

**Chris Korda interviewed by Fez
Gielen**

Chris Korda interviewed by Fez Gielen. Subjects include assisted suicide, the Church of Euthanasia, antihumanism, post-antihumanism, neo-primitivism, the Unabomber, the supremacy of scientific knowledge, the value of civilization, and the importance of non-procreation. The original audio recording is also available. Thanks to Norah Scooter Burch for laboriously cleaning up the machine transcription.

RADIO: So I did my assigned readings and. But I'll be asking some questions at those that like the manifesto for instance addresses already but for the sake of our listeners... and I'm sure you know you've done a lot of repeating yourself...

CHRIS: But not lately, actually.

RADIO: No I guess it's been a while.

CHRIS: I don't interact with the public anywhere near as much as I did for a while there. I was doing it every day and I got pretty practiced at it. You might say I learned my lines. It was a little like being a politician or... being a reverend is a lot like being a politician in the sense that the main thing that you have to do is remember people's names, or it sure helps. And you kind of have to put people at ease and interact with crowds; be a forceful public speaker and give an impression of command over your topic so that people will... not really I mean you know... I don't necessarily... it's not like being a politician in the sense that you want to fool people, which is unfortunately what politicians do. You might argue that their main skill is telling ten different people ten different things but making it sound like you agree with all of them. Telling people exactly what you've determined they want to hear... so I don't do anything like that; I mostly tell people things that they *don't* want to hear. That's a big difference.

RADIO: And is there a reason you're in the public less?

CHRIS: Yeah I was a little overexposed. I think at one point it became physically much too dangerous and also the times changed. At the time when the church was the most publicly active in the late 90s and early oughts, it was a different world. 9/11 changed a lot of things but there was so much more change coming, by the end it was almost unrecognizable. You know today I think that if we tried to do anything like what we did then it would be lethal. I would be doxed, I would be beaten up, killed... Increasingly America is beginning to resemble Latin America or Central America in the sense that, you know, the rich are living in gated compounds surrounded by private security and barbed wire.

The economic inequality has reached a point so corrosive that there's the real possibility of violence. Not so much organized violence as in revolution, but just individual violence. People just, you know, disenfranchised people who just can't take it anymore taking out their aggression on the nearest person who doesn't fit into their puzzle. So that's, you know, anything that is different is suddenly very dangerous. This often happens, I mean, if we look back at the history of fascism this is how it works right—fascism is all about conformity and to the extent that somebody is nonconforming,

that's a test of how politically liberal the times are. Right now the times are super not politically liberal; they're very fascistic, and it's so consequently it's very dangerous to be different in a way that it wasn't before.

RADIO: Were you met with that kind of aggression or violence?

CHRIS: Oh yeah, there's an escalating scale of violence and we were somewhere on it. I've certainly been, you know, chased; pelted with bottles. I narrowly escaped getting some free dental surgery on numerous occasions and mostly only because I had the presence of mind to have bodyguards, so typically for some of the more drastic church actions it was like running a small army; the general would be in the back, not exactly on the front, there would be a little crew of people standing around me to make sure that nobody got too close. And that's just normal, I mean, that's how you do things if you're if you're an experienced operative. You get some experience of working on the streets; you learn how to do it without getting killed, but, there were certainly lots of close calls; enough close calls to make me concerned. There were tons of death threats, of course. People were starting to figure out where I lived and all of that.

I think probably the point when it became really much too dangerous was after a bunch of people actually did kill themselves. That started to bring heat in a different form. That meant potentially not just heat from the police or, you know, from prosecutors and so on because there I think we were on fairly safe ground; certainly no more tenuous than the Hemlock Society. Distributing information about how to kill yourself is not a crime in the way that, for example, Dr. Kevorkian committed a crime; actually hooking people up to your own jerry-built carbon monoxide machine and watching them die, leaving their bodies in cars. That's a crime, but just distributing information on how to kill yourself efficiently and without any harmful effects on anyone else, that's not a crime... but that doesn't mean that you're immune from civil suits. And so, in the cases where people killed themselves following our instructions and then left information attributing that to us, there's the potential for the family of the deceased to come after us for wrongful death, and that's that was a real threat too and so that was another reason that it seemed advisable to lie low.

RADIO: Right now you still have instructions on how to kill oneself on your website.

CHRIS: I don't actually know those were removed decades or more than a decade ago but the instructions of course never really die because... God bless them, the Internet Archive and their Wayback Machine keeps everything alive forever. That's their idea, the stated aim of Internet Archive is to back up the entire Internet forever. We'll see how well that lasts into the future, but for the moment it means that if you type the right search term you can certainly find the instructions but they're not technically on our... on any server that I have any control over and that's by design.

RADIO: Oh but there's a link from the Church of Euthanasia site to another site at least if you check that while I was browsing Yeah I came across...

CHRIS: Oh yeah, really? What page is that? Let's have a look.

RADIO: Maybe it's under "Resources"? OK So it's a church approved link; I guess it's not your website, the ASH space

CHRIS: Sorry where is that?

RADIO: So it's the alt suicide holiday

CHRIS: Oh yeah but those weren't our instructions. We had much more serious stuff than that. Alt dot suicide holiday is very old; that's old hat, that's been around since the mid 90's at least. And... they have a billion methods there. They just try to list every conceivable suicide method including some very silly stuff that, is probably not a good idea but. It's a fact I'd say that most of what they list is not a good idea it's your typical kind of B.B.S. style internet group that... hearkens back to the days of, you know, newsgroups and the Alt newsgroups, especially—which is exactly what it is. So that was a very different environment, they're more just sort of showing off how much they know about suicide methods. But no, our list was very practical. We had a simple test... you can find it here... I'll point you at it. If you type "Church of Euthanasia suicide method" I'm pretty sure that'll bring it up, let's just see if I'm right about that... but the Internet Archive is amazing.

RADIO: Suicide method?

CHRIS: Yeah it doesn't look like it... let's see, how interesting. Doesn't seem to be showing up yet we could also try... Yeah I mean I it may have actually... wait wait wait wait wait. Hold on, I'm not using the right title to the guide. Church of Euthanasia's guide to suicide with helium. This looks pretty good this might be it.

RADIO: OK Well here's a Telegraph article called "predators tell children how to kill themselves." **CHRIS:** Here it is yeah all the stuff is out there right so here is an exact copy of it. If you type "Church of Euthanasia suicide meta-guide" with a hyphen, it'll come right up.

RADIO: OK Great yeah here you go.

CHRIS: And you know these are very specific concrete instructions about how to kill yourself with a tank of helium. And you might ask why we picked that and... it's a good question, but you didn't ask it but I'll answer it anyway. There is a simple test that the Church of Euthanasia used to evaluate suicide methods it's called the QPCDSAT test. It's an acronym. It stands for: Quick, Painless, Certain, Discreet, Safe, Accessible, and Tidy. Don't forget the tidy. And so any test that flunks one or more of those criteria is not approved. It's really as simple as that, and it's actually very difficult to find a suicide method that passes that test—it's a pretty stringent test. Of course "safe" doesn't mean safe for you—it means safe for *others*. People sometimes get confused about that. "Quick" is simple enough; "Painless" is also understandable. "Certain" is a very very important one—there's lots of suicide methods that, you know, can be very effective *except* when they go wrong. Guns are a classic example. Guns are a terrific suicide method, likely to pass most of the tests (although they're not very tidy), but they're actually not all that certain. It's surprising how many times people survive a self-inflicted gun wound and just become brain damaged. That's considered a super negative outcome. That's really not what you had in mind. So anyway certainty

is important. Discreet—so a lot of people don't consider that. Driving your car into a brick wall or something is not very discreet.

Yes, so anyway... there's all these tests that we apply, but the key about helium is that it actually is accessible, so you don't need any kind of special license to buy helium; it's not a controlled substance and it's widely available. They use it to inflate balloons and lots of other things. You show up somewhere and demand a tank of helium, nobody's going to give you the slightest... you know... they're not going to look at you twice, which would not be true, for example, if you showed up and asked to buy... let's say... a tank of nitrous oxide, which would also work pretty well. Or, for that matter, if you showed up and tried to buy a tank of carbon monoxide and... we could get into a separate debate there because carbon monoxide is actually explosive and flammable so, you know, there's lots of reasons why it would be a bad idea. In short, any noble gas would do. You could make do with nitrogen. Nitrogen is seventy percent of the atmosphere, I figure roughly. You can breathe it absolutely easily.

There is a point I didn't explain about all this, which actually should have come up from the beginning, and something that the average person wouldn't necessarily be expected to know—which is that suffocation is not what most people think. Suffocation is not oxygen deprivation. You might think it is—it seems logical that it would be—but it isn't. What I mean is that your body does not have an oxygen sensor; it just doesn't. What your body has is a *carbon dioxide* sensor, so the reason you feel like you're suffocating if you put a bag over your head, is because you're breathing in your own carbon dioxide. Your body has evolutionarily adapted an ability to sense that. It's a useful thing; it's evolved over billions of years and not all—not only in humans—most animals can sense suffocation. But the point is—you're sensing the *presence* of something, not the *absence* of something. So suppose I gave you a gas to breathe that didn't contain any oxygen but that was on the list of gases that you can breathe easily, like for example nitrogen, which is most of the atmosphere. In that case you would just breathe perfectly normally. You would have no sense of suffocation, you wouldn't feel uncomfortable; you wouldn't know that anything was wrong. You would just sit there and breathe and about thirty seconds later you'd be unconscious.

RADIO: Wow.

CHRIS: Yeah that's just true... and then about five minutes after that you'd be stone dead... from oxygen deprivation... which you never saw coming. And in fact, the proof of this is... this happens fairly often in industry, so it's a common enough source of death if you look into—for example— nitrogen poisoning as a source of death; it's fairly common because there are plenty of industrial environments where you need to fill a room full of nitrogen, or for that matter argon, or there are other gases which are nontoxic—they pose no threat to you—but one hundred percent solution of them, meaning to the exclusion of everything else including oxygen, is absolutely lethal. And so this is how it works: as helium is one of these gases—you can breathe helium quite easily—the only way you'll even know anything's unusual is that your voice will get

squeaky, but other than that you'll just sit there and breathe it, and you'll feel fine because you're not being exposed to carbon dioxide, so your body is fooled.

RADIO: Right. OK.

CHRIS: Right. So I mean... it's good to clear all that up. So is all of this was there; it was information we distributed, and it led to people killing themselves, and it generated a lot of publicity—as you can imagine—that was more or less the idea, right? And so it was a successful strategy, except that it became too hot. So we backed off, you know, as we'd made our point—we didn't need to keep doing it. No need to be greedy.

