

**PPERUSAL SCRIPT**

# **OTHERWHERE**

by **Matthew Ivan Bennett**

Episode 8 of the **RADIO HOUR** Series



Newport, Maine

© 2015 by Matthew Ivan Bennett  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

## **OTHERWHERE**

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

**Script and music copies must be rented from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s.)**

Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 *for each infringement*, plus attorney fees.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights, inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS. Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

**FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!**

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made, license granted and royalty paid before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS  
P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536  
[www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com](http://www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com)  
Printed in the United States Of America

THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:

*“Otherwhere” is presented through special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, [www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com](http://www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com)”*

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

RADIO HOUR EPISODE 10: OTHERWHERE by Matthew Ivan Bennett received its world premiere on October 30, 2015 at Plan-B Theatre Company in a co-production with KUER FM90's RadioWest, broadcast live as that day's episode. Directed by Cheryl Ann Cluff (also sound design). Featuring *[NAME of HOST]* Fabrizio as the Host, *Jay Perry* as Dr. Arlen Childs and David Evanoff as Albin Lorde. Callers were played by Colleen Baum, Matthew Ivan Bennett, Michael Johnson, Teresa Sanderson and Jason Tatom. Original music by David Evanoff. KUER's RadioWest is produced by Benjamin Bombard and Elaine Clark, with sound mixed for air by Michael Havey, technical direction by Tim Slover and hosted by *[NAME of HOST]* Fabrizio.

**CHARACTERS** — 6m 2f, can be doubled to 4m 1f

Host — an interested party

Dr. Arlen Childs — fraud or real

Albin Lorde — a musician in league with Childs (can be the real composer)

Callers (2f 3m) [can be doubled to 1m 1f, if needed] (Colter, Kaitlin, Angelica, Jesse, Dallin) (Can be pre-recorded, or live onstage/on air)

**TIME:** October 30, 2015 (or the present year)

**COSTUMES:** Selected street clothes

**SETTING:** A Radio Station

**Sound Effects required** (can be Foley, recorded, or a mix of both. Music required.)

**MUSIC** may be licensed from elsewhere, or composed for the show. If original music is used, it may be convenient and interesting to have the composer play the music for the show live, adjusting the closing credit as needed. If the music is licensed, the musician may even fake the playing during the show.

**NOTE:** phone numbers and email addresses are given in the play. They can be false, if there is no live listening audience; or real, if you involve a live listening audience. For an email in the script, it can be faked by using the one written, or you can solicit an email from the live listening audience and have ARLEN ad-lib on the question. The phone calls, however, should be staged.

**DISCLAIMER:**

The options to fully stage or to stage for radio is left to the producer. The option to simulcast from the live performance on radio, or to record the performance for later broadcast must be specified in your licensing agreement with Leicester Bay Theatricals, and if EQUITY actors are used must be approved by EQUITY. A fully staged play may not be broadcast without Virtual Licensing Rights, which must also be obtained from the publisher, with permission from EQUITY.

**OTHERWHERE** Episode 8 of the RADIO HOUR Series by Matthew Ivan Bennett. 6m 2f. (51 minutes) Simple costumes and Radio Station setting. SFX essential. Staged Radio Drama, Radio Broadcast, Fully-Staged Production, or Virtual Theatre. The Host of RADIO HOUR talks about the disputed practice of channeling. Over the years there have been writers who attributed the books they had written not to themselves, but to disembodied spirits. It's a practice that's mostly been debunked, but there are those who swear by it. Our Host is joined by a man who has created quite a following and a stir with a book he says he has channeled. That stir enters the studio/theatre with a shift in reality. The day before Halloween seems a fitting time to talk to Dr. Arlen Childs about *Otherwhere*, but then reality shifts can happen anytime, anywhere. STAND was a co-production between Salt Lake City's Plan-B Theatre Company and the University of Utah's Public Radio station KUER's Radio West. **ORDER #3242**

**MATTHEW IVAN BENNETT** is a resident of Plan-B Theatre, listed by American Theater magazine as one of 14 companies nationwide exemplifying social action and civic engagement. At Plan-B, he's premiered several stage and radio plays, including an adaptation of "*Frankenstein*" that won a Utah Broadcasters Association award, and "*Eric(a)*"—which won Best Drama at the United Solo festival in New York. He received the Holland New Voices award from the Great Plains Theatre Commons, has twice been a finalist in screenwriting at Austin Film Festival, and in 2016 was an O'Neill finalist. His short plays have appeared at Chicago's Circle Theatre, Rising Sun in New York, Monkeyman in Toronto, and the Source Festival in DC. Matt is a member of the Dramatists' Guild.

