bother to investigate because it was a probably just a trick of light or some rare weather phenomenon which caused all of our trained pilots, whose job it is to know exactly what is in the sky, to mistakenly assume they were seeing something."

In an era when an unattended backpack can shut down an airport for an entire day, this explanation was naturally met with skepticism; that the FAA believes a giant silver ball floating directly above an international airport terminal is not worth investigating remains an incredible story in and of itself, one that came and went as mysteriously as the UFO.

The situation was practically repeated on January 8 this year,

when hundreds of residents in Stephenville, Texas, including policemen and airline pilots, reported a triangle “the size of a Wal-Mart” passing slowly over their town before being chased off by Air Force fighter jets.

Again, the Air Force initially denied having any planes in the air over a civilian town, until FOIA requests were filed and they suddenly remembered (again I’m paraphrasing), “Oh yes, sorry, you’re right, we did send ten fighter jets flying over your small Texas town that evening on some undisclosed training mission we aren’t at liberty to discuss. National security and all. You understand, right? 9/11. Never forget.”

These stories are everywhere and—full disclosure—I also had a very close, as in ten feet away, UFO sighting one night that I will only confess if I am very drunk or you tell me something secret first. This is because, like anonymous “Joe,” I don’t wish to be lumped in with the people who are running around America trying to convince people a rubber gorilla suit is the remains of a Bigfoot.

That said, I worry I am making a mistake in allowing my fear of public ridicule to shame me silent. I mean, why did the O’Hare incident not launch a national call for investigation? Maybe because there were so few witnesses willing to talk publicly about it, and those who did, like “Joe,” did so anonymously, fearing reprisal? It’s understandable. UFO sightings force us all into an incredibly uncomfortable situation. If millions of people on this planet who claim to have seen a UFO are all trying to pull a joke, or if we are all simply delusional, if that’s the case, then what are the consequences? Nothing. But what if a few of us have actually seen what we are telling you we have seen? Then consequences are potentially... everything.

You have to wonder, were the first Mayans to see Cortez’ ships

arriving on the shores of the Yucatan afraid to speak up for fear of being mocked on the Mesoamerican equivalent of *Larry King Live*? How many of Doña Marina's fellow citizens dismissed her, assumed she was insane or joking, or felt she had not seen the prophetic return of Quetzalcoatl, but had instead hallucinated some rare weather phenomenon? Because in the end it was not Spanish guns or European disease that doomed Mesoamerica and left it decimated, it was their hesitation in responding to the alien invasion. I'm just saying, we repeatedly see the perils of ignoring seemingly inconsequential risks, and perhaps a little cautious interest in the unlikely would be wise. And, finally to the point, perhaps one should think hard before laughing at David's Huggins's story, appearing here in Wholphin No. 7.

Also likely to blow your mind on this issue is Aaron Michels's concisely titled *Massively Multi-Operator Asynchronous Retrocausal Video Experiment*, which is without a doubt the first ever scientific experiment on DVD (see Bonus Disc). You, the viewer, will be experimental subjects in a series of "intention tests," which could help give concrete data and advance a theory well established by physicists: that time, time itself, that clever trick to keep everything from happening at once, is not entirely unaffordable.

As Karl Popper said, pseudo-science is anything that is the result of observation that cannot be falsified. Thus Wholphin No. 7 might be the most scientific yet, because believe it or not, everything within is real.

On top of all that, we are also proud to present an amazing documentary excerpt of Zach Niles's and Banker White's *Refugee All Stars*; Gus Van Sant's sublime adaptation of a William S. Burroughs story; and many other unbelievable sightings.

—Brent Hoff

SIERRA LEONE'S REFUGEE ALL STARS

Directed by Zach Niles and Banker White

Excerpt and extended scenes from the documentary

U.S.A., 2005

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKERS

Q: Are the Refugee All Stars still playing concerts in the camps? Are other bands doing this as well? Is there an organization involved?

ZACH NILES AND BANKER WHITE: Since the film has come out, the band has only had a couple small tours within Sierra Leone,



playing for refugees from Sierra Leone and Sierra Leoneans who are still internally displaced. They have also played at a camp in Freetown that was established especially for amputees from the war. The band often said that for them

music was a medicine, a nourishment, and the refugees themselves seemed to transform when given the opportunity to experience live music. It helps them remember where they came from, singing and dancing to the same music that was a part of their life before the war. Anything that helps to distract them from their daily routines and struggles and bring some sense of normality to their lives.

We have just started a new project called WeOwnTV which is all about helping disenfranchised communities become more connected to the rest of the world, and our first program uses community-based media workshops to teach filmmaking techniques to a group of young Sierra Leonean ex-combatants and survivors from the civil war. WeOwnTV will provide technical support, encouragement, and training that will allow these young adults to creatively produce their own media. *{More info at weowntv.org.}*

Q: If you were suddenly elected Secretary General of the UN, what is the first thing you would do, in terms of Africa's many refugee camps?

ZN & BW: Jesus. I don't even know where to begin with that one. I'm definitely not a whiz on policy issues, but you do learn a bit just from being on the ground in the camps. I have nothing but respect for UNHCR at the ground level. They do amazing things for people under some of the most stressful and dangerous of situations. At the same time it feels that the field workers are hampered by the size of the organization and the resulting slowness with which they are able to respond in certain situations. Oh, but you asked what I would do as Secretary General of the UN—I'd probably make sure that UN Peacekeepers were able to respond more quickly and directly to situations. I'd also try to be more intelligent about the type of money spent on peacekeeping operations versus the same type of financial injection into education, infrastructure, agriculture, and so on, of so-called failed states.

We also witnessed different forms of refugee-initiated political organization. The election of camp chairs and spokesmen and women really kept communities involved with helping to solve their own problems.

Q: Would this have been such a success if the Refugee All Stars had chosen another artistic medium instead of music? Basically, do you think the simple humanizing effect of respecting these refugees enough to entertain them in any way was the most powerful and healing aspect of the trip?

ZN & BW: In terms of the effect on the All Stars, we initially introduced ourselves as musicians to the band, and the fact that we were truly interested in music, enjoyed their music, and played music with them off camera was hugely helpful to our relationship. Our time together off camera—talking, eating, playing music, or just spending time—was incredibly important. It allowed us to cre-

ate a bond and reach a level of trust with the All Stars that would have been very difficult to achieve without that connection. Reuben and the band also started referring to us as their promoters, which is a funny thing to be called when you are establishing a relationship between filmmaker and subject.

I do think this could be easily transferable to other art forms, however we've always felt that music is truly unique in its universality. It's something that can easily span gaps of language, culture, geography, and beliefs.

Q: What was the most surprising thing you discovered while in the camps?

ZN & BW: When we showed up in the camps we had absolutely no idea what to expect. All we knew was the Sally Struthers-type images and what we saw on CNN—sprawling haphazard tent cities with fifty people huddled under one blue tarp. However, camps that have been established over the course of a few years are more like villages, with all the functioning aspects of a local government. Schools, churches, mosques, hospital, markets, bars, etc. This natural rebuilding of a civil society surprised and fascinated us. We were also very shocked to realize that many refugees have fears about returning home that have nothing to do with war or perceived safety. In the camps they are protected, not only from bullets and rebels, but from the real effects of severe poverty. As Reuben makes plain in the film, in the camps they have medical services, education, food, lodging—none of this is guaranteed once they go back to their war-torn homeland. What's their incentive to return?

Q: What was the most intense part of the process for you emotionally?

ZN & BW: Partially because this was a first film for most of us, there were lots of emotionally raw moments. At the beginning, the stories that we heard throughout the refugee camps were horrific and

unimaginably brutal. I think we all were extremely affected by this, and you start to put up your guard and not let the stories sink in in such a personal way just to get through the day. I think we returned after our first trip with a real sense of responsibility to the people we had met, to the band especially, to really do something with this material that we had recorded. This feeling like we were working for more than ourselves has stayed with us throughout the project.

