



**SANDBAGGED BY  
NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE  
QUESTIONS**

**DR. PATRICIA CHURCHLAND**

[skeptiko.com](http://skeptiko.com)

1  
00:00:11,150 --> 00:00:08,900  
on this episode of skeptic Oh Alex talks

2  
00:00:13,129 --> 00:00:11,160  
with the neuro philosophy pioneer dr.

3  
00:00:15,320 --> 00:00:13,139  
Patricia Churchland about the

4  
00:00:17,870 --> 00:00:15,330  
implications of near-death experience

5  
00:00:20,570 --> 00:00:17,880  
science on neuro philosophy well

6  
00:00:23,450 --> 00:00:20,580  
specifically dr. Churchland you cite in

7  
00:00:26,390 --> 00:00:23,460  
your book that dr. pin van LOM will

8  
00:00:29,179 --> 00:00:26,400  
holds that opinion that's clearly not

9  
00:00:30,349 --> 00:00:29,189  
the case I mean he's really mm-hmm all

10  
00:00:31,790 --> 00:00:30,359  
right yeah I'm gonna read you what he's

11  
00:00:34,190 --> 00:00:31,800  
written he's written at the study of

12  
00:00:36,080 --> 00:00:34,200  
patients with near-death experience and

13  
00:00:40,160 --> 00:00:36,090

this is from The Lancet paper that

14

00:00:52,350 --> 00:00:40,170

you're citing clearly shows us tick stay

15

00:00:56,350 --> 00:00:54,700

welcome to skeptical where we explore

16

00:00:58,720 --> 00:00:56,360

controversial science with leading

17

00:01:01,060 --> 00:00:58,730

researchers thinkers and their critics

18

00:01:03,190 --> 00:01:01,070

I'm your host Alex Karras and for this

19

00:01:06,430 --> 00:01:03,200

episode of skeptic oh I almost feel like

20

00:01:08,890 --> 00:01:06,440

I need to issue one of those warnings

21

00:01:11,650 --> 00:01:08,900

that they put on the front of shows that

22

00:01:14,500 --> 00:01:11,660

have content that might be inappropriate

23

00:01:19,830 --> 00:01:14,510

for some viewers you know I'm always

24

00:01:22,570 --> 00:01:19,840

surprised when people are squeamish over

25

00:01:24,969 --> 00:01:22,580

confrontation conflict debate of any

26

00:01:27,010 --> 00:01:24,979

sort I mean I get that on one level you

27

00:01:29,200 --> 00:01:27,020

know we don't want to see people squirm

28

00:01:31,330 --> 00:01:29,210

and we want everyone to be nice to each

29

00:01:34,150 --> 00:01:31,340

other and all that and I get that

30

00:01:37,570 --> 00:01:34,160

but on another level I want you to

31

00:01:40,180 --> 00:01:37,580

consider in this interview with dr.

32

00:01:42,160 --> 00:01:40,190

Patricia Churchland who I've really been

33

00:01:44,050 --> 00:01:42,170

trying to contact for years I have

34

00:01:47,170 --> 00:01:44,060

emails going back several years ago

35

00:01:51,540 --> 00:01:47,180

trying to contact this woman who is a

36

00:01:53,620 --> 00:01:51,550

well respected academic oxford-educated

37

00:01:56,710 --> 00:01:53,630

UCSD which is a prestigious university

38

00:01:59,050 --> 00:01:56,720

out here in California highly regarded

39

00:02:02,020 --> 00:01:59,060

at these conferences gives these

40

00:02:04,929 --> 00:02:02,030

speeches and has blabbed about these

41

00:02:07,390 --> 00:02:04,939

ridiculous ideas about consciousness

42

00:02:11,770 --> 00:02:07,400

that she has she's blabbed about it for

43

00:02:13,690 --> 00:02:11,780

years how else would one confront her on

44

00:02:16,509 --> 00:02:13,700

the nonsense

45

00:02:19,420 --> 00:02:16,519

that she talks about I mean how do you

46

00:02:22,240 --> 00:02:19,430

do that in in a nice way how do you do

47

00:02:25,930 --> 00:02:22,250

that in a non-confrontational way I

48

00:02:28,539 --> 00:02:25,940

don't know that you can so it really

49

00:02:30,610 --> 00:02:28,549

surprised me the extent to which she

50

00:02:33,759 --> 00:02:30,620

kind of breaks down and squirms and just

51  
00:02:36,220 --> 00:02:33,769  
kind of goes out in the outer limits of

52  
00:02:39,880 --> 00:02:36,230  
reality and believability in this

53  
00:02:42,610 --> 00:02:39,890  
interview but I don't really know how to

54  
00:02:45,970 --> 00:02:42,620  
approach these things any other way if

55  
00:02:48,729 --> 00:02:45,980  
you really want to get answers so with

56  
00:02:53,920 --> 00:02:48,739  
that said here's my interview with dr.

57  
00:02:57,160 --> 00:02:53,930  
Patricia Churchland today we welcome dr.

58  
00:02:58,600 --> 00:02:57,170  
Patricia Churchland - skeptic Oh dr.