# OTHERWHERE

## PART ONE

**HOST:** (*recorded*) From [NAME of RADIO STATION and/or THEATRE] News in [NAME of CITY], this is Radio Hour.

(Show **MUSIC**)

I'm [NAME of HOST]. Unless you frequent the New Age section in Barnes & Noble, names like Jane Roberts, JZ Knight and Helen Schucman may not ring a bell. But I'm willing to bet you'll know at least one name in this list: Seth, Ramtha and Jesus. The books "by" these women are allegedly channeled material—that is, transcribed by human beings but written by the disembodied. You can find Schucman's name in the introduction to a course on miracles, but its authorship is credited to Christ. Today on the program we're talking with Dr. Arlen Childs, the channeler of an entity known as the Concordant. He's arguably the author of a new book called *The Return: Claiming Your Birthright in the Otherwhere* and inarguably the focus of its controversy. *The Return*, after the news.

*F/X: (a weird buzzing toward the end; news break.)*

*(HOST continues, with a headache)*

This is Radio Hour, I'm [FULL NAME of HOST.] Today on the program we're talking with "author" and spiritualist Dr. Arlen Childs. He's been compared to Jim Jones and Joseph Smith. "His" book, *The Return: Claiming Your Birthright in the Otherwhere*, has been reviled by some as "pseudo-psychological claptrap," hailed by others as the "magnum opus of a new American prophet." But whatever you believe about the book, its appeal is indisputable: it's now sold a million copies and tens of thousands of people—in the United States and abroad—are now practitioners of Dr. Childs' process. Now, we don't normally do this, but we begin this show with a disclaimer: we're flying by the seat of our pants here. We didn't actually know till this morning Dr. Childs would be on. Our guest was going to be Lisa Diamond—Dr. Diamond—of the Gender Studies program at the University of [LOCAL CITY of STATE], and we thank her for her willingness to re-schedule, but given the week's events, and the intrigue, both positive and negative, around Dr. Childs...well we felt we shouldn't pass this up. Our plan, of course, was to have Dr. Childs with us in the studio, but he's had a car accident en route, so we apologize in advance for any technical difficulties as we go now to Dr. Childs on his cell phone, he's still on his way in. Dr. Childs, are you there?

**ARLEN:** (*on foot; winded; coughing; Midwestern*) I am, thank you—right outside the building, almost there.

**HOST:** Great, OK, just stay on the phone, my people will see you in. In the meantime, I'll invite our listeners to join us. [LOCAL Area code]-555-HOUR is the number. That's [LOCAL Area code]-555-HOUR. Or you can email us at radiohour@[THEATRE NAME].org. You can also join us on Facebook and on Twitter. Dr. Arlen Childs, you've had a quite week, haven't you? On Tuesday you had a death threat and now you're in a car accident.

**ARLEN:** (*on foot*) I think the universe is trying to telling us something, [NAME of HOST].

**HOST:** Well we're glad you're with us. You rarely give interviews, this is only your second in the U.S., so welcome to the program. Your assistant, is she OK?

**ARLEN:** *(on foot)* —Thank you.—She is, just pretty shaken. We got about four, five blocks away and this Civic just swerves and tries to hit us.

**HOST:** Tried to hit you?

**ARLEN:** *(on foot)* What it looked like. He's coming the other way and he veers, goes right through the turning lane.

**HOST:** So this was head-on?

**ARLEN:** *(on foot)* Pretty damn close. Mel jerked the wheel and the guy got us in the rear panel, but yeah, he was comin' right for us.

