THE ORACULAR VISIONARY

The Formula on the Envelope

Sound, light, frequency, consciousness, and the strange possibility that some things are remembered before they are understood

Michelle McAllister · First published 18 September 2026
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If you're familiar with Bryce Zabel and Brent Friedman, or you've been following *Sound, Light & Frequency*, you'll already know that the podcast gets its name from a rather strange encounter at the *Dark Skies* premiere party in 1996.

If you're not familiar with the story, buckle in.

A mysterious gentleman calling himself JC turned up at the party. He said he was connected to the Office of Naval Intelligence. According to Bryce and Brent, he knew things about *Dark Skies* that made them pay attention, and he proposed something even stranger: that information could be fed into the series as a form of slow disclosure.

That particular idea has been floating around UFO folklore forever. The spook appears. A filmmaker or writer gets approached. A few tidbits are offered. Something works its way into popular culture. Years later everyone argues about whether it was entertainment, predictive programming, acclimatisation, disinformation, somebody having a laugh, or some messy combination of all of the above.

I have no idea.

But I do love the premise.

Before JC disappeared back into wherever mysterious men called JC go after crashing television premiere parties, he asked for something to write on.

Bryce Zabel's wife Patricia found a bank deposit envelope.

JC drew on it for about thirty seconds.

Sound, Light and Frequency.

Secrets of the Universe.

And then came the instruction: put it somewhere safe. A safety deposit box, preferably. Come back to it in ten or fifteen years. If they didn't end up making a deal with him, eventually they would understand that he had been for real.

There is something wonderfully bureaucratic about storing the secrets of the universe in the same place you'd keep your grandmother's jewellery.

The formula subsequently disappeared.

Years later, Bryce offered Brent's daughter $500 to search the house properly for it.

She found it.

Which may be my favourite part of the entire story.

Five hundred dollars turns out to be an extremely effective archaeological grant.

Brent's daughter was studying microbiology and, once she heard the story behind what she'd found, became curious enough to do her own investigation. Her handwritten analysis is now among the material released on the *Sound, Light & Frequency* website.

And on 17 September 2026, thirty years after the original encounter, Bryce and Brent finally showed everyone the formula.

I had been ridiculously excited about this.

I wanted to know what was on that scrap of paper.

Then it appeared on the screen.

And before I had time to analyse anything, something in me went:

Oh.

Because I had seen something strangely like it before.

Not on paper.

In a dream.

I should probably explain the dreaming thing

If you know me, or you've read much of my work, you already know that dreams feature quite heavily in it.

Everyone dreams, obviously.

My relationship with dreaming has just become a little unusual over the years.

I've had lucid dreams since childhood. Nested dreams. Dreams where figures appear and communicate. Dreams that seem entirely symbolic until some piece of them turns up later in waking life and makes me go back through my records wondering what on earth happened.

I keep a dream corpus for precisely this reason.

I'm not particularly interested anymore in convincing someone else what a dream is.

Sometimes I treat them psychologically. Sometimes symbolically. Sometimes metaphysically. Sometimes I simply record them and wait.

What matters to me is whether a pattern persists.

And during 2025, cubes and spirals began persisting.

There was a series of dreams involving time which expanded into timelines.

In one, photographs seemed to cascade upward in a spiral from something resembling a roundabout. There was this sense that time wasn't laying itself out in a straight line at all. It was moving upward while somehow also returning.

Later came dreams about building a container.

First the container.

Then something could happen to time inside it.

I've used the word transmute before, although I still don't think that's the right word. Manipulate isn't quite right either. Compress? Translate? Move through? Cascade time up and down?

I still haven't found the right word for it.

But the architecture was remarkably consistent.

Container.

Spiral.

Time.

And then came a disclosure dream.

> *"That photo with the spiral in front of a cube… I'm taking a photo of disclosure. It's happening."*

A spiral in front of a cube.

Disclosure.

Now make of that whatever you will.

I offer it because this is how my work actually happens, and I've stopped pretending otherwise.

Sometimes I write in a rather uptight academic register with references, falsifiability conditions and enough caveats to make an ethics committee happy.

Other times a dream gives me a shape and I spend six months trying to work out why.

Both are me.

And when the formula appeared on the screen and I saw the geometry rising from its base with that winding line moving through it, my first response wasn't academic at all.

It was recognition.

So naturally I opened about seventeen tabs.

This is where things got interesting

At the bottom of JC's drawing is a square.

Above it, a crescent.

Then a downward-facing triangle.

