

# **Wireless Course: Things That Aren't Wi-Fi**

These slides have been updated and condensed from the original course material

# Things that aren't Wi-Fi

That's no moon!

# Running the gamut

There's a ton of things out there that aren't Wi-Fi

Kismet, NetStumbler, etc, will never be able to see them

Doesn't mean they're not a weakness!

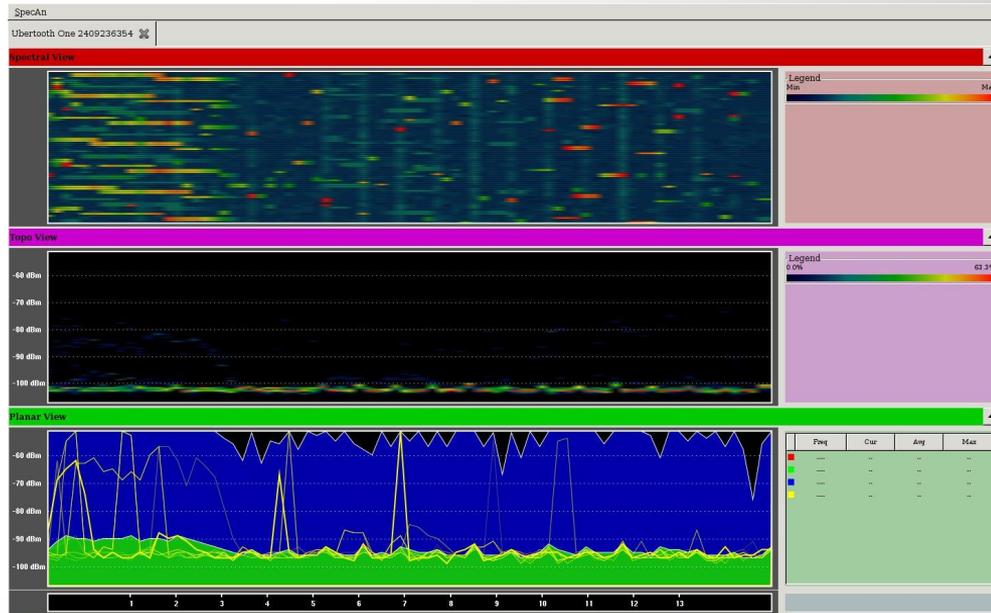
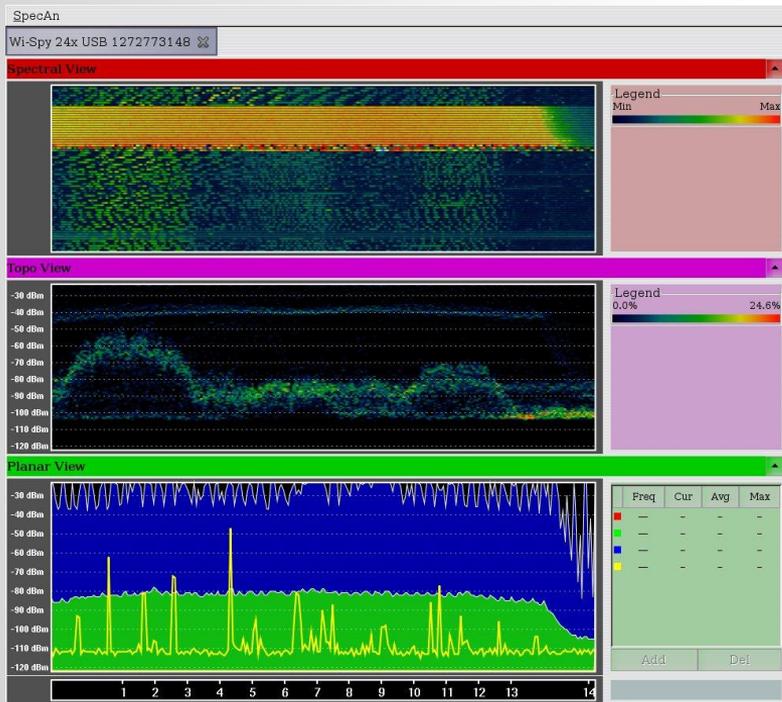
# Spectrum Analyzers