**HOST:** Do you think he fell asleep or...?

**ARLEN:** *(arriving)* I think he was trying to hit me.

*(ARLEN switches from his cell to the mic.)*

**HOST:** And what makes you think that?

**ARLEN:** I don't believe in coincidence. Pleased to meet you. Arlen Childs.

*(A handshake; he coughs as he settles in)*

**HOST:** Glad you made it, have a seat. There's some water there.

*(ARLEN sips)*

I'll just remind people that we're on Facebook and Twitter and—uh, we have a musician, actually, I should tell you that, musician Albin Lorde in studio.

**MUSIC:** *hello from ALBIN*

*(HOST and ARLEN laugh.)*

He's here in the studio, along with Mr.—Dr. Childs. Luckily he wasn't in the car, but he performs—guess we can call it that—performs with Dr. Childs in these...Can I say rituals?

**ARLEN:** You can.

**HOST:** OK, so he's in studio, and you may be hearing him later on. Dr. Childs, let's jump right in. You used to be a medical doctor.

**ARLEN:** Yes, in the ER, seven years. St. Joseph's. Phoenix.

**HOST:** But then you had an experience, which in the book you describe it as “smashing into the dark matter of consciousness.” So tell us about that. What made you leave medicine?

**ARLEN:** Well, I died. I was hit by a drunk driver and pronounced dead.

**HOST:** For forty-five minutes, you claim in the book.

**ARLEN:** Yes. They'd actually carted me to the morgue.

**HOST:** But during that time, you say, you were aware.

**ARLEN:** Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that I have a partial memory of things after my heart had stopped. But it wasn't atypical for an NDE: I—

**HOST:** NDE, it's a near-death experience, NDE.

**ARLEN:** Right. But it wasn't atypical: I saw my body below me, I shouted, no one answered; there was no um "White Light," but there was a tunnel. So yes, I was aware. And yet it's also a no—to your question—because, it wasn't only me that was aware.

**HOST:** What do you mean?

**ARLEN:** It's like my arm had fallen asleep, [NAME of Host], but as the feeling came back, I bent my fingers and realized it wasn't ten, but twelve, or thirteen. Except they weren't fingers.

**HOST:** What were they?

**ARLEN:** The Concordant.

***MUSIC:** ceremonial sting.*

And they aren't a what, they're a who; they're—

**HOST:** Sorry, let me stop you, I want to explain to listeners what that was. Mr. Lorde, the musician, we have in studio. He accompanies Dr. Childs whenever he speaks and you can expect him to come in occasionally. Please, go on, the Concordant, "they aren't a what, they're a who"?

**ARLEN:** Exactly, they're me and they're you; they're everyone in this building. Everyone in their car right now; in their houses chopping carrots. They've been with us always, [NAME of HOST], but we've been numb.

**HOST:** OK, back up with me. You call them, in the book, in chapter one, a "meta-terrestrial consciousness." Can you unpack that for us?

**ARLEN:** Well, it's better by far to meet them in ritual. Can we do the demonstration?

**HOST:** How long will that take?

**ARLEN:** Three, four minutes maybe.

**HOST:** OK, OK, we can do that before the break, but let me ask you about this death threat that happened, this was Tuesday, at Crone's Hollow in [NAME of CITY]. Late on Tuesday you tweeted this, you tweeted "Lamestream media says two words about mass shooting threat at Crone's Hollow. Had it been Black Friday, there'd be uproar." So you honestly think the story was ignored?

**ARLEN:** I think this community is threatened by spirituality that doesn't come out of a book. I think it's easier for the Establishment to let a wacko with an AK descend on me than to stand up for my constitutional rights. I don't think some news director pulled the story on purpose, no, but if you Google "Arlen Childs death threat [NAME of CITY]" you'll get hits about Anita Sarkeesian—that feminist—which was horrible, no question, but this was bigger. We had food trucks coming. We—

**HOST:** So you're convinced it was a "wacko" who sent the email? That it wasn't just a prank, as the police believe?

**ARLEN:** I'm convinced it's crazy to threaten mass killing—even to joke.

**HOST:** Then you disagree with the [NAME of CITY] Police Department's assessment.

**ARLEN:** Do you have the email? Did you read it? I'm not a criminal profiler, but I don't know what part's supposed to be a prank. He wrote "I love—"

**HOST:** You're assuming it's a he.

**ARLEN:** (*quoting*) "I love my country and I'll protect it no matter what. You, and your bootlickers, will scream as you bleed out your asses and burn." Show me the joke.