Then a six-pointed form.

Then an oval or circular structure.

Higher again is a mark associated with the brow centre.

At the top sits ॐ.

And wound through the entire structure is a line that climbs upward.

If you've ever encountered chakra diagrams, parts of it look immediately familiar.

The closest historical text I found was the *Ṣaṭcakranirūpaṇa*, the *Description of the Six Chakras*, written by Pūrṇānanda in Bengal around the sixteenth century and later translated into English through John Woodroffe.

And this is where it becomes much more interesting than saying, "Oh yes, chakras."

The old material associates earth with a square.

Water with a crescent.

Fire with a triangle.

Air with a six-sided geometry.

Space with a circle.

Square. Crescent. Triangle. Star-like geometry. Circle.

It is very difficult to look at JC's drawing without seeing the family resemblance.

And then there is the winding line.

The Sanskrit material describes channels running through the subtle body and kundalini coiled at the base, eventually rising through the system.

Which becomes particularly interesting when you've spent an entire podcast listening to Brent describe spontaneous kundalini experiences of his own.

At some point you start thinking that the story isn't really behaving itself anymore.

Neither, apparently, have I

Recently I went to a psychic expo.

This is not unusual behaviour for me.

I live on the Sunshine Coast. If you leave the house on the right weekend there's a reasonable chance you'll encounter either an aura photographer or someone selling activated crystals before you've found coffee.

I wasn't particularly interested in buying anything.

Then I saw the aura photography booth.

I have wanted an aura photograph forever.

Obviously I was doing it.

I sat down and they took the photograph almost immediately, which is why in the picture accompanying this article I look considerably more serious than someone

having their aura photographed should.

I should have smiled.

As the image started coming out, the man doing the reading looked at it and said:

“You’re smart”

I said, “Are you asking me if I am?”

Apparently he wasn’t.

There was a strong yellow band through the image, which he associated with intellectual and mental activity. There was green, which he associated with heart and service to others.

That bit wasn’t particularly surprising to me. I’ve spent much of my professional life working in mental health, disability, health commissioning and systems reform. Service is hardly an exotic interpretation of where my life has gone.

Then he pointed to another part of the photograph.

“You’re psychic.”

Okay.

“But you’re not allowing it to come through as much as it wants to.”

That got my attention.

What did he mean?

He explained that what he was seeing suggested this was part of my underlying disposition, but that I was filtering it through the intellectual mind.

I was overthinking it.

And I had one of those rather annoying moments where somebody tells you something you already know but have successfully constructed an elaborate research programme to avoid admitting.

Because he was right about one thing.

I have spent a lot of time building safeguards around my intuition.

I created a research framework.

I record dates.

I keep the dreams.

I separate the observation from the interpretation.

I look for disconfirming evidence.

I ask whether something could be coincidence.

I keep track of the misses as well as the hits.

Eventually some of those questions grew into what I call Constraint Architecture Theory, or CAT, an exploratory framework I've been developing around geometry, constraint, information, consciousness and what persists when a system changes form.

None of that is bad.

It's probably sensible.

But somewhere along the way I realised I was behaving as though intuition needed to earn permission from my intellect before it was allowed into the room.

And I don't think I believe that anymore.

The cube came first

Part of CAT grew directly from those dreams.

What makes something something?

Why does a thing become locatable?

Why does the universe have structure at all?

Why is symmetry broken?

Because a perfectly symmetrical universe isn't necessarily the beautifully ordered universe we casually imagine when we use the word symmetry.

Difference matters.

Constraint matters.

Boundaries matter.

A completely unconstrained system can't easily become a particular thing in a particular place having a particular consequence.

So I began thinking about the cube as constraint.

The container.

Not a prison, necessarily.

An architecture.

Something enters constraint and becomes locatable.

Then the spiral gives it movement through time.

And once memory enters, a cycle ceases to be merely circular.

It returns, but it carries history.

That makes it a spiral.

Which is why the JC drawing got under my skin so quickly.

It wasn't simply that I'd dreamed a spiral and subsequently seen a spiral.

That's interesting to me personally, but it proves precisely nothing to anyone else.

The interesting bit was that the diagram pushed me back into a body of questions I was already asking.

And some of those questions lead into physics.

Matter is already stranger than our intuition

Take the Higgs field.

We tend to imagine matter as the fundamental solid stuff and fields as something floating around it.

Modern physics gives us something considerably weirder.

Fields are fundamental to the description.

Particles appear as excitations of those fields.