59  
00:03:00,550 --> 00:02:58,610  
Churchland is a professor of philosophy

60  
00:03:03,700 --> 00:03:00,560  
at the University of California San

61  
00:03:06,040 --> 00:03:03,710  
Diego and at the very prestigious

62  
00:03:08,560 --> 00:03:06,050  
institute both of which are just a few

63  
00:03:10,930 --> 00:03:08,570

miles from where I sit which is kind of

64

00:03:13,720 --> 00:03:10,940

interesting she's also a very highly

65

00:03:16,420 --> 00:03:13,730

regarded academic and best known for her

66

00:03:19,780 --> 00:03:16,430

pioneering work in the field of neuro

67

00:03:21,960 --> 00:03:19,790

philosophy where she looks to interface

68

00:03:25,000 --> 00:03:21,970

between traditional philosophical

69

00:03:27,640 --> 00:03:25,010

questions and new developments in the

70

00:03:30,130 --> 00:03:27,650

science of neuroscience she's the author

71

00:03:33,550 --> 00:03:30,140

of several books including touching a

72

00:03:35,800 --> 00:03:33,560

nerve the self as brain dr. Churchland

73

00:03:40,720 --> 00:03:35,810

welcomed a skeptic oh thanks so much for

74

00:03:43,300 --> 00:03:40,730

joining me well you know in addition to

75

00:03:44,950 --> 00:03:43,310

seeing some of your excellent youtubes

76

00:03:46,990 --> 00:03:44,960

and other interviews that you've done

77

00:03:49,780 --> 00:03:47,000

out there I did have a chance to dip

78

00:03:51,400 --> 00:03:49,790

into a couple of these books and most

79

00:03:53,800 --> 00:03:51,410

recently I was trying to dig into

80

00:03:56,410 --> 00:03:53,810

touching a nerve tell us about that

81

00:03:59,920 --> 00:03:56,420

who's it written for first of all and

82

00:04:03,880 --> 00:03:59,930

what's the general thrust of it well

83

00:04:08,170 --> 00:04:03,890

it's been for a very general audience it

84

00:04:10,690 --> 00:04:08,180

was really provoked I think by my

85

00:04:14,320 --> 00:04:10,700

realization as I taught undergraduates

86

00:04:17,860 --> 00:04:14,330

that many many people have a kind of

87

00:04:19,780 --> 00:04:17,870

ambivalence about neuroscience on the

88

00:04:21,970 --> 00:04:19,790

one hand they're they find it

89

00:04:25,570 --> 00:04:21,980

fascinating it teaches them something

90

00:04:28,750 --> 00:04:25,580

about themselves and sometimes teaches

91

00:04:32,230 --> 00:04:28,760

them things that are very surprising on

92

00:04:35,290 --> 00:04:32,240

the other hand they they think oh gosh

93

00:04:38,409 --> 00:04:35,300

you know what if I mean if I'm only my

94

00:04:41,590 --> 00:04:38,419

brain you know isn't doesn't that sort

95

00:04:43,870 --> 00:04:41,600

of freak you out and I think I think

96

00:04:47,350 --> 00:04:43,880

it's a very natural reaction especially

97

00:04:51,700 --> 00:04:47,360

if one has thoughts about an afterlife

98

00:04:54,250 --> 00:04:51,710

and and so forth and so I really wanted

99

00:04:57,460 --> 00:04:54,260

to address that kind of ambivalence and

100

00:05:01,210 --> 00:04:57,470

I wanted to sort of explain how things

101

00:05:04,330 --> 00:05:01,220

look from my perspective and

102

00:05:07,450 --> 00:05:04,340

why it is or how it is perhaps I should

103

00:05:09,780 --> 00:05:07,460

say that I feel very comfortable with my

104

00:05:12,700 --> 00:05:09,790

brain and with knowing that my

105

00:05:15,780 --> 00:05:12,710

perceptions my consciousness my beliefs

106

00:05:19,030 --> 00:05:15,790

my desires they really are a function of

107

00:05:21,820 --> 00:05:19,040

the physical brain that resides within

108

00:05:23,800 --> 00:05:21,830

my head yeah great and that's really

109

00:05:26,110 --> 00:05:23,810

kind of an interesting place to start

110

00:05:31,330 --> 00:05:26,120

this idea that consciousness is an

111

00:05:33,790 --> 00:05:31,340

illusion of a biological robot it's not

112

00:05:35,440 --> 00:05:33,800

an illusion at all this is the quote of

113

00:05:38,440 --> 00:05:35,450

course that's what Daniel Dennett said

114

00:05:41,020 --> 00:05:38,450

right that's not what I said okay what

115

00:05:43,690 --> 00:05:41,030

are you so it's not an illusion what is

116

00:05:46,150 --> 00:05:43,700

it are we biological robots like Richard

117

00:05:47,920 --> 00:05:46,160

Dawkins thinks I don't think Richard

118

00:05:52,659 --> 00:05:47,930

thinks that we're biological robots

119

00:05:55,719 --> 00:05:52,669

either I mean I think that what what I

120

00:05:58,510 --> 00:05:55,729

what does seem to be emerging from

121

00:06:01,330 --> 00:05:58,520

science is that consciousness third

122

00:06:03,550 --> 00:06:01,340

sample is a property of the physical

123

00:06:05,560 --> 00:06:03,560

brain that's one of the things one of

124

00:06:09,550 --> 00:06:05,570

the many things actually that the

125

00:06:12,760 --> 00:06:09,560

physical brain does and it changes when

126

00:06:15,490 --> 00:06:12,770