**HOST:** Let's do the demonstration and come back. If you're tuning in now, a quick word: we've prepared this taste of Dr. Childs' process today—at his insistence. The ceremonies he performs rely upon environment and music so, again, we have a musician here to help, he may be playing underneath us, so bear with us. What do I do, Dr. Childs?

**ARLEN:** Just sit on your thumbs, [NAME of HOST], relax.

**HOST:** What am I relaxing for? Help the people at home.

**ARLEN:** I'm going to guide us all through a basic exercise to raise the energy in the studio, at which point I'll enter a trance so you can interview the First Voice of the Concordant, the Waif.

***MUSIC*** (*very simple, just a note or two, until we actually enter the induction*)

**HOST:** Explain who the Waif is, though—for those of us ignorant of the terminology. There're three voices: the Waif, the Belovèd, there's the Envoy. Who's the Waif?

**ARLEN:** I can explain or I can show. I like showing. Now...

***F/X:*** *a little static*

*(he rubs his hands; in the following lines his voice becomes soothing and familiar, solicitous but not salesman-like)*

Have you heard the saying that music is well said to be the speech of angels?

**HOST:** Not that exactly, but yes.

**ARLEN:** Good, because these angels—and I use the term literally, meaning "messenger"—these messengers, they don't speak English, or Latin or Aramaic; they have no lips, no tongues. They don't even breathe. But to help us, here on Earth, they shrink their wisdom into the units of sound we've come to associate—and occasionally confuse—with objects and concepts. It's a little—  
(he was going to say "like translation")

**HOST:** What do you mean there? "Confuse."

**ARLEN:** We have all these sounds, like "god," and we confuse them with the thing or process. Some people, 'specially in  
(*with an accent*)



[NAME of STATE], get offended if you dare “misuse” the sound. But of course in the case of God, if “he’s” infinite—as many claim—then no sound can sum him up. The sound would have to, itself, be infinite and majestically dynamic. So what I’m saying is: these messages are imperfect. I make no claim of being a perfect mediator, unlike some. But because it’s imperfect—the message—it’s best listened to like music. Now we never expect music to be precise; we want it to be moving. Also, in the music ‘K, we can wiggle out of our verbal consciousness and soar into emotional being. It’s emotion that bridges them to us.

**HOST:** Understood. Have we begun then, or...?

**ARLEN:** *(a rhythmic trance beat)* We begin now. OK, everybody. Together we’re going to re-calibrate our consciousness. It’s up to you to partake or hold back, but before you decide, answer one question in the quiet of your mind: “Is growth a matter of comfort, or risk?” ... Now: I’m going to guide you through a simple hypnotic induction. Just follow along it’s not mesmerism you’re in control you won’t be brucking like a chicken the point is to focus and amplify the right feeling when I say. So: settle yourselves in your chairs and let your muscles slacken.—Go on, [NAME of HOST].—Let your shoulders fall, your muscles dangle like silk ropes over a pit. Go ahead and blink, if you aren’t driving right now blink slowly, ever so slowly, do that now please. Pretend you can hardly keep your eyes on the world. And as you do this, notice the eensy, weensy shift in perception, that tug toward the interior. Do you feel the tug? Feel it now and blink—gently, leisurely. Open...close; the world without...the world within. Now let your eyelids rest and feel for the center of your being. Imagine your mind shrinking to a single fiery point, be the fiery point, and then fly as a point down, down, down into your guts, into your intestines. Be there now. Feel the squish, the hollowness. Forget the tick-tock-hickory-dock world and be there, and from your gut, be one with your worst fear. It might be the cold mouth of the ocean, or glass breaking in your hands; it might be your teeth cracking, your hair thinning and falling out; it might your father’s bulk on top of you; it might be a house, quiet and loveless. Whatever it is, sit next to it. Tremble. Let terror pulse and metastasize. Look into its depth, for its depth is a door. Your fear is the grate through which the First Voice of the Concordant can climb. The First Voice is the Waif, the orphan, the lost one. He is climbing up now. He is here, with us; I shall be his translator; in a moment we shall be one.