The Higgs mechanism helps explain why fundamental particles have mass.

The "thing" is already relational.

Then there are neutrinos.

Neutrinos oscillate between flavours as they travel because their quantum states accumulate different phases.

Something can persist while the identity available to measurement changes.

That sentence has occupied far too much of my brain lately.

What persists while form changes?

It is one of the central questions beneath CAT.

And once you start thinking in terms of phase, oscillation and recurrence, the title *Sound, Light & Frequency* becomes interesting in a different way.

Sound is organised vibration through a medium.

Light is electromagnetic radiation and, in quantum terms, an excitation of the electromagnetic field.

Frequency describes repetition through time.

Suddenly these don't sound like three mystical nouns.

They sound like three ways of talking about pattern.

And then we arrive at consciousness

This is where my curiosity has been living recently.

What if consciousness isn't produced entirely inside the skull?

What if the brain is not simply a generator but also, somehow, a receiver, transducer or coupling system?

I am intentionally framing that as a question.

We don't know for sure.

But it is no longer possible to dismiss every conversation about fields and biological organisation as though biology were a collection of tiny billiard balls bumping into one another.

Brains are electrical.

Bodies are electrochemical.

Cells use bioelectric gradients to coordinate.

Living tissue emits extremely faint photons as a consequence of metabolic processes.

Electromagnetic fields produced by neural activity can interact with neural systems.

How far any of that takes us toward explaining consciousness remains unresolved.

But the territory exists.

And human beings have been describing something they experience as subtle energy, life force, aura, prana or qi for an extraordinarily long time.

I don't need to collapse those concepts into electromagnetism.

In fact, I think that would be a mistake.

But I am very interested in a different question.

What if people have been phenomenologically detecting aspects of embodiment long before we developed instruments capable of describing their physical correlates?

Not necessarily correctly.

Not necessarily completely.

But perhaps something was being observed.

Governments apparently wondered too

This is where the history becomes almost comical.

People sometimes speak about psychic research as though somebody invented it on TikTok last Tuesday.

The United States government spent years investigating remote viewing and related anomalous cognition research through programmes associated with SRI and later government initiatives.

The declassified record contains the now-famous Gateway material.

Everyone calls it a CIA report.

It was actually written for the Army in 1983 and simply ended up in CIA holdings, which is a very ordinary sort of filing accident and has done absolutely nothing to slow the mythology down.

It is concerned with altered states, hemispheric synchronisation and models of consciousness that sit very far outside what most people imagine intelligence agencies spending their time on.

The Navy had its own encounters with this territory.

A 1978 memorandum recorded that the Navy had previously explored parapsychology as it might apply to submarines, and that the programme had been dropped amid concern about adverse publicity over spending resources on what the document called "ethereal ventures."

That phrase makes me laugh every time.

Not because the work was necessarily correct.

Because I spent fifteen years around bureaucracies.

I know that sentence.

Somewhere there was probably a meeting.

Someone probably had a folder.

And eventually somebody decided that even asking the question carried institutional risk.

That interests me enormously.

The public mythology goes further, of course.

The Philadelphia Experiment.

Tesla.

Stories about electromagnetic fields, ships, invisibility, temporal displacement and technology that sits somewhere between documented history and decades of accumulated folklore.

Culturally it all belongs to the same recurring cluster of ideas.

Electromagnetism.

Consciousness.

Space.

Time.

Perception.

Military secrecy.

And the suspicion that changing one variable might alter several others in ways we don't yet understand.

That cluster keeps returning.

Which brings me back to JC

Here is the thing I can't quite make fit.

If JC's diagram draws heavily from ideas that were already old in 1996, why tell Bryce and Brent to put it away for ten or fifteen years?

Chakra systems weren't new.

Kundalini wasn't new.

ॐ certainly wasn't new.

Even the twentieth-century Western reinterpretations of those traditions weren't new.

So what exactly was supposed to become clearer later?

Maybe nothing.

Maybe JC was simply an eccentric man at a party who knew his esoteric diagrams and enjoyed theatrics.

Entirely possible.

But the timing instruction becomes more interesting if the relevant variable wasn't the knowledge.

What if it was the context?

Because thirty years later we are having a very different public conversation.

UAP disclosure has moved into congressional hearings, legislation, intelligence oversight and mainstream reporting.

Consciousness research is widening.

Psychedelic research has returned.

Meditation is mainstream.

Scientists are investigating bioelectricity, information, complexity and questions about whether cognition may be far more distributed than the old brain-as-computer metaphor implied.

