

Interview Transcript
Participant M – 27th June 2016

Participant M: Because one of the first things I started doing when I started hallucinating was taking notes about it. That's because I could happily be a scientist. I've always been really interested in science, but I didn't do a science degree. I did a commerce degree.

Interviewer: Yeah, I remember you saying that.

Participant M: Because I've got different interests in life, and I thought that I could do a better job of a commerce degree than I could a science degree, because I don't work particularly hard. I certainly didn't work particularly hard in high school, so a science degree would've been more challenging, but I'm equally as interested in science as I am in commerce so I did a commerce degree, but when I started having unusual experiences, my first thought was that I need to collect data about this so that I can approach managing it all. I just know human memory is really fallible, and the longer between the point you're trying to recall and the point you're at recalling it, the more unreliable it becomes.

Interviewer: Yeah, open to interpretation.

Participant M: I know that because I read a lot of science, and you don't have to read very much to realize how fallible human memory is, so I started keeping notes. On a couple of occasions, my voices and I have got in an argument where they insisted that I throw the notes away.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Participant M: So I've done that. Because at that point in time, they were counterproductive.

Interviewer: The notes or the voices?

Participant M: The notes.

Interviewer: The notes were.

Participant M: It was going to cause me more problems in the immediate future to hang on the notes, and my view of the voices meant that it was more worthwhile to throw the notes out than to keep them. In 2005, I threw out about 15 years of notes. In 2015, I tricked my voices and pretended to throw out the notes, but I knew in the back of my mind without being cognizant of exactly where there were copies, I knew I had copies around, so I pretended to throw them out, but I've recently got them back.

Interviewer: Wow. Wow.

Participant M: So I have them again. It turned out that up until 2015, I attribute most of the disposition of my voices to being a result of the notes that I keep, because even though I started off making second or third person notes that people might keep in a diary, which is, "I did this and this today." Since 2007, I largely kept first person notes. The notes were just quotes of what I heard, rather than my feelings about what I heard or what I did, what activities resulted from my interaction with the voices. Around 23rd of November, 2007, I started keeping first person transcripts. The interesting byproduct, the reason I did that is because writing the notes, and a scientist would argue with this and I wouldn't argue with the scientist, because human memory is so fallible. It's fallible after 2 hours.

The science that's conducted into human recall indicates that if you get in an experimental setting and you show people a bunch of symbols, and then the science was, there's different things you can intervene with, but if you just show them some symbols and don't intervene, then 2 hours later the error rate of people recalling those symbols will start to increase. The longer it is between when they were shown the symbols and when you ask them to recall them, the more the error rate will increase, but it's also ... Part of the reason we write notes in lectures and stuff like that is because the act of writing the notes helps you consolidate the memory, and so you remember more about it. I feel that I have some quite good memory of periods where I don't have notes for. I don't need to recall what was said in great detail in 1992, but I remember bits of it. But a scientist would point out that my recollection's not likely to have great accuracy, but I think it's certainly better than if I hadn't made any notes.

Interviewer: Yeah, at all.

Participant M: Because I've been making notes all the time, I have these dates. That's my disclaimer. I have dates for things, but it's possible the dates aren't exactly accurate, but they're more accurate than they would've been if I didn't-

Interviewer: If there were none.

Participant M: Keep notes.

Interviewer: Yeah, exactly.

Participant M: I didn't know that at the time, but I think that the reason my voices are quite often really good is because I put them on the spot. There's good and bad voices, and I really make a mess of the bad voices' intentions to be antagonistic to me, because of the notes I've kept. At first I just did it as a matter of scientific investigation. If I'm undergoing these strange experiences, then it's a good idea for me to work on data, not impressions, so I started keeping notes. Around the 23rd of November, 2007, I started keeping first person notes, because I had realized that my voices lie a lot. But I have good and bad voices, and the bad voices lie a lot, and I've proven that many times over. The way ... But they don't lie a lot, they often are

contradictory in the same sentence, but they lie about important things over time.

The things that lead to delusions, as far as my secondary research indicates, are generally things that change over time, and the reason people get caught up in delusions a lot of the time is because they don't see that slow progression of a lie that they hear from voices. I hypothesize at the moment that there's a life cycle of delusions, that when people start getting auditory verbal hallucinations, they immediately start wondering where they're from and draw the wrong conclusions. I think there may or there may not be a life cycle, but I think people that end up in delusional states are largely there because they're confronted by a stimulus that they can't clearly understand-

Interviewer: Make sense of in that moment.

Participant M: So they start thinking the FBI or the CIA are involved, because they're having a conversation with the stimuli, and there's no observable stimuli source. There's no origin for the stimuli. The stimuli, which is the auditory verbal hallucinations, will say something about their current circumstances or their location, so they draw the conclusion that there must be cameras around, because this voice has just said to me something about the chair in the room, but there's no one here, so there must be a camera. Then they think it's the CIA or mind control experiments from the government, or the FBI, because someone can see where they are, and they're saying something about it, and what they hear is very human. They take the human part as a given. They take the fact that someone can see their location as an observation of a given, so their next conclusion is FBI, CIA, cameras in the room. I see mine differently, because I've kept all these notes, and I've realized things, especially now that it's been 24 years. It's nearly 25 years. My first hallucinations started on the 21st of July, 1991, and it's the 27th of June today, so 24 years, 11 months. Nearly 25 years exactly.

Interviewer: Do you have any intentions on what you're going to do with your notes?

Participant M: My opinion is that they've provided me with such benefit, and my evidence of that perhaps is the Hearing Voices groups. I've only been to a couple, because they didn't give me a lot of value, but they always started off with the happiness thing, and my happiness is never less than 95%. I'm always quite happy. I have my periods when the voices cause me problems, but they're not the majority at all. I think my happiness with the voices, my whole response and reaction to them, I like it. I'm really interested in them, and I wanted to share that with other people.

In 2005, I was going to do some research, and the Schizophrenic Fellowship of New South Wales were going to fund my research, and I said to them, "Hang off for a bit. I think I can do a better research effort than what I've described to you," and in 2014, I filled out the online application for LNR research ethics approval with the New South Wales government, but then in 2015 I really had some problems with my hallucinations, and I decided that the research could be counterproductive, so I

haven't taken the last step of the ethics application, which is to print up a copy of the application and send it to the local committee and actually make the application. I may or may not do that. The story in my voices changed, and my notes became really problematic. That's really the first time that they have been, so I've yet to make use of them.

Interviewer: Do something with them.

Participant M: A combination of the notes and the plot of what I hear led me to develop this thing that I call the personification technique. I thought that the fact that I'm happy about hearing voices, as a result of the notes, and I wanted to share that with other people because I thought if everyone responded to them the same way I do, if I could show them the value in keeping first person notes, and I still think there's a lot of value in it, then it could change a lot of people's lives. It's not the solution to voices, and it probably depends on your personality, because I think some people don't want to hear voices at all. My social worker here identified long ago that for some people, voices just keep them company.

Interviewer: Yeah, and especially when voices first came about for people, the first time they started experiencing them, they had a real function in providing companionship for so many people.

Participant M: Yeah. I developed this perspective, this idea about how to manage them. I came to that because I wanted to help people keep notes, because they would realize that what they're hearing is a lie. If they know it's a lie, then it's my belief they would end up ... There would be less suicide attempts. Because I think what gets people into so much stress is that they take the voices still as being like another person, or not evaluating them correctly. They see more truth in them. I came up with this thing called ... I was building a website to try and help people. It was just another management technique, really, that I came up with. My management technique is not just to keep a journal or a diary, which is a common management technique, but to keep a first person journal. Don't write down what you did in the day and what effect the voices had on you and how you felt about the voices. Write down exactly what you hear, and then read it again later on. That really changes the nature of voices for people. When I was at one of the Hearing Voices groups, there was a lady called [Nita 00:14:36]. Was it you who had met Nita? Did you-

Interviewer: I think I know who you're talking about, yeah.

Participant M: She must've been in her late 50s, early 60s, and she saw my happiness each week, and she said "Scott, my voices want me to commit suicide, and they keep telling me to lie on the floor, and it really, really upsets me. What do you think I could do about that?" I said, Nita, give me a week and I will give you an answer, and I really wanted to tell her about my management technique. My management technique resulted in this potentially useful point of view, and I called it the personification technique. It's got to do with the fact that it's a really big hurdle for people to get

over the fact that the voices they're hearing aren't other humans, because they're human voices and you can't help but react as if a human had said that to you. Nita said, "They keep telling me to lie on the floor and they want me to commit suicide," and the technique I came up with is called the personification technique, and it's a direct result of what I hear, but the idea is that if the voices saying they're ghosts or demons or whatever they say they are, if they're not humans, then pretend they are humans. If they say they're humans, or you think they're humans, then pretend they're ghosts or aliens or something else.

With Nita, the answer I wanted to give her ... She said, "My voice's name is Satan, and it keeps telling me to lie on the floor." After she said that to me, I said, "Give me a week." I wanted to go back and say, "Nita, his name's not Satan. Pretend his name's Stephen. Pretend he's just this guy in a big, ill fitting pair of shorts with a pair of thongs, with a stupid t-shirt, and if he tells you to lie on the floor, say, 'Fuck off, Stephen. You go and lie on the floor.' Don't think he's Satan, the head of all evil in the universe. Think he's the guy next door. This really skinny, ugly guy or a big, fat, stupid looking man, or-

Interviewer: Something funny to look at, yeah.