***MUSIC*** *crecendos and pulls back)*

*(the hypnosis has worked on HOST; ARLEN continues, a change; vaguely panicked; without pauses.)*

Greetings I am the Waif I thank you for your concentration and ask that you feed images of fear with eyes shut what are your questions.

**HOST:** *(throat clearing; surfacing)* Sorry?

**ARLEN:** What are your questions.

**HOST:** Oh. Uh...

*(chuckles)*

You got me there. I’m a little underslept today. This is the Waif?

**ARLEN:** I am.

**HOST:** How do we know you aren't Dr. Childs, putting us on?

**ARLEN:** I am Dr. Childs I am also more than man but we come not to prove we come with offer of knowledge which you may scrutinize.

**HOST:** But "you" claim you're not from here. Not from Earth.

**ARLEN:** I am not from I live free of space-time I am from nowhere Otherwhere.

**HOST:** Why do you want our listeners to feel afraid?

**ARLEN:** You are incorrect I do not wish them to feel fear I wish them to transcend your culture teaches you that fear is a boulder in the path a burden that it bludgeons your faith and spiritual feeling thus you learn to be afraid of fear but fear is useful.

**HOST:** Useful how?

*(ARLEN screams.)*

*F/X: static*

Are you alright?

**ARLEN:** We are well that was deliberate fear cuts away the ego for you will die for you will be enfeebled a thoughtless hungry germ will infest your tissues one day unexpected your mother shall seizure or your children drown in a canal your friends' faces may be mangled in metal in a crash it may be war or virus but grief and loneliness inevitably come.

**HOST:** And you're saying it's useful to contemplate that.

**ARLEN:** It is useful to prepare ourselves for the inescapable.

**HOST:** That seems reasonable, but, why is the spectacle necessary? The theatrics and music?

**ARLEN:** You are embodied creatures changes in your environment can entrain the components of your mind.

**HOST:** Why do they need to be entrained?

**ARLEN:** It is not a case of need the individual may join or abstain but our messages have urgency.

**HOST:** Why is that?

**ARLEN:** The vessel of Arlen Childs begins to decay in this locus of linear time.

**HOST:** Dr. Childs is unwell?

**ARLEN:** You are correct.

**HOST:** What's wrong with him?

**ARLEN:** His respiratory organs.

**HOST:** OK, but, with all due respect, why does that trigger an urgency on "your" part? A key doctrine of yours is that anyone can channel the Concordant, right? The appeal is open access?

**ARLEN:** Correct but there is always a door that hangs wide—

*(an alarmingly violent coughing fit.)*

***MUSIC*** *tentatively ends*

**HOST:** OK, let's take a break. We'll be right back. This is Radio Hour.

***MUSIC:*** *unplanned outro.*

*(STATION BREAK)*

## PART TWO

**HOST:** *(a worse headache)* This is Radio Hour. I'm [NAME of HOST]. Back now with Dr. Arlen Childs  
*F/X: static*

the head of a new spiritual movement based on channeling that has drawn some criticism lately. He reported a moment ago—in a trance, apparently—that he's terminally ill. Dr. Childs, you say you can't remember anything from these episodes?

**ARLEN:** Nothing. Which is why it's done in public or on tape, to have a record.

**HOST:** But during the break, when I told you that you, as the Waif, said you were dying, you weren't surprised.

**ARLEN:** Why should I be? We're all dying. I just know how: tumors in my lungs will block the oxygen. I suffocate. I knew about them; now I just know it's sooner than I thought. I'm not unprepared. (throat spray)

**HOST:** Let's go to the phones; I'd like to hear from our listeners. The number is 555-HOUR if you want to join us. That's [LOCAL AREA CODE]-555-HOUR. Or you can email us at radiohour@[NAME of STATION/THEATRE].O-R-G. We have Colter on the line from [CITH and STATE] What's your question please? ... Colter?