Still, every time we see the Refugee All Stars play on stages throughout the U.S. and the world, there is at least one moment where tears come to our eyes—the idea of this band of survivors being able to do what they love and bring so much joy to the crowds gets us every time.

Q: Favorite food in the camps?

ZN & BW: Sister Grace cooks a mean chicken with spicy peanut sauce. We'd all sit around a big bowl of rice and chicken and dig in with our hands.

Q: Any updates on the band now? Updates on you?

ZN & BW: The band is doing great in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and preparing to record their next album. You can read all of these updates on our website.

Our next film is called *My Life Before Me*. It is a documentary about an Afro-Cuban musician and Yoruba priest, Carlos Lazaro Aldama Perez. His life story illustrates the idea that culture is a living thing: free from geographical borders, living within people, and thriving on social exchange. His work to keep his cultural traditions alive in California illuminates how African traditions survived slavery in the Caribbean and how they continue to flourish two centuries later, both in California and across the globe.

We've also started production on a film based in Haiti that

focuses on a group of traders who sail rough-hewn handmade sailboats laden with goods and economic refugees back and forth between Haiti and the Bahamas without navigation equipment or motors.

{For updated information about the band, or to purchase a copy of their debut album, Living Like a Refugee, please visit refugeeallstars.org. The feature-length version of the film is available on DVD from Docurama Films. Please visit docurama.com.}

COLD & DRY

Directed by Kristoffer Joner

Produced by Bjørn Arne Odden

Norway, 2008

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER

Q: Ruth Benedict said, "Our faith in the present dies out long before our faith in the future." This seems like a good description of Cold & Dry.

KRISTOFFER JONER: Absolutely! This seems like a very good description. Wish I could have been this articulate! We always look for the simple solutions in the future, where all is figured out and explained.

Q: Why do humans always try to fix things by making them worse?

KJ: Old habits die hard. It's difficult for people to acknowledge that life is at least 50 percent pain and unpleasantness, and dealing with our problems is how we evolve. As long as problems aren't solved, we are at a standstill—and nothing will ever change in the future either. We have a habit of buying time—in a way this is our ultimate task, to postpone extinction as long as we can—and

buying time will always bring us further down the drains.

Q: *Will those people ever be re-constituted?*

KJ: Sadly, I don't think they would ever be revived. They'll never figure out how to do that—and by the time the film ends, the bright scientist of tomorrow is sitting alone in his breakroom fearing they might have done something stupid. It's kind of part of what the film is about—pushing our problems into future oblivion.

Q: *Where did the idea for this film come from?*

KJ: I was visiting a Norwegian prison, doing research for another project, when one of the inmates told me that he saw this place as a huge freezer. They are put in here, supposed to be rehabilitated, but that doesn't work—and when they get out, nothing is changed. And now they have a cold. This got me thinking of what if we could just freeze our prisoners in ice blocks, stack them in a huge storage area, and they could be guarded by one man. Cost-efficient and practical. The concept later evolved into *Cold & Dry*. In a way, *Cold & Dry* is for me also an image of our prison system—we're not doing any good here, and we haven't for thousands of years.



Q: *How can a bunch of people in the same place all be lonely?*

KJ: I think that when you start to feel lonely and you see all the people around you, you get into this downward spiral—"Why am I feeling lonely when there are so many other people here?"—which makes you even more lonely, and so on. The funny thing is that people need people but at the same time we are afraid of

them—and as long as we don't do anything about this, we'll end up being lonely—at a standstill.

Q: As one of Norway's most beloved actors, are you ever lonely?

KJ: Every day. I think feeling lonely is very natural and we shouldn't live without it. It is in a way a good thing because it makes us not take things for granted. It reminds you that life needs work, it doesn't come for free.

Q: Any plans to direct again? What are you working on now?

KJ: Yes, absolutely! We're going back to meet the guy in prison who gave us the idea for this film, and maybe we'll come up with something more.

THE DISCIPLINE OF DE

Directed by Gus Van Sant

Written by William S. Burroughs

U.S.A., 1982

NOTES FROM THE FILMMAKER

This was my first film outside of my school projects, made in 1977 or so, and was the occasion that I was able to first meet William S. Burroughs, whose writing I much admired and who lived in New York City. I wanted to get in touch with him to ask his permission to film this small story, and found him listed in the New York telephone book. I was under the impression that if I visited him and asked his permission in person that I would have more of a chance. And that may have been true—he did give me an okay—but also I was able to ask a few questions about the ideas in the story.

One of the things he said during our visit, not in the film or

story, was, "Of course, when anyone knocks something over, or trips over something or breaks anything, they are at that moment thinking of someone they don't like."

And after telling him that I was moving to Los Angeles, he said that I should look up James Coburn and his wife because they gave numerous pot parties, and they would love to have me come to one. I wasn't



so sure about either of these statements. I never did look up the Coburns, but every time I knocked something over or tripped over anything I stopped to think, and I *was* always thinking of someone or something that I didn't like. This was illuminating. Time and again, when I fumbled and broke something, there it was, I was thinking about some unfortunate incident in my past where I had been misjudged, ridiculed, or caught red-handed by someone, or when I stubbed my toe, I realized that I was thinking of a meeting in the future with someone about something that I didn't want anything to do with. So, the answer was possibly to not do too much moving around when things appear in your mind that could lead to someone or something that you don't like. I haven't mastered this one, however.

—Gus Van Sant

NUTKIN'S LAST STAND

Directed by Nicholas Berger

U.S.A., 2008

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER

Q: Does it make sense for humans to eradicate invasive species? Does it make sense to arbitrarily choose a moment in time and try to freeze the natural flow

of species between continents, in order to preserve current levels of diversity? Why do people think changes that humans cause are unnatural changes?

NICHOLAS BERGER: I did a lot of seesawing on this issue, but in the end I decided that something does need to be done to save



the reds in their native habitat. Basically the grays have taken over almost the whole country. They were introduced in the south and have moved north over the last century and now the reds only exist in

a few pockets along the Scottish border. In all, there are about 2 million grays in the country compared with about 150,000 reds. The campaign to save the reds is focusing on eradicating grays in buffer zones around these last surviving pockets. Anyway, I don't think the timing is arbitrary. I think the situation is actually pretty dire.

As far as the issue of "the natural flow of species," I think Lord Redesdale [Chairman of the Red Squirrel Protection Partnership] put it well in an interview that didn't make the final cut when he said, "Man caused the problem, so man has a responsibility to fix it." Members of the royal family brought over the gray squirrels as pets in the early 1800s. It's kind of like an oil spill if you look at it this way. Although in another way it's not like an oil spill at all because the oil are living, breathing little squirrels who aren't themselves responsible for the trouble they're causing, which kind of puts us back where we started....

I think the trajectory of the film kind of reflects my dialectical thought process on the morality issue: We start out seeing the damage the gray squirrels are doing at the lecture and we think, "Something needs to be done about this." Then we see how cute the red squirrels are (they are cuter than gray ones), and we think

something definitely needs to be done about this. Then we see the poor little grays getting shipped off to be “dispatched” and we start to think this smacks of racism or ethnic cleansing, and we start to have doubts. Then we see the squirrel being eaten and it makes the personification of the whole situation a little more difficult. Finally we see Ernie Gordon at the end, who is almost shaking with his overpowering love of red squirrels, and we come full circle and think we can’t let these beautiful creatures be wiped out. That’s the way I experience it at least. A little note about Ernie Gordon: His book, *The Adventures of Rusty Redcoat, Volume 1*, is a delightful story told from the point of view of a red squirrel, and everyone ought to go to his website and order it: rustyredcoat.com.

Q: *Do you see the film as a metaphor for, oh... anything?*

NB: I definitely do. I actually chose the topic in a large part because it was so loaded with metaphorical significance.