we fall asleep it changes when we drink

127

00:06:19,120 --> 00:06:15,500

alcohol it changes when we're tired or

128

00:06:22,930 --> 00:06:19,130

very hungry and it changes also as a

129

00:06:24,730 --> 00:06:22,940

result of changes in hormones and so if

130

00:06:27,969 --> 00:06:24,740

you think about your own puberty for

131

00:06:34,110 --> 00:06:27,979

example you will remember that as the

132

00:06:37,540 --> 00:06:34,120

levels of sex hormones in your pituitary

133

00:06:40,570 --> 00:06:37,550

changed and consequently as the levels

134

00:06:42,730 --> 00:06:40,580

of sex hormones in your brain changed

135

00:06:46,629 --> 00:06:42,740

you began to think about things in a

136

00:06:48,610 --> 00:06:46,639

rather different way and you began to

137

00:06:50,950 --> 00:06:48,620

notice certain kinds of things to pay

138

00:06:53,200 --> 00:06:50,960

attention to be fixated by certain kinds

139

00:06:56,200 --> 00:06:53,210

of things and so forth and so we think

140

00:06:57,760 --> 00:06:56,210

that that consciousness is a function of

141

00:07:00,279 --> 00:06:57,770

the physical brain it's a very

142

00:07:02,409 --> 00:07:00,289

fascinating function it's almost

143

00:07:06,490 --> 00:07:02,419

certainly not too unique unique to

144

00:07:08,469 --> 00:07:06,500

humans but it is a very real property of

145

00:07:12,760 --> 00:07:08,479

the physical brain in just the way that

146

00:07:16,740 --> 00:07:12,770

I movements or many other

147

00:07:19,450 --> 00:07:16,750

functions memory attention

148

00:07:23,020 --> 00:07:19,460

problem-solving reasoning self-control

149

00:07:25,540 --> 00:07:23,030

these are all things that are properties

150

00:07:27,670 --> 00:07:25,550

of the physical brain yeah but aren't we

151

00:07:29,350 --> 00:07:27,680

kind of trying to split hairs and kind

152

00:07:32,860 --> 00:07:29,360

of move away from the consciousness is

153

00:07:35,020 --> 00:07:32,870

an illusion thing without really jumping

154

00:07:37,779 --> 00:07:35,030

all the way to the other side of where

155

00:07:39,100 --> 00:07:37,789

the physicists are taking us and saying

156

00:07:41,589 --> 00:07:39,110

that consciousness is somehow

157

00:07:43,390 --> 00:07:41,599

fundamental I mean if we break down this

158

00:07:45,730 --> 00:07:43,400

debate on what is the nature of

159

00:07:47,140 --> 00:07:45,740

consciousness we have these two camps

160

00:07:49,350 --> 00:07:47,150

that we've been talking about I guess

161

00:07:52,149 --> 00:07:49,360

talking around one is this very

162

00:07:53,589 --> 00:07:52,159

materialistic view like I think you

163

00:07:55,420 --> 00:07:53,599

started out but then I don't know if

164

00:07:57,850 --> 00:07:55,430

you're really we're holding to that that

165

00:08:00,909 --> 00:07:57,860

you know consciousness is purely a

166

00:08:05,740 --> 00:08:00,919

result of an epiphenomena of the brain

167

00:08:07,870 --> 00:08:05,750

it's it is an actual phenomenon of the

168

00:08:09,730 --> 00:08:07,880

physical brain it's one of the things

169

00:08:12,450 --> 00:08:09,740

that the physical brain does and just

170

00:08:15,700 --> 00:08:12,460

the way that your brain stores memories

171

00:08:16,360 --> 00:08:15,710

and some of those memories change over

172

00:08:21,640 --> 00:08:16,370

time

173

00:08:23,680 --> 00:08:21,650

as a result of changes in the physical

174

00:08:26,980 --> 00:08:23,690

brain and we know for example that

175

00:08:30,969 --> 00:08:26,990

people who have Alzheimer's because they

176

00:08:33,190 --> 00:08:30,979

have lost many neurons in the fifth in

177

00:08:35,670 --> 00:08:33,200

in their brains no longer have a

178

00:08:38,110 --> 00:08:35,680

capacity to remember certain things

179

00:08:39,969 --> 00:08:38,120

memory is a real function of the

180

00:08:42,880 --> 00:08:39,979

physical brain and so it was

181

00:08:44,079 --> 00:08:42,890

consciousness it's not an illusion it's

182

00:08:47,019 --> 00:08:44,089

the real deal

183

00:08:48,760 --> 00:08:47,029

but it's the what is it I mean I think

184

00:08:51,880 --> 00:08:48,770

we're kind of dancing around you're

185

00:08:54,730 --> 00:08:51,890

saying it's immaterial or it is material

186

00:08:56,350 --> 00:08:54,740

or it's immaterial I mean don't we need

187

00:08:58,360 --> 00:08:56,360

to nail it down a little bit more than

188

00:09:00,250 --> 00:08:58,370

that you're saying it's what's an

189

00:09:01,930 --> 00:09:00,260

emergent property of the brain isn't

190

00:09:04,139 --> 00:09:01,940

that kind of passing the buck a little

191

00:09:06,970 --> 00:09:04,149

bit here's the other possible

192

00:09:09,670 --> 00:09:06,980

explanation consciousness is somehow

193

00:09:11,790 --> 00:09:09,680

fundamental and that the brain is

194

00:09:14,530 --> 00:09:11,800

somehow interacting with this