Participant M: "Some stupid man in a pair of thongs telling you to lie on the floor," and if you do that how I do it, and I live through it. It works a treat for me. I don't know because I've never ... I didn't answer her, because I didn't have ethics approval, and I know that as an unqualified person, I can't go around treating people, because there's an ethical problem in that, so I never told her that, but I wanted to. I'm not a clinician. I don't have a medical degree. All I have is my own opinions. I'm a commerce graduate, and I've got some other qualifications as well, but just saying there was an ethical liability that if something went wrong in me saying that, that it would've been advice coming from someone who is not qualified to give advice, but that's what I wanted to tell her. I wanted to say, "Just pretend he's this stupid looking man in a pair of thongs telling you to lie on the floor, and if you do that successfully ... 'You go and lie on the floor.'"

Interviewer: What you're describing is taking your power back, isn't it?

Participant M: Yeah, and I've always had it. Except for this 9 month period in 2015, I've always had it. I'm really good at it. I'm good at my own ideas, because I have this attitude about my voices, and it largely stems ... I might have an attitude about everyone. I don't know. I don't reflect on my own personality that much, but I grew up in the age of punk rock, and it's a real punk rock attitude.

Interviewer: Down with the establishment.

Participant M: Yeah, but I'm not like that as a person. I'm really pro establishment. I love the police. I love politicians. I live in eternal gratitude of our community. I'm just so thankful to be an Australian because I lead a comfortable life, and I've got mental

health problems that prohibit that, and if it wasn't for Australia's fair-go ethos, and the diligent hard work of politicians that enable me to have a DSP and community housing, if I was in America I'd be in really different circumstances, and I live a life of gratitude. But I can be like that, no problems at all, and I do that because that way you're not full of profane language on your-

Interviewer: Oh, go ahead. If you want to [crosstalk 00:19:35] I'm not one to step back from profanity. I think it's a great expression.

Participant M: No problems. I'll just keep my profanity visual, that means a much nicer-

Interviewer: More directed that way.

Participant M: Part of my attitude, the foundation of that attitude, is because I've kept notes about my voices and I see them very differently to what other people see them as. Because when you reread what they say, they're really weak, unimposing, useless things, and that's not to say that I haven't had problems. I've had a suicide attempt as a result of them, and I've had some really difficult years, but that was early on. The more data I keep about my voices, the more empowered I become, and the less empowered they are.

Interviewer: Can we go back to the beginning, and are you able to tell me your story with mental health and substance addiction challenges from the beginning?

Participant M: Yeah, as best as I can recall it. The data is a bit sparse in the early years, because it's

Interviewer: You chucked it.

Participant M: Two and a half decades ago and I threw the data away. Actually, my ability to tell you about my mental health is not as good as my ability to tell you the plot of what I've heard, because the notes I kept are about what I hear. My background, my story that led to my ... That includes my early years, I was always good at music. It was my best subject at school, and I think that's because I practiced a lot. Music's a really mechanical thing. I didn't work very hard in high school, so my academic marks got me into university, but I didn't do very much homework in math, so I didn't know revision for my, what you call the HSC. I'm from Perth. We had different names. I always loved pop music, so I thought I'd try and be a rock and roll star. I joined a band just before my HSC, and I did my first paid gig the night after my HSC. I didn't do any gigs because I knew my HSC was important, so I hung off a bit. My first band went really quite well. We got regular crowds. Pub rock existed then, and I don't know how old you are, but you may not know about-

Interviewer: I do know about pub rock.

Participant M: Right. It was a thing. Audiences of 2,000 people were coming, and we were getting 2 to 500 people a gig, and I was perhaps doing 3 or 4 gigs a week, and we were

getting money.

Interviewer: Were you singing, or were you playing?

Participant M: I wasn't the lead singer. I did backup vocals, and I was playing bass guitar, and I'd never played bass guitar. I went to the audition for the band, which was a mods band, and you probably don't what mods are, but there was punk rockers, there was disco, and then a movie called Quadrophenia came out in 1980 which was from The Who. Pete Townshend wrote a rock opera called Quadrophenia, and it was about the mods of the 60s.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know mods, about the song, She's a Mod.

Participant M: I was sort of a mod myself, and I joined a mod band and that made me a mod for sure, but in Perth which has got a very small population, the mods, the punks, and the skinheads were all one group of people, because they all had a common British background. Most of the guys I hung out with were Brits themselves, and I was a mod in a mods band, and they always used to come along to our gigs. The whole rock and roll thing went really well for me, but I drank a lot, and I think that caused a problem for the band but I would've left anyway because my grandfather was an alcoholic, and I found myself drinking one morning. Alarm bells went off and I thought, "This is not good," because my grandfather caused a lot of trouble in the family, and I could see that if I didn't have a drinking problem, I was about to get one, so the band fell apart naturally. Excuse me.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:24:31]

Participant M: Hello. How are you going? I'm here with a researcher at Hornsby Hospital doing some research. [inaudible 00:24:49] I haven't even seen her yet, so I'll come and get you when I do. Okay. See you then. The whole rock and roll thing went quite well, but I had to leave that group of people because I was developing an alcohol problem. I went to other things, and I started smoking cannabis, and I joined a band that could've done quite well but it didn't do that well at all, so I started my own band and we had an album that was number 3 on the independent charts, but we didn't have a record deal because there was no record companies in Perth. I knew from the very start that if I really wanted to be a rock and roller that I needed to live in Sydney or Melbourne, and I don't like Melbourne so I knew I'd end up living in Sydney, which was fortunate because I hated Perth and still do. Even the Eurogliders had a song, Heaven (Must Be There), which if you examine the lyrics of that song, it's saying, "I want to get out of Perth." Because everyone in rock and roll knew they had to live in Sydney because there were no record companies.

I came to Sydney in '89. That's when I started using amphetamines. That band didn't get to where I wanted it to go, so I left. I stopped the band because actually my girlfriend was using heroin and I wanted to leave Sydney, because I didn't like heroin at all. I went back to Perth and did the first year of my commerce degree,

and then I met a guy through someone that was going to do a record deal for us here in Sydney, a guy called Ron Thiessen who used to play with a band called the Uncanny X-Men. He had gold and platinum records and stuff, so I deferred from uni for a year, came back, and gave rock and roll one last shot. At the start, I said I would only try and be a rock and roller for 10 years, because I could identify from the very beginning that you could be unsuccessful forever and forever try and be a rock and roll star and never get there, so I said that I'd give it 10 years and if I didn't have a million dollar deal I'd quit. I wrote with this guy who had gold and platinum records, and we still didn't get the deal that I wanted, so I did quit. I went back to Perth and did my commerce degree, but in '91, when I was writing with Ron, I had my first hallucinations.

I stopped writing with Ron in July and I moved to Surry Hills and I had a recording studio. I was still working a bit in the industry, and I was recording other people's music, but my hallucinations were really upsetting. They were really bad. The hallucinations weren't any worse than they are these days, but because I didn't know how to manage them, I didn't know anything about schizophrenia, they were really catastrophic in my life. I went back to Perth and I told my mom that I was hallucinating, and she took me to a place called Heathcote Hospital which is now closed down. It was a terrible place. It was like Bedlam, although Bedlam's quite good these days, but it was this old hospital and there were 8 people to a room and it was just terrible experience. I was prescribed trifluoperazine, which the common name is Stelazine. The side effects of Stelazine is akathisia. I couldn't handle ... I would rather die than live with akathisia, but I discovered that the only thing that could get rid of akathisia, which was worse than the schizophrenia, was amphetamines, so I started using amphetamines. I just got caught in this-

Interviewer: Cycle?

Participant M: Cycle. I would take my meds as prescribed and feel absolutely terrible, but then I would go and buy amphetamines because it got rid of the terrible feeling of the Stelazine. I didn't really know how to use Stelazine, and up until 1998, I didn't know anything about the pharmacology I was using to try and manage my hallucinations. The doctor warned me at the very start, my second admission into Heathcote, he said, "Scott, the amphetamines are causing the hallucinations, and your history of cannabis and stuff. The more hallucinations you experience, the more entrenched they will become." He did say that to me, but I thought that the antipsychotics were like headache tablets, so if I was hallucinating, I would take some. Sometimes I would take more than the prescribed dose. I was thinking that if I hallucinate, I take an amount of Stelazine, 30 milligrams of Stelazine or something, and that will get rid of the hallucinations. No, Stelazine ... I have never looked into Stelazine, but it may or may not have a long lead in period, and you need to take it regularly, but there was no way I was going to suffer with the akathisia, and I was back at university. I had two admissions in the fortnight before exams, so I had troubles with university, but I still did my degree, and I won an award as the best graduating student.

I was really good at what I did, despite my hallucinations, but my amphetamine use ... I always liked and still like the euphoric stimulation of amphetamines, and that just sounds logical to me, even way I say it now. It's a euphoric stimulant. Great. I'm into euphoria, and I'm into stimulation and I like working a lot, but the whole thing, unsurprisingly, which was especially no surprise to yourself, is that you end up in this pattern of usage. Back then, it was akathisia or amphetamines and university, because there was no way I could do any study at all as long as I had akathisia. I really wanted that degree, because I just quit a 10 year experiment, a 10 year go at being a rock and roller. I was having auditory verbal hallucinations. The only treatment I had at my disposal was Stelazine, and if I took Stelazine, I couldn't do any study at all, but if I took amphetamines, not only could I do my study, but I would be awake for 3 days.

I was 30 or 32 or something. When my student colleagues were out at the pub on a Friday and Saturday night, because they were 18, 20 years old, and I was 32, I was at home working for 3 days straight, getting just huge marks. I was the best in every class. I got 3 or 4 marks over 90%, and I won an award as the best student. If I didn't use amphetamines, I think my good marks I'm capable of anyway. I think I'm a clever person, and I know how to study, and as an adult student, [inaudible 00:33:29] students always get better marks than their young colleagues, because they've just got different focus. I did quite well, but it was the start of the cycle of meds versus study and amphetamines, and the two got intertwined. It persisted. That cycle persisted, and it exists today, but it's different now. I moved to Sydney in '89, and then I went back in 1990. Then I came back to Sydney in '91, then I moved back in '92.