RADIO: Sure although, I mean the end goal you know, I mean... you still have billions to go

CHRIS: Well yeah... but there was... that wasn't the point of... there was no question that, you know, we were never... one of the common misnomers about the Church of Euthanasia is that people imagine that we set out to actually reduce the human population but this was always strictly a quixotic goal. Nobody who organized this church from the beginning ever really believed that that was going to happen. Instead, the deeper goal was to start a conversation about anti-humanism and in that we were very successful. I like to argue that we made anti-humanism a relatively household word at a time when that was simply not the case. So Save the Planet Kill Yourself was a breakout hit. It absolutely was. I mean as a bumper sticker alone hundreds and thousands of those bumper stickers went out and those were just the ones, you know, that I know about... before people started copying them. It's one of the most widely copied bumper stickers. It's, according to Spencer Gifts, which was which was my main distributor, that's like one hundred malls across the country, right off the bat or no—five hundred malls at the time—it was a huge number there were malls selling the sticker in suburbia all across the country and they... they couldn't keep them in stock! We were sending them enormous quantities—so many that it became a real nuisance—I mean it—I had to hire a special company to print them. We would count them, and they had to be banded into packs of ten. I can remember being, like up to my waist in bumper stickers. It was just absurd, the amount of bumper stickers that went out. And so those bumper stickers were quietly changing reality, in the sense that right there was a cryptic message embedded in that slogan, which, according to Spencer Gifts, was right up there with you know... “Don't like my driving? Dial 1-800 eat shit”—that's, by the way, their all-time best seller for, you know—obviously we were never going to beat that—but we were up there; we were up in the top ten, you know, and so for a while there we had it good—and that message was just being disseminated everywhere basically for free, right? And better than for free; we were being paid—very well actually—thirty five cents a sticker to disseminate this message. All of this well within the mission set forth by our tax exemption, according to the I.R.S. in a conversation which I had with them. You can think you talk to the IRS. But at a certain level you do when you've founded a nonprofit it can happen and so I had a long talk with them and they explained to me that that we could absolutely

sell bumper stickers and still be a church, so long as the bumper stickers proselytized our message.

So quietly while all this was occurring, anti-humanism was being normalized to the point where nowadays it's no longer controversial—now you read about anti-humanism in *The New Yorker* and, you know, the *New York Times* or whatever; in mainstream media. It's no longer a particularly new idea, but at the time, believe it, it was. This was long before *Life After People*; this was when, you know, the Voluntary Human Extinction movement was still at least as marginal as the Church of Euthanasia. All these things were really esoteric. They were only people who were part of punk culture or people who read zines and stuff knew about it. But we changed all that—we brought antihumanism out into the limelight and gave it its fifteen minutes. And it got its fifteen minutes by a long shot, so I feel that this is the real accomplishment of the Church of Euthanasia.

RADIO: Sure, well in so there's some irony here right that part of part of what led to the guys sort of pulling back a bit is you receiving death threats

CHRIS: Yeah but it's proof of success. Yes, that's ironic in the sense that death threats were merely proof that we've actually accomplished our mission. If we were completely obscure nobody would bother sending us death threats, because we're not ... interesting.

RADIO: Right, sure.

CHRIS: So...the fact that it became dangerous was proof that we were starting to find the target.

RADIO: Right. And on that note I mean so I've been telling some people about this leading up to this conversation, and I mean the first question everyone asks is... or you know the first comment made is like so Chris Korda's a hypocrite right because Chris Korda is still alive.

CHRIS: You know yeah this is the oldest church question... and it's not a very interesting question. The real point about this is that it's none of anyone's business actually what I do.

RADIO: Sure, OK.

CHRIS: If I kill myself, I kill myself. If I *don't* kill myself, I *don't* kill myself. That's *my* decision. *I* get to decide whether ...*that*. I may or I may not that's up to me to choose the time and place. It's not up to anyone else, so it's not it's not even an interesting point—it's the *least* interesting question you could ask about the Church of Euthanasia... there are one hundred other questions you could ask that would be more interesting... and so this was always the problem with this question. Is that is that it makes the person who ...a certain kind of person... it makes the person who asks it feel like they're super smart; they can say 'huh huh huh gotcha!' You know, it's a kind of trolling question. Its pure form is something like "Why aren't you dead yet?" And the answer is... the short answer is "don't nudge."

RADIO: Right, sure.

CHRIS: Of course, they could then say “well that’s what you’re doing, right? You guys are encouraging other people to do it!” You know, the answer is “Yeah, what’s your point in the end?” There is nothing there’s nothing to discuss there, is the problem. It doesn’t lead to anything interesting; it just leads to at least to a kind of troll fest.

RADIO: Yeah I see. So to go back a bit we could use or to give like a brief history of the church or your sorta early forays in activism... it started with Unabomber for president, right?

CHRIS: No, no, no, that’s not correct at all. No, the church started way before that. The Church started in 1991, and it started with Save the Planet Kill Yourself. That was the shot fired... that was heard around the world. That took off very, very rapidly and it led to a whole chain of events. It led to the first church actions which took place in Cambridge Massachusetts... in Harvard Square, and other places. Including... there was a participation in an anti-vivisection march where we marched with a sign that said “Kill your fetus not your pet.” That was an early...kind of, practice run for what became a much more elaborate and well-oiled strategy of attaching ourselves to other, larger organizations and especially to their events, and using them as a way of surfing... to a greater public awareness of our of our aims.

So, for example, the canonical example of this—the most famous example—is the fetus barbecue. That was much later when the church was already a well-established organization, but so you could have had a fetus barbecue any other day of the year on the Boston Common and nobody would have paid much notice. There just would have been a bunch of guys with, you know, weird signs and giant banners and a barbecue grill... and nobody would have even seen it, or maybe the police would have come by, but probably not. But to have a fetus barbecue at the same time as the largest pro-life march in New England is a totally different proposition. At that point you’re having a fetus barbecue in front of Cardinal Law, you understand? Different. That’s situationism. The essence of situationism is that time and place matter, and that you have to modulate your message according to what the immediate audience is; that what will drive one audience, you know, one audience crazy will be ignored by another. So it’s all very specific. You have to *know*... you need intelligence in fact there was a whole unit of the church whose aim was to kind of ferret out information about what was going to happen in the future that might be interesting and that might be the opportunity for a dada event, which is what this is—Dada as in the famous art movement in the 1920s—Marcel Duchamp and all that. What we are is Neo-Dadaists. We use some of the same strategies that the Dadaists evolved back in the 20’s, to rile up crowds and to communicate in unorthodox ways, and to reach a vastly larger audience than they otherwise might have.

We use many of those strategies to our benefit and they often involved manipulating other organizations, particularly organizations we didn’t care for, like for example, right wing Christians. They turned out to be surprisingly easy to manipulate, so the Fetus Barbeque was an example of that... but also the sperm bank action was another very good example of that. We managed to get Christians to protest against a sperm

bank simply by posing as another organization. We sent them faxes saying that we were going to protest at the sperm bank, against the sperm banks using fetal tissue which is of course a total lie; a fabrication. But the Christians were so gullible that they showed up anyway and so then instead of finding an organization protesting with them they found an organization protesting against them so they basically were just used as a prop; they became a backdrop to our action. This is typical of how the Church operated. We would move other organizations around like pieces on a chessboard, generally because most other organizations were... not only were they not typically well-schooled in the tactics of situationism, but they also sort of they tend to be kind of do-gooders, and they think of themselves as benevolent. But we never had any, you know, illusions about that, so we were more—what’s the word I’m looking for—we were more... Machiavellian. We would outfox them from the beginning, and this was just how we operated. This is how we were able to leap into the limelight so quickly.

RADIO: So yeah... you’ve described the church as sort of an art piece before; as Dadaist—and I know that you guys, sort of, would use these, you know, the situationism, as more of these extreme messages to shock people and to start these conversations.

CHRIS: Yeah I mean you can’t... It’s clear that “Eat a Queer Fetus for Jesus” is a shocking statement, even today. If you put that on your car, you might get your windshield broken... so it was shocking then, and it’s shocking now, and it probably always will be shocking. And so, in that sense, it’s a score—like to the extent that I sat down one day and thought of that. I was ahead of the curve. I was coming up with ways to bend people’s consciousness around new ideas that were previously heretical, or that, you know, that would somehow be inconceivable.

RADIO: Right, so... I don’t know if you can answer this but so... where does like, the shock and the rabble rousing sort of... what’s the distinction between the rabble rousing and what you actually believe? Like what’s just shit disturbance and what, you know, is something you truly believe in a message you’re actually trying to get out there.

CHRIS: Well OK there’s a huge difference between the public perception of the Church of Euthanasia and ...the intentions of its founders. And of course even a difference between those two things and my own ... personal... way of looking at things. All those things are correlated and they have... overlaps, but they are different. So the public perception of the Church of Euthanasia, for example, is Save the Planet Kill Yourself. Let’s go back to that... so most people took that at face value and said OK well you know you know they thought “Ha ha that’s funny like I’m going to put that on my truck” and because... “I’m basically telling everybody to screw off like you should kill yourself” kind of thing, or they thought, “yeah I agree with that; we ought to save the planet.”

But the problem is that the statement is... a paradox. In fact, as we’ve discussed—I think previously—it wasn’t the planet that needs saving; it still isn’t. Think about it:

this is the whole point that the *Life After People* guy made... That in fact, if humans were to disappear in an instant... the natural organisms that remained would be more or less covering the whole surface of the earth again within five hundred years. Which is considerably, you know, shorter than human history, which is already an eyeblink by geological time scales. So the point is that *human beings* are what needs saving, not the planet. If humans press on their current course, it's not going to be the *planet* that's destroyed, it's going to be human civilization that's destroyed. Here we have to be careful... it's possible that some form of humanity could survive such events... so for example, suppose we push on without pause and go all the way to six degrees Celsius; basically create, you know, Planet of Reptiles again—side point—so the place where we're going in terms of the climate is not a place that's inconceivable at all.

In fact, the history of the earth has seen such conditions before. The problem though, is that such conditions don't favor mammals. The fundamental difference between mammals and reptiles is that mammals actually need to stay cool. Mammals evolved in relatively cool times. They're not well suited to a super-hot ultra-tropical climate. Reptiles are suited to that climate. That's why they're called they're called 'cold-blooded animals;' they are fundamentally different—they have a different system of respiration, and so they can take much hotter temperatures. In fact, they thrive in super-hot humid environments. So the mucky, hot, broilingly hot world that we're hell-bent on creating would not favor us. So ultimately it would lead back to Reptile Planet. The last time that the planet was as warm as we're proposing to make it, there were palm trees in the Arctic. There were crocodiles in the Arctic—look it up if you don't believe me. This is just true; that's how it worked.

This is well within the range of what's happened on Earth before and so the point is that... there is something that people really don't see... which is that human civilization is fragile—and this is my real message for you. Human civilization is new and it's fragile and so... I'm not saying that if we pushed ahead with our stupidity that there couldn't be some, you know, bands of humans still surviving— maybe cowering in caves...

[unclear] that's possible... Giant Reptiles, but I wouldn't call that a win, and I don't think you would either. The point is... that the thing that makes humanity interesting... the part of us that's plausibly worth saving; worth even discussing... is not our animal-ness, because we share that in common with all the other animals who evolved here. The part of us that makes us interesting and special and worth saving... is our *humanness*, which means our civilization. Which is all in a very short time—even compared to our own biological history we've only had anatomically modern humans for a couple hundred thousand years. But civilization is vastly shorter than that; orders of magnitude shorter than that. The history of civilization is mostly the last five thousand years, and since it's exponential, you could make a case that the part of it that's really interesting is only the last couple of hundred years. So that's beyond an eyeblink on geological time scales. That's just too small to even consider. It's almost... from the point of view of the geological time scale of earth, that is

essentially instantaneous. We've gone from being kind of bumbling overgrown apes to being full-blown planet dominators in a few hundreds of years.