For one thing, there is the whole racial element. It’s amazing and absurd that people can have such viscerally different feelings about two creatures that differ in little more than color. (The reds are “mystical creatures” and the grays are “good for nothing apart from shooting.”) Having it be about squirrels rather than people provides a little distance and allows you to laugh at it a bit.

There’s also a kind of eerie parallel to what happened to the Native Americans, with the “reds” being killed off by “squirrel pox,” which is being spread by foreign invaders....

Then there’s the nationalism metaphor. This is only hinted at in the film, but I think that the fact that the gray squirrels are American is an important piece of the puzzle. There’s a bit of resentment of American imperialism in the way the Brits describe the grays. They see them as oversized and pushy and rude and unsophisticated. The reds, on the other hand, are seen as dainty

and classy and clever and beautiful. There are definitely some national stereotypes being channeled here.

Finally, and most importantly, the situation is constantly referred to in terms of war and invasion. Lord Redesdale calls himself “an armchair general in the war against gray squirrels,” and the whole strategy of buffer zones and “holding the line” definitely sounds like military doctrine. I think that the fact that this war metaphor has been applied to the whole thing definitely has a bearing on the kinds of solutions that they are coming up with. The solutions might be different if they were seeing the problem in terms of ecosystems rather than invading armies.

Q: How did you first hear about this anti-gray squirrel campaign?

NB: It's actually a really big deal in England, especially in the north where the reds still live. An English friend of mine told me about it a couple of years ago and I thought it would be a good film subject. Then, this fall, there was a *New York Times* article about it and I started doing more research. I was kind of shocked to find out that there hadn't been any films made about it yet, especially given how documentary-happy they are in the UK.

Q: What can we do if we want to save American squirrels?

NB: I think if we got a celebrity to champion the cause, we could get people to fund a massive airlift to bring the gray squirrels home. This would make a good Ridley Scott epic: *Gray Squirrel Down*.

Q: Are there any pro-American squirrel groups in the UK?

NB: There is actually a moral philosopher named A.C. Grayling (notice “gray” in his name) who teaches at the College of London who has been comparing the culling of grays to the Holocaust.

Q: Any updates on the war?

NB: If you go to the Red Squirrel Protection Partnership's website, they keep a running tally of how many grays they have killed. It's at 18,228 at the moment (*rssp.org.uk*). I also know that Save Our Squirrels is working on a couple of other long-term solutions. One of them is to mutate the squirrel pox virus so that it contains a vaccine, and another is to find some way to sterilize the grays. SOS has always seen the culling of the grays as a temporary solution, something they are supporting to avert calamity while they come up with a more sustainable solution.

Q: *What's the best advice you've ever gotten?*

NB: I met Werner Herzog while I was working on this film and he said, "Nicholas, you must film the squirrels on their eye level." I had done most of my shooting by then, but I made a point to go film some gray squirrels in the park and I think these ended up being some of the best shots in the film.

FIELD NOTES FROM DIMENSION X

Directed by Carson Mell

U.S.A., 2008

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALIEN INFLUENCE

Whenever I have a dream that's exceptionally vivid I write it down. The first time I did this I was four years old, and though I didn't yet know how to write out words, I recorded the dream in the back of my closet with a crayon drawing.

I'm lying in bed when I see something glowing outside my window. I slip out the back door and see a giant glowing egg sitting on the lawn. My brother joins me just as a smallish alien exits the egg and invites my brother and I aboard. He takes us to

his home planet, to a city under a “radiation-proof” bubble—the buildings connected by a complex series of bridges. Then, as we’re crossing one of these bridges, my brother puts a hard elbow into the alien’s back and sends it over a railing to its death. Afterward we’re scolded by an elder who tells us that we can never return to the planet, that a lifetime of trips had been planned and now canceled. We are returned to Earth.

Growing up well-fed in a loving home, I needed a superficial place to plant my youthful anxieties, and I picked aliens. I used to lie in bed at night staring at the window and waiting for the pale, black-eyed face to rise into view, serious and intent. I bought Chinese stars and kept them on my nightstand. One night, trying to empower myself, I said to my mom, “You know, those aliens are so skinny—they must be so weak. I’m sure I could beat one up.” And my mom said, “Well, you know, honey, ants are skinny but they can lift ten times their weight.”

As I got older I found new fears, got over the aliens. It was done with. Then as I was cleaning out my closet to move into my first apartment I found the hieroglyphics from that childhood dream, a tracing of which are printed below. Keep in mind these are from 1984, long before the image of the “grays” had become a part of pop culture.



You can be sure that that first night in my bachelor pad was not a peaceful one.

CHOQUE

Directed by Nacho Vigalondo

Produced by Basque Films

Spain, 2005

Q: Where did the idea for this film come from? Was it a true story? Have you ever defended a woman's honor?

NACHO VIGALONDO: Thank god, I've never had the chance to fight for honor. We've got plenty of bloody stories in our literature about honor and you can be sure those times are happily over. But I know the feeling from the inside. That desperate feeling when you need to win to prove yourself to someone in real life, like a real-life video game. But I'll tell you where this idea came from: the location. An actual underground bumper track in the center of Madrid: a perfect silly metaphor about hidden childish feelings.



Q: Why did Diego throw up? Motion sickness? Failure?

NV: Motion sickness, failure, and in the first shot he's eating some orange cheesy children snacks. That can't be good.

Q: Did you make this film primarily for a Spanish or non-Spanish audience? Do people react differently in different places?

NV: When I try to picture an audience, I never think in country

terms. I love the idea of building a story that can be smart or silly, no matter where you come from. Bumper cars are childhood icons everywhere, the same with a pretty lady. The same with concepts such as “winning” and “losing.” That works everywhere.

Q: *Can you explain the whole machismo thing as you see it? As we understand it, the word is primarily used in western Europe and America as an insult to working class Latino men who are sexist, and that it wasn't even a common term in Spain until the 1990s.*

NV: That's not exactly true. I've heard that word as a common term all my life (and I think most of my parents' lives as well). *Machismo* and *feminismo* have been in our mouths for a long time, as opposite forces. But there's a difference: *Machismo* has a bad connotation, and suggests reprehensive behavior, and *feminismo* refers to the fight for women's rights and equality.

Q: *We read that Spain's Equality Minister, Bibiana Aido, has “waged war on machismo.” Has there been much reaction to this? What effect, if any, do you think it could have in the long run?*

NV: Yeah, some of the changes she proposes are really radical. Gender equality has been slowly increasing since the end of the dictatorship and this may accelerate some aspects. Anyway, the language changes the minister offers are not going to work in a short range. Language changes by itself, not under explicit rules from the government.

Q: *Cormac Regan was telling us about your next feature film, The Ramp, which he said was about a man who builds a ramp so that he can make a car fly onto a UFO as it passes overhead. That sounds incredible! Do you believe in UFOs? Have you seen one? And if not, what inspired you to make the film?*

NV: I'm only attracted to UFOs for aesthetic reasons, and as pop icons. But honestly, I'd love to see one. The story of *The Ramp* gives me the opportunity to tell a low-fi sci-fi story with some of the elements that I love in films: cars, UFOs, and human obsession.

Q: *Aside from the The Ramp, what else are you working on now?*

NV: I'm working on other ideas, all inside the genre of science fiction, horror, and comedy, and I'm reading scripts and novels to adapt. So far, I don't know if my next project would be Spanish, American, big budget, low budget or... no budget at all. But I'll move sooner than later.

DAVID HUGGINS: EXPERIENCED

Directed by Jeremy Vaeni

U.S.A., 2008

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER

Q: *How and when did you become involved with the UFO phenomenon?*

JEREMY VAENI: This is where Yakov Smirnoff would step in to remind you that in Russia, UFO phenomenon becomes involved with *you*. And for once in his miserable, bread-line-waiting life he'd be right: I'm what the kids call an "alien abductee," whatever that ultimately means. I became aware of this in high school. Arguably, I've been one since at least three years old. My dad has a little story involving me from then that sounds suspicious. But barring that, yeah: in high school, something walked into my room.