Then I came back to Sydney in '97 or late '96. October or November '96. I was working full time, and I had some prestigious work. I was writing software. I was a web developer, but the World Wide Web was only invented in 1994, and in 1996, most people still hadn't heard of it. I was really a web developer, but I wrote business software. I wrote business applications. A lot of my early work was in intranets, and I worked for Microsoft and I worked for big corporations, because they were the only people that could foresee the importance of the World Wide Web.

I was earning a lot of money, and I was doing work that most people hadn't heard of, and my project managers knew so little about the field that I was working in that they could never really conduct my activities. They would just say, "Are you finished yet?" [inaudible 00:35:23] they asked me any technical questions, I would just say things that they didn't know what I was talking about. In 1998, was it '98? No, in the year 2000, the end of the year 2000, it might have been early 2001, I was seeing a psychiatrist in Neutral Bay, and olanzapine had just been invented. That's my understanding of what she said, and she gave me a sample. It didn't do much for my hallucinations, but I still didn't realize that some antipsychotics have this lead in period, and it takes 3 weeks before they start having benefit or having any

efficacy, and you have to take them as prescribed. You don't get a result for 3 or 4 weeks. I was just taking them like headache tablets, and I was ignoring the prescribed dose, and I never thought to tell them that that's how I was taking them.

It was such a marginal thing to me in my life. I just dealt with my hallucinations. They weren't stopping me from working. I was earning more than nearly everyone I knew, and I was working full time. On occasion I would take ... I assume I was taking 10 milligram. I didn't keep notes, but if they were giving me 10 milligram tablets, some days I would take 60 milligrams and deal with the strange physical response I got to taking such an overdose of them, but then I wouldn't take them for 5 days and then my hallucinations would be bad, so I'd take 4 or 5, just the same as I might with a headache tablet, but even with headache tablets these days, I take a little more than you should. But I hate headaches, so if you're only supposed to take 3, sometimes I will take 4. I know I'm doing the wrong thing when I do that, but that's how it was.

I think my hallucinations are somewhat stress related, and that is evidenced by the fact that the two admissions I had into a mental health hospital were both in the fortnight before the end of semester exams, when I was at university. Then in 2003, I bought a unit in Epping, and for the first 6 months there were tenants in the property that I bought, so I was still renting a place in West Ryde, but I bought at a high point in the economic cycle and I paid a lot for my unit, and my mortgage repayments were higher than what a sensible person would take on.

Then when I moved into my unit I ran out of work. I was a contractor, because the World Wide Web was so new that other than intranets, Internet for businesses was just thought to be a strange, glossy brochure, and there was no ... Other than Microsoft and Pfizer and multi billion dollar corporations that I worked for, no one knew enough about the World Wide Web. Most businesses didn't even know they needed a webpage, but the few that did know thought that you would hire someone, they'd do 3 months work, build your webpage, and that would be it. You have a webpage. The words Internet marketing didn't exist in the English language. Search engine optimization didn't exist. Google didn't exist. No one knew anything about the World Wide Web. The Internet was a text based way of sending emails. No one had email addresses. The whole thing didn't exist. That's why I was writing, a lot of the time, business application software, because I was really a web developer, but to write to and from a database through a website, which is what I did, databases were something that were used internally by businesses. Excuse me. I'll have to turn this off.

Interviewer: That's fine.

Participant M: Hi, Michelle. Hi. Good, thank you. My brother rang me this morning and said he was going to deposit it today. Yeah, he rang me this morning at 11 o'clock. Yeah. Oh, okay. I thought I'd emailed it too. Okay, no problems. Yeah, that's all right. That'd be great. Thanks, Michelle. Okay. See you then. Bye-bye. Yeah, I think he

will. I think he'll send me the receipt. Yeah, it'll be at the end of the day, because I'm just doing some research for someone at the moment. I'm a respondent in an interview. I'm sitting in an interview, so that's why I'm going to ... Yeah, that's why I'm going to conclude this conversation, but I'll have a look as soon as I get home. Okay, no problems. See you. Yeah, if I get two phone calls a week, it's a busy week.

Interviewer: It's a huge day then.

Participant M: Yeah. Yeah, I lost some money recently. I was involved in a credit card fraud. I've just lost 4 grand because of it.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:41:33]

Participant M: That was the person who was involved. That's partly due to schizophrenia as well, interestingly enough. Yeah, so I didn't know how to use the meds, and in 2003 I got a mortgage, and then my contracts ran out. I was a contractor, because there was no full time work for web development. There was no permanent salaried positions, because the World Wide Web had only just been invented, so all my work was contract based work. As soon as I moved into my mortgage, I ran out of work and couldn't pay the mortgage, so I had an episode. None of my friends knew, still don't know anything about schizophrenia. I don't have a lot of close friends in Sydney because I'm from Perth, and the episode went on until December and I was about to be thrown out of my mortgage by the sheriff when my cousin finally realized that he's got a mortgage and he hasn't worked for 9 months, there could be something wrong, and that's when I first met Michelle and came into contact with this mental health service. I lost my mortgage. I lost my proprietary limited car company. I lost the lease I had on my car and lost the car. I lost everything. I wasn't even on settling benefits for 9 months, so I had nothing.

That is the history of my medication up until 2003, but the plot of my hallucinations was, when I was back in Perth in 1992, I moved back to Perth in '91. I started having hallucinations in '91, and I had a suicide attempt in '94, and my hallucinations said that they had stolen some of my music and that they had sold the music and that I was owed an amount of money, and I wasn't allowed to have the money unless I gave up smoking. I've had all modalities of hallucinations, and I still have visual and auditory, but I was having lots of tactile hallucinations in '91, '92. That led to a suicide attempt. I injected Drano and Rust Rid, because I'm an intravenous drug user. I was coming off the back of what some days was a real failure in rock and roll, but I knew at the time, there were other musicians I knew, there were people I knew from Perth that were much more successful than I was. I knew people that were getting 2,000 people a night to a gig and they still didn't get a record contract. One of them I knew, they were about to sign a deal with Mushroom Records, and apparently Mushroom got wind that one of them was an intravenous drug user and decided not to sign them.

I couldn't avoid at times feeling like I had failed to make it in rock and roll. I didn't

get what I wanted and I was depressed about it, but I knew at the same time that there was an element of luck in being a successful musician. It's not like a business where there's middle ground even, and only the top 2% of musicians make any money out of it. Most people with record deals, and I discovered while I was doing my commerce degree, that the money you get for a record deal is a loan. You get an advance, so effectively what I was trying to achieve was a million dollar loan from a record company, because I came into contact with bands later on that had got a \$500,000 record deal and that pays for your studio time and your marketing. Trying to market in Australia over such vast distances-

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:46:12]

Participant M: Cost a lot of money, so you easily spend ... I'm a sound engineer as well. I've got qualification as a sound engineer, because I was doing some sound engineering while I was playing with the band, but it came down to being mutually exclusive. I couldn't work as a sound engineer and not work Thursday, Friday, Saturday nights, and I couldn't be in the band and not play Thursday and Friday and Saturday nights, so I had to choose one or the other. That \$500,000 advance is to cover recording costs, pressing CD costs, printing the CD cover costs, and all the other marketing. Some artists spend a million dollars in the studio, and studios at that time were about \$120 an hour. It would cost you \$350,000 to bring out 2 albums. The deal we were looking at was \$500,000 for 3 albums, so you would easily spend \$400,000 recording the thing, and then that only left you \$150,000 for marketing, and that's barely pole posters for one week. In Australia, it's especially difficult. In America and England, which everybody knows that artists have to go overseas to be successful, it's because \$150,000 spent on pole posters in Los Angeles that has a population of 13 million people gets a lot more people informed about your band-

Interviewer: More people.

Participant M: Than \$150,000 worth of pole posters in Sydney that only goes to 4 million people. The same pole posters in America go to 13 million people. I met bands later that got a \$500,000 deal, sold 15,000 copies of their CD, which earned them \$80,000, so they owed the record company \$420,000 and for the rest of their lives they're going to be paying back the record company, so they're doing gigs at RSLs, and they've got a day job working at Kohl's, and out of their salary that they earn at Kohl's they have to pay the music company back, because they still owe them \$400,000. That's the 5 guys that were in the band. I decided at the end that maybe one of the things that went wrong for me in my aspirations to be a successful musician was that I didn't know any marketing. I was a sound engineer, so I knew how to get a good product from the recording studio, and I was a good musician anyway, but I didn't know that much about marketing.

That was one of the reasons I did a commerce degree. I just wondered what it's all about. I wondered what I didn't do. In those early days, my psychosis was telling me that it had stolen some of my music and sold it, and I was owed this money

from my music sales. My psychosis used the name, the primary name of my auditory verbal hallucinations was the name of this girl who was going to get us a recording contract and a publishing contract, and she signed up another band with RCA in Los Angeles, and she said she could do it again, but she met a guy in England and left to go and marry him, and so the band didn't have management again. My auditory verbal hallucinations, said they were her and that she had this music and she'd sold it and she had a publishing contract and a recording contract, and I was owed over a million dollars but I wasn't allowed to have it unless I gave up smoking cigarettes. That just served to infuriate me, because it's still legal to smoke cigarettes, and that went on for years.

I came to realize that at times, I become, this is where my vocabulary and my knowledge of [inaudible 00:50:54] lets me down, but the hallucinations always tend to lead to delusions, because you hear them and there's no stimuli, and you can't understand where they're coming from. Depending on what they say to you, you have a different understanding of what's going on. If they're saying they're your next door neighbor and they're saying nice things, then you become real good friends with your next door neighbor. If they say they're your next door neighbor and they're persecuting you and they're antagonistic and insulting and full of hatred, which most auditory verbal hallucinations seem to be. When I look at YouTube, on YouTube there's a growing amount of people's examples of their hallucinations. Have you seen any of those?