**COLTER:** *(caffeinated and loud; a dog barks madly in the background)* Hi, yes, hi, I just want to say I'm long-time listener who's disgusted and appalled that you're having this guy on there's no evidence for what he does the man is snake oil. He's dying? Gee, lemme guess: he's got a Kickstarter campaign to cover the chemo. Does your producer not have a brain, [NAME of HOST], 'cause I'm confused: the whole concept of mediumship has been debunked by heroes like James Randi—and if "Dr." Childs really believes, what he's saying, really, which I guarantee he doesn't, then I invite him to apply for the Million Dollar Challenge at Randi dot org, it's a million dollars to anyone who can prove their supernatural claims and NO ONE HAS EVER WON. And if the "doctor" doesn't need the money, I invite him to apply anyway and donate the cash to charity. And if you don't start in with some tougher questions, [NAME of HOST], I may have to re-consider my pledge this year. I'll take your apology off the air. Thank you.

*(COLTER hangs up)*

**HOST:** Thank you, Colter. I assure you the hard questions will come. Dr. Childs, you want to respond?

**ARLEN:** Certainly. Colter, 90% of all my book sales go to the Children’s Miracle Network and Wounded Warriors. I gave fifty thousand to them last year and I would have liked to have granted more. Also, if listeners can’t afford the cover price, they can download it free on our website, Otherwhere—all one word—dot org. The material isn’t copyrighted; the Concordant stated they did not want that: the truth isn’t for sale; you can print out the book and wallpaper your outhouse in [COLTER’s CITY] if you want. As for James Randi, I don’t know what to say, [NAME of HOST]. Does he want the Catholic church to submit to Randi? I have a First Amendment right, just like—

**HOST:** So you do regard this as a religion. Let’s clarify that right now. Is this a religion?

**ARLEN:** Etymologically, yes. In terms of structure? Not at all.

**HOST:** What does that mean?

**ARLEN:** What is “religion”? The word? It comes from “religare,” the Latin, meaning to “bind fast.” The process is a way—not the way, but a way—to bind ourselves.

**HOST:** To the Concordant.

**ARLEN:** Exactly. But we have no building, no tithing, we have no name. Only a bond.

**HOST:** Let’s take another caller. We go now to Kaitlin, in [CITY NAME]. Kaitlin.

**KAITLIN:** *(on the phone)* Can you hear me?

**HOST:** You’re on the air. What’s your question?

**KAITLIN:** *(somewhat bad cell connection)* Thank you, big fan, my daughter wants to marry you, [NAME of HOST]. Um, my question’s about a dream I had, I mighta had a dream about the Concordant. Read the book, loved it, paid full price, but when I went to bed last night, the CD going, which, wow, I woke up or thought so and it was blackness? I knew I was sleeping but I can’t feel my body on the bed I’m just a point in space, without stars, and, my family’s Irish, so that wasn’t weird but then! I saw an amphitheater? It’s black marble, shiny and black and empty and no one’s sitting there, except, on the stage—and I’m floating over the rows, ‘K?—on the stage, like center stage, was a man in a suit with no face. No eyes, nose, no lips, hair; it’s all smooth and freaky. Except I feel him looking at me.

**ARLEN:** Did he gesture?

**KAITLIN:** No, he just like stared, without eyes and I jolted back in my body. Was that the Concordant?

**ARLEN:** Absolutely. Congratulations. Music, please.

**MUSIC**

**KAITLIN:** Oh my gosh oh my gosh.

**ARLEN:** I know, exciting, right? Actually, dream contact is typical, Katie; it’s just rarely effective. The problem is we’re culturally disposed to be unconscious in our dreams. But of course we can be fully lucid and live polyphasically.

**HOST:** Explain that, if you would. Kaitlin, thanks a lot. Can you explain that, Dr. Childs?—Can we stop the music?

***MUSIC ends.***

**ARLEN:** —“Polyphasically”? Sure. I try to eschew jargon, but I’m drawing on the work of Dr. Laughlin, the neuro-anthropologist at Carleton. He’s done cross-cultural studies in dreaming and has found—

**HOST:** Let’s not beat around the bush: you’re telling this woman “meta-terrestrial” beings have contacted her. And you’ve convinced thousands of people of the same thing, which—getting at the controversy here—has resulted, lately, in a cluster of suicides.

**ARLEN:** Ah, here we go.

**HOST:** No, this isn’t gotcha, you knew I was going to ask this. And it’s not one or two, Dr. Childs, it’s at least two dozen. Six of them in [LOCAL CITY].