As far as pure UFO sightings go, in eighth grade I saw a UFO with my mom and sister on the way to Vermont from Massachusetts. It was green, had round windows running down its center, blinking red and blue lights, and just hovered in the air tilted on

its axis, the top half spinning one way, the bottom half the other. If I took a picture of it you'd think it was fake. I mean, you'd just never believe it. I didn't believe it and I was seeing it. Looked like a giant toy in the sky.

Q: Have you ever wished you hadn't been abducted?

JV: Yeah, when I was a kid, but not now. I realize I know things most people guess at or have a belief about, so how could I trade in a certainty like that for ignorance? Certainty in that I am certain this stuff is real. That's as far as it goes. I still don't know what "real" means. Is it aliens? Something pretending to be aliens? What is the ink blot we're staring at? But I'm certain the ink blot is there.

I wish I didn't have to preface everything with qualifiers, you know? I know what sleep paralysis is, I know what lucid dreams are, and I've got an active imagination. I know what planes and helicopters look like. Give me some credit for having thought these things through before asking if I could have just dreamed it like I'm an asshole.

But as far as wishing this away—no. Not for a long, long time.

Q: It seems that the UFO field is bitterly divided in a variety of ways. Can you break it down for us?

JV: It's long and complicated and involves a doctorate in psychology, so probably not, but mainly there are what's called "nuts and bolts" researchers and then there are those who believe this cannot be what it seems. Nuts and bolts people believe that there are aliens riding around in space cars. Maybe one crashed in New Mexico in '47. Maybe we have treaties with them or they're just waiting for us to evolve so we can join their galactic federation.

Star Trek scenarios, in other words. That's nuts and bolts. "Science and diplomacy will solve this."

Then there are the researchers who see more to it than that. The nuts and bolts crowd will exclude evidence as outliers. Outliers of an unprovable topic—figure that. Anyway, the researchers who don't discriminate generally tend to find that all of this paranormal stuff—from aliens to bigfoot sightings to hauntings—are part of this larger pattern. They would argue that we don't know what this trickster intelligence is but it ain't aliens and we're not going to solve it.

So that's one divide.

The other is that most people in my beloved field of ufology are morons. And let me be clear by what I mean here: I mean they're morons. Seriously, I have a researcher friend who's been at this for over ten years and can count on both hands how many decent, solid researchers there have been since the fifties. Now, when you have a bunch of morons all screaming for attention and wanting to be taken seriously by the mainstream media, guess what happens when you argue that there should be a system of checks and balances in the field for that to happen. Go on! Guess! That's right, they turn on you! They turn on you because they know that the second this field gains legitimacy they are out. Their voices will be marginalized on this already marginal set of subjects, and who wants that? Good work is not what brought them to the dance, the need to be heard is.



So you've got fanatics and true believers all wanting some religious experience out of this. You've got shoddy researchers who want to be taken seriously... except no, no, they really don't.

You've got hoaxers and charlatans and nuts, of course. And you've got a handful of honest people who are qualified to examine evidence. It's a mess.

My question to anyone in ufology or into ufology these past few years has been, "What are you in this for? Do you want truth? Is it all a show?" Because I'm an experienter and I find, for the most part, the people who take me seriously are more offensive than those who don't. Not believing makes sense until you've seen it for yourself. What doesn't make sense is believing anything about it.

The skeptical experienter is the future of this thing, if there is one.

Q: Where do you come down in the theorizing (with the caveat that of course we are just guessing here)?

JV: Okay, let's keep it simple: Say humans conquered space/time in the way theoretical physicists currently dream of. You can travel anywhere in space. You can hop dimensions. Maybe the barrier between life and death breaks down. Maybe we find a way to travel into the past or the future, or abandon the timeline for cyclical time or even the timeless—I mean, we're at a point now where we can logically, theoretically see these possibilities, right? No one denies that, but what we don't do, generally, is think about the impact that would have on us.

Where would we be from? Earth? When the whole universe is your playground, do you say, "I'm from Earth"? *When* would we be from? Who would be our maker?

So I think when these various alien types are asked, "Where are you from?" and they answer, "everywhere" or "nowhere" or just point up, I think they are telling the truth.

As far as what these beings want, why they're here in the first

place, I contend that they are of a oneness consciousness, which all sentient beings—including us—have the ability to adopt. And so they are here to wake us up. It's one waking oneself up, you see? But doing that doesn't require a conversation because just explaining this doesn't do the trick. They aren't space brothers the way New Agers have it. They're here to kill us, kill our ego-self sense, the very thing we think we are.

That's my informed opinion, anyway, take it or leave it. If not that, I suspect they'd have destroyed us or flashed us the peace sign by now. I know your rebuttal to that is "Well, if they're here for such compassion, why do they disrespect us?" And the answer is because the "self" is not a thing worthy of respect. That's your Judeo-Christian background talking. The self is out of control. We need to work on ourselves, reintegrate that piece of us in a healthy way before we can make judgment calls like that. And if I'm wrong, it can't *hurt* to work on us first, can it?

Q: What is it like being abducted? Have you ever met anyone with exactly the same story?

JV: It's scary beyond the word "terror." It's as if at that moment you know you have a soul and these beings could eat it if they wanted to. I mean, all this consciousness talk here? Yeah, right out the window during an experience. I'm brought back to an animal terror I've only known with them.

My abduction "stories" are in snippets. I don't have huge, fully fleshed out memories. So yeah, I've heard the same stuff from other people. Usually they have more to tell. But it being a life-long ordeal is more common than one-off abductions.

Q: Do you believe Huggins' experiences as told?

JV: I believe he believes them. I've talked to his son, who believes

him and has seen some UFOs with him. Daylight disk sightings. Uh... but do I believe he's fucking an alien? God, I hope so.

The thing that's not in the film is that when this started for him it was terrifying. You don't get that sense in the tabloid headline that sums up his experiences, do you? But actually, outside of the fact that he's not afraid to be open about all of this, it does fit a pattern of certain alleged abductees who act as "breeders." And the fact that he's been talking about praying mantis-type aliens for decades now helps his case, because they are rarely talked about and Huggins doesn't have a vast collection of UFO books to weave fantasies from.

So yeah, I recognize that his story is outlandish, even by my standards. But I'm going to choose to believe him until otherwise notified by Crescent.

Q: What is the ratio of people you meet who are freaked out by your experiences?

JV: No one is. I don't talk about it. It's not a very good pickup line. I'd rather someone get to know me first, then break out the big guns. Usually they don't give a shit. If they have heard of me then they've followed my work and are interested in the subject, so someone like that isn't going to be freaked out. Odds are they're freaks themselves.

Q: We were talking about why no high-profile people come out about having been abducted. I was also wondering, are wealthy humans ever abducted?

*JV: Yes. I run a UFO festival called Culture of Contact. Last year was our first. I did an interview with *Time Out New York* where I said I wanted Rosie O'Donnell to come out of the closet because she's an abductee. They misquoted me as saying I hope we some-*

day get our Rosie O'Donnell. No, no, she's an abductee and needs to say it—that's what I meant.

So her and Whitley Strieber. Strieber was a horror novelist who had movies made of his books long before he wrote *Communion*, the most famous alien abduction book in history. I mention O'Donnell, by the way, because she had Strieber on her show and basically admitted this but downplayed it, so I'm not out of line. There are other famous people but they should remain anonymous until they feel comfy talking about it.

Q: *Speaking of solving, do you think we will ever be able to solve anything? Ever? How?*

JV: Yes. Forty-two.