- Basic SA reports signal level at regular intervals
- Cheaper the SA the lower the resolution and the slower the speed
- Can help find non-Wi-Fi interference

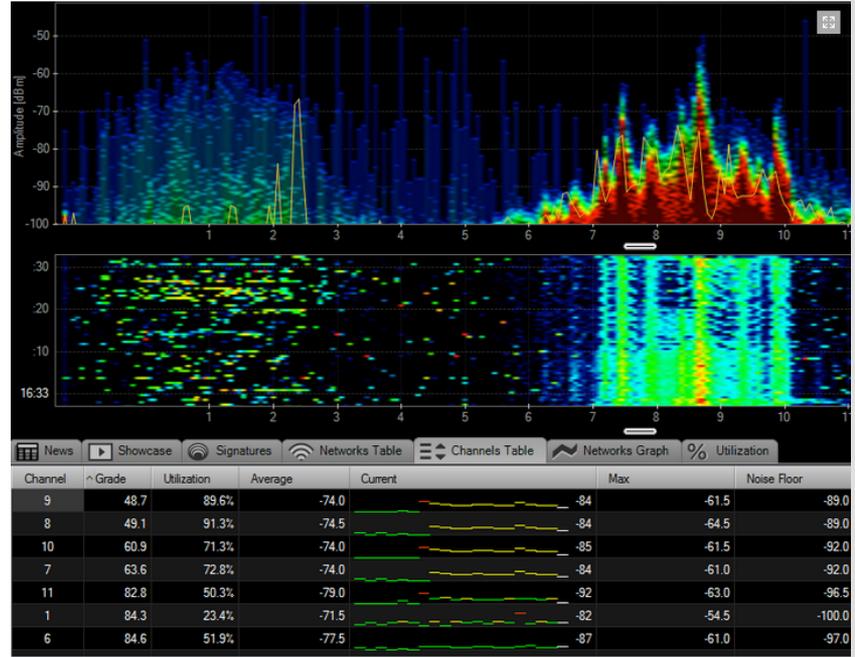
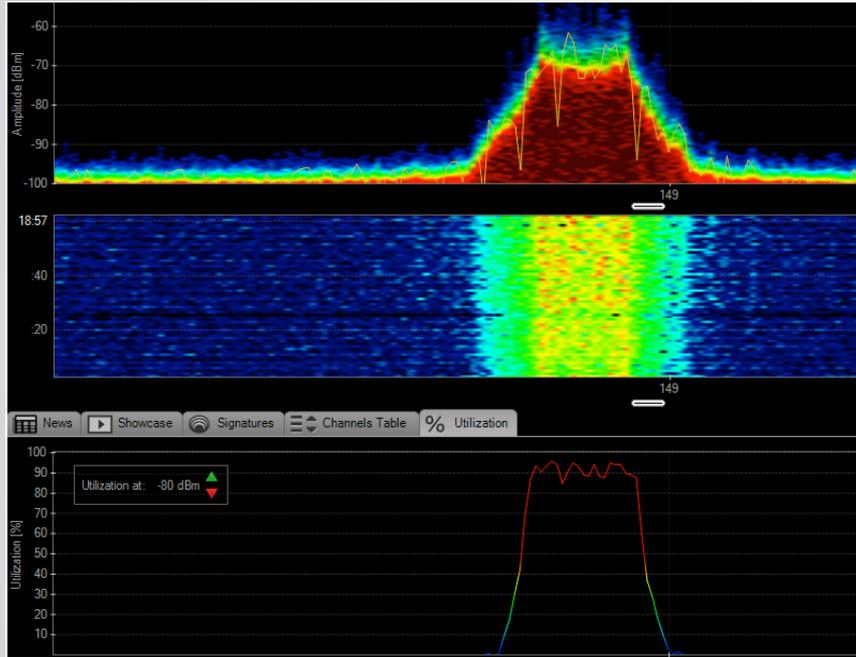
# Affordable SAs