Interviewer: No.

Participant M: Put hearing voices into YouTube, and there's all these people that have made recordings of what they're voices are like, and Andrew Denton did a-

Interviewer: Oh, yeah. Angels and Demons.

Participant M: Yeah. Angels and Demons is the name of a website. Did you know that?

Interviewer: No.

Participant M: Yeah, it's about ghosts and it's very relevant to what I'm going to say later on today, but was that episode of Andrew Denton's called Angels and Demons? Was it?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant M: Someone gave him a CD of what it was like to hear auditory verbal hallucinations, and he was saying how horrible they were and how shocked he was. How could anyone conduct their lives listening to this? This is just catastrophic for an individual. He was communicating that. There's a growing body of YouTube clips of the same thing, where people say what their hallucinations are like, and they're right. They are like that, but mine tended not to be like that. Mine have been that nasty, derogatory, horrible, insulting, hatred, antagonism, that people are putting

on YouTube. Mine were, you made over a million dollars with your music. Mine were just success. They're all about my success, and they were generally good, but they weren't always like that. They were persecuting me at the same time. A combination of depression that I had because of my occasional feeling of failure to do with the music and my outrage at being told that I couldn't have the money that was due to me because I was smoking cigarettes, which infuriated me.

It meant that they weren't always good things that I was hearing, and stuff like that. I was keeping notes as well. My suicide attempt was ... That's what I was going to say is that I believe these days that there's two sorts of psychoses. There's two sorts of psychosis for an individual. There's psychosis which is as a result of your neurotransmitters. My brain can go into a phase or a stage of operation where I'm unable to defeat the voices. My normal view of them, these days, gets changed, and so I think the voices are real, because most of the time I don't have an explanation for who or what they are, but I think they're external entities or beings. But if I take too many drugs, my ability to be that objective and disconnected to them changes, and that's what used to happen to me early on.

It was probably the drugs that I was taking, but I think it's stressed related in many ways because to this very day, the substances I use, and I just use amphetamines. I don't drink. I don't smoke cannabis. I don't take cocaine. I don't take heroin or anything else. I use crystal methamphetamine, and I always have, and it was amphetamines that were dealing with the akathisia from Stelazine so effectively and allowing me to work. There's not a one to one correlation between psychosis and amphetamine use. There's maybe some degree of correspondence between the two. If I use an awful lot of amphetamines, I'm much more likely to become psychotic, but it's still not a one to one correlation, but then again the amphetamines aren't made by chemists. They're made in people's backyard, so their purity changes. There's not a one to one correlation between how much I use and how much active crystal methamphetamine there is in there, if they're cutting, or stuff like that, then that changes that correspondence. Generally, I guess there's a correlation between how much substances I use and the psychosis, but-

Interviewer: You say the substance use is worsening the psychosis?

Participant M: Yeah, they do. I think generally they do, but it's not a perfect correlation. Generally they do.

Interviewer: What about the other way, psychosis affecting the substance use?

Participant M: Yeah, I'll get onto that. That'll become evident in what I say anyway, but the answer is I'm fascinated by these hallucinations, and the view I hold of them leads me to sincerely enjoy taking amphetamines because I'm collecting data. I'm collecting information about a very, very strange thing, and that's the answer to what you're saying. Do the amphetamines lead to psychosis? Yes they do. Does psychosis lead to amphetamines? [inaudible 00:58:08] treatment resistant auditory verbal

hallucinations, and it doesn't stop me from using amphetamines. Rarely do I use amphetamines in order to hear voices, but I'm so fascinated by the voices that it encourages me to take amphetamines because I know I'm going to hear them and I'm so interested in them.

Interviewer: You didn't go to uni and study science, but effectively in life, you've become a scientist.

Participant M: I'm a scientist.

Interviewer: Through living. Yeah, through life and living.

Participant M: Yeah, although my science is observational. It's not very experimental, so I don't really ... My voices don't lead me to take amphetamines, they encourage me to take amphetamines, and I don't do lots of experiments. If I was a scientist and experimenting, then I would be getting cocaine and seeing what effect cocaine has on them, and taking heroin, and seeing what effect that has on them, and taking cannabis, and seeing. I'm predisposed to using euphoric stimulants anyway, and the effect that they bring on voices is of great curiosity to me. Sometimes my voices will amplify before I've used the amphetamines. Sometimes my voices want me to stop using them. My voices always say that amphetamines are the cause of them being there, but my voices blame me for having them in the first place. That amuses the heck out of me. It's like cancer blaming you for getting cancer. It's just ridiculous. Occasionally, I say, "I'm going to use drugs," and get the drugs ready, and then, rather than using them I go and sit down, and my voices will amplify before I've even used the drugs, or I say I'm going to use more drugs, and then get the drugs ready, and then hide them under a bit of paper and go and sit down in the lounge, and my voices will respond as if I've used the drugs.

Interviewer: Oh, as if you've used the drugs. They're not calling for you to use them.

Participant M: No. My voices will go into that amplified state without me using the drugs, and I'm pretty sure that once I pretended to be going to inject the drugs, and I squirted them on the carpet and hid the syringe, and my voices went off. There's, however you want to say that, that goes on as well, but I didn't know all this back in the early '90s. In the early '90s, my voices were a combination of, "We've got this money and you can't have it unless you give up smoking," and a combination of other things that I don't recall now, but the suicide attempt ... I had some problems with some of the ... The people that I was sharing a house with had moved out and I was sharing a house for interim period. We were looking for other people to share with, and my behavior became quite erratic.

This guy said, "I can't deal with your behavior, so either you leave this house or I'm going to leave this house," so I went and lived with my parents again, and that depressed the heck out of me, because I was 36 or something, and I was absolutely awful. I never could live with my parents anyway, but when I had to go and live

with them again as an adult, I just couldn't handle it, and I was still trying to get over not having had the success that I wanted in music, so I was quite depressed.

That largely led to my suicide attempt more than my voices. I was keeping notes the whole time, and although I've forgotten the other characters in my voice, I am ... That's why. I had an argument. At one point, my voices claimed they were the Supreme Court of America, and I had some pornography. I had some magazines of girls, magazines that I had purchased in Kings Cross. My voices saying, "That's pedophilia." All of a sudden my voices turned into the Supreme Court of America, and they were trying to convict me of owning child pornography, and it wasn't child pornography at all. It was just common, Penthouse Magazine, and stuff like that. That went on for 9 months. All day, everyday I was in this argument with my voices about this pornography. I studied law, and I don't know whether the voices were a reflection of the fact ... I always got over 90% in law. Every law exam.

Interviewer: When you did commerce?

Participant M: When I did commerce. I was just amazingly good at it, and the law faculty said, "We hope you're going to change from commerce to law, because we really want people like you studying law, because you're so good at it." This is the first time in my life that I've realized that I was doing law when they claimed they were the American Supreme Court. It's never occurred to me. I've always focused on the ... Because there was no way they could ever, they couldn't convict me anyway, because they were hallucinations, but they were in this argument about this pornography, and at the time, all I thought is, "You can not possible win this argument, because pedophilia is a legal charge where someone sexually interferes with a child in person, physically."

It's not pornography. The charge, if you're going to try and charge me with anything, which would be stupidly misguided, it would be for being in possession of child pornography, which depending upon how much child pornography you have might be from a \$200 fine to a year's good behavior bond, to Rolf Harris, well, no, Rolf Harris did it in person, but some people get 5 to 8 years, but Pete Townshend took his hard drive down because he was having a problem with it and got a 200 pound fine and a one year good behavior bond for having child pornography on his hard drive. But my voices were trying to convict me of pedophilia.

The whole thing was ludicrous to me, but I went through this argument, and it lasted between approximately May and November, about 6 or so months. I have another hallucination which is an internal visual one, and after that argument, my voices drowned in their own soup. This guy was so sick of arguing with me and not winning the argument that I just saw this, I have these internal drawings, and I have a modality of hallucinations that doesn't exist in any of the secondary research that I've done on hallucinations. I see internal images, and I can only best describe them as what I imagine great artists have. I'm studying graphic, and we had a teacher. We had an assignment where we had to do a floating city, and he said, "Look into

your mind and look at a picture of a floating city, and then draw that."

When I look into my mind, I don't see anything. I don't have mental images, and I wonder about great artists. If Picasso, or Monet, do they see this mental image of something and then go and reproduce it physically? As a sound engineer, I've been a volunteer movie maker and made Tropicfest films and stuff, and when I read the scripts, I have no mental imagery of what's going to take place, and that's a challenging thing, because when I go to record something, once I had record a bunch of people sitting at a barbecue having a conversation, and there was 10 people sitting around this table. When I see a name and their line, and then another name and their line, you need to read the script and know who's going to say what, because you have to get the microphone there before they say it, because you can't get the microphone there after they say it or you miss their bit of dialogue. I have no mental imagery at all, but I have a modality of hallucinations that draws pictures in my mind. This argument with this Supreme Court, the guy ended up drowning in his soup. He just fell face first into a bowl of soup in this mental image in my mind.

I have never thought that those images were mine, because if I try to draw a mental image in my mind, I cannot. I've always intuitively and now explicitly identify these mental drawings, they're not photographs. They're often only line drawings, outlines. They are nearly always dark green, but then, I don't consider them to be mine. I can now do some images, but it doesn't feel like me creating them. I think now is the point when I need to say, "My view of the whole schizophrenia psychosis thing is that I'm involved with a form of life that isn't naturally observable to humans." Before I get on to that, because that will ... I will digress as soon as I start talking about that, but the question I was actually answering was the early period of my hallucinations.

