



My Times with Rai

Rana Adhikari / MIT Grad Student 1998-2004

“Hello Prof. Weiss. My name is Rana Adhikari; I’m a student at the University of Florida. I recently got accepted into grad school, so I guess I’ll be working with you.

I hope that this is the right number and you get this voicemail.”

“Rana -

A ‘Rainer Weiss’ called several numbers in the physics dept looking for you and seemed very angry about something. Please ask him to not call here again.”

- a note on my office door in Florida (I had forgotten to leave a number)

“No, I’ve never seen your application. I don’t have anything to do with admissions. I never look at grades.

It was Bernie Burke - he’s a little ‘footloose and fancy-free’.

C’mon up and visit us.

I’m a little too old to work for, but you might get along with the younger guys like Mike and Peter.”

“Don’t denigrate yourself. Most of the Namby Pambyes around here don’t know which end of the pliers to hold...David, get in here! I want you to meet this guy. He’s done something important - he worked on cars!”

**Part I: flunked twice
...Saturday morning
reform school: "Wow,
you really f****d the
dog on mechanics and
E&M. Maybe you're in
the wrong business?"**

**Part II: flunked once
"I can't help you with
that. I don't understand
Stat Mech."**

**Part III: Oral Astro
One week before: "Well
you don't seem to know
much cosmology or
astrophysics. Here's a
secret to how to pass..."**



Rai's Office: Aug 2010

Louisiana: 2001 - 2003

...while trying to understand the "198 questions" in the Astro Qual...

"So, you know I'm headed down to Louisiana to run the commissioning."

Me: "Yeah, you know I'm from the South, and I've been giving it a lot of thought and..."

"I don't know what you're thinking about, you're going!"

"Hey Rana, get your fat ass over here and help me with this coil driver!"

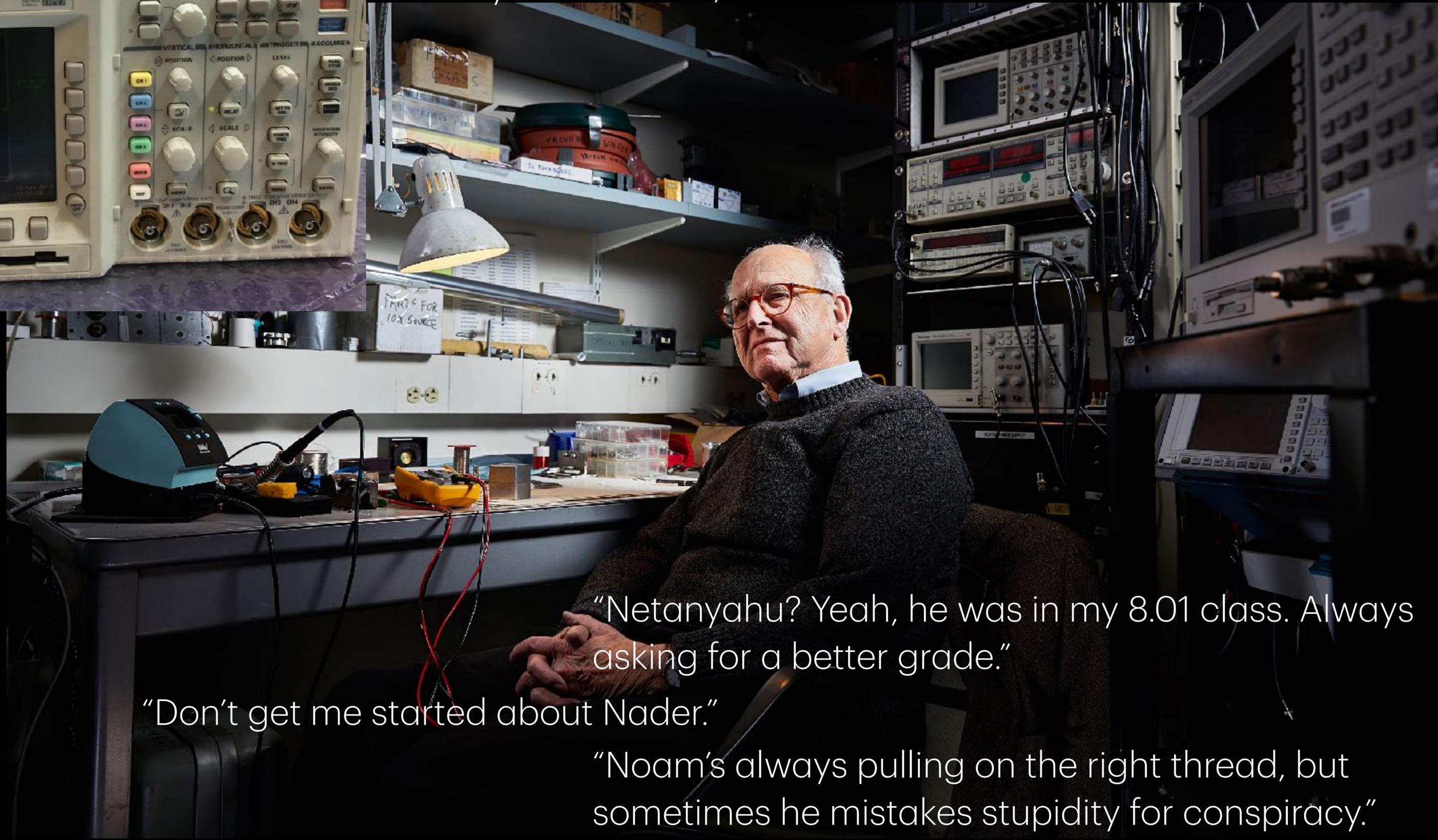
"In this ferkochta nest of mercurial and often vituperative wack jobs and you've got them eating out of your hand!"

At a quiet restaurant in Walker, Louisiana: "Can't get a beer because we're too close to a church?!? That's the fault of all these damn republicans."

"If they're beating up on you, you gotta let me know, or else I can't help you."

Louisiana: 2001 - 2003/2004

2 years of noise, and lots of electronics



"Netanyahu? Yeah, he was in my 8.01 class. Always asking for a better grade."

"Don't get me started about Nader."

"Noam's always pulling on the right thread, but sometimes he mistakes stupidity for conspiracy."

2003 - 2023

- Started a group at Caltech
- Introduced Rai to my students at a Thai restaurant (where Rai had Pad Thai, of course)
- Audio recording of a few stories:
 - “Tell me the one about Einstein and the flip-flops !”
 - “Tell me the one about Dicke and the Solar Oblateness !”
- Advice:
 - “You’ve gotta make it sexy - if you’ve lost that its over.”
 - “I still think there’s no better investment than students.”
 - From the RaiFest: “You should all do something important.”
 - “Have some kids, before you get too old to run around with them.” (2023)



2022:

"I met this girl, who I think I'm pretty serious about. I think she's going to move here from Australia!"

Rai: "How about you bring her out to Maine in September and spend a week with us? Give me a chance to check her out."

Rana: "... (two weeks of radio silence) ..."

Rai: "OMG, I thought that last idea gave you a heart attack!"

So we spent a week on Mt. Des(s)ert Island in 2023:





9/2024