195

00:09:17,650 --> 00:09:14,540

consciousness which is a reality and

196

00:09:19,210 --> 00:09:17,660

somehow in the field of consciousness is

197

00:09:21,960 --> 00:09:19,220

out there in the brain is somehow

198

00:09:25,569 --> 00:09:21,970

interacting with it but that's not to

199

00:09:26,560 --> 00:09:25,579

confuse it with being purely a result of

200

00:09:28,600 --> 00:09:26,570

brain active

201

00:09:31,480 --> 00:09:28,610

I mean that is a completely different

202

00:09:34,210 --> 00:09:31,490

theory right if the theory for which

203

00:09:36,880 --> 00:09:34,220

there's essentially no evidence and one

204

00:09:41,380 --> 00:09:36,890

of the problems with that approach is

205

00:09:44,320 --> 00:09:41,390

that we can't understand for example why

206

00:09:46,420 --> 00:09:44,330

taking a drug should change your

207

00:09:48,190 --> 00:09:46,430

consciousness if consciousness is not

208

00:09:50,200 --> 00:09:48,200

part of the physical brain because we

209

00:09:52,440 --> 00:09:50,210

know that the drug changes the physical

210

00:09:54,910 --> 00:09:52,450

brain and if consciousness is somehow

211

00:09:56,680 --> 00:09:54,920

completely independent of that because

212

00:09:57,880 --> 00:09:56,690

it's a fundamental feature of the unit

213

00:09:59,800 --> 00:09:57,890

it has to be do you have to be

214

00:10:01,870 --> 00:09:59,810

completely independent obviously there's

215

00:10:04,960 --> 00:10:01,880

some relationship of that close

216

00:10:08,740 --> 00:10:04,970

relationship what always puzzled

217

00:10:12,340 --> 00:10:08,750

Descartes is if there there is an

218

00:10:14,380 --> 00:10:12,350

independent non-physical so how does it

219

00:10:16,450 --> 00:10:14,390

interact with a physical brain and the

220

00:10:18,220 --> 00:10:16,460

problem with dualism is that nobody has

221

00:10:21,910 --> 00:10:18,230

ever been able to address that in a

222

00:10:24,760 --> 00:10:21,920

meaningful testable way yeah but I think

223

00:10:26,800 --> 00:10:24,770

what we also have problems with the

224

00:10:28,720 --> 00:10:26,810

ideas emergent property of the brain

225

00:10:31,090 --> 00:10:28,730

thing that we're kind of moving to right

226

00:10:34,420 --> 00:10:31,100

I mean I interviewed Christof Koch from

227

00:10:36,310 --> 00:10:34,430

Caltech last year and he's the guy who I

228

00:10:39,700 --> 00:10:36,320

really think set people down this

229

00:10:41,740 --> 00:10:39,710

direction that we can no longer claim

230

00:10:43,840 --> 00:10:41,750

that consciousness is a product of the

231

00:10:45,580 --> 00:10:43,850

brain and we have to move towards this

232

00:10:47,530 --> 00:10:45,590

what seems to me this kind of middle

233

00:10:50,260 --> 00:10:47,540

position where we're saying what does he

234

00:10:52,690 --> 00:10:50,270

say ontologically distinct but never

235

00:10:55,540 --> 00:10:52,700

really define how consciousness begins

236

00:10:57,760 --> 00:10:55,550

how consciousness ends exactly what the

237

00:10:59,770 --> 00:10:57,770

relationship is with the brain I mean

238

00:11:02,230 --> 00:10:59,780

aren't I think a lot of people are more

239

00:11:04,180 --> 00:11:02,240

comfortable with Daniel Dennett Richard

240

00:11:06,670 --> 00:11:04,190

Dawkins ok consciousness is an illusion

241

00:11:08,260 --> 00:11:06,680

then they are with this middle ground

242

00:11:10,420 --> 00:11:08,270

that I don't really know how that

243

00:11:12,400 --> 00:11:10,430

answers the big questions of what is the

244

00:11:14,490 --> 00:11:12,410

nature of consciousness other than just

245

00:11:16,510 --> 00:11:14,500

to repeat that consciousness is

246

00:11:17,530 --> 00:11:16,520

something that the brain does I mean

247

00:11:20,170 --> 00:11:17,540

that doesn't tell us much

248

00:11:22,150 --> 00:11:20,180

what isn't how does it begin when does

249

00:11:23,860 --> 00:11:22,160

it end what's necessary and sufficient

250

00:11:25,720 --> 00:11:23,870

to cause consciousness these are all

251  
00:11:29,590 --> 00:11:25,730  
questions that are unanswered by what

252  
00:11:33,280 --> 00:11:29,600  
you're saying science hasn't got all the

253  
00:11:34,600 --> 00:11:33,290  
answers yet there's about go ahead no

254  
00:11:35,710 --> 00:11:34,610  
I'm sorry I mean but that's just kind of

255  
00:11:37,630 --> 00:11:35,720  
passing the buck we don't have the

256  
00:11:38,860 --> 00:11:37,640  
answers those are fundamental questions

257  
00:11:40,300 --> 00:11:38,870  
if we don't have the answers then we

258  
00:11:45,760 --> 00:11:40,310  
don't really have a theory of what kind

259  
00:11:49,840 --> 00:11:45,770  
this is right that's what your view

260  
00:11:51,610 --> 00:11:49,850  
seems to be alright well I'm just saying

261  
00:11:53,530 --> 00:11:51,620  
me these are basic when does

262  