THE EVEN MORE FUN TRIP

Directed by Bob Sabiston

Excerpt from the animated documentary

U.S.A., 2007

AN CONVERSATION BETWEEN FILMMAKER AND SUBJECT

I called Ryan about the interview. I didn't get much out of him. Mostly he was concerned with whether we would speak in mid-October about going trick-or-treating. But here is a rough transcript of the conversation, in case you're interested. He might call me back later once he has had time to think about it—often if you surprise him he doesn't like it and won't say much, but he might think it over and get back to me. —Bob Sabiston

SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

BOB SABISTON: *Hey Ryan. The people that are putting The Even More*

Fun Trip on DVD asked me to call and interview you about it. Do you have any comments you'd like to make about the film?

RYAN POWERS: Why would I? Um, I remember everything I rode at Fiesta Texas in 2002 and I remember everything I rode there in 2005 as well.

BS: *Right.*

RP: But why would you want to interview me?

BS: *Well, I guess they are interested to know if you have anything to add about the film.*

RP: I don't know. Well, should we talk again in the middle of next month, to see if we can go trick-or-treating again or not?

BS: *Yes, but tell me... what made this trip more fun than the last one?*

RP: Oh, we rode a few more rides!

BS: *Oh, right.*

RP: Shall we talk again in the middle of next month? The middle of the month is always on the 15th.

BS: *Anything else about the film?*

RP: What about seeing me breathing like Darth Vader, that I always do a good impression of his breathing?

BS: *Okay. Did you have a favorite ride in the film?*

RP: One of my favorite rides in Fiesta Texas is the Wave Runner, which is a whip ride.

BS: *A what?*

RP: A whip ride. You know how it *mmmmmmmm*, how it turns?

You're in those grey things, and then you go spinning.

BS: *Oh, I know which one you're talking about! Anything else?*

RP: You know, some cops are studio cops that guard a studio entrance.

BS: *Yeab...?*

RP: Um, this was my fourth trip there, it sure was nice of it to be recorded.

BS: *How about the number of times you said "just like last time," any thought about that?*

RP: Mmmm, I don't know. Well, shall we talk again in the middle of next month so we can talk about whether we can go trick-or-treating or not?

BS: *Yes.*

RP: Okay. <click>

{Ryan always hangs up immediately when he is finished talking.}

INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER

Q: *How did you first meet Ryan?*

BOB SABISTON: My friend and I met his mom at a coffee shop in 1998. When we told her that we made animated documentaries, she said that her son Ryan might make a good subject. He was thirteen then and apparently obsessed with Fievel the mouse. She thought it might do him good to see himself animated. We ended up making a three-minute short called "Snack and Drink" from that first meeting.

Q: *How has your relationship changed/developed over time?*

BS: We go out to a store and dinner on the second Wednesday of each month. There are two alternating routines we have: Barnes



& Noble/Long John Silver's, and Toys "R" Us/Wendy's. Also, I usually take him trick-or-treating every year. In his Darth Vader outfit, he is pretty impressive, almost scary, to the other children and their parents. I would not say that

the relationship has changed that much over time. Ryan says that he and his mom have decided to stop aging, and so he is going to be eighteen forever.

Q: Did you have any experience working with people with autism before?

BS: No, but I have always been interested in people whose minds seem to work differently than most.

Q: What are some of the things you've learned from Ryan?

BS: I've learned that Ryan is the boss. That is, he knows what he wants to do, and there's very little you can do to influence him in any way. To try is to just make yourself upset—and if you are going to spend time with him, you just have to go with it and not try to have your own way in anything. They say there is joy in repetition, which I think is practically Ryan's whole philosophy of life.

Q: As huge fans of yours, can you tell us a little bit about how you developed your style of animation?

BS: I got interested in animation in college, and started out with some simple 3D stuff. From there I started writing code for doing hand-drawn animation on top of the 3D, and I made a couple of films that way. The process was so labor-intensive that it nearly

gave me a breakdown—I spent two years trying to finish two minutes of a film. The rotoscoping thing was a reaction to all of that. It was fast, easy, and just enabled you to capture the essence of something you'd filmed. Over time, as we have tried to top ourselves stylistically, it's gotten to the point where it's laborious again. *A Scanner Darkly* and the Charles Schwab commercials are good examples of that. But this film with Ryan was nice because we were free to be simple when we wanted to be. Incidentally, Ryan is in *Waking Life*—he plays an alien who gives some final words of wisdom to the main character before getting beamed back into space.

Q: *What are you working on now?*

BS: We are helping the folks at 236.com do *Get Your War On*. It's the animated version of David Rees' comic. Also I have been writing some new software that I hope to publish, an animation program for the Nintendo DS called Inchworm.

To see the full-length version of The Even More Fun Trip and more of Bob Sabiston's work, visit flatblackfilms.com.

GLORY AT SEA

Directed by Benh Zeitlin

U.S.A., 2008

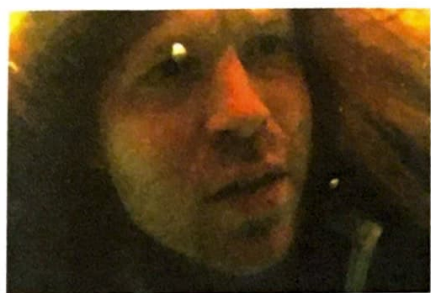
AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER

Q: *What was the impetus behind this film?*

BENH ZEITLIN: The film actually came from a script that I was planning to shoot in Greece; the only similarities between the two was the idea of this resurrection from an underwater afterlife. The

spark was an image of naked Greek men catapulting out of the ocean in a symphonic hairy-porpoise-inspired resurrection finale that settled on an island paradise of obese naked love, which, of course, has almost nothing to do with the finished film.

I wasn't able to get the production going in Europe, and one day on a bench in Prague it struck me how relevant the idea of this



underwater afterlife could be in New Orleans, and how much I wanted to make something American. Really, an available couch was the clinching factor, but once I got there, it completely transformed the film. I was

there alone for five months before pre-production began, then was joined by Par Parekh and Ray Tintori, and over that time met the people who ended up acting in the film, who brought with them a force of communal tenacity and fatalistic passion that shifted the focus of the film from just wild surrealistic bombast to something that's more human. We re-wrote the script to fit their personalities and stories.

Post-Katrina New Orleans is a modern frontier; it's in flux, and it's incredibly exciting and frightening and heartbreaking and inspiring. There was so much stuff and so many people that I saw and loved that the film got completely out of hand, went from seven minutes to twenty-five, and infinitely bigger than the resources we had. I thought I'd be home in October '06 and ended up finishing the film in April '08.

Q: Can you talk about the decision to deal with a relatively recent tragedy on a mythical level?

*BZ: The mythological qualities of the film are largely retained from an earlier script, *Glory at Sea*, and also just from me, raised*

by Folklorists and being into that kind of stuff. But also I really wanted to keep a distance from Katrina, it didn't happen to me and I wouldn't know how to begin to try to express those realities. The mythology and the distance approach I took was just necessary for me to deal with the subject matter. I made a decision very early on not to shoot in the lower Ninth Ward, not to shoot long, tracking shots of fucked-up houses. Instead it was shot mostly on the outskirts of the city, along the Mississippi and Lake Pontchartrain, on the other side of the levees. I know the imagery is still very volatile, but as it compares to the documentaries that I've seen about the storm, I think there's a huge difference between showing someone drowned but magically alive underwater, and showing their bloated corpse in a puddle, which I would never do. I have tremendous hope for New Orleans, and I wanted the imagery of the film to express that.

Q: How did you go about building the ship, and where is it now?