Interviewer: It was like you read my mind, because my next question was about to be, what sense do you make from your life experiences around the psychosis or schizophrenia [crosstalk 01:09:05]

Participant M: The early hallucinations were me believing that this was Julia, who's the name of my ex-manager, was this human being who was telepathic who had sold my music and wouldn't let me have the money from it. Over a million dollars' worth of sales. I was conducting radio interviews, out loud, in my bedroom. The voice would say, "What do you [inaudible 01:09:32]" and then I would answer it. That's why my mom kept taking me back to a mental hospital, because I'm in my bedroom talking out loud to myself, just the same as you see people in Darlinghurst or Kings Cross or Surry Hills where someone's psychotic and they're yelling and screaming. They're sitting on a park bench yelling and screaming and always like that. I had a suicide attempt, but ... My early psychosis was me thinking that the voices I was hearing were other people. Now I can identify that I was seeing these images, and I thought that they were like photographs. I didn't criticize the fact that they seemed to be outline drawings. They would include people like my psychiatrist and stuff like that,

and I thought that everyone was telepathic and it was a common thing, and because I was smoking cigarettes I wasn't allowed to participate in it.

Now, I can't remember exactly when the ... It was around between 1999 and 2001, and because I've thrown those notes away, I don't remember exactly what was said, but my voices changed from being humans to ghosts. It was June, 2003, when I was in my newly acquired mortgage in Epping, the unit that I bought, and I was really psychotic. I wasn't taking any meds, because up until I came here I didn't realize that they weren't headache tablets. I had some Zyprexa, and I took 6 of them, and they were probably 10 milligram tablets, because I was hallucinating. By now, my psychosis was saying it was \$63 million had been earned off my music, and that was the other thing. When I become really psychotic, I get so involved in the plot between my hallucinations and me that I can't get objective about it. These days, I know I'm unwell, but at that time in 2003, I didn't realize that I was really psychotic. I was so involved in this money ... I thought \$63 million sounds like an exaggeration to me, but I already had established that my voices were unreliable and prone to lying and exaggeration through the notes that I kept.

I was seeing things. I was seeing ghosts, and I was seeing ghosts of different colors. I ended up drawing pictures of the different ones I'd seen, and I've thrown those notes away, but I think I saw 13 different types of ghosts. Between May and December of 2003, I was really psychotic. I didn't have any medication. I didn't have any income. I was not on settling benefits. The only income I had for 9 months was about \$1,000 I got off selling some NRMA shares that I had been given when the NRMA listed themselves on the stock exchange. I was very psychotic, and none of my friends could really tell what was going on, or they didn't know to take me to a doctor, or whatever. For 9 months I was really unwell, and I was getting food out of rubbish bins and stuff like that. Eventually, my cousin realized that I was unwell and brought me here to Hornsby Hospital. In that time, I started seeing all these visual hallucinations, and I kept notes about them. I kept notes of what they'd said, and I was still in my note taking phase. It wasn't the voices that declared themselves to be ghosts, but I decided they were ghosts. Ghosts is not my word. I decided they were beings, because it seemed to me that this was part of me, and I'm a human being.

The strange thing about them was that they were all about this German punctuality, and all this nonsense that they would say, and I realized that some of it was true. I've always realized that some of what I heard was true, because there were these dark gray ones that would enter my living room from the same direction. I don't remember whether it was like Star Trek and all of a sudden there'd be this hazy gray, very difficult to see, smoky gray, vertical biped, or they walked through the walls or just appeared, but they always appeared at the same part of the room at the same time of day. Then there would be green ones, and they would come in. I'd be sitting in my living room, and the green ones, which were vertical, these were all vertical bipeds, they would walk in from my bedroom into this room, and may or may not have a conversation with me. By that I mean,

I'm suffering auditory hallucinations, but there's a green vertical biped has just walked in from my bedroom. Everyday at 3pm, this green vertical biped walks in from my bedroom, and so I'm off to the library next door looking at the time zones of planet Earth wondering, how come I have this-

Interviewer: Who's coming in, yeah, and how?

Participant M: How come it's 3 o'clock everyday? Then I'm having this telepathic conversation with this green person, and they say whatever they say and I'll write it down, but I don't recall now. I do recall, though, it's a sort of dark brown one. The dark brown one I only saw once come in from the bedroom and it walked around my dining room table, and I had notes. I've always got notes and books open and stuff, and I'm quite tidy, but there's always some things that I'm doing. It walks around my dining room table, and then walks around my living room, and I'm just sitting there going, "You all right? You okay?," being a bit sarcastic, say, "You're just walking in my room. You haven't asked permission or anything."

Walked around, and then the next day I saw a drawing of it. It said, "Scott, don't leave your notes open. Close your books when you're doing research and when you're writing down what's being said. Close your book, because those other ghosts are looking at your work and using it, and they'll use it against you, so close your books up. Don't leave notes laying around for other people to read." Then in December, 2003, I met Michelle Young and she became my social worker. In that 9 month period from May to December, 2003, when I was really sick, my voices went from being humans to being ghosts, and we might have to have a pause, because my voice, I damaged it singing in rock and roll. I still-

Interviewer: I was wondering about your voice.

Participant M: Yeah. I still am smoking. I gave up smoking cigarettes for 8 years. I've been smoking a bit lately. I had a really difficult time in 2015, but my voice gets tired, so we might just have to get another cup of coffee.

Interviewer: Yeah, of course. Let me go make you one. It's totally cool.

Participant M: [crosstalk 01:18:17] have a biscuit while you're doing that.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Go for it. Do you want a new cup?

Participant M: No, no.

Interviewer: Sure?

Participant M: Same cup's fine. Thank you.

Interviewer: And the same?

Participant M: Yeah. Thank you very much.

Interviewer: My pleasure.

Participant M: I've had two endoscopies, and the doctors can't see anything wrong with my voice.

Interviewer: No nodules or anything like that?

Participant M: No. That's what I thought at first, I had nodules. I just needed to ... It's nothing there, and then I worried that I had cancer, so I went for another endoscopy, and they can't see anything wrong with it, but I did used to smoke when I was singing rock and roll.

Interviewer: Plus-

Participant M: But it was okay until 1998, and I stopped singing in '91, so it was 7 years my voice was okay, and then it went hoarse and gravelly like it is, and it wasn't 7 years of rock and roll. It was just 7 years of writing software, so I don't know.

Interviewer: Funny, isn't it?

Participant M: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's amazing, some of the rockers who have been going for so long-

Participant M: [inaudible 01:19:20]

Interviewer: Okay, so you're talking about the ghost.

Participant M: In the course of 9 months in 2003, my voices went from being humans ... I don't know where the word ghost came from. I always thought they were people from outer space.

Interviewer: That's very Bowie of you, as well.

Participant M: Yeah, probably is.

Interviewer: That was probably also partly because the stereotypical view of a ghost is something in a sheet. As a scientist, the interesting to me is that I don't believe in ghosts. Actually, come to think of it, I did actually see one. It wasn't all in 2003. In 2002, when I was living in West Ryde, I was going to join the Skeptics Society. I got online and downloaded their application form. It was a \$65 fee.

Participant M: I thought you were going to say it was a 65 page ...

Interviewer: No. \$65 fee. I filled out the application form, wrote a check for \$65, put it on my table, went to bed, got up in the morning, used some drugs, and saw a ghost. The ghost came out of my bedroom as I was walking to the bedroom, so I met this ghost in my hallway. I was so confronted and amazed by what I saw that I didn't send my application in. It's of great amusement to me now that the day I saw my first ghost was the day I had the Skeptics form filled in.

Participant M: Yeah, that is funny.

Interviewer: It was one of the most opaque ghosts I've ever seen. It was ...

Participant M: -very vivid.

Interviewer: Yeah. It was like smoke out of a barbecue, but it appeared as someone I had met. Not someone I knew that I saw all the time, just someone who I had met in my life. Yeah, I thought that was hilarious.

Then in 2003, there was lots and lots of them, all different colors, getting around my unit. It wasn't like there was lots of them there every day. For three days, there were these really tall ones that were a dark grey, and they seemed to come from the same direction at the same time of day. 11:00 am every day, these three tall dark grey things would come in from the corner of my room. My response was to look up international time zones and to draw a picture of them, so that I could recall what they looked like.

I ended up with diagrams of 13 different sorts of mostly different colors. But they're all indistinct, and the ones I see to this day look like ... You know heat haze? You know what heat haze looks like when you see a 40 inch of something above a road in the desert? And Predator, which is a movie I've only seen five minutes of. Predator looks a bit like that, as well. I still see these ghosts that look just like that. I see them to this day.

In fact, the ones I see to this day, three months ago asked me to be their leader. I've heard that before, and I've always declined because ...

Participant M: How do you decline? "Oh, no thanks."

Interviewer: No, I just speak telepathically with them. Sometimes I say something out loud. Mostly, I don't say anything out loud, but I can't help but laugh out loud. If I hadn't heard before, I'm sure the first time I heard it, I go, "... You're joking." That's what people interpret as schizophrenia.

I've seen all these different things, and between late 2002 and the end of 2003, the whole scenario changed from me thinking they were humans to me thinking, "These are just some other life form." That hypothesis, I haven't managed to defeat yet. That accounts for everything that I've ever been through. I've elaborated on

that hypothesis, and it's not because I've set out scientifically to evaluate visual hallucinations or evaluate telepathy. This is something that I'm unavoidably involved with. As I've said, that's why I've come up with this hypothesis about the life cycles of delusions.

In the early '90s, in '92 and '93, I was up on ladders looking for hidden cameras and stuff like that. I know a girl who's become psychotic. She lives in Moringa in the past couple of years, and she's the same. She's never told me that she's hearing voices, but she recons there's cameras hidden in the room and all of this stuff. I think I'm figuring in her hallucinations because she won't talk to me anymore. I think she's hearing voices, and she's hearing my name. She's thinking that I'm persecuting her in the same way that I thought my hallucinations stem from this other person that I'd met.