00:11:55,660 --> 00:11:53,540  
consciousness begin when does it end

263  
00:11:58,030 --> 00:11:55,670

what is necessary and sufficient to

264

00:12:01,630 --> 00:11:58,040

create consciousness if we can't answer

265

00:12:02,890 --> 00:12:01,640

those then what what do we really have

266

00:12:09,760 --> 00:12:02,900

what can we really say about

267

00:12:14,280 --> 00:12:09,770

consciousness we can't say anything ok

268

00:12:17,440 --> 00:12:14,290

well I think we can say some things I

269

00:12:19,840 --> 00:12:17,450

think we can say well let me ask you

270

00:12:21,550 --> 00:12:19,850

this I I didn't mean to throw you

271

00:12:23,290 --> 00:12:21,560

completely off you want to get back to

272

00:12:24,660 --> 00:12:23,300

talking about your book maybe no not

273

00:12:32,560 --> 00:12:24,670

really

274

00:12:35,680 --> 00:12:32,570

ok let me ask you this dr. Churchland do

275

00:12:38,710 --> 00:12:35,690

you think consciousness can do work is

276

00:12:40,840 --> 00:12:38,720

that an important element to

277

00:12:42,579 --> 00:12:40,850

understanding what consciousness is I

278

00:12:44,290 --> 00:12:42,589

mean the theory before the zit

279

00:12:47,590 --> 00:12:44,300

consciousness can't really do anything

280

00:12:49,290 --> 00:12:47,600

but have we come around I think there's

281

00:12:51,970 --> 00:12:49,300

research that suggests that maybe

282

00:12:55,060 --> 00:12:51,980

consciousness can be focused can direct

283

00:12:56,440 --> 00:12:55,070

can affect neural plasticity and other

284

00:12:58,329 --> 00:12:56,450

things what's your feeling about that

285

00:12:59,829 --> 00:12:58,339

what do you seem to think that it

286

00:13:00,600 --> 00:12:59,839

doesn't work so why don't we just go

287

00:13:03,730 --> 00:13:00,610

with that

288

00:13:07,630 --> 00:13:03,740

so you agree it does do work I have no

289

00:13:09,220 --> 00:13:07,640

opinion on the matter ok what do you

290

00:13:11,110 --> 00:13:09,230

think about near-death experience you

291

00:13:14,530 --> 00:13:11,120

write quite a bit about that in your

292

00:13:21,370 --> 00:13:14,540

book and what is your general take on

293

00:13:25,030 --> 00:13:21,380

near-death experience I'm not sure that

294

00:13:28,180 --> 00:13:25,040

it really matters does it does it matter

295

00:13:29,920 --> 00:13:28,190

what does that matter for well I think a

296

00:13:33,300 --> 00:13:29,930

lot of folks look at near-death

297

00:13:35,440 --> 00:13:33,310

experience as highly suggestive of

298

00:13:37,230 --> 00:13:35,450

consciousness somehow in some way we

299

00:13:39,699 --> 00:13:37,240

don't understand

300

00:13:42,220 --> 00:13:39,709

surviving biological death which would

301

00:13:45,579 --> 00:13:42,230

certainly kind of falsify that other

302

00:13:47,410 --> 00:13:45,589

idea that it's so tied to the brain and

303

00:13:51,670 --> 00:13:47,420

the consciousness ends at death I mean

304

00:13:52,090 --> 00:13:51,680

that would falsify that right oh I'm

305

00:13:54,049 --> 00:13:52,100

sorry

306

00:13:57,769 --> 00:13:54,059

there is my dog just came in

307

00:14:01,429 --> 00:13:57,779

no no no don't do that can't no no no no

308

00:14:03,650 --> 00:14:01,439

oh dear me I'm sorry okay so yeah okay

309

00:14:05,979 --> 00:14:03,660

yeah I guess I've never had actually a

310

00:14:10,909 --> 00:14:05,989

near-death experience

311

00:14:14,929 --> 00:14:10,919

have you no but I mean write quite a bit

312

00:14:16,780 --> 00:14:14,939

about it in your book so why do you want

313

00:14:20,269 --> 00:14:16,790

me to talk about it

314

00:14:23,449 --> 00:14:20,279

well I guess one of the things I did

315

00:14:25,819 --> 00:14:23,459

want to ask you is in your book you

316

00:14:28,309 --> 00:14:25,829

asked the question is there a

317

00:14:31,039 --> 00:14:28,319

neurobiological explanation for

318

00:14:33,919 --> 00:14:31,049

near-death experience and then you cite

319

00:14:35,960 --> 00:14:33,929

NDE researcher and a former guest on

320

00:14:39,530 --> 00:14:35,970

this show as answering that question

321

00:14:42,199 --> 00:14:39,540

with yes and you say that dr. PIM van

322

00:14:44,710 --> 00:14:42,209

Lommel believes the answer is yes is

323

00:14:47,299 --> 00:14:44,720

that your understanding of his research

324

00:14:50,329 --> 00:14:47,309

well I think there's certainly quite a

325

00:14:51,859 --> 00:14:50,339

bit of evidence that at least some

326

00:14:54,289 --> 00:14:51,869

near-death experiences have a

327

00:14:57,289 --> 00:14:54,299

neurobiological basis of course we can't

328

00:14:58,970 --> 00:14:57,299

be sure about all of them maybe you've

329

00:15:00,859 --> 00:14:58,980

had one that doesn't have a

330

00:15:04,129 --> 00:15:00,869

neurobiological basis I wouldn't really

331

00:15:06,710 --> 00:15:04,139

know would I well specifically dr.