BZ: Because the film was about a group of people who attempt something impossible on purpose, with total disregard for practical physics and personal safety, we felt obligated to follow the rules of their mission in every element of the production. So the design of the boat developed by us seeing something on the side of the road like a gigantic burnt limousine or a discarded bathtub and saying "that has to be on the boat," and that was that, nothing would stop us from putting it on. This fall, Gustav willing, me and my sister are going to transform the boat into a rolling, popcorn-making movie projector cum Mardi Gras float in preparation for a *Glory at Sea* American tour. We're also looking for some kind of museum, hopefully in NOLA, to let us reconstruct it as a piece of art. It was so fragile, someone had to be with it all the time to make sure it wouldn't wreck itself against the docks where it was moored. Some

of my best memories from the shoot are sitting around babysitting the boat and fishermen and general beer-drinkers and all manner of dock life coming to look at it. People were drawn to it.

Q: *Would you call Glory at Sea a "Katrina film"?*

BZ: Filmmakers' impulse to speak on someone else's behalf is I think what troubles a lot of people about the idea of a "Katrina film." They feel like the artists aren't entitled to the subject matter. I don't think *Glory* tries to speak for any oppressed population; it speaks for me, and I think it speaks for the people who made it, the cast and the crew. Many of them are from New Orleans and helped me create the stories and emotions of it. I think it represents the love we have for the city, and the sense of loss we feel toward that tragedy, but also tragedy in general. It's about how we can respond to tragedy with love, and hope, and total insanity. And that emotion, I hope, translates universally, and isn't bound within the politics of Katrina.

LOOK AT THE SUN

Edited by Emily Doe with Brent Hoff

Footage by SOHO, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

U.S.A., 2008

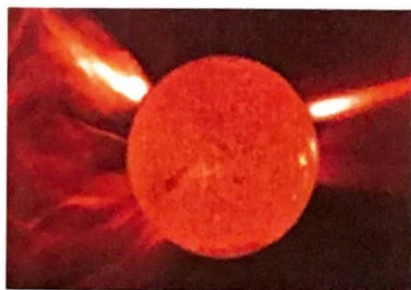
INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR ROGER ULRICH OF THE UCLA ASTRONOMY DEPARTMENT

Q: *What is your research focusing on currently?*

ROGER ULRICH: I have mostly been working on the strength of magnetic fields. There are problems in comparing different ways of measuring these and I have spent the past two years trying to get that straight.

Q: What have you learned about the strength of the sun's magnetic fields? How have you settled the issue?

RU: The magnetic field strength is found from the Zeeman effect on absorption lines in the spectrum of the light from the sun. The magnetized plasma of the solar atmosphere is concentrated into very small tubes that cannot be observed individually, even with the best telescopes. Because of this effect and because of the way different spectral lines respond to the magnetic fields, these averages give different results. Also, the field strength in the magnetized plasma changes through the layer we call the photosphere where the absorption is formed. My recent work studied spectral line shapes in magnetized regions to determine the best way to estimate the total field leaving the solar surface and getting out into interplanetary space. It ultimately is dragged past the Earth and is part of the Space Weather system.



Q: Can you explain the sun's magnetic state? Does it have currents like our oceans?

RU: The sun's magnetic field has a dipole like the Earth's magnetic dipole that we use for finding north with a magnetic compass. This dipole field alternates its polarity during the eleven-year solar cycle. There are also sunspots that come in pairs or groups where it is as if someone is holding a magnetic bar magnet just below the solar surface. For one eleven-year cycle these bar magnets are oriented with magnetic north to the east in the northern hemisphere and magnetic south to the east in the southern hemisphere. This configuration switches from one eleven-year cycle to the next.

Q: *What concerns you about the current solar minimum?*

RU: This minimum seems different in that there are no regions on the solar surface with enhanced magnetic field activity, which we call “plages.” These show up in the violet light emitted by Calcium, as well in our maps of magnetic activity. In past minima there has always been a plage or two somewhere over the solar surface. This minimum there are none and there have been none, for even longer than there have been no sunspots.

Q: *So the sun is mostly lacking in magnetic activity right now?*

RU: Not exactly. There is actually more weak field now than usual. Sunspots are strong field, plages are moderate field, and everywhere else there is either weak field, or very weak field. At the moment there is more weak field than in the past two minima, less moderate field and no strong field.

Q: *What is the likelihood of another Maunder Minimum?*

RU: That remains to be determined. The 1933 and 1954 minima had similar plage-free periods. The sunspot number in 1954 had some long stretches near zero, similar to this minimum. So far there are still no real plage areas showing up, but some observatories did see a couple small spots near August 22. We did not see these spots possibly because they came and went too quickly for our observing day or possibly because our spatial resolution was a bit less on that day. Given this sequence, and the similarity of the 1954 minimum that was followed by a big maximum, it is clearly too soon to start talking of another Maunder Minimum. However, only the sun can make the real determination.

Q: *So you don't agree with those who feel the Maunder Minimum was likely responsible for the mini-Ice Age of that period?*

RU: That is hard to agree with or disagree with. We just do not have enough information to make that determination. It is possible. However, the effect of the greenhouse gasses is greater than our best estimates of the size of any solar energy output change. The measurements of changes in the global temperature between 1920 and 1970 could have had a contribution from a solar energy output change since there was a secular increase in the solar cycle amplitude during that period. The solar cycle amplitude has been pretty constant for the past three cycles, so unless there is a big inertial effect, the most recent global warming probably has no contribution from the sun.

Q: Do you remember the solar maximum of 2001? That was expected to be much more significant than it turned out to be, right? I remember people predicting global catastrophe from all the downed satellites. Were you expecting a bigger event then?

RU: The amplitude of solar cycles is tough to predict. Overall, the strength of the solar cycles has been larger for the past forty years than during any previous period. These are mostly manageable and unlikely to cause major harm, but potentially inconvenient. There may be a component of global climate that is influenced by the state of solar activity, but the size of this component is hard to establish and probably considerably smaller than what is caused by greenhouse gasses.

Q: What first got you personally interested in solar research?

RU: I started off making theoretical models of stars. The sun became a focus of my research when I spent fifteen years working on the problem of solar neutrinos, which are formed when nuclear reactions generate energy in the sun's core. The number of these neutrinos detected was about 1/3 of what the models predicted,

and that was a big puzzle. We now know that the neutrinos change flavor between the sun and earth, and the initial experiment only detected one flavor. My models and everyone else's models were proven to be essentially correct. When I became involved with monitoring the sun's surface magnetic fields and surface motions, I had to drop the neutrino study due to lack of time. That was in 1986 and I have concentrated on these other solar physics problems for the past twenty-two years.

Q: Have you ever looked directly at the sun?

RU: Yes, and I have a large company in this—the Chinese astronomers. They used the infamous dust blowing off the Gobi desert, I used the smoke from one of our many Southern California brush fires. Driving home one evening I was able to visually observe a couple of large sunspots. You need to have just the right amount of smoke or dust so that the brightness is okay, but not so much that you cannot see the sun. You have to know what you are doing to carry out this exercise. It is normally a really bad idea to put the sun's image onto your retina.

Q: Do you know what it is precisely that makes it so bad for our eyes?

RU: Have you ever seen what happens to a piece of paper when you focus the sunlight onto it with a small f /ratio magnifying glass? It burns. So will your retina, and that is not good for its functioning. A piece of paper is easy to replace. Your retina is not replaceable, and a blind spot is formed where you focused the sunlight.

Q: And what approximately is the right amount?

RU: If you mostly cannot see the disk but occasionally the smoke or dust gets just thin enough to make out the disk then it is okay. You have to be ready to look away quickly if the thinning is fast.

Patchy smoke will not do it. It has to be pretty uniform so the transparency changes are slow.

Q: *Are you more cautious of the sun than you were before your research?*

RU: I mostly stay out of the sunlight.

WILLIAM TELL

Directed by William Lamson

U.S.A., 2006

NOTES FROM THE FILMMAKER

He was so positive they were giants that he neither heard the cries of Sancho, nor perceived what they were, but made at them shouting, "Fly not, cowards and vile beings, for a single knight attacks you."