That's interesting. That's amazing, and it may have terrible consequences, but it is at least interesting, and the good parts of that are arguably worth saving. And that's the post-anti-human Church of Euthanasia. The post-anti-human Church of Euthanasia is all about understanding what is special about humans and what's worth saving. And, of course as you probably gather from your readings, what's worth saving is our rationality; our ability to actually comprehend the universe. That's unique. There is no other animal on earth that does that, and we don't know that there are other animals anywhere else, or anything anywhere else in the universe that does that.

There may be life forms out there that have acquired our level of understanding of their situation, but we can't prove that now because of the distances involved. We're not going to be able to prove that in any amount of time that matters to us. And so for the moment we have to assume; we have to presume that we are a kind of intelligent scuzz that has evolved on this chunk of rock that's whipping through space at an almost inconceivable speed, and that we are alone... alone in a totally indifferent universe. This is what the Hubble telescope makes abundantly clear—that most of the universe is *uninhabitable*. Couldn't go anywhere near it in fact. Vast chunks of the universe are either empty, and just unimaginably freezing cold, or even worse, they're broilingly hot and filled with exploding plasma, black holes, stuff like that. Stuff that, you know, if you were even within light years of it you'd be fucked. You can't be anywhere near it, so most of the universe is just basically completely antithetical to our existence.

There's no hope and so we're not going anywhere. Rich guys can, you know, transport themselves to the moon and Mars all they want, but it doesn't solve the fundamental problem. We do not have a life support system anywhere else in the universe at this time except on earth, and so we either survive here or we don't. But either way it's of no relevance to the universe itself. The universe is unaware of our existence and indifferent to our existence, and so to the extent that humans screw up and make earth uninhabitable themselves we're the only ones that matters to. The animals on it ... in fact for animals, it'll be an improvement. For squirrels it'll be an improvement. OK you could argue that for cows and chickens possibly, and certainly for corn and maybe roaches and rats and other species that have relatively been beneficiaries of humanity's takeover of earth's surface—for them it'll be tough shit—so they won't have as good a time as they did, though you've got to make a case that for most of those species, they existed before us, they could exist after us too in somewhat reduced conditions, and it'll all work out for them.

There's no danger of roaches going extinct, but there's a huge danger of humanity going extinct or at least of human civilization becoming untenable and going extinct. Those are real plausible dangers, and in fact there's every reason to believe that this is going to happen; that if human civilization is still around in twenty one hundred—I

won't be there to verify it—but you know, color me amazed because if ever there were a lifeform hell-bent on its own destruction it's got to be human beings.

RADIO: So I haven't really heard you talk this way before. I read the Metadelusion blog but um... **CHRIS:** It's all about science; I mean Metadelusion is all about science.

RADIO: So but...

CHRIS: Essentially, Metadelusion rose out of a debate with Lydia Eccles, who was the founder of the Unabomber for president campaign. She is a neo-primitivist, which I am not. I am not a neo-primitive.

I had neo-primitive sympathies at one time—I think that they have their points, and I was you know, I'm not going to say that I *appreciate* Ted Kaczynski—I read the Unabomber's manifesto very carefully, and I think there's a lot a lot in it worth considering, but ultimately I don't agree with his premise. I once wrote a pretty well-known critique of it which was published in *the Realist*, but that's another story. I think that his methods, you know, were misguided at best. I don't think he really reached the people that he hoped he would have reached. But aside from that, I think that his fundamental message rests on a misassumption. I don't think that... I think that what he gets wrong, and that what Lydia gets wrong, is that there's anything about humanity worth saving *other* than our rationality and our ability to understand the universe. The rest of it—you know—forget it. This is the point of Metadelusion. The argument grew out of a fundamental debate over the specialness of scientific knowledge. Lydia accused me of “scientism” and to some extent... she's not *right*... I wouldn't say she's *right*—it's more that—she's seeing something real—what she's seeing is that I have contempt for other modes of knowledge. So, like, she would try to argue that Buddhism is a perfectly valid and equal mode of knowledge to science, or you know—substitute some other system or alleged system—and so my point about that is that that's absurd. I'm like Richard Dawkins. I mean [I'm an] absolutely unreconstructed you know—unrepentant is, sorry, the word I mean—unrepentant rationalist... in the sense that I don't accept that there's any other mode of inquiry that can arrive at real truth other than the scientific method. Anything else is just childishness. It's as simple as that.

We have we have a method for establishing whether something is in fact provisionally true, because if remember your Karl Popper you'll know that nothing is actually ever proved true forever—it doesn't work like that—things are only proved false. And so everything that we consider true for the moment is provisionally true. So gravity is provisionally true. It's the best explanation we've got for the phenomena, and until we see something better, it will do. So the real point about science; the point that Metadelusion is striving for—through its many thousands of words to make—is that science works in a very simple way. It works like this: every explanation of phenomena is judged by how predictive it is. Nothing else. In order for your explanation to receive any credit; in order for anyone to even be interested in your explanation, it has to be not just repeatable; it has to be not just testable; it has to be not only repeatable—even by people who hate your guts which is how peer review works—much more fundamentally

than all of those things, it has to be predictive. And its explanations that are predictive have merit, and are preserved. Explanations that fail to be predictive are cast aside and falsified. This is what we inherit from Karl Popper, and the road of our history is littered with failed explanations.

RADIO: All right.

CHRIS: So this what Metadelusion is about. Metadelusion is about the idea that there is something worth saving in humanity... and what's worth saving in humanity is that we're capable of actually understanding ourselves. We're capable of understanding the periodic table. We found bacteria, right? We observe the motions of the stars and we're able to understand what they're made of. This is no joke. When Einstein said "the moon is really out there," he wasn't joking. That's a scientific statement. It's funny—it was probably funnier in German—but what, in other words, the point about it is that that the moon is out there whether you believe in it or not. You know, and there are cranks who believe that it isn't perhaps, and certainly ...in humans' dark pre-history, people, you know, imagined that the moon was made of cheese or whatever they thought. But none of that matters. The fact that humans were simpletons in the past is not relevant now. Simpletons can be discounted. Because we stand on the shoulders of giants. You understand? We stand on generations now of brilliant people who gave their lives to chisel out one more little small piece of reality and understand it deeply. And those individual journeys—very isolated at first—remember, before the Renaissance, each scientist essentially worked alone, unable to communicate with other scientists in many cases, had to repeat the entire infrastructure of science from scratch starting with the most basic logic and algebra. Because there was no way to share information; there was no mail; there was no Internet. Everybody was on their own but... that's not true anymore; today we have we have Wikipedia. Today I can I could trivially look up anything and get to the bottom of it almost immediately.

And so today we truly stand on the shoulders of giants and it's because of this that you have a cell phone in your pocket, not because of childish wishful thinking. This was the point of Metadelusion. This was what upset Lydia so terribly. She couldn't accept that actually... belief is childish, and yet this is the essence of what I'm saying. I don't ...you know when I hear somebody use the word 'belief' I reach for my revolver. I don't believe anything.

RADIO: But you have, you clearly have an affinity for science. So, it's sort of surprising to me, I mean...

CHRIS: I'm a scientist for fuck's sake! I mean that's what I spent my whole life doing! I'm an engineer! I mean in my work—you gotta understand—in my work right, if you fail to predict phenomena, then your stuff just doesn't work ...and you'll find yourself out of a job. That's what engineering is.

Engineering is applied science. I spent thirty-five years building vast systems that depend critically on being correct, on actually fully understanding reality! Your wishful thinking counts for nothing in such a world. I... you know... I worked constantly with people who were further up the scientific food chain than I am, and the message

was clear; the message is that Pythagoras is as real as your nose. The Pythagorean Theorem couldn't be more true. There's twenty seven proofs of it just on Wikipedia. If Pythagoras weren't true, every building on earth would fall over. Our universe would simply couldn't be possible. We only can live in a universe where Pythagoras is true; it's just as true as a thing can be.

And so the point is that ...you know... it's just absurd to try to imagine that our wishful thinking about our origins as ensconced in things like, you know, the patriarchal religions, or Buddhism or Hinduism or whatever... that our wishful, magical thinking, could have any value compared to a system as firmly grounded in truth as the scientific mode of inquiry. This is just laughable. It's embarrassing and the fact that there are, you know, that what a third of the people in the United States think that Earth is only three thousand... or six thousand years old... this is just an outrage! We live in a time of desperate know-nothingism... In which people are *proud* of their ignorance. And this is shameful. It's a horror, and to the extent that this persists, humanity doesn't deserve to survive.

RADIO: Right... and so that's... I mean, that's why I sort of so... OK so that's why this sort of surprised me... because you've written a lot about speciesism and... so I mean it's one thing to you know be a proponent of science and believe in it or something...

CHRIS: No, but I don't believe in it. Remember, I told you I don't believe in anything. But do you really understand what I mean by that?

RADIO: I mean I'm not going to be able to articulate it like you.

CHRIS: The point is that science doesn't require belief

RADIO: Sure right yeah right it's just... it's just... it just *is*.

CHRIS: NO! No, we wish! No no no no... the problem is it requires proof, and proof is work! The real point about magical thinking is that it's *easy*. Magical thinking is the refuge of scoundrels... to famously misquote... you know it really is, because scoundrels love magical thinking, because it's so easy. The Church of Scientology can sling out any shit they like. They can sling out cheesy science fiction and people lap it up because people love easy answers to hard questions. But science isn't like that. Science is all about hard answers to questions... Answers that actually require deep understanding, careful, long, laborious work. The point is that truth isn't free, not really. You have to ascertain it.

RADIO: I guess it surprises me that you think the pursuit of these answers is worthwhile. I guess because...

CHRIS: Look if you mean you think it surprises you that I would be willing to see Earth destroyed in order to preserve human civilization? Yes. That is shocking, right; shocking coming from the founder of an anti-humanist organization. It is truly shocking, I agree and that's why it's the post-anti-human Church of Euthanasia. In other words, I had what you what you might call a conversion. I saw something that I didn't see originally, and what I saw is that squirrels are all very well. But squirrels... are not ultimately interesting. Sorry but there's a reason why we don't name them, not really.

There's a reason why we name humans but we don't, you know, name every squirrel that we ever see. It's not that squirrels don't have rights—we grant them rights. This is the point. Squirrels don't grant us rights; they can't because rights don't exist for them. Now do you see? The point is that the whole superstructure of human experience and knowledge that allows us even to conceptualize universal rights—even for humans never mind for non-humans—this is a *human* thing, only *humans* could construct such a thing because only humans have the sufficient neurological developments that have allowed us to achieve full self-awareness. And this is the flame worth preserving, and if that experiment causes the destruction of civilization then so be it.

Because what other experiment would you run? So I argue the point is, that the reason this is causing cognitive dissonance for you is because I'm arguing in the Antihumanism Manifesto that humanity should exterminate itself precisely because it's capable of feeling guilty for having done all these terrible things.

RADIO: Well this flame that you talk about like our intelligence has come at the cost of you know, all these other species being wiped out...