332

00:15:09,579 --> 00:15:06,720

Churchland you cite in your book that

333

00:15:12,470 --> 00:15:09,589

dr. PIM van Lommel holds that opinion

334

00:15:14,599 --> 00:15:12,480

that's clearly not the case I mean he's

335

00:15:15,590 --> 00:15:14,609

written a C mm-hmm all right you I'm

336

00:15:17,449 --> 00:15:15,600

gonna read you what he's written he's

337

00:15:19,789 --> 00:15:17,459

written at the study of patients with

338

00:15:21,639 --> 00:15:19,799

near-death experience and this is from

339

00:15:28,309 --> 00:15:21,649

The Lancet paper that you're citing

340

00:15:29,150 --> 00:15:28,319

clearly shows us that so that's it she

341

00:15:31,789 --> 00:15:29,160

hung up on me

342

00:15:34,039 --> 00:15:31,799

a first really of all the interviews

343

00:15:35,960 --> 00:15:34,049

I've done that's the first well I

344

00:15:40,099 --> 00:15:35,970

immediately got an email and I sent her

345

00:15:41,090 --> 00:15:40,109

this very short email my email reads Wow

346

00:15:43,879 --> 00:15:41,100

that's a first

347

00:15:46,129 --> 00:15:43,889

smiley face is that really how you want

348

00:15:49,479 --> 00:15:46,139

to end things I think you're gonna look

349

00:15:51,739 --> 00:15:49,489

pretty bad it's all I said and I fully

350

00:15:54,529 --> 00:15:51,749

expected that that would be the end of

351  
00:15:58,220 --> 00:15:54,539  
it I mean come on that was really testy

352  
00:15:59,779 --> 00:15:58,230  
the tension was really thick and I just

353  
00:16:00,019 --> 00:15:59,789  
thought I'd just never hear from her

354  
00:16:03,169 --> 00:16:00,029  
again

355  
00:16:06,379 --> 00:16:03,179  
but to my surprise she emailed me back a

356  
00:16:07,070 --> 00:16:06,389  
few minutes later she writes sorry lost

357  
00:16:10,580 --> 00:16:07,080  
connect

358  
00:16:14,390 --> 00:16:10,590  
action I think my computer has a little

359  
00:16:18,860 --> 00:16:14,400  
problem so sorry Pat so I immediately

360  
00:16:19,370 --> 00:16:18,870  
skived her again here's that call caught

361  
00:16:22,760 --> 00:16:19,380  
up

362  
00:16:24,650 --> 00:16:22,770  
are we back I can hear you can you hear

363  
00:16:29,590 --> 00:16:24,660

me you're coming through loud and clear

364

00:16:39,770 --> 00:16:37,670

sorry yeah okay so what's up well let's

365

00:16:41,330 --> 00:16:39,780

try and let's try and finish I think it

366

00:16:44,270 --> 00:16:41,340

was getting a little bit testy there I

367

00:16:47,600 --> 00:16:44,280

mean tell me what you're tell me what

368

00:16:50,840 --> 00:16:47,610

the what the rub is here I'm telling you

369

00:16:52,670 --> 00:16:50,850

that you get totally distorted Vaughn

370

00:16:55,130 --> 00:16:52,680

Lamas thing it's right there in your

371

00:16:58,610 --> 00:16:55,140

book it's I can give you the exact page

372

00:17:01,550 --> 00:16:58,620

it's on page 71 you say there's a

373

00:17:04,370 --> 00:17:01,560

neurological explanation for nd ease is

374

00:17:07,100 --> 00:17:04,380

there and then you cite pinv Alamo as a

375

00:17:08,510 --> 00:17:07,110

in de researcher who says there is he

376

00:17:14,870 --> 00:17:08,520

clearly doesn't he says the exact

377

00:17:20,960 --> 00:17:14,880

opposite hello

378

00:17:22,970 --> 00:17:20,970

yeah oh sorry yeah so I mean what's how

379

00:17:26,180 --> 00:17:22,980

do you explain that is just a mistake or

380

00:17:30,890 --> 00:17:26,190

do you not know his research a lot of

381

00:17:33,260 --> 00:17:30,900

people do see that there are certain

382

00:17:36,020 --> 00:17:33,270

drugs and so forth that can cause

383

00:17:38,360 --> 00:17:36,030

out-of-body experiences or near-death

384

00:17:39,770 --> 00:17:38,370

experiences but dr. Churchill I'm

385

00:17:44,390 --> 00:17:39,780