—Don Quixote, *Miguel de Cervantes*

The male obsession with glory, honor, and personal heroics has inspired as many actual heroes as it has misguided adventurers. *William Tell* is very much a part of the latter tradition.

The video documents a one-man re-creation of the fabled archer's feat. In it, an armor-clad protagonist emerges from the pastoral landscape to attempt the seemingly heroic act of shooting a can off of his own head by firing a BB gun at a polished piece of marble. Much like Don Quixote's epic charge at a windmill that he believes to be a giant, the protagonist is attempting a challenge that a spectator would perceive as both inconsequential and potentially self destructive, since he is essentially shooting at himself. However, unlike Quixote, and unlike Tell, the protagonist is aware of this danger and protects himself from the ricocheting BBs with a suit of armor. The armor and the gun,

which can be seen as past and present representations of masculine power, actually undermine his image as a heroic man by revealing



his vulnerability. This is especially true in the case of the armor, since its purpose is to protect him from his own inaccuracy. Furthermore, its metal construction provides far greater protection than is necessary to stop BBs, severely limiting his

mobility and thus making the act of balancing the can on his head, and picking it up when it falls off, almost as much of a struggle as hitting it. While the armor is clearly overprotection, the gun is just the opposite. It appears to be a 9mm handgun, but it actually shoots BBs, associating the performance as much with an adolescent shooting at cans as with a would-be knight involved in a heroic historical re-creation.

At the end of the video, having been foiled several times by a light breeze that easily blows the can off of his head, the protagonist finally hits his target and celebrates his victory. Arms in the air, he stumbles backwards, and finally comes to rest against the backdrop of his set. The motionless figure sits by himself in the empty landscape, the only witness to his small triumph.

—William Lamson

FANTAISIE IN BUBBLEWRAP

Directed by Arthur Metcalf

U.S.A., 2007

NOTES FROM THE FILMMAKER

Like all good ideas, *Fantaisie in Bubblewrap* was stolen from a friend.

At work on a children's educational TV show, a friend at the desk next to mine drew a face on a scrap of bubblewrap and showed it to me. I was very, very excited. I sketched a handful of more or less unrelated scene ideas at lunch, and that night, with such insightful guides as "pregnant" and "that Obi-Wan line from *Star Wars*," I improvised the dialogue into a shitty pencil-mic pitch-shifted into the hearing range of a shar-pei.



Inaudible Fun Fact!

Before she gets a pencil in the eye, the lady bubble winks. This is because she has made an atrocious pun on the word "prick." Almost no one has ever heard her say "prick." This was probably done intentionally so that on the DVD you would have something to listen intently for. My brother and I shot about an hour of me popping bubblewrap and I animated faces over that. It was supposed to be a silly film to show to friends on YouTube, but fortunately, as Oscar Wilde famously put it, a complete lack of taste and blindness to low production values is fairly common in the independent film community. High five! [Wilde never said high five; he always favored a double thumbs up. —*ed.*]

Note: The film's title is ridiculous. It is meant to be so.

Another note: The production company name, Metcalf Loves You, is not.

—Arthur Metcalf

BONUS DISC: SELECT YOUR INTENTION (AKA MASSIVELY MULTI-OPERATOR ASYNCHRONOUS RETROCAUSAL VIDEO EXPERIMENT)

Directed by Aaron Michels

U.S.A., 2008

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FILMMAKER

Q: So how do you describe this experiment to friends and family and how do they respond?

AARON MICHELS: I usually avoid the topic unless I know I've got time for a full conversation. It's a hard thing for me to mention casually.

As for the response of friends and family, there are two reactions, both disturbing.

Some people say: "Of course that's true," and "Why does it matter if scientists don't believe it?" I'm not sure why I find that answer so strange. There's a certainty there that I can't identify with. Sometimes it's almost a New Age fundamentalism.

And the rest come from the clinical neuropsychologist side of my family, which ends up with them saying that the data



must be fabricated because the effects are patently impossible.

I usually point out that that's not really an argument, it's just slander.

We have a stalemate. They refuse to consider the data, and

I refuse to dismiss the data without

good reason. This conversation wouldn't be that disquieting, but somehow I get cast as the heretic believer, and I find that upsetting. If that's going to happen, I figure I should at least have the comfort of believing something. But somehow I don't.

Q: Because the principles of quantum indeterminacy have been fairly well enunciated by celebrity physicists, people I talk to don't seem to have much of a problem with the idea of retrocausality, and instead seem more dubious of the telekinetic abilities the experiment will test. Does it surprise you that people think of a non-linear universe as more likely than a relatively undocumented electronic brain wave electronic computer connection?

AM: I don't think I've had the same experience, but it's hard for me to tell which part of the experiment pushes people over the edge. I think people who don't like this stuff usually have a problem with all the parts, and the retrocausality is the last straw for them. Personally, I think the atemporal nature of the effect is the most difficult to work with for modeling and experimentation, so that's what I find the hardest.

Q: What do you predict the results will be?

AM: My baseline guess is that the experiment will show a modest effect size in the intended direction, but there are more interesting results we could hope for. Some correspondence between the size of the operator pool and the effect size is what I'm really targeting here, but an inverse effect would be also be instructive.

Q: What do you plan to do with the results?

AM: Two months after the DVDs are released, when we can be sure that viewers have seen the recorded runs and have directed their intentions toward the data, we will conduct the analysis of the data. None of the experimenters or people producing and processing the DVDs will have looked at the data until then. We'll post a report on the experiment at the online experiment center: psyleron.com/wholphin.

The goal of the experiment is to refine the understanding of the interactions between Random Event Generators [REGs] and

the compounded intentions of large groups. I'm looking at the possibility of running similar experiments with other organizations in the future. Depending on the results of this experiment, it may be interesting to see if there are different effects from differently sized or culturally positioned groups.

Q: *What got you interested in this in the first place?*

AM: My major was ecology and evolutionary biology, and not related to any of this. I've always thought that philosophy of mind was fun. I went dancing with David Chalmers once.

As for my interest in PEAR and electronic Random Event Generators, I heard about the lab in 1995 and put it in my mental category of "fascinating if true." I actually visited the lab in 1999, as kind of a lark, and since then it's been a nagging little bug in my head. It's pretty strange stuff.

I think what's made it really stick with me, though, is that I've always had a personal difficulty with belief. Hand in hand with that, I've had an appreciation for logic, reason, and empirical science. I believe in Science, rather than Belief. That's pretty much where I am.

So the PEAR data actually causes some turmoil for me. From my interactions with the PEAR lab, I respect their methodology as much as any science I've encountered. So here, my appreciation for a skeptical empirical science has led me to the reasonable conclusion that mental states can have concrete physical effects. Belief does matter.

I also feel the pressure of mainstream science, which would rather ignore these results. So in this case, the social weight of the institutions of science seems to be acting against impartial, rational judgment: "Ignore the data, believe what we believe."

Either way, it comes down to belief, which is what I had a

problem with in the beginning. It leaves me conflicted and agitated. It's not a comfortable interest, but it's a topic that's hard for me to set aside. It's like a chipped tooth I keep coming back to.

Q: The notion of sending out brain waves is not unprecedented in science. There are two examples that come to mind: First, dolphin echolocation. Second, Jon Ronson documented in his book The Men Who Stare At Goats a U.S. Army program which involved remote viewing as well as a bunch of sergeants in a room with a goat trying to explode its heart with the power of their minds. Are there others?

AM: As for the military remote viewing program, PEAR also did remote perception studies based on the Russel Targ and Hal Puthoff experiments for the military. As far as I know, neither study was measuring emitted brain waves. I thought they were both relatively agnostic about how the effect occurred.

Maybe a brain wave is a useful way for people to visualize the effect, but I've heard researchers in this area say that the "brain wave" hypothesis is a bit too simple and mechanistic. Any waves the brain emitted would have to be able to go back through time and resist decay over global distances. The REG devices have also been shielded from electromagnetic influence, so if that's the kind of wave you're talking about, I don't think that's the medium we're dealing with here.