- Metageek Wi-Spy and Chanalyzer software
- Ubertooth One can double as a SA
- Ubiquity

# Spectools



# Chanalyzer



# Use cases

- SAs excel at finding consistent interference
- Analog video cameras, baby monitors, microwaves are all common
- Generally not (at least, not the affordable ones) so good at finding short-duration interference

# Why Can't My NIC Do This?

- The NIC is meant to decode Wi-Fi
- In theory the radio is capable of doing it, but it would increase the cost
- Some Wi-Fi cards **can** do basic spec-an functions
- Generally high-end ones for APs, no good API documentation

# Software Defined Radios

- Radio front end
- No dedicated IC backend for decoding radio signal
- Digitize signal and pass it all to the host system
- In theory, if you can tune it, you can be that type of radio

# Hardware

- Previously hideously expensive
- Commodity radio hardware like Wi-Fi cards can't do it because of the cost of digitizers
- Used to be \$2000+ to get involved

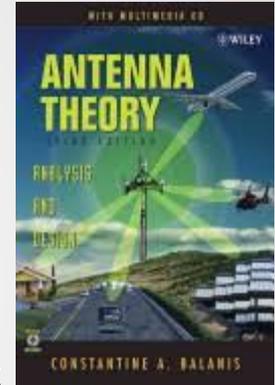
# Enter The Cheapions

- RTL-SDR ; It turns out you can kluge raw signal data out of a DVB tuner for .eu bands
- HackRF ; Mike Ossmann does it again with a killer TX capable SDR board that's hugely affordable
- BladeRF ; Another very affordable solution

# Antennas, aka Why-phy

- Get some books, become a HAM
- Know your connector types
  - SMA / R-SMA / N / BNC / etc
- Know your cable types and constraints
- Receive only, very forgiving on antenna types
- Transmit with the wrong antenna/cable...

Sad Panda



# SDR vs Spectrum Analyzers

- SA reports signal level at a given frequency
- SDR reports encoded signal data
- SDR can act like a spectrum analyzer
- Spectrum analyzer can't act like a SDR

# SDR vs Monitor Mode

Monitor mode turns off the filtering at the MAC layer

Sends a stream of packets to the computer

SDR is different - it sends raw signal data

# SDR Capture Data

No packets - just raw data

Raw radio samples of some bandwidth per sample

Bandwidth defines amount of spectrum covered by samples

# The Problems With SDR

- Until very recently, almost exclusively the domain of academics
- Academics are great, but they don't usually design for reproducibility / edge cases / etc
- Mike Ossmann's explicit goal with HackRF is to bring signal analysis to the hackers
- This is very good news

# More SDR Considerations

- Almost always the most expensive possible route - but that doesn't mean don't do it
- Shifts the cost from designing a chip to supplying the compute power in the backend
- Takes a LOT of bandwidth

# On The Brighter Side

- One device can talk nearly infinite protocols
- Able to investigate protocols for which there are no public specs or chips
- Computing power is always growing making the compute cost less of an issue

# SDR Specs

- Bit depth of samples (usually 8 or 16 bit) determines fidelity, much like 16 bit color
- Sample width, such as 200KHz or 20MHz, defines how much spectrum can be captured at a time
- Frequency range, such as 30MHz to 4GHz, defines the range the radio can be tuned to

# SDR Software

- Multiple tools
- GQRX, SDR# for browsing spectrum
- GNU Radio is the grand-daddy of decoding platforms

# Using a RTLSDR

- Controlled by the rtl-sdr software
- Also uses gr-osmosdr (bridge to GNU Radio)
- ... and GNU Radio
- Fortunately, Pentoo came with all this installed

# Plug it in!

- Make sure it's being recognized...

```
$ lsusb
```

```
Bus 003 Device 004: ID 0e0f:0003 VMware, Inc. Virtual Mouse  
Bus 003 Device 012: ID 0bda:2838 Realtek Semiconductor Corp. RTL2838 DVB-T  
wifi@pentoo ~ $ █
```