CHRIS: Yeah, but it's come at a huge cost to us too; fully half of the human population right now lives on ten dollars a day or less. A solid third of the human population goes to bed hungry every night and is considered absolute poor. Ok? This is true—you can just look it up in the UN numbers—a third! Right? Of—what is it—seven and a half billion people... that's a lot of hungry people! And so you could make a case that human civilization has been a disaster for humans too! And in fact this was exactly the Unabomber's point. His point was... it wasn't that he *wasn't* concerned about wilderness, he was very concerned about wilderness, but he focused primarily in his manifesto on the impact of Industrial Civilization on humans. Ultimately his argument boiled down to this: his argument was that industrial civilization might survive, but it could only survive by turning human beings into domesticated animals. And... since that was the only way it could survive that was a reason to destroy it, because being a domesticated animal is contemptible, and embarrassing, and shameful, and ... you know... he treasured the wildness in humans—he particularly extolled the virtues of frontier life—frankly I think that he was very misinformed on this point, but his ideal was something like frontier life in the eighteenth century or so, or before, in America. When a man could, you know, go out there and clear a piece of land and kill a bunch of animals and chop some wood and build himself a house, and meet life on his own terms. He considered that very glorious and everything, but I don't! I think that's laughable and absurd. I think that in fact much good has come from domesticating humanity. I'm proud of my domestication! I grew up in New York City, where everyone is domesticated because you have to be; because you live in giant towers on top of thousands and thousands of other people and your way of life is circumscribed by a billion rules and a code of conduct that's very strict and requires everybody to have a specialized job, and work for the allegedly agreed-upon greater goals of our society. I don't... I'm not embarrassed of being a domesticated human! I have served well! I served society for thirty five years or more. I've served society,

and I believe in society. I want society to succeed. I don't think it's *likely* anymore; I think that other, darker forces have gained control, and it's very likely society's going to destroy itself... but society was the only thing I was ever interested in.

I like to joke around and say "people ask me when I'm going to kill myself—it's like this—the day my debit card stops working. You got it? Really, the day the internet goes down—forget it!" I'm not one of these, you know... I'm not one of these people that is going to go to my luxury survival condo or anything like that, even if I had one... I wouldn't... I don't believe in that. I know people who are like that; it's very common actually. It's a common pretension in the financial circles especially financial managers and so on. It's like a game that you can play if you have a lot of money and...it's kind of fun... you get to learn to use guns... and you know you have this kind of fantasy of—like you know— you're a super bad-ass, and it's going to be like the John Carpenter movie or something... and you're going to, you know, hoard up all your supplies, and go to your special place... and then shoot the zombies when the zombies come.

It's a lot of bullshit, first of all, because the one thing you can say about the collapse of civilization ... is that's going to favor the criminal element. So your hedge fund managers think they can prevail, but they can't because they're not actually practiced enough. Criminals actually do this for fun, that's the whole idea of being a criminal—you actually enjoy making people suffer. You're a sociopath; you like it. You like killing people; it's fun. It's what you do. And so those guys are professionals right? They'll show up at the luxury survival gated compound or whatever and they'll kill the men and rape the women, take whatever they've got; whatever there is to take, and split because that's... you know, they're practiced. Think of outlaw bikers, right. In a collapse-type civilization the zombies have the upper hand for sure because they... you know, they have years and years of practice at fucking over rubes.

So... it was all just fantasy anyway, but the point is that even regardless of the fantasy aspect of it— I'm not even interested. I don't want to live in a zombie movie. Everything that I value about being alive comes from society; from civilization: math, books, the internet, science, the ability to understand my universe, the Hubble telescope... all of these things are products of civilization. I don't want to go back to cowering in caves. I don't even like camping! That's disgusting... like it's dirty... You know what? No hot showers? You gotta give me a break! Sorry but, like, this is just not... you know I grew up in New York City, one of the most cosmopolitan places on earth. If there's ever a place anywhere on earth that's committed to the idea of maintaining civilization... Right there in the heart of the Empire, it's got to be New York. I believe in the Empire. The Empire is the empire of knowledge, you dig? It's the empire of man's deepening understanding of his own predicament and to the extent that process [unclear] Ever be ... real hope for humanity. Humanity could pass through its current resource bottleneck and become a long lived species. That's the dream. And if squirrels have to bite it to make that possible I'm a fan. Fuck the squirrels. It's low on our list of problems.

RADIO: OK. So civilization is sacred. And it's sacred to humans and no one else and that's fine.

CHRIS: And who else would it be sacred to? Obviously it's not sacred to squirrels, right. Squirrels don't even know it exists. I mean, they may be aware of its effects—they may think like, “hey there's less acorns around here than there used to be” or “oh look, they're cutting down my favorite tree” or whatever but... in other words, the point is, that squirrels aren't going to band together and form a union and lobby Congress and say “hey we want, you know, more federal money every year for acorns!” That doesn't happen! Reality doesn't work like that! It's not some kind of, you know... this isn't a cartoon. This is real.

The point is that humans dominate the game at the moment... we have the killer app and the killer app is *intelligence*, and our ability to cooperate on large scale projects of altruism, where we create a huge system whose only purpose is to give a helping hand to other humans. That was a tremendous innovation—we build roads so that people can get around. The roads don't benefit the person who builds them—the person who builds them is just some guy who works for a huge road building company. Roads fulfill societal aims, so you could make a case that a society is defined by its shared goals. To the extent that it has shared goals which are actually constructive, then there is hope for that society. The society may still get destroyed by unknown unknowns; it may get destroyed by things that its original shared goals just didn't include, or you know weren't aware of. And so the society could be laudable in the sense of having admirable goals but still bite it for reasons that weren't anticipated. And that's, in fact, exactly what's happening to us. It's not that our society was fundamentally flawed. No, the goals of the French Revolution were right. The French Revolution was a tremendous step forward in progress, and the American Revolution as well. The idea that human beings have intrinsic value was a tremendous progression; a tremendous advance in our way of life.

In fact human beings *do* have intrinsic value. We are in fact worth saving. And to the extent that that's codified now in the U.N. charter and in many other places—that's real progress! And yeah there was some backsliding right, the Holocaust was serious backsliding and there's been lots of other horrible examples too. The Civil War was a just cause—we fought for the idea that it's not OK to own other humans; that humans can't be property. That was a just cause and we prevailed, and so we are crawling our way out of the slime and becoming actually a somewhat plausibly ethical creature, to the point where we even are now having discussions about what rights we should or shouldn't assign to non-humans. Well that's tremendous progress right? First gays... you know... first women can vote and then, you know gays can get married and next thing you know we're going to be assigning rights to squirrels or even to artificial intelligence, as they just did in Dubai or in sorry, in was it Dubai?... I forget ... I think it's in Saudi Arabia—they just assigned rights to that famous artificial intelligence that was created by Hansen robotics.

RADIO: Sophia or whatever?

CHRIS: Yes, Sophia. She now has rights so in other words, we are on a long journey of being more ethically defensible and actually having you know... becoming more advanced; more sophisticated in our way of looking at things, but that doesn't mean that there aren't retrograde forces at work; there most certainly are—the most corrosive which is greed and inequality—and it may be our undoing, but my point also is: don't forget the impact of things that we didn't anticipate, of unknown unknowns. Here's my best example... you ready? It's like this: imagine you're in the 1950s, like you know... picture that movie *Pleasantville* or something like that. There you are back in doofus land right—I mean McCarthyism—and ...you're a man from the future and you walk around trying to convince people that we shouldn't build the Interstate Highway System and we shouldn't have lots of cars and build all these giant suburbs like Levittown. Why? Because if we do that we're going to be putting tons and tons and tons of this invisible gas in the air which is going to fuck up the climate in the future and change the weather and ultimately make earth uninhabitable. You know what would have happened? Guess. They would have grabbed you off the street, dragged you off to the nearest loony bin, and fucking lobotomized you! Nobody would've believed you! They would've said you're out your fucking mind! We're not going to build the Interstate Highway System because you say that this invisible gas is going to do all this stuff? You're crazy!

Well it turned out that you would have been right. But it wouldn't have done you any good back then, and so the point is that there are there are unanticipated side effects. In this the Unabomber was absolutely right. He was correct in saying that the problem—one of the problems—the big problem with civilization is it creates a cascade of exponential unanticipated side effects, and every time we respond to some crisis, our solution in turn creates new crises and those are the unintended side effects which we then have to respond to, and our response to those still create more... and so there's this logarithmically expanding kind of fractal cascade of chaos that we engender, and there's no escaping from that. That's just the price of admission. If you want to do something as bold and as entropic—to use a big word—as civilization, you have to be willing to take on risk.

But that doesn't mean you have to be stupid. And so my argument against humanity is not so much that we're engaged in a risky enterprise—of course we are!—but it's an enterprise worth taking risk for. But that doesn't mean we have to be stupid. Being stupid is like capitalism. Capitalism is just out and out stupid. The idea that ...private avarice engenders the common good... this is just plain nutty. This is just not true, right? So we've had decades and decades now in which to try and prove that trickle-down economics works, but of course it doesn't work. The idea that we should create a system that basically has its sole purpose is to allow a tiny minority to vastly enrich themselves at everyone else's expense in the short term, totally disregarding the future consequences of their actions; that's just crazy. Of course that'll lead to catastrophe, but the point is that humans could change that. We don't have to have that economic system. I'm not saying that we should have communism or Leninism or Trotskyism or

anything else. I'm just saying that we could change that system because it's a human system; it's not dictated by biology. It's not like your liver or something.

You want to change your liver you've got big problems, because that's dictated by millions and millions of years of mammalian evolution, and you know you can't live without your liver; you can't digest food; you can't do anything—you want to build a different one? Lots of luck with that. But economic systems? Shit! Economic systems... you could build a new economic system in a couple of days and if it's popular ...you know... the whole world could agree to it by next week. You know the human systems are extremely ephemeral; they come and go and so there's no there's no set reason in stone that humans have to use an economic system that's guaranteed to lead to catastrophe. That's just not true. We don't have to, and so we could change our minds and this is exactly the kind of reason why humanity is worth fighting for—it's because it's actually in play; it's not set in stone that we're going to destroy ourselves, it's just increasingly more and more likely because more, and dumber and dumber people are taking control. But if we can manage to reverse that, you actually have a chance of creating something fantastic and very much worth fighting for.

This is the point that I'm really trying to make... is that it's worth fighting for and the fight is actually in play. Now. We are currently having a debate today in our society about the specialness of scientific knowledge. We are having that debate when Trump gets up there and says “you know that's fake news” or “we have alternative facts”—that's an opportunity to assert that there is no such thing. You're entitled to your own opinion as the senator famously said, but you're not entitled to your own facts. Have I made myself clear yet?

RADIO: You have. Yeah you have I'm having a hard... I guess I didn't anticipate this and I'm...

CHRIS: Well you know the Church of Euthanasia is full of surprises—would you really have wanted it to be boring? I mean would you want to just be exactly what you anticipated?

RADIO: Well sure yeah I mean yeah I came in with some blanks that I wanted you to fill with what I expected but this is not that but...

CHRIS: OK I mean well so give me the blanks and I'll do my best I really will.

RADIO: Oh no, you haven't disappointed me... I just... I mean how can you align yourself with the Church of Euthanasia any more then?