**ARLEN:** How many religious persons kill themselves every year?

**HOST:** That’s not an answer.

**ARLEN:** How many young men under 20 who think they might be gay?

**HOST:** That’s not an answer.

**ARLEN:** I object to the question.

**HOST:** Why?

**ARLEN:** It’s not objective, [NAME of HOST]. Just your tone is swollen with moral judgment.

**HOST:** I’m not judging them, Dr. Childs, their families—the people’s families—believe the victims hurt themselves—

**ARLEN:** You can’t be a “victim” of suicide.

**HOST:** Fine, but the families think their children killed themselves—

**ARLEN:** They weren’t “children.” None of them were “children.” What is this?

**HOST:** —One was 17.

**ARLEN:** That’s a “child”?

**HOST:** Legally speaking.

**ARLEN:** Seventeen’s enough to consent to sex in most states.

**HOST:** Yes, but—

**ARLEN:** But what? What are you setting me up for?

**HOST:** I’m asking you what you have to say. The families think their loved ones killed themselves in order to be with the Concordant. What do you have to say?

**ARLEN:** I say if that's the case they misunderstand the teaching. We are not separate.

**HOST:** Then why is the book called *The Return*?

**ARLEN:** A return of consciousness.

**HOST:** But the Concordant implores people, again and again—through you; mainly through you; other people are publishing blogs or YouTube videos, but yours have the most hits—they're imploring people to "come home."

**ARLEN:** In the spirit.

**HOST:** I want read something to you, from the suicide note of Amelia White.

**ARLEN:** So you have an agenda.

**HOST:** I have questions; this is an interview.

**ARLEN:** My company paid for her funeral.

**HOST:** No, the family refused the money.

**ARLEN:** Initially, then they accepted.

**HOST:** Months afterward.

**ARLEN:** [NAME of HOST], I mourn Amelia White as if she were my sister.

**HOST:** Let me read this.

*(reading the note)*

"Please know, Mom, that I am not sorry or sick. The Concordant have called me home and I must go."  
This was a girl, 17, no history of mental illness, she had AP classes, boyfriend on the baseball team—

*F/X: static*

**ARLEN:** And that's never happened? Not to be unfeeling, but is that unique?

**HOST:** She cites your process in her note.

**ARLEN:** It isn't my process.

**HOST:** You published the book, you do the workshops.

**ARLEN:** I mediated the book.

**HOST:** "Mediated." Isn't that a cop out?

**ARLEN:** The jury found me blameless. The suit against me did not succeed. So the question is do you believe in the American justice system, [NAME of HOST]?

**HOST:** I'm not questioning the jury's—

**ARLEN:** Yes, indirectly, you are.

**HOST:** I'm asking what's on many people's minds: "How much of this is suggestion." You're telling people, in the case of the Waif, to feel fear. With the Second Voice, you ask people to feel love, etc. You ask them to wade into deep emotion, on blind faith, and maybe their imagination stirs and that's all it is?

**ARLEN:** You want physical evidence?

**HOST:** Considering how extraordinary your claim is, Dr. Childs, is that unfair?

**ARLEN:** —How have you determined it's "extraordinary"? The Book of Mormon wants you to believe Native Americans have a Semitic origin. Is that not extraordinary? When you have a Mormon on, do you demand proof?

**HOST:** No, but I ask them—

**ARLEN:** No, you don't, because they have bricks and mortar and newspapers and congressmen, [NAME of HOST].

**HOST:** —Yes, and I still ask them for explanations.

**ARLEN:** —Psh, come on, no, you aren't...!—An explantion?! No. This interview's...!—You want more, [NAME of HOST]. Which I get. We all want certainty. But all we can do—schik—is strike a match and hold on to it as we stumble—and heed the voices, saying, "Watch out, there's a drop off." I'll confess, yes, when the process began for me, I wondered if I was going mad.

**HOST:** And what made you decide you weren't?

**ARLEN:** (*chuckles*) You're gonna give me a dirty look, [NAME of HOST], but I'll tell you. You want me to spill all? Here it is: ghosts hunters.