Participant M: Early on?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant M: How do you see the mental illness side of things and the substance addiction side of things fitting together?

Interviewer: There's a tenuous correlation between my amphetamine use and the amount of hallucinating I do. If I use a lot of amphetamines, I get a lot of hallucinations. The thing that Olanzapine does for me is it changes the character of the hallucination. My hallucinations are much friendlier when I'm on Olanzapine than when I'm not. I'm always compliant with my meds. I never fail to take my meds these days, and I always take them in a prescribed dose so I have no control. I don't stop taking Olanzapine in order to see what it's like when I'm not on it. But, yeah, there seems to be a correlation between the amount of drugs I take and the amount I hallucinate.

Participant M: Do you hallucinate without the drugs?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant M: They're always there?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant M: But they don't trouble, they slightly change with your landscape?

Interviewer: Yeah, they're not there as much and they're not there with the same amplitude.

Participant M: When you're using?

Interviewer: When I'm not using.

Participant M: When you're not using at all?

Interviewer: When I use, their amplitude increases, but it's not a strong correlation.

Participant M: No. Sometimes when I use a lot, their amplitude increases. Sometimes when I'm not using, their amplitude increases.

Interviewer: Got you.

Participant M: These days, I have this perspective of who and what they are, so my ability to assess the relationship between amphetamine use and psychosis, or amphetamine use and hallucinating ... My ability to observe that is skewed by my belief that I'm communicating with other life forms. I'm just so interested in it that I'm sure I can't be objective about it because it's only me. I have no control, and I'm not willing to stop using Olanzapine in order to do more investigation into ...

Interviewer: Because?

Participant M: Because I'm prepared to believe in professional opinion, even though a scientist, my psychiatrist, will never acknowledge that I'm possibly in contact with another form of life. They can't do it. Even if they wanted to. Even if they contemplate that to themselves, they can never tell me they contemplate that as being a reality. Because my ghosts make these other claims. You just can't have people wondering around thinking they're talking to ghosts. I don't even think they're ghosts, but it's the name I use for them because sometimes it's the name they use for themselves. But we can't have people walking around thinking they're in contact with ghosts. Because we've done research into ghosts, and we can't find any evidence of them. It would be irrational for the community to believe they exist when people have made effort scientifically to investigate them, and we can't find any evidence of them.

Interviewer: But in saying that, what you experience is very real?

Participant M: Yeah.

Interviewer: So, it may not be a ghost or labeled as a ghost?

Participant M: My explanation, my hypothesis holds true for everybody else, as well. But I'm not out trying to prove that I'm correct. I don't experiment with them because I'm not going to undermine the efforts of my mental health care service providers in order to conduct my own scientific experiment. If I wanted to, I would tell them first. I'm not on this quest to prove that other life exists. I try to conduct my own life. I have normal goals and aspirations, and that's all I'm doing. I'm pursuing my own. But I'm unavoidably involved with the symptoms of schizophrenia.

I take drugs because now I've got to the stage where, if I don't take drugs, I have trouble doing my work. It's probably the withdrawal symptoms. I think they only last for a couple of weeks, but I quite like taking drugs. I get the cycle that I'm in is that I have work obligations in my life, and I'm very rarely free of them. I'm staying at TAFE again, and so I have homework to get in. I can't afford two to three weeks of not doing anything. My withdrawal symptoms from the amphetamines leaves me unable to do anything for two to three weeks. I've never found a two to three week space in time where I don't have to do anything.

Interviewer: Where you can't be unproductive?

Participant M: Yeah. Where I can only be unproductive. That's it. You would think, "Well, I will have that at the end of this course." By December I will have graduated, and so I don't have any job at the moment. I will have two to three weeks then, but it's yet to be seen whether I want to stop using. I did have three weeks right now. The beginning of last week, last Monday was the first Monday of my three weeks mid-semester break. But because I had two voluntary admissions during first semester, I had to get an extension on one assignment. It took me a week, so my three week break has come down to two weeks, and I'm still going to be using. It's just because I want to. I could try and not use for this two weeks and find out that it was enough to get through the withdrawal symptoms or not enough to get through the withdrawal symptoms. And if it wasn't enough, then I could start using again when the semester two begins and make my way through the semester. But I haven't even tried.

Interviewer: When was the last time you got clean?

Participant M: 2008 or something.

Interviewer: Okay, so a while ago. What do you want with it all? With everything. Not just the addiction side of things, but everything.

Participant M: I'd like to get a job. I'm so interested in what I am involved in. The hallucinations interest me so much that it doesn't put me off using drugs, but I don't think I can do regular employment and use at the same time. I'm looking for a job, and I tend to think, if I get a job, I need to do something about it. But it's likely in the field that I'm entering into now, which is graphic design. A lot of the work is freelance. The other thing that prevents me going into recovery is because, in some ways I've made some compromises in my life. It has ended up in some compromises because of my drug use, and I'm going to be a bit depressed about how I've spent a lot of my time if I go into recovery.

Interviewer: Things start to settle in a bit?

Participant M: Yeah. I don't know. For the time being, I'm just happy using and studying. I might have to reevaluate that if I get a job, but I don't know what decision I'm going to

make.

Interviewer: What does that R word mean to you, recovery.

Participant M: Mostly what it means to me at the moment is it'll be two to four weeks of not being able to get anything done. That's hell to me because I've always done quite a bit of work. I always am involved in something. If I'm not working, I'm studying. I've done a lot of study in my life. This'll be my fourth diploma. I've got an undergraduate degree, and I want to go and study post-grad statistics on [inaudible 00:16:12] for a post-grad diploma in computing science. I've just about got a post-graduate certificate in the humanities. I like studying. I like being at university and learning things.

I do the TAFE because they're a good way to get a job. I was out of work in 2004 to 2006. Then, I found out from a recruiter that I can do a TAFE course for free, so I did web development. They gave me a year's prior recognition. I did one year study, and I had a job before the end of the course. Then, I did seven years freelance web development. Most of my money was coming from one source, which is the way business usually is, in fact. But the guy who was paying me to do all the freelance work went and moved to San Francisco, so I was out of work. I thought, "Well, I need to get more work." In the time between '97 and 2013 when I was doing web development, all the Indians and South Koreans have now got online to do freelance work. They only charge \$6 or \$7 an hour.

Interviewer: Yeah. You can't compete with that.

Participant M: I can't compete with that. I'm not willing to compete with that, so I'm just going into another field. I chose graphic design because it's mostly computer based, and I thought, "Even though I don't have much talent at art, I know so much about computers that I'll be able to get my way through it." Which is turning out to be true. But also, there's a lot of freelancing.

But mostly it's because it was at Hornsby TAFE, and I was out of work for 18 months. I just thought, "Well, last time when I got new qualifications, I was able to get a job." I'm hoping that this time, if I get qualifications in graphic design ... Because I've got a marketing degree, and do search engine optimization and stuff ... Graphic design is just a form of marketing communications, so I should be able to get a job. Given my other background and my knowledge of software, I should be able to get a job in graphic design. I'm hoping that the qualifications will be the thing that enables me to get reemployed. But it's yet to be seen what I do about drugs when I get a job.

Interviewer: Yeah, what that will mean for that. Does recovery mean anything else to you beyond that?

Participant M: No. I don't think about recovery until I've got through the withdrawal symptoms.

Recovery makes me think of withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal symptoms make me think of 14 to 28 days of being able to get nothing done. I don't usually make it that far. On the occasion that I try, it just seems like an eternity of doing nothing but sleeping and sitting watching TV. The physical withdrawal symptoms prevent me concentrating clearly enough to get anything done.

I don't have much to do. If I'm not studying or working ... In 2005, 2006, I did three feasibility studies of businesses that I wanted to start because I was telling myself that I've got 13 years experience in software development and a marketing degree. I should be able to run my own business, but I'm not an entrepreneur. I'm not willing to take on much financial risk to get a business going. Starting a business, you've got to have money for advertising. I never want to be responsible for paying people's salaries because I'm not a very responsible person. It's just a burden that I don't want.

I thought I'd try to start my own cottage industry business and get something going that I could do, but I did three feasibility studies and none of them worked out. I just knew at the end of that that I'm not the sort of person who can run their own business. I just want to get a salaried job and work three to five days a week for three to five hours a day. Just get up, go and do it, go home, and chill out.

Being a contractor was more than I wanted to do. I employed an accountant to do all the companies wages. I had to be a proprietary limited so I could give myself worker's comp insurance when I worked on site. My parents said to me, "Don't own your own business." Because they ran their own business. They said, "You're better off just getting a salary because you can leave work at work and go home and enjoy your weekend." When it's your own business, you're always worried about your work. That was true in music as well. I could never turn off. I was trying to play music. There was not a minute in my day where I thought, "Oh, gee. I could be practicing right now. I could be writing a song." You could never stop, never just detune from work.

Interviewer: Have you always had that compulsivity?

Participant M: Yeah, driven to work a lot. Although, I don't have so much of it these days. Less and less as I get older, but a lot when I was young.

Interviewer: The thought of having spare space is just too much?

Participant M: Yeah. These days, it's that I think I've got ongoing sleep deficit from taking amphetamines, which is hardly surprising. As soon as I go to stop, I sleep a lot.

Interviewer: Oh, really?

Participant M: More than 10, 12 hours a day. It just feels toxic. It just makes me feel physically crappy. That goes on for a couple of weeks. That's a far as I get. I just can't handle it

beyond that. And I like taking drugs. I'm sure there are costs, but I've probably been doing it for so long that I don't see the costs anymore. I've been to NA, and I've been to AA, done things like that. I've read Smart Recovery. The way I think of it is if I don't want to take them, then I will make it through those two to three weeks of feeling lousy and stop. If I take them, it's because I want to take them.