# Lets Look At Spectrum

- 'gqrx' is a great tool for viewing and decoding spectrum
- Lets fire it up, and tune to somewhere that should have lots of obvious signals...
- FM radio! Tune to ~100MHz

```
Bus 003 Device 002: ID 0e0f:0002 VMware, Inc. Virtual USB Hub
Bus 001 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0002 Linux Foundation 2.0 root hub
Bus 002 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0001 Linux Foundation 1.1 root hub
Bus 003 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0002 Linux Foundation 2.0 root hub
Bus 004 Device 001: ID 1d6b:0003 Linux Foundation 2.0 root hub
Bus 003 Device 004: ID 0e0f:0003 VMware, Inc. Virtual USB Hub
Bus 003 Device 012: ID 0bda:2838 Realtek Semiconductor Co., Ltd. RTL8192U
wifi@pentoo ~ $ gqr
linux; GNU C++ version 4.6.3; Boost_1
gr-osmosdr 0.0.2 (0.0.2) gnuradio 3.6
built-in source types: fcd rtl uhd ha
Using device #0 ezcap USB 2.0 DVB-T/D
usb_open error -3
Please fix the device permissions, e.
FATAL: Failed to open rtl_sdr device.
Trying to fill up 1 missing channel(s)
This is being done to prevent the app
due to a gnuradio bug. The maintainer
>>> gr_fir_ccf: using SSE
>>> gr_fir_ccc: using SSE
Using Volk machine: avx_64_mmx_orc
>>> gr_fir_fff: using SSE
```