**HOST:** Ghost hunters. Explain that if you would.

**ARLEN:** Sir yes sir. When they started, my blackouts, after my accident—which, in the beginning, that's how it was, I had to learn how to enter these trances consciously, which I can now do pretty much instantly—but, after the accident, I had myself checked out and nothing was wrong. A hairline fracture in my fronto-nasal suture but no damage to the head or brain—the trauma was in the chest; had to have my ribs re-built. But nothing seemed to be wrong, physically, and I—

**HOST:** The cancer hadn't appeared at this point. Isn't that unusual? This was only two years ago, the accident, right?

**ARLEN:** Generally speaking, yeah, the oncologist said— The tumors have doubled fast.—So I began recording myself, to puzzle it out, and on the tapes was me, in these slightly altered voices, but on the first tape was a voice that wasn't me, in the background.

**HOST:** Another person in the room?

**ARLEN:** Well that's the thing: I was alone. I had a townhouse, I was under lock and key. With me blacking out—on my way to the bathroom, three in the morning—I worried that I'd wander into the street, so I had my locks redone, chains put on, you had to have key to get out, so no one could have been in the room. Yet on the tape, there's a second voice.

**HOST:** Saying what?

**ARLEN:** I imagined you might ask, [NAME of HOST], so I brought it. Can you play the tape? I've got the original—and a thumb drive, with a lot more.

**HOST:** —We can do the tape.

**ARLEN:** Good deal, you can hear for yourself then, and perhaps it'll seem less “extraordinary.” So if you listen closely, you can hear a voice say—

**HOST:** Hold on. I have a question first: this is an “EVP”? An electronic voice phenomenon?

**ARLEN:** It is.

**HOST:** Then let's get this to my team, but I don't want the audience to be told what's on the recording. We'll listen to it and then ask a caller what he or she heard. (someone comes for the tape)

**ARLEN:** Why is that necessary?

**HOST:** Because these tapes aren't always clear. We're told there's a voice saying, “Get out” when it might be the wind, so let's not color people's perceptions. So if you're waiting on the phone, listen carefully to the recording, when we've got it ready. And uh as we wait here's an email: this comes from Stacey in [TOWN hours from yours]. Stacey says, "Is this guest for real, or just an actor?"

**ARLEN:** (*chuckles*) I assure you, Stacey, I am very real. I did our school play in the fourth grade, that's about it. "The Pied Piper." I played a rat.

**HOST:** —Hold that thought. Elaine's telling me the tape's ready. How much do we play? Is it long?

**ARLEN:** I'd say twenty seconds'll do. You'll know it when you hear it.

**HOST:** OK, so here is what Dr. Childs is claiming as proof. Go ahead and press play.

***MUSIC*** of the Beloved

**EVP:** *ARLEN speaks in the saccharine Second Voice, the Belovèd; the audio comes in too loudly at first)*

“AS THE PROPHET JESUS TOLD YOU, ‘IF ANYONE COMES TO ME AND DOES NOT HATE FATHER AND MOTHER, WIFE AND CHILDREN, BROTHERS AND SISTERS—YES, EVEN THEIR OWN LIFE—SUCH A PERSON CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE.’” WE SUPPORT THIS STATEMENT. TO PASS THROUGH THE GATE INTO OTHERWHERE, YOU MUST LOVE THE SUPREME “I” MORE THAN GENETIC FORM.

***MUSIC*** stops where *ARLEN* says “*Otherwhere,*”

**EVP:** (*begins, a girl's garbled voice saying:*) “DADDY? DADDY, STOP.”

**HOST:** Hm, play it again, please. Back it up so we can hear the other voice—if it is, in fact. Everyone listen closely. No music. Play it.



**EVP:** “—THIS STATEMENT. TO PASS THROUGH THE GATE INTO OTHERWHERE...—  
DADDY? DADDY, STOP.”

**HOST:** And that’s the clip you wanted, right?

**ARLEN:** For now, yes, but I do—(have more)

**HOST:** Let’s go to the phones. No questions, please, callers, just tell us what you heard on the tape, aside from Dr. Childs. Angelica, in [NAME of NEARBY TOWN]. What did you hear?

**8 more pages to the end of the script**