That's lousy because of the attitude that the people around me have. Not just health care service provision. I've lost some friends. I've had some relationships go bad because of drugs. The strange thing is, it's actually because of schizophrenia, but not drugs. No one knows anything about schizophrenia unless they're schizophrenic. It's an unimaginable disease to try and describe to people, but I can give you an example of what I'm talking about.

My cousin's got two daughters. Me and my cousin are quite close even though there were seven years where I didn't see them. He's always forgiven me for being who and what I am, and he likes me a lot. We get along well. I come from a really not close family, and birthdays and stuff don't mean anything to me at all. But they do. He's got two daughters, and birthdays mean the world to those two young girls.

A couple of years ago, I was buying his eldest daughter a present and I realized that I'd forgotten his youngest daughter's birthday, which is a month earlier. So, I bought them two gifts, and I was so distracted by my hallucinations at the time that I didn't think it through clearly. But I bought two gifts and sent them to the two girls. Then, his wife wouldn't talk to me anymore. It was because I suddenly realized what it would be like to get a gift ... "It's my sister's birthday." From their point of view, "It's Selena's birthday, and Scott has sent Selena and Lauren a gift at the same time. Lauren's birthday was a month ago." I just know that they're saying, "He's fucked on drugs. He's completely drug fucked."

When I do irrational or strange things, even though I know it's because of my schizophrenia that I'm not able to concentrate and I've done something strange, they don't know the first thing about schizophrenia. They don't know the first thing about how disruptive auditory hallucinations are. They don't think of my suicide attempt ... They don't realize that 50% of schizophrenics attempt suicide. I don't know what they think about why I attempted suicide. I've attempted twice. Once when I was really young, and it was really alcohol that caused that. The second time was really my hallucinations. But they don't know that. They know nothing about schizophrenia.

His wife won't talk to me, and he hasn't ... I'm just assuming this. I would just bet you it's because she thinks I've fried my brain on drugs. I've sent the younger daughter a birthday present on the elder daughter's birthday. She just can't bear to talk to me. She won't talk to me. I'm just sure it's because they think I've taken too many drugs. Because I know their attitude. For 52 years I've known this guy. But it wasn't. It was because I was dealing with hallucinations at the time. I just didn't think through what I did.

This is the thing. I've lost a lot of friends. I don't have a mortgage anymore. It cost me a proprietary limited company. I thought people would look at me and say, "Your drugs have cost you your house, your friends, your car, your employment, all your money." That's just about all there is in life. But they don't know. All they ever think about is drugs because they think that the hallucinations are a result of drugs. That may or may not be true, but there are other people who take drugs and don't have hallucinations.

The other thing that confounds all of this, the other thing that's really relevant to your study, I think, is that when the hallucinations are nasty and insulting and derogatory ... Even though the drugs tend to make the hallucinations worse, you get so sick of being insulted and living in terrible circumstances, that a euphoric stimulant makes you feel better, even though it's counterproductive. It might just be for a short while, but even though the reason you're feeling upset is because the hallucinations are giving you a bad time, taking a euphoric stimulant makes you feel less upset for a while.

Interviewer: It's a bit of a relief, as well as ...

Participant M: That's what it is.

Interviewer: -feeling better. Yeah.

Participant M: As usual, my addiction is a complicated, compounded thing. Like all addiction is. Which is why we have such a difficult time treating it. Mine is no different than anyone else's. I know from NA and AA that that's how they work. The 12-steps program works because, when you get a bunch of people together, they suddenly realize they're all going through similar sorts of things. I'm no different.

Interviewer: What's been helpful and what's been unhelpful in your journey?

Participant M: Keeping the notes has been simultaneously helpful and unhelpful because I'm fascinated by what I hear. These days, I'm happy to use drugs just so I can hear more of it. I think it's this external thing, and I don't see it. I don't think they're hallucinations, errant brain signals. I think there's something else going on.

What's been helpful? My contact with mental health services is invaluable. I'd be out on the street. I don't know whether I'd be dead, but I'd be on the street if it wasn't for my social worker. I'm sure the Olanzapine helps, as well. I say, "That's my psychiatrist." My contact with medical services, invaluable.

Interviewer: What has it been about your engagement with them?

Participant M: They have all these solutions to problems that I am likely to encounter. I wasn't on [inaudible 00:29:37] benefits, and Michelle said, "We need to get you a DSP." I

couldn't get a DSP if I didn't have the support and the diagnosis of my psychiatrist. I was in the rental house, the private rental market. That was really upsetting me because every time the economic cycle changed, my lease would run out because the owner would sell the unit. I'd have one month's notice before the lease changed. There was a time when rental properties were really hard to come by. It used to worry me. It would stress me out to the max, thinking I was going to end up on the street. I got community housing because Michelle accompanied me down to the community housing place in Top Ryde. I know people that are still on the waiting list. You can be on the waiting list for six years ...

Interviewer: Or more.

Participant M: -for community housing, but because I went down with Michelle, my case was seen as higher priority.

And I need my medication that I take. Everything. Knowing Michelle, having closer contact with my mental health services means that I'm more likely to do a voluntary admission if I need it. That means I'm more likely to succeed in my studies because sometimes when I'm unwell, if I couldn't do a voluntary admission, I wouldn't have an excuse to get an extension. Even though there's such cyclic reasoning there. The only reason I need an extension is because I did a voluntary admission, but the fact that I do a voluntary admission means that I can get an extension.

The thing is, sometimes I have periods where I'm just unwell and it's not drug related. I can't tell the difference when I do. Doing a voluntary admission means it all gets fixed quicker. In 2003, without access to mental health services, I was really sick until I got access to mental health services. I was really psychotic. That went on for nine months. I was eating out of bins and stuff. If it wasn't for my mental health services, I would, theoretically, be in the same circumstances.

Interviewer: Scott, you said that with one of the admissions, it wasn't drug related. How do you know when it's drug related and when it's not?

Participant M: The only way I can know is by thinking about how much drugs I've taken in the relatively recent past.

Interviewer: Right. It's not a different feeling or experience ...

Participant M: No.

Interviewer: -or something for you. It's knowing how much you've used and knowing yourself?

Participant M: Yeah.

Interviewer: I'm interested in the ... Because I'm also running out of time. Got 15 minutes. That's

good. I'm interested in the concept of rock bottom. Some participants have spoken about the concept of rock bottom, and I was wondering what your thoughts were about hitting rock bottom.

Participant M: I don't even know specifically what you're referring to there, but I would tend to respond by saying, "I'm an amazing optimist." At 52, I have been alive for long enough to see things a different way. I think that fact that I've got a lot of education contributes to that, as well. You can see everything has a multiple number of perspectives that you can use to view it. I would never use the words "rock bottom" because I would never see anything that way.

Interviewer: That concept or that idea is about perspective?

Participant M: Yeah. My most immediate reaction is that's a foreign word. I would never end up thinking that.

Interviewer: Not something you relate to?

Participant M: No.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Is that something that's come from the interviews [crosstalk 00:33:54]

Participant M: Yeah, my hallucinations, remembering that I don't think that it's me talking to myself, and I'm just about offended by the concept of subvocalization. Have you come into contact with that?

Interviewer: No. What's that mean?

Participant M: One of the theories of psychiatrists is that, and they recon they've got data to support this, is that what schizophrenics are going through is that they're talking to themselves and they don't realize. They have a problem with spacial orientation, so they're having this conversation with themselves and don't realize it.

Interviewer: They don't realize the voice is actually coming from themselves?

Participant M: That's right. They've done these larynx tests where they put a tool that measures larynx movement. They've got all this data to support this subvocalization theory. I think it's part of psychoanalytic theory, which I find offensive, as well.

Sorry, I've forgotten what the original question was.

Interviewer: I was asking about the concept of rock bottom and how you relate to that.

Participant M: Yeah. I don't relate to that at all. I see it differently. I don't see the voices as having an origin within me. I see them as having external ... I think my voices have

autonomy and volition and sentience. My voices have said to me, "It can always get worse." At the times when they're really drilling me and upsetting me and doing terrible things, they say, "It can always get worse." That's an insult to them, and they are insulting [me. 00:35:30] I never have related to that. I think that that's true. I think it can always get worse. Even when I was living out of rubbish bins, I thought it could get worse. So, the concept of rock bottom isn't something that I relate to at all. I never think that way.

Interviewer: It's not part of your thinking system. It totally doesn't fit you.

Participant M: Yeah.

Interviewer: How interesting. I don't know if it's an NA or AA way of thinking about things, but I know it's come out in the interviews. I know for me and my own value system, this idea that there has to be a point so bad ... It's very linear. Do you know what I mean?

Participant M: Yeah.

Interviewer: It's been interesting seeing it come out. I think there's an NA, AA relationship there.

Participant M: I don't really subscribe to the 12-steps thing very much, though I have used it to some effect on occasion. But I've never made my way through it. I had Dr. [inaudible 00:36:37] on North Shore. I was seeing him about addiction, and that was what he prescribed. He said, "You need to go to NA AA." He said it's the most effective treatment that there is, but it never worked for me much.

Interviewer: I wonder if that's for me. [inaudible 00:37:06] Hello? Hi [inaudible 00:37:10] been you. Oh, okay. We'll sum up. We'll be another ten. Okay, thanks. Bye. Sorry.

Participant M: I don't really have that concept, especially since I've got somewhere to live and a car to drive and stuff like that. I guess I was so involved in thinking that my hallucinations have an external origin in 2003 when I was really psychotic for 9 months. I think that's probably more about drugs than psychosis, the concept of rock bottom.

Interviewer: I think it does come from the 12-step programs. You know, when you hear other terms, like surrendering and blah, blah, blah. It's all part of the same ...

Participant M: Yeah, right.