CONTRIBUTORS

ZACH NILES comes from a music-industry background and from 1998–2004 was part of the production and promotion of some of the largest rock and roll tours (The Rolling Stones, Paul McCartney, Madonna, Simon and Garfunkel). In 2001 he was the associate producer for the eight-part television series *Live at the Fillmore*. He has lived and worked in South Africa and Cameroon, and has had a long-standing personal and professional interest in the music and cultures of Africa.

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KRISTOFFER JONER is one of the most celebrated young actors in Norway and has earned numerous awards and wide critical acclaim through the course of his career. He was selected as the Norwegian “Shooting Star” at the Berlinale Film Festival in 2003. *Cold & Dry* is his first film as a director.

GUS VAN SANT is an author, musician, and photographer, but is best known as a film director. His works range from indie films such as *Last Days* and *Elephant*, which won both the Palm D’Or and Best Director at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival, to major studio productions, including *My Own Private Idaho*, *To Die For*, and *Good Will Hunting*. Gus is an involved member of the Portland community and has been a recipient of the ACLU “Freedom of Expression” award.

NICHOLAS BERGER spent two years working on documentaries for PBS and the History Channel before attending Stanford University’s Documentary Film program where he recently received an MFA. *Nutkin’s Last Stand* was his thesis film at Stanford. To see more about Nicholas Berger’s Films visit his website: pineconepictures.com.

Arizona native **CARSON MELL** currently lives in Hollywood, California. His short films have been screened at Sundance, CineVegas, and the Los Angeles Film Festival. You can see more of his work at carsonmell.com.

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DAVID HUGGINS is a New York artist who commits his lifelong alien experiences to canvas.

BOB SABISTON and his company Flat Black Films have been making innovative animation since 1987. Over the past decade, his 'Rotoshop' interpolated rotoscoping software has achieved international recognition as it has evolved in such films as *Snack and Drink*, *Waking Life*, and *A Scanner Darkly*. Flat Black Films' animation has an organic, human element that is missing in a lot of computer animation.

Raised by two folklorists in Queens, New York, **BENH ZEITLIN** is a director, animator, and composer for the Court13 coterie. *Filmmaker* magazine recently named him on of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film." He currently resides in New Orleans where he is developing two feature films and transforming *Glory at Sea's* ship into a rolling, popcorn-making, movie projector cum Mardi Gras float in preparation for a *Glory at Sea* American tour. For more information visit court13.com.

Professor **ROGER ULRICH** studies the solar interior using theoretical and observational methods. Dr. Ulrich made the first observation and identification of Alfvén waves on the solar surface, and has also developed a method for mapping a measure of the tilt angle that the magnetic field

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WILLIAM LAMSON is a Brooklyn-based artist who works in video, photography, performance, and sculpture. He received his MFA from Bard College in 2006, and his work has been shown at PS1, the Brooklyn Museum, Pierogi Gallery, and the Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe, among other places. For more information, visit williamlamson.com

ARTHUR METCALF is an animator living in New York. *Fantaisie in Bubblewrap* is his debut film. He is currently at work on a Christmas present for you, stranger. Norse visions of doom? Candy canes? Epic, snowy wastes? Sexual dimorphism? Pointiness? Yes dear, he knows how you like it. metcalflovesyou.com

AARON MICHELS makes videos, light sculptures, spreadsheets, beehives, and funny noises. He cares about co-housing, vegetable oil, local economies, and efficiency. He is from St. Louis but now lives in Oakland with his favorite person. You can find out more about him at stripmindmedia.net.

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WHOLPHIN

REFUGEE ALL STARS

30:00. SHORT FILM. U.S.A.

DIRECTED BY BANKER WHITE AND ZACH NILES

COLD & DRY

12:00. SHORT FILM. U.S.A. | DIRECTED BY KRISTOFFER JONER

THE DISCIPLINE OF DE

9:00. SHORT ADAPTATION. U.S.A.

DIRECTED BY GUS VAN SANT

NUTKIN'S LAST STAND

18:00. DOCUMENTARY. U.S.A. | DIRECTED BY NICHOLAS BERGER

FIELD NOTES FROM DIMENSION X

4:00. ANIMATED SHORT. U.S.A. | DIRECTED BY CARSON MELL

CHOQUE

11:00. SHORT FILM. SPAIN | DIRECTED BY NACHO VIGALONDO

DAVID HUGGINS: EXPERIENCED

7:00. SHORT FILM. U.S.A. | DIRECTED BY JEREMY VAENI

THE EVEN MORE FUN TRIP

16:30. ANIMATED SHORT. U.S.A. | DIRECTED BY BOB SABISTON

GLORY AT SEA

25:00. SHORT FILM. U.S.A. | DIRECTED BY BENJAMIN ZEITLIN

LOOK AT THE SUN

5:00. NATURE STUDY. U.S.A. | DIRECTED BY WHOLPHIN

WILLIAM TELL

3:40. PERFORMANCE ART. U.S.A.

DIRECTED BY WILLIAM LAMSON

FANTASIE IN BUBBLEWRAP

4:30. ANIMATED SHORT. U.S.A.

DIRECTED BY ARTHUR METCALF

BONUS DISC: SELECT YOUR INTENTION

45:00. INTERACTIVE SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT. U.S.A.

DIRECTED BY AARON MICHELS

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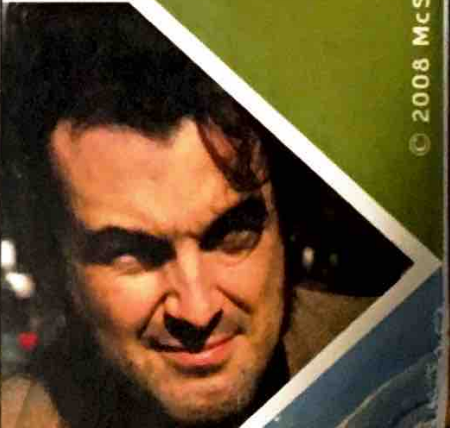
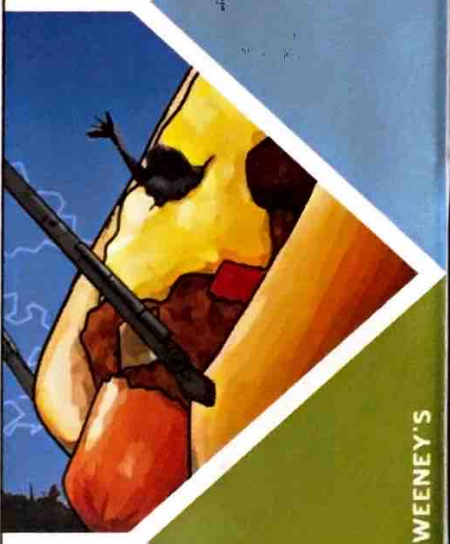
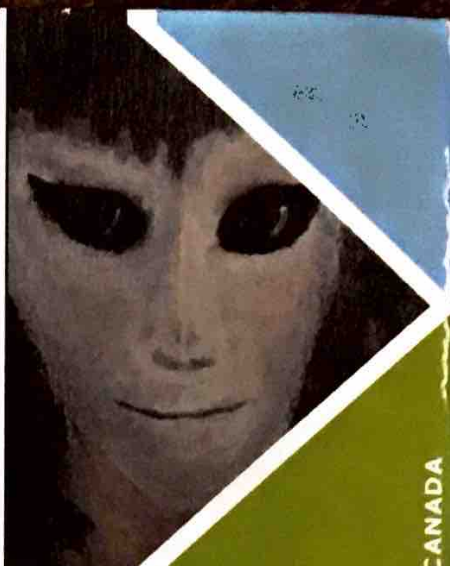
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