

Adam Ruben

Adam Ruben '01 is a writer, comedian, and molecular biologist. He earned his undergraduate degree from Princeton University and his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. Adam has appeared on the Food Network's *Food Detectives*, the Science Channel's *Head Rush* and *Outrageous Acts of Science*, the Travel Channel's *Mysteries at the Kremlin*, the Weather Channel's *Weather Gone Viral*, Discovery International's *Superhuman Science*, Netflix's *The Mortified Guide*, and NPR's *All Things Considered* and *The Moth Radio Hour*; he currently hosts *What on Earth?* and *Ancient Mysteries Decoded* on the Science Channel and is a writer for *Elinor Wonders Why* on PBS Kids. In addition to writing a monthly humor column in the otherwise respectable journal *Science*, Adam is the author of two books: *Surviving Your Stupid, Stupid Decision to Go to Grad School* and *Pinball Wizards: Jackpots, Drains, and the Cult of the Silver Ball*. Learn more at adamruben.net.

Abstract:

February 1997, Scottish scientists announced the birth of the first mammal cloned from an adult cell, a sheep named Dolly. As with any scientific breakthrough, some people celebrated her birth, while others felt we had crossed a line into a brave new world with military-grade human clones just around the corner. But while many valid objections to human cloning exist, much of the public's fear of Dolly was based on a fundamental, science-fictional misunderstanding of cloning. This perception gap thwarts many branches of science, since a correct understanding of technology is not a prerequisite for forming an opinion about it, an issue that has become particularly relevant in recent times. In this talk, comedian/molecular biologist/TV host Dr. Adam Ruben will examine the way the public views science and scientists. Using Dolly as a lens through which to view failures and successes of science perception, Dr. Ruben will discuss the archetype of the "mad scientist" and how scientists can use open communication to teach children that we're not all insane, white-haired chemists holding Erlenmeyer flasks of bubbling green fluid.