CHRIS: Because I think they have a point. The point is that the Church of Euthanasia is saying, that if humanity can't shape up... if we can't manage to somehow coexist with life then we're anti-life. This is something that people often get wrong. They think the Christians call themselves pro-life, but from the church [unclear] ...especially the anti-abortion ones right... but the Church of Euthanasia calls them “pro-death” and why is that? It's because by rejecting... by believing, for example, that they're going to go to heaven and so on by believing in, you know, this nebulous idea of the afterlife... What Christians are demonstrating is that they don't really take consequences seriously. Consequences means that life has consequences; the consequence

of life is death. You can't have one without the other and this much the pagans and the Wiccans... the Satanists and so on... the Wiccans... are absolutely right. The two things are two sides of the same coin.

That's in fact how evolution works. The whole point of evolution is that it doesn't work unless you have selective differential survival. You have to have a selection. I know it sounds like Auschwitz or something, but it's true. The Nazis were emulating... were in their own way mirroring actual Darwinian processes. You have to have death trimming away the stuff that isn't working, otherwise you haven't got evolution; it doesn't happen. You have to have stuff that's mutating, you need... as Dawkins puts it beautifully... you need replicators. You need self replicators, but you need self replicators operating in an environment of differential survival, where death is always there ready to snap up the stuff that isn't working as well, so that what survives... what goes to pass on its genes is the stuff that's working better. Then it accelerates. You get positive feedback, and next thing you know, it's squirrels... and next thing you know it's humans... it's a long journey from amoeba—believe it—took millions and millions of years but that's how life actually works. You need life and you need death.

And so...you know...Christians are completely misguided about this, and their refusal to accept evolution should be your first big sign right that they're not getting it; they don't really understand how life works here. In fact this is serious business here on Earth. Very very serious! It's taken millions and millions of years of trial and error just to get to this point and believe it that we can completely fuck this up and then it will be back to squirrels again.

But the Church of Euthanasia's point is that that's OK. If that's the way it has to go, then that's how it has to go. And in that case, it *should* go that way. Of course it's true that squirrels could evolve back into apes and apes could evolve back into humans eventually... but it might *not* go that way. Maybe they won't. Maybe they'll evolve into something else, something actually smarter than us. One can only hope, right? And either way—even if they do evolve back into us it won't be *our* fault because we'll be gone.

Right, so really the Church of Euthanasia is about recognizing that humanity is special, but its specialness does not guarantee its survival. You understand? That survival implies *coexistence*, not just with animals—forget animals—think about your gut, man. Think about your insides—what's in your insides. Inside your insides are billions of bugs! There's more bugs inside you than you have cells! You couldn't digest food for an hour without them! You are basically—as Dawkins put it beautifully—you're basically a convenient container that your commensal bacteria have evolved to get around in because it's a good gig; you know, it beats walking, it's warm in the winter, there's plenty of food... It's a good gig for them and it's deeper than that. It's like fractal. It's at every level. Your cell contains... basically modified bacteria, every one of your cells basically evolved its multiple parts from bacteria. Ultimately, evolution figured out the trick of creating multicellular organisms out of bacteria so that your mitochondria, and many other specialized components inside every one of your cells,

which are already fucking small, are basically things that recently were free ranging! You know, they were bacteria that figured out a new way to exist... [domesticating themselves] and so you coexist with all that stuff, and if you stop co-existing with it, you're dead. You're dead dead dead, right?

If your cells stop behaving themselves you get cancer... and you're DEAD. And so the point is, that it's all very tenuous and fragile. Our existence here is provisional. To the extent that we shape up, and play by the rules, and keep Earth, you know, somewhat tenable, and keep, you know, the climate range reasonable for mammals, and like, co-exist with plants because we need them right; we can't photosynthesize. Last I checked humans aren't going to be photosynthesizing anytime soon, which means we need a shit ton of plants to keep ourselves alive, and we actually need a lot of the other animals to keep the plants, you know, in the right proportion, and to keep the insects in the right proportion... all the rest of it.

It's all extremely fragile, and it's evolved over, you know, millions of years to be the way it is because that way is the right way. Because that way keeps entropy about right; about what's manageable.

We've got to talk about that. We've got to talk about entropy a little bit. See, the point is that that you can't have life without entropy. You can't. It's the price you pay for doing business... but that doesn't mean you have to fucking maximize it! It's like saying you can't live without spending money—of course you can't!—but it doesn't mean you have to go out and spend it all tomorrow, right? You could save some for the next day. You could be *prudent*. Humans so far aren't really showing a lot of...joy in prudence, but they used to, actually.

You could make a case that when we were more religious, we had more of a reverence for prudence, and that was a good thing. Not everything about religion is bad; not everything about anything is bad. Everything has good and bad aspects. One of the good aspects of religion is it gave humans an organizing principle that actually maximized certain highly successful strategies like... communality. You know, basically working for the good of the entire community, of considering the future, of having reverence for life, you know... especially for agrarian life, and trying to keep things, you know, more or less the same so that our food would survive and stuff. Those are all good things.

You know, you go back and look at those gothic cathedrals, right—I've seen them in person—they stand for something. They stand for a highly ordered way of life, and yeah there were bad aspects of it. Yeah, eventually it led to stuff like the Spanish Inquisition. Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition! ...but it led to a lot of good things too, right? It was a symbol of a way of life in which people didn't have to ask why. They knew why. Everything was done for the glory of God, which basically meant— for the continuity of human civilization. We could use some of that right now! If Christians actually stood up for that for a change, I might actually agree with them!

We need an organizing principle that actually has a future, and enriching *yourself* at the expense of *everyone else* is not that principle, you dig? Like what I'm saying is, that the death of humanity is not going to be climate change... the death of humanity

is neo-liberalism; the idea that empowering individual actors to maximize their selfish interest at the expense of everyone else, and especially of the future, could lead to good things. It won't! It can only lead to disaster. And to the extent that we model our entire socio-economic order along such principles, it will be short-lived, and we will be back to squirrels in no time. But that was stupid! We didn't need to do any of that! And to the extent that that actually happens it will be one hundred percent self-inflicted, and we richly deserve it. And in this sense I'm completely in tune with the original Church of Euthanasia, which is all about condemnation of human stupidity. Human stupidity is a thing, man. It's a real threat.

RADIO: But now instead of saying all right the noble thing to do is let's exterminate ourselves, let's take it into our own hands and sort of run toward extinction... you think, like, it's going to happen, or, you know, maybe not, but probably it's going to happen and that's fine let's let that.

CHRIS: You know I think you're mischaracterizing. The truth is, The Church of Euthanasia was not primarily a suicide organization though we certainly encouraged it. The... you didn't have to commit suicide to join the Church of Euthanasia; you're mischaracterizing something important here. Membership in the Church of Euthanasia involved one thing, and *only* one thing, and it wasn't suicide. Please, for of the for the benefit of our listeners, why don't you tell us what it was!

RADIO: No procreation.

CHRIS: Right! You had to take a lifetime vow of non-procreation, and I'm still down with that! I still haven't procreated and none of my members have either. And so the point is that *non-procreation* was the point of the Church of Euthanasia. Ultimately, that was the only thing you actually had to agree to. Suicide, and abortion, and cannibalism, and sodomy—the four pillars—those were all optional. Strictly optional. Approved, but optional. Right? And so the point is that by not procreating... you're having exponential effects. Right?

You could recycle garbage or whatever it is you do... whatever... for your entire life right? You could recycle and change your light bulbs and, you know, have solar panels and so on... but that only has a linear effect. That only affects *you* and *your* consumption. But now imagine if you have two kids and your two kids grow up to be pro-life Christians and they wind up having huge families; they each have ten kids apiece, and then all their kids wind up being brainwashed too, and they have ten kids apiece... Before you know it, you've created an enormous, ever-expanding exponential tree of side effects that long outlive you, which you have no control over. You'll be dead and in your grave, right? But meanwhile your kids are still out there growing more and more and more... and probably not using the right light bulbs either... And so you're fucked, right? You've lost control. Ultimately, your impact was determined, not by the individual consumption decisions you made in your lifetime, but by your procreation decisions; by your reproductive decisions. And this is why the church focused on non-procreation—because it is the single most important consumption-related decision that any human being can make. By cutting off your potential offspring, you are eliminating

an entire exponential tree into the future of cascading consequences, which otherwise you would have no control over.

You might think “oh well I’ll brainwash my children and so they’ll be, you know... they’ll only have one kid apiece or whatever,” but actually history shows that the more you try and brainwash your children to do X... the more likely they are to do Y. And so in fact it never works that way in practice and the only way to ensure that your children don’t wind up leading to population growth is by not having them. This is clear, right? Absolutely crystal clear.

So this is a laudable thing. This was the part of the Church of Euthanasia that was truly worth sacrificing for: gaining wider acceptance of the idea that non-procreation is a fundamentally just cause, and that it is a cause that is laudable from the perspective of long-term anti-humanism. The idea that if humans can’t live within limits, then they shouldn’t exist at all. And they won’t exist ultimately. Is that clear enough?

RADIO: It is, yeah... and maybe we should, I mean... because I just we haven’t talked a lot about sort of the, you know, the pillars of the Church of Euthanasia or whatever. For our listeners... so the four pillars are: Abortion. Sodomy. Cannibalism and Suicide.

CHRIS: And they form an acronym: SACS.

RADIO: So it’s pretty clear how suicide and abortion... you know... work toward the goal of human extinction. What about cannibalism and sodomy? Why are those important to the church?

CHRIS: Well sodomy is clear enough right ... sodomy is often misunderstood as meaning anal sex, but that’s not at all what it means; it has a biblical definition; it’s very old word. What sodomy strictly means is sex not for procreation. It’s often associated with spilling of seed. Though it could be associated with homosexuality, for example in women. But strictly speaking, it’s the idea of spilling your seed on the earth, right. So masturbation is technically a form of sodomy. Yeah right, the idea that the purpose of sex is to expand the human race. And of course there’s some truth to that particularly when the population was a lot smaller, and so to the extent that men were wasting their seed, they weren’t doing The Thing. They weren’t using it for its intended purpose, which was, you know, God’s plan on Earth, which was for there to be lots more humans, right? So this is what sodomy means. So sodomy, of course, is a sacrament in the Church of Euthanasia. Not just because it’s a means to the prime directive of non-procreation, but because it’s symbolic. It symbolizes rejection of the idea that the... continual expansion of human numbers is laudable or a goal worth having.

That, on the contrary, it symbolizes the idea not just that sex could be for pleasure, which is important. But that the idea of living within limits begins in the most fundamental way. With sex. So this is key, right? You’re making it every time you’re having sex—you’re making a conscious choice either to [risk], or to *not* risk not failing to live within limits. That’s clear.

And then for cannibalism well so you know strictly speaking... Vegetarianism and veganism are not *required* in the Church of Euthanasia. The idea is that... it's suggested that if you have to eat flesh you should eat *human* flesh. So this all goes back to Peter Singer; I think it was Singer who said... Was it Singer I'm trying to think of? It might have been the other Singer there's two Singers in this domain; I sometimes mix them up... but one of them famously—I think it was Peter—who famously said that, “for animals the Holocaust never ended. For animals every day is the Holocaust...” You know... actually his famous quote was, “for animals it's Treblinka every day...” Something like this; I'm slightly misquoting it but, you know, if you've ever read *Treblinka* and have some idea what that means, you know it's pretty graphic! This is one of the great horrors that ever existed throughout history. And you know, for animals, that's just another day.