Interviewer: It's been interesting to hear some of that. I was going to ask you, hypothetical ... If you could choose one experience over the other, so the mental health side of things or the psychosis side of things or the addiction side of things, which one would you choose? And why?

Participant M: That's a very interesting question.

Interviewer: Yeah, I thought you'd appreciate that.

Participant M: I would choose the mental health things. My addiction is, these days, about being able to work because I haven't found that window of time that I need to get through the physical withdrawals. I see the euphoric stimulant effect of amphetamines as being short lived, so I'd rather have ... I'm fascinated by my mental health.

Interviewer: And the creativity that comes with it, and the expansion and the ...

Participant M: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, I can hear that.

Participant M: They're so interrelated these days.

Interviewer: Yeah. They are.

Participant M: It's a good question, though.

Interviewer: Yeah. It makes you weigh things up, doesn't it? We're coming to the end of the study. One of the questions that I'm looking at is ... Which I think you've spoken to, as well, but if there's anything else you want to add ... What are you moving towards?

Participant M: I'm moving towards part-time employment.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's the work and the study, isn't it?

Participant M: Yeah. I contemplate discontinuing drug use and setting full-time employment as a goal because I can't do full-time employment and use drugs. They're mutually exclusive. I contemplate that as a goal. The reason I used to want part-time employment was because of my research and wanting to help people. I've always wanted to help people get the attitude and the understanding that I have of my hallucinations. Because even when my hallucinations are bad, I really enjoy them. But most of the time, my hallucinations say such nice wonderful things to me. You couldn't pay someone to say that to you. They say amazing things to me.

That's just about embarrassing to say. It's embarrassing because I don't think many other people can adopt the reality of my view that these are external things, like ghosts or beings or whatever you want to call it. I mentioned one earlier, these days I see ... Angels and Demons is a website that I visited. It's a website about ghosts and I've decided ... According to Angels and Demons, these ones that I see that look like heat haze are called ectoplasms. That's actually an ambiguous word

because ectoplasm means something different in America to what it does in Australia. But that's the name. They've got these descriptions of all these different sorts of ghosts.

I put ghosts into Google and found this website. I said, "Well, they say it looks like heat haze. You must be an ectoplasm." But the ectoplasms ask me to be their leader. That doesn't mean anything in a physical sense. But I defeat this bad ... The way I tell people about ghosts that I'm dealing with ... I think there're all these different lifeforms on planet earth that we can't see because they don't exist within the range of visible light. I don't know how many there are or anything like that, but I wonder if there's a whole society of beings we ... And I've got explanations for nearly all of this.

1% of them are like bikies, and one-half a percent are like Ivan Milat or Martin Bryant. There might be all these different lifeforms that live on earth that are involved with humans that we can't see, but 1% of them are really badly behaved. That could be the cause of schizophrenia. These other beings, these other lifeforms, 1% of them just like hurting humans. There might be millions and millions of them. Or there might be 50 of them, but 1 of them doesn't like humans. Or is just like Martin Bryant. You now who I ...?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant M: And Ivan Milat?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant M: Just one of those is a ghost. There might be 50 ghosts. There might be 500 trillion ghosts on planet earth. But at least one of them is like Ivan Milat.

Interviewer: It's the same with humans, isn't it?

Participant M: Just the same with humans.

Interviewer: In terms of what's driving people.

Participant M: Yeah, that's the thing. I've seen so many of these vertical bipeds walking around. They've said such nice things to me, and such a diversity of opinion. When I read what's said, I wouldn't say any of it. None of that do I identify as being possible having an origin within my thought patterns because I don't think like that. They're strange and foreign thoughts.

Interviewer: Think about dogs. Dogs hear things that we can't hear.

Participant M: That's it.

Interviewer: I know, especially coming from your science background ... Science is very much about what's tangible, what's [inevitable. 00:43:32] That's very much the foundation of the way we think as humans, but you've got to be open to the possibility that there could be things that aren't tangible or not so interactable out there that exist.

Participant M: Yeah. With respect to recovery ... We were talking about my goals and what I want to achieve in the future. I contemplate a 40 hour week, but I'd have to clean up for that.

Interviewer: Yeah, and you still haven't worked out ...

Participant M: Haven't worked that out.

Interviewer: -which one you actually want.

Participant M: No. It means I have to resign myself to a ... It's a bit unknown, too. I assume the withdrawal symptoms are only going to last two to three weeks, but I don't know. Part-time work, I always wanted to ... Recently, for the last ten years, I've only ever wanted to work part-time because I wanted to share my view. I wanted to help other schizophrenics so that they could enjoy their mental health as much as I do. That's why I only wanted to work part-time. But, I don't know. I don't think I can effectively share my point of view. I don't think it will get ethics approval if I am honest about saying, "I think there are these different lifeforms."

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant M: My personification technique is already on a website. If people want to adopt it, they can. What was being said in my hallucinations changed on the 14th of November, 2014. Especially in December 2015, my notes became a bit counterproductive in a way. I won't go into that because it's another long story.

My idea of working part-time and helping schizophrenics in my spare time has changed. I don't think I can achieve what I personally want to achieve through research in order to help other schizophrenics. I'm not so concerned now about only working part-time, and a possible goal for me could be ... It's probably true that if I gave up using amphetamines, I wouldn't need Olanzapine. I think it's two years. Someone told me the other day, if you go two years without an hallucination, you can discontinue any psychotic medication. I could probably achieve that if I wanted to. If I wanted to stop using, I probably wouldn't have any hallucinations, and I could work full-time. But I'm still contemplating it.

Interviewer: Second last question, so another one that I've added in from the interviews that sparked my interest, which I think you've spoken to a bit anyway ... What's driven you to be involved in the study?

Participant M: It seems so prima facie absurd or counterproductive. I don't think my doctor ... Michelle's different. Michelle, my social worker. My doctor, I'm sure she's baffled by the thought of why ... Since these hallucinations are sometimes unenjoyable, why would you take narcotics when they have such an obvious, to her, correlation between psychosis and drug use. But I don't tell them about all the good things my hallucinations say.

Interviewer: Do they ask, as well?

Participant M: No, they don't ask either. They wouldn't realize. 90% of what I hear is good. I hear things you couldn't buy. It's the most interesting experience, and I'm not a Trekkie. I'm not a Star Trek sort of person. I'm rooted in real, everyday science. But have you seen the movie Galaxy Quest?

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant M: I live in a Galaxy Quest world. I'm just a human being, but I've got all these ghosts and beings and 13 different lifeforms that I interact with that say the nicest possible things to me. We have this whole life of interaction, and I just happen to be a human being. In the same way that those people were actually actors, but they ended up being involved with those really sophisticated technologists. I'm a bit like that, I think.

I've forgotten again what that last question ...

Interviewer: Being involved in the study. What's driven you?

Participant M: On the face of it, people don't understand why you would use drugs when hallucinations seem to be so bad. But my hallucinations aren't that bad. I just know from the secondary research that I've done, there's not much studies have been conducted about substance abuse and psychosis or hallucinations, schizophrenia. I think the doctors really need that extra bit of information so that before they walk into the office, they can really understand why you might want to use drugs even though they seemingly lead to terrible hallucinations. It's something I'm sure my doctor doesn't fully appreciate. Because the drugs make you feel good. I guess it depends on what the drug is, as well. I've seen people using cannabis who start hallucinating terribly when they use cannabis. I know that it's an area that's under researched, so that's why I was keen to be involved in the study.

Interviewer: Cool. It's been great having you, that's for sure.

Participant M: Yeah, cheers.

Interviewer: Really different perspective, which is awesome. Last question. Is there anything else you think I need to know or should know about your experience to understand you?

Participant M: No. I've often wondered how long it would take for me to describe some of the things I've been going through.

Interviewer: Oh, really? Yeah.

Participant M: The funny thing about sitting with a doctor ... It took me 22 years to realize this, but it's so important. If the hallucinations are good, you can't get enough of them. A recent Dutch study said 16% of the population experience auditory verbal hallucinations, but only 1% present to a doctor for medical help. That's because the other 16% are hearing good things. You don't end up at a psychiatrist's office unless your being hurt by your hallucinations.

The doctor's okay, and that's so important to me because I might only have 10% of my hallucinations are terrible, and 90% of them are really good. But the reason I'm presenting are because of the terrible ones. The doctors sometimes say to you, "What have you been hearing?" I keep notes, so if I haven't seen the doctor for a month, and I hallucinate, say, 14 hours a day ... Let's say 15 X 7, that's 95 hours.

Interviewer: Times 4.

Participant M: Times 4 is nearly 300 hours. They're asking me to summarize 300 hours of university lectures. If you consider, taking notes is like sitting in a lecture.

Interviewer: Totally. A script, yeah.

Participant M: 300 hours into 1 or 2 minutes. I've often wondered how long it would take me to give a general overall impression of what I've been through. What, have we been here 2 hours?

Interviewer: Two-and-a-half.

Participant M: Two-and-a-half. That's how long it takes. Because there's nothing, I don't have anything extra other than details. But I've managed to convey to you in the two-and-a-half hours generally what's going on.

Interviewer: A description of what you're experiencing, yeah.

Participant M: I think you're asking all the right questions.

Interviewer: Good. Good to know.

Participant M: I've been fascinated to hear what I've got to say about it.

Interviewer: It's amazing, this process. Isn't it?

Participant M: An amount of clarification and distillation happens when you have to articulate something.

Interviewer: As you said, the linkage between ... That you were studying law and commerce when you were getting the voices talking about ...

Participant M: Supreme Court and stuff. Yeah.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Participant M: Cool.

Interviewer: Well, thank you.

Participant M: Pleasure.

Interviewer: It's been my pleasure.

Participant M: Do I keep this?

Interviewer: You keep that.

Participant M: All right.