talking about what you wrote in your

386

00:17:47,000 --> 00:17:44,400

book on page 71 you asked you know you

387

00:17:49,760 --> 00:17:47,010

say that this researcher near-death

388

00:17:51,010 --> 00:17:49,770

experience researcher claims that

389

00:17:55,100 --> 00:17:51,020

there's that there's a neurological

390

00:17:57,230 --> 00:17:55,110

based explanation for nd ease that's not

391

00:17:57,740 --> 00:17:57,240

what he says he says the opposite who

392

00:18:00,080 --> 00:17:57,750

else

393

00:18:02,270 --> 00:18:00,090

what other NDE researchers do you know

394

00:18:11,250 --> 00:18:02,280

who support that what you're saying do

395

00:18:27,190 --> 00:18:23,320

hello dr. Churchland are you there hello

396

00:18:28,840 --> 00:18:27,200

sir can you hear me you're I'm here you

397

00:18:33,370 --> 00:18:28,850

now I didn't hear anything before there

398

00:18:35,110 --> 00:18:33,380

was just a long silence oh I don't know

399

00:18:37,900 --> 00:18:35,120

what is going on I don't know whether

400

00:18:39,550 --> 00:18:37,910

it's your computer or whether it's my

401  
00:18:44,140 --> 00:18:39,560  
computer or whether you're just messing

402  
00:18:49,410 --> 00:18:44,150  
with me or what's going on here but this

403  
00:18:52,510 --> 00:18:49,420  
is not actually working out because if I

404  
00:18:54,730 --> 00:18:52,520  
want things and you say you can't hear

405  
00:18:56,830 --> 00:18:54,740  
me so I don't really know what to say

406  
00:18:58,720 --> 00:18:56,840  
well no please respond I hear you fine

407  
00:19:07,780 --> 00:18:58,730  
now you're talking I don't have any

408  
00:19:10,300 --> 00:19:07,790  
problem do you want to write me an email

409  
00:19:24,190 --> 00:19:10,310  
response maybe to that to that question

410  
00:19:26,410 --> 00:19:24,200  
I can I can do that okay so now surely

411  
00:19:29,110 --> 00:19:26,420  
this is the end of this right I mean

412  
00:19:30,940 --> 00:19:29,120  
it's just a charade at this point if you

413  
00:19:33,160 --> 00:19:30,950

listen at the very her putting her

414

00:19:34,480 --> 00:19:33,170

coffee mug or whatever it is down on the

415

00:19:35,740 --> 00:19:34,490

table you can hear the background noise

416

00:19:37,870 --> 00:19:35,750

and she's not talking into the

417

00:19:40,030 --> 00:19:37,880

microphone claiming that there's these

418

00:19:44,590 --> 00:19:40,040

technical difficulties so surely it's

419

00:19:46,960 --> 00:19:44,600

over now right nope back to the email a

420

00:19:49,600 --> 00:19:46,970

few minutes later she writes tried

421

00:19:52,750 --> 00:19:49,610

calling you no answer maybe the problem

422

00:19:55,570 --> 00:19:52,760

is on your end so I immediately emailed

423

00:19:58,870 --> 00:19:55,580

her back no problem do you want to

424

00:20:02,100 --> 00:19:58,880

finish the interview question mark so I

425

00:20:07,560 --> 00:20:02,110

called her for a third time here goes

426

00:20:12,670 --> 00:20:10,780

actually my husband's on my landline so

427

00:20:14,500 --> 00:20:12,680

that's not going to work no there's

428

00:20:16,540 --> 00:20:14,510

something there's just something not

429

00:20:21,130 --> 00:20:16,550

working here I just don't know quite

430

00:20:23,170 --> 00:20:21,140

what it is so I'm working fine now I

431

00:20:34,180 --> 00:20:23,180

wanted to go ahead and give it a try now

432

00:20:37,480 --> 00:20:34,190

to say yeah okay so yeah and that was

433

00:20:39,220 --> 00:20:37,490

the end of it I did send her another

434

00:20:42,310 --> 00:20:39,230

email asking her how she'd like to

435

00:20:45,580 --> 00:20:42,320

proceed but I never heard back from her

436

00:20:47,530 --> 00:20:45,590

of course I'd like to again thank dr.