RADIO: Yeah, and ...a part of the anti-human manifesto... sort of advocates a species Holocaust and now, you know, you could've used different wording... that's a deliberate sort of controversial word choice. Why...?

CHRIS: Well, I didn't advocate species Holocaust; what I said is that that's what's actually occurring. **RADIO:** Oh sure.

CHRIS: Humans are causing a species Holocaust, and that's not only short-sighted in the sense of it ultimately leading to human extinction—which it would—but it's also monstrously unethical. And so to the extent that human beings are trying to evolve a more just way of life that is actually ethically defensible, it's a huge black eye for us. Just as much as slavery was, or just as much as the enslavement of women essentially... effective enslavement of women you know women used to be property, and they were basically, you know, once they were wedded they had no rights indistinguishable from those of their husband, and so on. All that would be considered monstrous now. It is considered monstrous except in the most regressive retrograde countries, you know, in some of the Islamic countries perhaps, you know, that these beliefs still persist.

But for the most part, the world has moved beyond that, but not with respect to animals. Not at all.

And so animals are the new frontier. After we get done, you know, with gay marriage... we've got a

lot more work to do. Because, in fact, we cannot expect humans' ethical system to survive until it confronts the fundamental problem of having created Treblinka for animals. That's not going to work. It's not just because it's not going to work in *energy* terms, it doesn't work in the sense that having all this enormous population of humans consuming meat is a huge driver of climate change and many other environmental problems, the eutrophication of the oceans and so on. It's shortsighted in the physical sense. It's fucking up earth's chemistry; no question about that. It's leading to grotesque conversion of land, cutting down a forest to grow beef for, you know, fat Americans who are then going to die of heart attacks.

The whole thing is monstrous logically and physically, but more fundamentally it's monstrous ethically. We simply can't... it's as monstrous and impossible as slavery was

for us at the time. The people... the radical Republicans were great heroes of the Church of Euthanasia, by the way, guys like Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner—look them up later—Thaddeus Stevens is a great hero because he was somebody who fought throughout his life, very viscerally, for a just cause. He saw that civilization couldn't continue and still allow slavery; that they weren't compatible. That civilization... had within it the seeds of its own destruction; that as long as it continued to have such corrosive injustice it contained... or you know... agglomerated inside of itself it would fail. So it had to be purged. We had to get rid of this injustice. We had to just expel it for once and for all. If we had to fight a brutal bloody war over it, then it was a war worth fighting.

Well, the war against consumption of animals is just as worthwhile. We have to fight this battle. We have to ultimately arrive at a position where humans are vegetarians or vegans, not just because it makes sense environmentally, but because it makes sense ethically.

RADIO: Right. And so using the word holocaust I mean it's going to you know that brings up... you know something that really happened to humans and it's a touchy subject to people but you want that shock to sort of you know make them look at what we're doing here and realize...

CHRIS: I don't know why ... it's only a touchy subject for people because they're sort of misinformed or something. I mean, you know... in other words, the Holocaust was just the worst atrocity that humans, you know, ever actually ever actually *admitted to*. This is how I like to describe it and this would upset my German friends because of course in Germany have strict laws about this, where you know, you're not allowed to compare anything to the Holocaust, even today that's true. It's a crime and I've committed that crime many times and I'm proud of it because it's a crime that needs to be committed.

In fact, dreadful as the Holocaust was, you can make a case that humanity has committed and continues to commit vastly worse crimes. Crimes against non-humans, and the only reason that they're not recognized as crimes is because we don't value non-humans ethically. But so from the point of view... you know... if we want to get specific, right... if we were going to value the crimes of non-humans... Massachusetts, where I live, would be the... it would be like, the world's capital of Holocaust memorials. There would be Holocaust memorials in Fall River, in New Bedford, in

Gloucester, in Boston itself, in Rockport, all up and down the coastline of Massachusetts... in Hyannis; everywhere. There would be monuments to the holocaust. Why? Because that's where the whales were almost exterminated from, and in fact some species of whales were actually completely exterminated.

Imagine that. What I mean when I say "exterminate"? What I mean is I don't mean like, something bad. I mean as in erasing that species' information from Earth hard drive, permanently. Like no take backs. No backups. No. That information is gone forever. You will never have that species again. Just like the passenger pigeon—really gone. No undo, right? So you know... it would... enrage people, but I would say look

you know I'm not... trying to lessen the horrors of the Holocaust. The Holocaust was certainly a dreadful... the most dreadful, and certainly the most industrial-scale attack against a group of humans ever in our history so far, but that doesn't lessen the fact that actually Jews survived it... in terms of their actual culture and their biological inheritance—to the extent that they can be distinguished biologically, but they really can't so let's to avoid going to that whole debate—let's just say that they had some cultural inheritance; some socially evolved inheritance to make them distinguishable as a people right. That survived!

There are, you know, there are temples all across the land in this country. Jewish culture survives ... where you can't say the same about certain kinds of whales, right? They're really gone. Gone—gone. And so the point is that actually, humanity has committed worse horrors also using industrial technology—believe it. Whales were hunted industrially...the only thing that makes the Holocaust so shocking, I think, for people to think about is that it was the first time that they'd seen animal processing—Victorian animal processing technology—directed at human beings. And it was a horror. It's like oh my god I can't believe that they're actually herding people into box cars and like, rendering people in giant rendering factories [into] big piles of you know, gold jewelry and hair and bits of clothing and so forth, and skin, and who knows what?

I mean, that this is a horrible idea but the point is that we do it to animals all day long. All day long. And so what should make the Holocaust frightening to those who have the eyes to see it with, is that the technology was so familiar. In fact, this was well understood technology that the Nazis didn't have to innovate very much, because they could simply recycle existing technology that had been used on animals for a hundred years. And so the point is that, just like Peter Singer said, the Holocaust is ongoing. It's just that its targets are unvalued; they're not considered worthy of consideration and so they just sort of don't exist.

And so the Holocaust churns along quietly without anyone particularly noticing or caring. And that's abominable, and that's got to stop. And to the extent that humanity is going to survive, it's going to have to address that because it is so corrosive ethically to our structures. It's part of the wrong. It's like neo-liberalism in the sense that it's a cancer on the part of humanity that's worth saving.

RADIO: Right. So... just realized we've been talking for a little over an hour I don't want to take too much more of your time but I've got a few more questions written down... **CHRIS:** By the way I have a question for you.

RADIO: Sure, yeah.

CHRIS: You know where you can get a copy of this recording? **RADIO:** Yeah of course do you want like the RAW file or the finished... **CHRIS:** Yeah, I want the raw file from my records.

RADIO: Sure oh yes sure I'll send it to you right after we talk.

CHRIS: Great, thanks.

RADIO: No problem. So. I wonder if your thoughts on this changed—in the manifesto it talks about transhumanism. So you know the idea that you know maybe

humans could escape to another planet; start over, or upload our consciousness to computers or something. Is that viable? Is that worthwhile?

CHRIS: Well I think it's a distraction. I think that it's... the fundamental problem is that it smacks of escapism, and it feeds neatly into the neo-liberal agenda as well, so—there's something that I didn't point out earlier—which is that in many respects neo-liberalism and new-ageism have something fundamental in common. It's not often observed, but it's this... The fundamental message of new-age thought is that everything happens for a reason. It's a kind of fatalism, you know—that there's karma—or something... it's always something like that operating, and so the idea is that if good stuff happens to you, it's because you deserve it. It's because you did something good in a previous life, or because you're, you know, sending out good vibrations or whatever it is, and of course... conversely, if bad stuff happens to you, it's because you deserve it, right?

Well this should sound familiar! It should sound like neo-liberalism. It should sound like our president and his advisors right, because that's exactly what they say. In fact this was lampooned mercilessly and wonderfully in a Brazilian T.V. show; a dystopian sci-fi show called... “Three Percent.” ... the, kind of, mantra of that future society is “you've succeeded because you have *merit*.” Well of course it's... you know, it's a cycle right, that's what you call a cyclical definition. It's absurd in fact; it makes no sense. But this is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of our society right—is that we have a bunch of people for disparate reasons who are believing in a kind of magical thinking instead of grasping, as they should, that [they're] merely really lucky. That they won the sperm lottery and that there's, you know, inequitable distribution of resources at this point in our history as a people.

And consequent to that some people are—as William Blake put it so eloquently, right—“some are born to sweet delight, some are born to endless night,” right? And so that's just bad luck. Most people, they don't get an education. They don't get trained to be computer programmers or anything nice, and they're lucky if they can get a job working at Wal-Mart because they didn't get any breaks, because ultimately despite, you know, having some marginal safety, there is a huge percentage of people who never get a shot; who aren't going to become a... get a chance to be good at anything. And that's a monumental injustice and this too needs to be addressed. But the point is that... neoliberalism would have us believe that that's just tough titty for them and that's because those people didn't have merit.

Because everybody who is successful is successful because they deserve to be and new age thinking says the same thing. It says well you know I guess they just didn't have good vibrations, you know? And so this is all a kind of lie—right—it's a lie that people have come up with, the purpose of which is to rationalize the ugly features of the present. You understand? Like the fact the present political and social and economic arrangements for the most part are extremely ugly and violent and getting worse, much worse. The reality is becoming more unequal and more fascistic, more like the gilded age which, as we must recall, didn't end well. So people forget that,

but the Gilded Age was followed closely by what...the First World War, and the ... Marxist communist revolutions in Russia and China and... Germany, and then because we weren't done yet, the Second World War, which killed tens of millions of people right because it really took that.

We actually had to level whole cities and reduce them to piles of bricks before we could actually say OK maybe this wasn't such a good idea; maybe we need to reorganize our whole society and start actually expropriating wealth from the rich, which is what we did. People forget that too, but this was all what Thomas Piketty and Walter Scheidel had to say; is that in fact it takes a catastrophe before governments are willing to ... get some balls and actually start seriously challenging oligarchy and privilege.

People forget but immediately after the Second World War in this country, in the United States of

America, the... top nominal tax rate was ninety-four percent. Imagine that, ninety-four percent! Sounds punitive! It sounds inconceivable! If you tried to talk about that today they'd lock you up. It would be like talking about climate change back in the 50's right? Nobody would believe you. 94%. But it's history—just look it up; it's true! In fact we had, you know, in some cases, one hundred percent estate taxation. We decided to go after oligarchy and inherited wealth, because there was a perceived positive benefit from breaking it up; from trying to create a more egalitarian society in which more people would have an opportunity. And we sent people to college with government money and built the Interstate Highway System—OK that had some side effects—but the basic premise... the idea was noble right? The idea was to create a more egalitarian, interconnected society, where more people would get a shot at a decent life and so would be able to contribute more meaningfully to the further welfare of humanity by being good citizens.

Being good citizens but yeah, OK, clearly neo-liberalism got the upper hand in the 1980s. And now we don't believe in that anymore we don't believe that government should exist, never mind that government should invest in making us better citizens. We just shouldn't have any government! It's like back to the Warring States period, you know it's going to be like medievalism again. You know that scene in the beginning of—it's famous—the beginning of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* where the two ...where King Arthur goes riding by and the two people are grubbing about in the shit. One says to the other “musta been a king!” the other one says, “How do you know?” and the first one says “because he hasn't got shit all over him!”