And alongside all of that we have built artificial systems that can converse, reason, generate, model and reflect language back at us with extraordinary speed.

We are accelerating machine intelligence at precisely the moment some of us are wondering whether we have radically underestimated our own.

That seems worth sitting with.

Perhaps the technology is not the whole story

Peter Levenda and Tom DeLonge have written extensively about consciousness and the phenomenon.

Jacques Vallée has spent decades arguing that treating UFOs purely as nuts-and-bolts spacecraft misses something important about their effects on perception, culture and

consciousness.

Experiencer literature is full of telepathy, dreams, altered states, synchronicity, precognition and strange changes in perception following encounters.

You can disagree about the interpretation of every one of those things and still notice the pattern.

The phenomenon and consciousness keep turning up in the same room.

And maybe that matters more as AI accelerates.

We are putting enormous resources into building systems capable of doing more thinking for us.

Fine. I'm hardly anti-AI. I use it constantly.

But what if this particular moment also requires us to become more conscious rather than simply more computationally capable?

What happens if the machine accelerates and the human does not?

I'm not talking about becoming better at trivia.

I'm talking about attention. Intuition. Discernment. Dreaming.

The ability to sit quietly enough to notice what your own mind is doing.

The ability to distinguish fear from signal.

The ability to recognise the felt sense of something before you have language for it.

Meditation does this.

Dream practice can do this.

Contemplative traditions have been doing versions of this for thousands of years.

Modern life is almost perfectly designed to stop us.

Perhaps that is worth noticing too.

And here is the part I have finally stopped apologising for

My first encounters with what I can only describe as anomalous beings happened when I was very young.

They appeared in dreams and looked, to my childhood mind, like Men in Black.

I found them terrifying.

Whatever they were, psychologically, symbolically, metaphysically or otherwise, those experiences forced me to learn very early how to navigate dreams.

How to become lucid.

How to recognise that I was dreaming.

How to move between layers.

How to remain conscious while the environment changed.

I don't think I would respond to those figures today with anything resembling the same fear.

Quite the opposite.

Perhaps they were nightmares.

Perhaps threshold figures.

Perhaps something else entirely.

Again, I don't particularly need to settle the ontology in order to understand their consequence.

They taught me how to navigate the territory.

And maybe this is the piece I have been over-intellectualising.

For years I thought the work was to prove the intuition.

Maybe the work is to develop enough discernment that I can use it.

There is a difference.

So what is the formula?

Looks a lot like how energy systems work.

I don't know who JC was.

I don't know whether his claimed connection to Naval Intelligence was genuine.

I don't know whether the diagram contains some astonishing hidden physical insight or whether a man who had read a few esoteric books recreated a chakra diagram very quickly on a bank envelope at a Hollywood party.

What we do know is places like Jet Propulsion Laboratories were founded in the occult and CERN has a weird growing folklore itself.

Because thirty years later the drawing has done exactly what Bryce and Brent have asked people to let it do.

It opened something.

For me it connected a disclosure dream to a much older series of dreams about time.

It connected those dreams to questions about constraint and geometry.

Those questions led into fields, phase, asymmetry and consciousness.

That led back into kundalini and the subtle body.

Which led back into government research on anomalous cognition.

Which led back into the very strange historical entanglement between the phenomenon and human consciousness.

And somewhere in the middle of all of this, I went to a psychic expo and had a stranger look at an aura photograph and tell me to stop thinking quite so much.

Fair enough.

Maybe the formula isn't a formula.

Maybe it's a prompt.

Matter at the bottom. Consciousness at the top. A winding path between them.

Sound.

Light.

Frequency.

A human being sitting somewhere in the middle, trying to understand what they are.

And perhaps that is the question I'd rather leave open.

Have you ever known something before you knew why you knew it?

Have you had a dream that later seemed to brush against waking life?

Have you found yourself compelled to research something for no obvious reason, only for another piece to arrive years later?

Have your psychic senses become louder?

Have synchronicities increased?

Has something been trying to get your attention?

You don't need me to tell you whether any of that is real.

Maybe you don't need anyone to.

There is a point where the only honest thing to do is pay attention.

Write it down.

Stay curious.

Learn discernment.

And see what happens.

Some things, I suspect, are remembered before they are understood.

Because perhaps remembering what human consciousness can do is going to matter just as much as discovering what is flying around in the sky.

And perhaps the most interesting secret on that little bank envelope isn't hiding inside the symbols at all.

Perhaps it's the invitation to look.

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