437

00:20:49,210 --> 00:20:47,540

Patricia Churchland for appearing on

438

00:20:51,640 --> 00:20:49,220

skeptic Oh for agreeing to do the

439

00:20:56,170 --> 00:20:51,650

interview and for pushing through all

440

00:20:58,240 --> 00:20:56,180

the technical problems we had I'm sure

441

00:21:00,430 --> 00:20:58,250

it was a mistake on her part these kind

442

00:21:02,230 --> 00:21:00,440

of people normally don't engage in any

443

00:21:04,720 --> 00:21:02,240

kind of debate or any kind of real

444

00:21:07,480 --> 00:21:04,730

substantial back-and-forth on these

445

00:21:09,280 --> 00:21:07,490

issues I do have to say in my email I

446

00:21:11,500 --> 00:21:09,290

told her exactly where I was coming from

447

00:21:14,050 --> 00:21:11,510

I pointed to other interviews I've done

448

00:21:15,550 --> 00:21:14,060

I think I pointed to the Christoph cook

449

00:21:18,010 --> 00:21:15,560

interview and the Stuart Hameroff

450

00:21:19,930 --> 00:21:18,020

interview initially when I contacted her

451  
00:21:21,760 --> 00:21:19,940  
years ago she responded and said you

452  
00:21:23,320 --> 00:21:21,770  
know I don't really believe in Stuart

453  
00:21:25,480 --> 00:21:23,330  
Hameroff side ia's and therefore I don't

454  
00:21:27,550 --> 00:21:25,490  
want to talk about it and I copied that

455  
00:21:29,950 --> 00:21:27,560  
original email when I follow it up so

456  
00:21:31,930 --> 00:21:29,960  
it's not like she didn't know where I

457  
00:21:33,730 --> 00:21:31,940  
was coming from she just didn't focus on

458  
00:21:35,260 --> 00:21:33,740  
it otherwise she I think she would have

459  
00:21:36,970 --> 00:21:35,270  
been better prepared but then again I

460  
00:21:39,370 --> 00:21:36,980  
don't know how she could have prepared

461  
00:21:42,490 --> 00:21:39,380  
herself better because her ideas are

462  
00:21:44,650 --> 00:21:42,500  
ridiculous and her performance

463  
00:21:46,540 --> 00:21:44,660

I don't know I'm gonna be really

464

00:21:50,110 --> 00:21:46,550

interested to hear what you all have to

465

00:21:51,670 --> 00:21:50,120

say it was stunning to me it was

466

00:21:53,740 --> 00:21:51,680

laughable in fact I think you heard me

467

00:21:56,590 --> 00:21:53,750

laugh a couple of times here's a woman I

468

00:21:59,170 --> 00:21:56,600

can hear the background noise and yet

469

00:22:01,780 --> 00:21:59,180

she's suggesting that there's some kind

470

00:22:04,540 --> 00:22:01,790

of malfunction in the equipment and that

471

00:22:08,160 --> 00:22:04,550

that's the reason why she can't respond

472

00:22:11,110 --> 00:22:08,170

to my questions so I just offer up one

473

00:22:14,140 --> 00:22:11,120

question and it's a recurring question

474

00:22:14,620 --> 00:22:14,150

on skeptiko and that is what's going on

475

00:22:17,170 --> 00:22:14,630

here

476

00:22:20,590 --> 00:22:17,180

how have we devolved into a scientific

477

00:22:23,230 --> 00:22:20,600

and academic system that props up such

478

00:22:26,140 --> 00:22:23,240

nonsense again the real scary thing

479

00:22:29,530 --> 00:22:26,150

about dr. Churchland is her opinion is

480

00:22:32,920 --> 00:22:29,540

the status quo majority opinion it's

481

00:22:35,530 --> 00:22:32,930

nonsensical it's indefensible but it's

482

00:22:36,520 --> 00:22:35,540

the majority opinion and don't question

483

00:22:38,550 --> 00:22:36,530

it

484

00:22:41,410 --> 00:22:38,560

so again the question is a fresh look at

485

00:22:44,560 --> 00:22:41,420

what's going on here how can this be

486

00:22:48,310 --> 00:22:44,570

what's wrong with the system this isn't

487

00:22:51,150 --> 00:22:48,320

an isolated situation this is systemic

488

00:22:54,010 --> 00:22:51,160

this isn't about philosophy or neuro

489

00:22:57,130 --> 00:22:54,020

philosophy whatever that means this is

490

00:23:00,370 --> 00:22:57,140

about science this is about the culture

491

00:23:03,010 --> 00:23:00,380

war debate over who we are what we are

492

00:23:03,460 --> 00:23:03,020

where we came from that's what this is

493

00:23:05,530 --> 00:23:03,470

about

494

00:23:07,680 --> 00:23:05,540

and that's why this silliness is put

495

00:23:10,600 --> 00:23:07,690

forth in the way that it is because

496

00:23:13,170 --> 00:23:10,610

institutional science is more afraid of

497

00:23:16,300 --> 00:23:13,180

whatever else might come out of the data

498

00:23:20,140 --> 00:23:16,310

than they are of these old tired

499

00:23:22,570 --> 00:23:20,150

worn-out nonsensical ideas well there

500

00:23:25,180 --> 00:23:22,580

I've answered the question but I still

501  
00:23:27,490 --> 00:23:25,190  
hope you'll answer it as well and of

502  
00:23:32,200 --> 00:23:27,500  
course a place to do that is that the

503  
00:23:34,630 --> 00:23:32,210  
skeptic Oh website at SK ep tik Oh calm

504  
00:23:36,910 --> 00:23:34,640  
there you can leave a comment right

505  
00:23:38,110 --> 00:23:36,920  
there in the show notes jump on over to

506  
00:23:41,410 --> 00:23:38,120  
the forum and join the conversation

507  
00:23:44,830 --> 00:23:41,420  
there or connect with me via Facebook or

508  
00:23:47,470 --> 00:23:44,840  
email so I have a number of interesting

509  
00:23:49,000 --> 00:23:47,480  
ideas for shows coming up I don't have

510  
00:23:51,550 --> 00:23:49,010  
any shows in the hopper I've kind of

511  
00:23:53,290 --> 00:23:51,560  
cleaned up my backlog from the holidays

512  
00:23:55,900 --> 00:23:53,300  
so I'm ready to move on to some new

513  
00:23:57,670 --> 00:23:55,910

topics and I'm not exactly sure where

514

00:23:59,470 --> 00:23:57,680

I'm going to go so I'm gonna have to dig

515

00:24:01,870 --> 00:23:59,480

through some of those many great

516

00:24:04,330 --> 00:24:01,880

suggestions that you've sent and see if

517

00:24:06,970 --> 00:24:04,340

I can find something there or see if

518

00:24:09,340 --> 00:24:06,980

something else pops up I do hope you'll

519

00:24:11,950 --> 00:24:09,350

stay with me for all of that I greatly

520

00:24:14,050 --> 00:24:11,960

greatly appreciate your support of the

521

00:24:16,060 --> 00:24:14,060

show and your willingness to share the

522

00:24:19,150 --> 00:24:16,070

show with other like-minded people