Well yeah it could be like that again. You want to live in a world like that? That's what it would look like right, when we... could be cowering in caves, or we could be grubbing about in the dirt while King Arthur goes running by. But that would unwind a shit-ton of progress. That would involve *fantastic* destruction of progress, which is useless and worthless and totally stupid and avoidable. If we could just actually challenge power structures in our society, but unfortunately it looks like, based on history, that the only way we challenge power structures in our societies is when there's

a catastrophe like the Second World War. When we're actually you know, vaporizing whole cities with nuclear weapons. That's what it takes to organize people. People are not, you know, easy to organize. It's like herding cats. It's very very difficult to get people to focus on an external threat unless it's extremely present and for this, tragically, we can thank our evolutionary environment.

In our original evolutionary environment long-term thinking was not optimized for, because there was no long-term. Your life on the on the savanna was likely to be brutish, nasty and short. Thomas Hobbes had it right. And so you know, I mean, like you evolve lots of stuff. You're super good at focusing on the present. That's why we love to watch sports right, people love to watch basketball, football and stuff, because it's all about getting the hole, now! Now! Get in the hole, now! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! Yeah! People love that. It's because it's perfectly in tune with our original evolutionary programming, which is all about like "kill that thing now so we have something to eat, motherfucker! Kill it now!" or like "Look here comes the lion you know last week the lion, you know, ate my brother's head off right so we should run away." That kind of thinking, we're super at.

We can definitely handle immediate external threats, but long term threats, you know, nebulous threats, threats that are,... you know require critical thinking... invisible gases and stuff ...we're not programmed for that man, and so we have to change our programming, you dig? And so we *are* changing our program. Humanity has been involved in changing its programming for one hundred years or more! The whole history of civilization is effectively the history of us changing our programming, but it's accelerated drastically with the advent of technology.

And so to the extent that there are experiments with artificial intelligence... [that] help us to change our own programming, to make it something more constructive that has a decent chance of survival on this, our only home, the earth right, then I'm all for it. But if we think if it's just going to be more like rich people saying oh yeah we can let the planet go to hell because we're going to be fine in our special luxury condos on Mars or on Alpha Centuri then I'm *not* for it.

I think that's just pure escapism and that is something that the transhumanists, I think, share in common with the Catholics, in the sense that they're... it's always about the hereafter. For that matter the neoliberals—it's always the same with them. It's like "don't worry about the future because we're going to the happy place—and everybody else—don't worry about them. They're just sheep you know, and we're going to go to the happy place in the end, so it doesn't matter if we fuck up the earth. It doesn't matter if we you know... deoxygenate the entire ocean and all the ocean dies like something out of *Soylent Green*. Don't worry about it, because we'll be fine, we'll be in our gated condos on Mars." This just is just pure escapism. You might as well substitute heaven for luxury condos on Mars and you get the same exact result. It's all about fucking the future so that the privileged minority in the present can do whatever they want without any restrictions or limits on their behavior.

I'm saying that's crazy! That path can't work... that either humanity starts to have shared goals that involve long-term biological survival on earth or we're just not around, you dig? We're just not around.

RADIO: All right. Great. That might be. It might be everything.

CHRIS: You don't get to hear me preach very often I bet.

RADIO: No no it's a privilege. Really.

CHRIS: You see why I was that it was the Reverend, right?

RADIO: Seriously yeah yeah. Really good at holding court.

CHRIS: But it's not just holding court... it's also saying stuff that most people have never really connected.

RADIO: Sure.

CHRIS: The central skill that I have in all of this... the real reason is not just because I can get up in front of a crowd and shout at people, any fool can do that. Rather there's something deeper going on... What made what made it necessary to found a church in the first place is that there was something unique to be said. There are certain threads being woven together here that are not often connected. This is the core of it—right—is that there's a vision here, a vision not just of how humanity has been, but how it could be.

RADIO: Right

CHRIS: And that's what makes it worth having a church for. That's... to the extent that we're going to believe in anything, we're going to believe that there is hope. We're going to believe that there is hope for humanity and that humanity is worth saving, while simultaneously believing that if humanity persists on its current vector, that it deserves everything it gets. That it deserves to go extinct, richly. And that...we would rather have Planet of Reptiles.

RADIO: Right. And so how are you spreading the good word today now that, I mean, the Church of

Euthanasia has somewhat... you know... moved away from the spotlight... or are you a part of any...

CHRIS: The truth is I don't. I mean, you know the truth is that I mostly live out of the public eye. I have other interests and you know, I was... I'm best known for the Church of Euthanasia after all, but I was also well known for my electronic music. I had more than a decade of success with that, and...

RADIO: I'll be including some of that in the show by the way if it's a...

CHRIS: Great, you know I've super proud of that. You know there's something we could say... I could say about that actually there too. I mean I've tried to... I've done a lot of things in my life and I've tried to bring all of my faculties to bear on everything that I do and in the area of electronic music, though it's not well known, I am a pioneer. It's not often you know if you look at my Wikipedia page, there won't be much discussion of that but, you know, the truth is that I pioneered something.

What I pioneered was the use of polymeter in electronic dance music. It was almost unknown before. In fact polymeter is still very esoteric even today. At the time

polymer, you know, you'd say that word "polymer" nobody would have any idea what you're talking about, or they say "oh yeah polyrhythm, I know what that is" but it isn't. Polyrhythm and polymer are two different things. Polymer is a... So "polyrhythm" just means lots of different rhythms. But polymer... possibly at once possibly you know alternating... Polymer is related to odd time. Odd time is like... art rock— bands like Yes, Pink Floyd or whatever.

It could mean... so odd meter means either just playing in an odd meter, like seven or five, or it could mean alternating between meters, as Yes often did. But that's not what polymer does either. Polymer is when you actually have multiple meters going at once and they stay synced, meaning they're all multiples of some common unit, like a quarter note, but within that unit they drift so that if you have, for example, five and four at the same time then the pattern that's the super... the meta pattern; the super pattern that's generated as a result of those two things will be have a length of twenty.

RADIO: Right.

CHRIS: So it'll repeat itself every twenty beats, and if you add a seven to that so now you're doing five four and seven all at the same time, suddenly you have a much bigger number, right. Now you have twenty times seven which is one hundred forty right, so suddenly that's a lot of beats. And so if you don't have to get to very many prime... combinations of prime numbers before you have hundreds and hundreds of beats; enormously complicated patterns which actually, for all practical purposes, won't repeat on any reasonable [timescale]... you know, any reasonable duration, so I would use these techniques to create variation, and in fact I've built special software whose only purpose was to compose in polymer, because conventional sequencers have no ability to do this because nobody values polymer, and we can have a whole separate discussion about that, which will be for another day, about why polymer didn't catch on.

So I would ... put it in the shortest sentence and just say that the polymer didn't catch on because it's undoable without technology. You need machines to do it. Humanity's natural impulse is to try and get *into* phase, not to intentionally go *out of* phase. So I built special tools whose only purpose was to enlarge phase space and to construct enormous patterns that would all be drifting in a predictable way out of phase with each other, and then back into phase, and this was how I made most of my electronic music, and the best fine example, probably the finest example of that system at work is the first one... so the first track on the first Church of Euthanasia album *Six Billion Humans Can't Be Wrong*. It's called "Buy." **RADIO:** Right.

CHRIS: "Buy" is in Polymer, it has... it has five, seven, eleven, and thirteen, and of course four as well. So, that's an example of polymer at work. It could be something like the bass is in one meter, the synth is in another meter, the closed hi-hat is in one meter, and the open hi-hat is in still another meter... and all these patterns drift against each other creating this kind of tapestry; a kaleidoscopic tapestry of subtly shifting variation, which makes it sound as though it were bespoke. It makes it sound

as though I had hand-crafted every last piece of that. In fact I merely handcrafted the patterns in the software, of course, and then let the patterns do their thing.

So that's how I compose my music. And so—this is interesting—most people don't know this about my music. They would encounter it and they'd say, "Well Chris Korda's music sounds different, you know... it's a... it's definitely, you know, it doesn't sound like other techno house music, or other electro music" but they wouldn't necessarily be able to say *why* it sounded different. Well anyway now you know why it's different. So I'm still working on all of those things. I have more of that coming.

I've been working on virtual pottery for the last year, and before that I was working on an alternative kind of new musical instrument that makes it possible to play jazz by only using the white keys, so it would automatically handle all the complexity of the chord structures and scale structures of playing jazz trivially...like using a kind of artificial intelligence called an expert system, and that was a wonderful invention. I actually presented that at a conference. So I have lots of intellectual interests, and I pursue them.

I don't feel that I want to be limited in my life just only to the Church of Euthanasia, but I think that the Church of Euthanasia is important. I still embody it personally, and I still espouse it and I still feel strongly about it. But I don't necessarily want to spend every day of my life out there in the public proclaiming it, precisely for the reasons that we outlined earlier in this interview. In part because it's not just you know... because it's too dangerous, because it's the external conditions have changed, but also I think it's fair to say because I don't want to keep doing the same thing.

RADIO: Sure.

CHRIS: Because life is short, you know, and I only have so much time on this earth, and I devoted you know, a good chunk of my life—fifteen years at least—full time to the Church of Euthanasia and that's a lot of anyone's life. And so I feel that it's necessary to move on from that and continue to do other things.

RADIO: And you developed software for the first color 3-D printer.

CHRIS: That's true yeah... for work... my job for eighteen years. I worked as a software developer for thirty five years but eighteen of that was in the 3-D Printing industry, and the first company I worked for about fifteen years was originally called Z Corporation, later known as 3-D Systems. They got bought out—in a hostile takeover actually—which kind of ended my career with them, unfortunately... but they were a wonderful company, and they made the world's first color 3-D Printer, and it was the only one for a while, there was literally exactly one.

Some Japanese company that hired us to do it because they apparently had taken out a contract from the government to build it and then they pissed away all the money, on—I don't know—hot tubs or who knows what, and at the end of the contract they didn't have it and so they were casting around crazily trying to find somebody who could do it on short notice, and Z Corp agreed to do it for reasons that remain opaque to me but we ...took the gamble, and the idea was that we would build them this one prototype and they would get to use it and satisfy their contract, and then after three

months we were allowed to turn it around and develop it into a commercial product, which we did. So I worked on all of that and wound up being kind of the software guru for 3-D Color printing at a time when, you know, we were the only company in the world who did it.

And so it was really a very exciting time for me. I got to be an innovator... of course it wasn't only me, I worked with a lot of other engineers but I was definitely at the core of it. I wrote the firmware, I developed the firmware architecture which is a big deal. It's like, you know, that's a big cathedral. I like to tell people that you know, the Gothic cathedrals are very impressive, but by far software is the most complicated thing that humanity has developed.

That if you saw what Microsoft Windows look like spread out like a city... it would dwarf any human city. Vastly more intricate. Airplanes are, you know, held up as being super complicated... so airplanes are measured in man lives—a man life is if you have... a guy working forty hours a week, every day of the year or, you know, whatever—fifty weeks a year—That's a *man year*, right? So that's one guy's labor in a year. So now... a man life would be like fifty of those, because you know you only get about fifty years of work, that's under optimal assumptions, right? Assuming something doesn't... doesn't go wrong, you might get fifty years of useful work out of a guy. So of course you don't actually wait fifty years to build an airplane, what you do is you get fifty guys and you have them all work for a year, and you just got a man life.

