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STEPHANIE ARNETT/MIT TECHNOLOGY REVIEW | ADOBE STOCK, GETTY, ENVATO, PUBLIC DOMAIN

After operating in secrecy for years, a startup company called R3 Bio, in Richmond, California, suddenly shared details about its work last week—saying it had raised money to create nonsentient monkey "organ sacks" as an alternative to animal testing.

In an interview with *Wired*, R3 listed three investors: billionaire Tim Draper, the Singapore-based fund Immortal Dragons, and life-extension investors LongGame Ventures.

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But there is more to the story. And R3 doesn't want that story told.

MIT Technology Review discovered that the stealth startup's founder John Schloendorn also pitched a startling, medically graphic, and ethically charged vision for what he's called "brainless clones" to serve the role of backup human bodies.

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Imagine it like this: a baby version of yourself with only enough of a brain structure to be alive in case you ever need a new kidney or liver.

Or, alternatively, he has speculated, you might one day get your brain placed into a younger clone. That could be a way to gain a second lifespan through a still hypothetical procedure known as a body transplant.

The fuller context of R3's proposals, as well as activities of another stealth startup with related goals, have not previously been reported. They've been kept secret by a circle of extreme life-extension proponents who fear that their plans for immortality could be derailed by clickbait headlines and public backlash.

And that's because the idea can sound like something straight from a creepy science fiction film. One person who heard R3's clone presentation, and spoke on the condition of anonymity, was left reeling by its implications and shaken by Schloendorn's enthusiastic delivery. The briefing, this person said, was like a "close encounter of the third kind" with "Dr. Strangelove."

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