But probably it takes more than that. Probably you need like a couple, you know, a couple of man lives. You get a couple hundred guys working for a year, and bingo you could design something as complicated as an airplane. Well so, believe it, microprocessors like an Intel I7 you know... or whatever... it's more complicated than an airplane, lots more complicated! And so you need a lot of man lives to design that.

RADIO: Yeah.

CHRIS: It's amazing. They are the most astonishing things that human beings do. But so you know... I only explain all this...so that you know... firmware architecture or any kind of software architecture is... definitely a lofty pursuit; it's occupied a huge portion of my life on this earth. I've designed a lot of open source software and I believe in the open source model. I believe in allowing my work to be modified by other people, and keeping them free. I agree with the Electronic Frontier Foundation and all of that, of Gnu... I'm a big supporter of the open source community, and I feel very good about having contributed in some ways to, not only to the spread of software, and to the spread of human knowledge, but also... being able to bring new forms of art into existence by building special tools.

RADIO: Yeah yeah because I was going to ask if those projects sort of jive with your beliefs like 3-D Printing, or... it's a machine that creates stuff, but is the idea that you ...

CHRIS: Yeah, to tell you the truth, I only did that for money. I needed money because the Church of

Euthanasia, you know, farmed every last dollar it made back into the Church of Euthanasia. In fact

Church of Euthanasia cost me money. Believe it. Like I had to work to support the Church of Euthanasia you dig? Like the Church of Euthanasia probably made a hundred thousand dollars during its existence; it was a nonprofit. But every last dollar of that of course went back into the Org and got spent, you know, to do more wild stuff because that's... I mean, that's how it has to work. It's a charity right? It's...

You're not allowed to just pocket the money and buy a boat or something. It doesn't work like that. But not only that, even granted that... I had to still sink more money, especially into the electronic music part of it. All that stuff costs money, and so I was basically, you know, supporting it and so I had to work for a living. And nobody... it's hard to make a living writing open source software. The world doesn't work like that, so I had to have, you know, work a day job. I did for most of my life. I sat in a cubicle and worked with other engineers and developed products and, you know, 3-D printing is not the most destructive thing you could ever do. I mean it's pretty wasteful; you waste a lot of ... resources... you probably burn a lot of electricity and stuff, but it's not like working on missiles or something, you know, it's not *actively destructive*.

I had plenty of offers that I could have done... things with my career that were way more evil than 3-D

Printing! 3-D printing is mostly just kind of harmless, and kind of stupid in the sense that most 3-D Models just get thrown away. So you know a guy is making shoes or whatever... he wants to see a model of something before he 3-D prints it, because you're going to print a million of them and you don't get to say, "you know what I changed my mind!" after that so you want to see a model of it. So you print a model that's not quite right, you throw it away, you make some changes, and you print another model. People throw away 3-D models the way like ordinary, you know, people who work on documents throw away paper, you know, you just throw it away.

So I mean it's all kind of wasteful, but I mean it's not always. My second job I worked for guys who are doing casting, so they would build these beautiful one-off molds for ferrous metal casting. Well that's very beautiful. I mean, it's a thing you couldn't do before. It was very expensive to do casting because it cost so much money to build the molds. You have to pay artisans for, like you know, to take them weeks or months to make these molds by hand. And now you can just print one. Well that's amazing. It has its points, there are there uses for it.

But it's not; it wasn't really dear to my heart in the way that polypeter or, you know, artificial intelligence music... artificial intelligence -enhanced musical instruments. You know that's more dear to my heart, I like things like that. I'd like to pursue art. If I had... my druthers I would only pursue art. And I'm actually at a point in my life where that's more true than it was decades ago, so I'm very, you know—that's a big success. I planned reasonably effectively in my life and had a lot of luck, so now I'm able to focus more on my art. But in the past, you know, it wasn't like that; I had to work for a living, and you know—I don't feel shame about that. Most people do, you

know. It's good... in a way it's good for you. It builds character. I don't think that it's wrong to work, in the sense of contributing usefully to, you know, some meaningful enterprise that's part of your society, even if it isn't necessarily near and dear to your heart personally. It's always better to work at something that you love. It's better if you can work at what you love, that's optimal. But very, very few of us are lucky enough to have that gig. So most of us work at something that we, you know, that we like (hopefully) or that we can at least tolerate.

RADIO: Sure yeah. All right Chris. A message for the listeners what can the listeners do to if... if they like your message and want to do something to help?

CHRIS: Well the first thing they should do is something that they don't do and that is to not procreate... I just want to say one other point about this which is, look—non-procreation is a very unusual thing to ask people to do. You're not asking people to *do* something, you're asking them to *not* do something. This is extremely unusual, right? You know... it's... and so... you think it would be an easy sell, right? Look at it this way: ...by agreeing to do this one thing, you get a get out of jail free card. You get a pass on everything else; that's how the church works. It's kind of a slacker deal. You get permanent bragging rights. You no longer need to recycle.... you don't have to... you can use incandescent light bulbs. You can own a fat fucking truck and like... burn lots of fossil carbon. You can have a big house; you can have several big houses. We don't give a shit how much you consume, or what else you do with the rest of your life.

It's an amazing deal. You can take planes every day if you want—fly around the world and be a jet setter. We don't care about any of that. We only care that you not procreate, for reasons that I outlined earlier in this interview about the differences between linear and exponential effects on the future. And so the point is that actually—it's not just that it's a good thing or ethically a good thing. It's a benefit to *you*. You will get bragging rights. *You'll* be able to do whatever you want. *You'll* be free, and *you* will have more resources to do those things with. Whatever meager resources you have—right—they'll be more valuable if you don't have to spend them on your spawn. You'll have more to spend on yourself and your project. And so what I would encourage people to do is—if nothing else—adopt non-procreation from a purely self-centered point of view. I'm OK with that. We don't care *why* you don't procreate. You don't have to prove... you don't have to eschew procreation for some set Church of Euthanasia reason. We don't care! We only care that you don't procreate. If you don't procreate because you're selfish and you just want to spend all your money and your resources on yourself? Great! Deal! Sold!

RADIO: Great! Good deal.

CHRIS: There you go that's my message for your listeners.

RADIO: Awesome OK thank you so much Chris, I really appreciate that.

CHRIS: You're very very welcome. I have to say, I enjoyed it and I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

RADIO: I did yeah I mean, I didn't know what to expect, but I know I really enjoyed it.

CHRIS: Well if you liked it that... much we'll do it again sometime. I could talk till the cows come home. That's one thing I've learned to do. Send me that audio—Who knows maybe I'll make it into a book. It's always been one of my great goals, you know—I never actually wrote a book and lots of people complain about that, so you of all people should write a book because you have so much to say, and so much of it is unusual... but I'm just terrible at writing, I'm a miserably poor writer.

I agonize over it, unlike my father, who is quite good at it. He can just sit down—I've seen him do it—just sit down at a typewriter and write as if it were like water. It just pours out of him. He doesn't even have to ... correct anything. It comes out in fully formed sentences. I admire people who can do that, but it's so not me. I'm a sculptor and an editor, you know... I constantly agonize and constantly need to re-arrange the order and fuss with it. So the consequence is, I write terribly slowly and by the time I finally get the sentence the way I want it, I forgot whatever it was I was trying to say.

My natural form is... this form. I do best in, I think, what the Greeks called *dialogic*—where there's a conversation. I can play back and forth where you ask me questions and the questions direct the flow. And so for me like one of the great strengths of a good interview is a good interviewer, which you have been. You know, is it stimulating? In other words, does it go in the right direction, and does it ...do I get worked up and do I start to really feel it? It's that "feeling it" that I can't I can't seem to manage when I'm just sitting in front of the modern day equivalent of a typewriter. So the only way I would ever write a book is exactly this way...

RADIO: Have someone transcribe while you spoke

CHRIS: Yeah exactly... like... I mean... you know, we're in good company. Miles Davis felt the same way. Like 'awww maann; I don't wanna write no book. That's a drag man. Fuck that!'

RADIO: But the manifesto, I mean... you know, I spent this week sort of poring over it, and I mean— that's good writing in it and it really resonated with me and so...

CHRIS: Well thank you very much for saying so! That's kind of you. It is... it is good writing but believe it, it was a labor of love and it took much, much too long. If you if you think of it of how long it is... it's what, you know, it's... The, you know... Unabomber's manifesto dwarfs it right? I mean it's not even you know it's not even a fifth of the... might be a fifth the length... of the Unabomber's manifesto, and it took me years to get it all straightened out. At that rate of flow I don't have enough years left on earth to write a book. And so the right way is... this way. The right way is to just get the ideas down in one form or another because for... whatever... for good or ill I learned at an early age to speak in fully formed sentences, and so it comes out of me in the end as if I had written it, and it comes out in a natural order. What I am is probably... for better or worse... I have a natural gift as an orator. And the right thing

to do with people like that is to just let them orate! Let them do their thing and write it down afterwards.

RADIO: Right, and I'm happy to do that. And... I mean in my show I don't really editorialize much and it's going to be mostly you talking and I mean yeah so this is...

CHRIS: Oh yeah, well you'll have to edit; we've generated more material that you can use but my point is ...

RADIO: Sorry, wait I a minute I mean I *don't* editorialize...

CHRIS: Yeah no I dig; that's awesome. I think that's very very very good you know I think that that's the right approach. But I just meant that it could be that it turns out that big chunks of this can just be turned into text and used directly.

RADIO: Yeah.

CHRIS: And we don't even necessarily have to pay a human being to do it...the audio to text stuff is getting WAY better.

RADIO: Yes.

CHRIS: Scary better. It's almost at the point where you could just do it and then correct it afterwards and it's good enough.

RADIO: I mean I don't know if you have an iPhone but I'll have conversations *near* my iPhone and then have things advertised to me based on, I mean, seems to be... you know... pulled from things that I said in the vicinity of my cell phone.

CHRIS: I really have no comment about that. I've heard rumors that it's true it; wouldn't shock me. There's tremendous resources being thrown into artificial intelligence right now, and into speech recognition and so forth, I mean, things are changing very very rapidly, you know. We're at an advanced stage of Ray Kurzweil's logarithmic curve there—everything is going exponential at once and... you look at the Keeling Curve or whatever, and it's just like kind of... it's our larger situation writ large right? The atmosphere contains the carbon dioxide record of our exponential growth, and so... yeah... things are cuckoo. Increasingly the past is not necessarily a good guide to the future, and so I don't doubt that you know, a young guys like yourself...you are going to live to see marvels that I can only, you know, dream of.

RADIO: Marvels and horrors, yeah.

CHRIS: Well hopefully more marvels than horrors, but there's no guarantees of course. My generation hasn't done you any favors. Could be more horrors. I hope not for your sake, but you... certainly you will live to see some marvels and not only in the form of killer robots hopefully.

RADIO: Let's hope so! OK Chris, all right well I'll send you this file and if you want to talk again I mean be in touch, it was great.

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