**Configure I/O devices**

I/Q input

Device: ezcap USB 2.0 DVB-T/D

Device string: rtl=0

Sample rate: 1500000

LNB LO: 0.000000 MHz

---

Audio output

Device: Default

Sample rate: 48 kHz

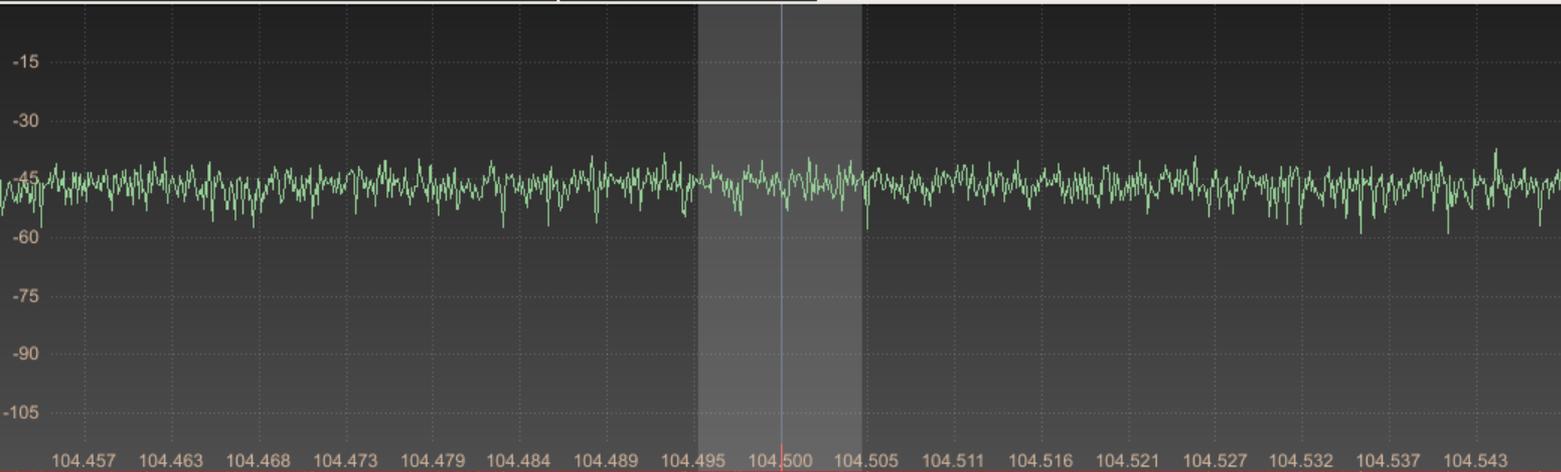
Cancel OK

VB-T

file rtl-sdr.rules



104.500 000 MHz



Receiver Options

0.000 kHz

Hardware freq: 104.500000 MHz

Filter Normal

Mode Narrow FM

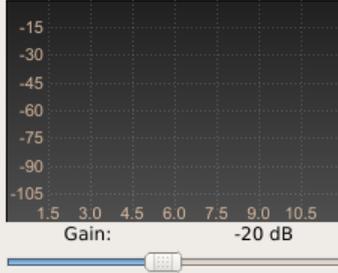
AGC Fast

NB1 NB2

SQL -150 dBFS

Input controls Receiver Options

Audio



# Well That's Weird

- So if something goes wrong, GNU Radio tools fill with random gaussian noise
- Because somehow totally bogus data is... .. better?
- Lets see what happened...

# Ah.

```
>>> gr_fir_ccf: using SSE
>>> gr_fir_ccc: using SSE
Using Volk machine: avx_64_mmx_orc
>>> gr_fir_fff: using SSE
gr-osmosdr 0.0.2 (0.0.2) gnuradio 3.6.5.1
built-in source types: fcd rtl uhd hackrf
Using device #0 ezcap USB 2.0 DVB-T/DAB/FM dongle
usb_open error -3
Please fix the device permissions, e.g. by installing the udev rules file rtl-sdr.rules

FATAL: Failed to open rtl_sdr device.

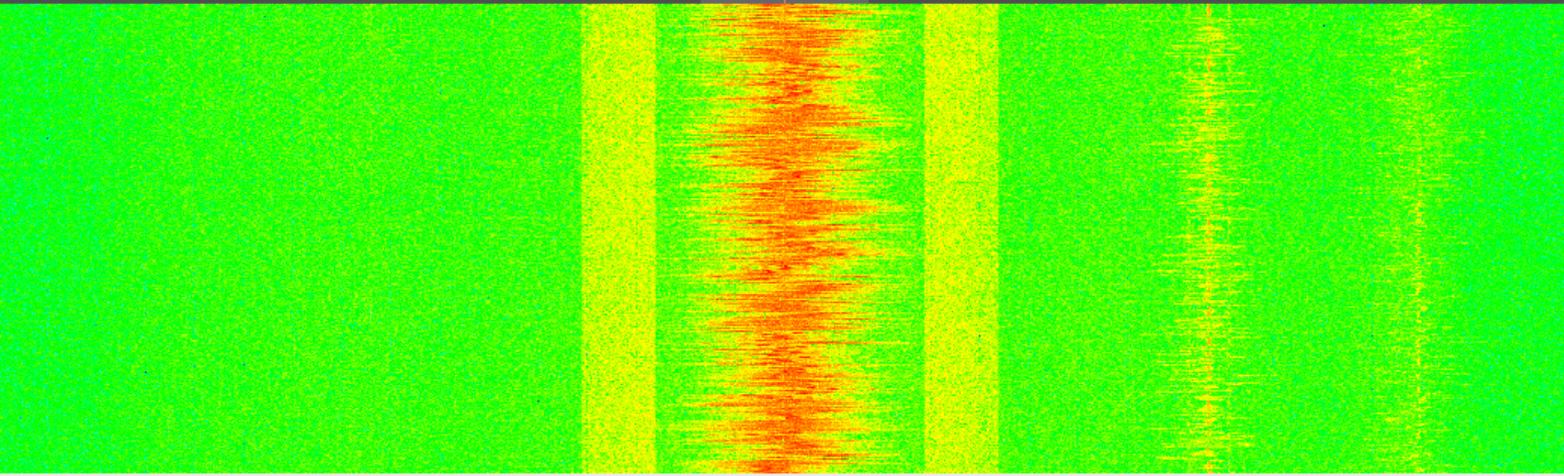
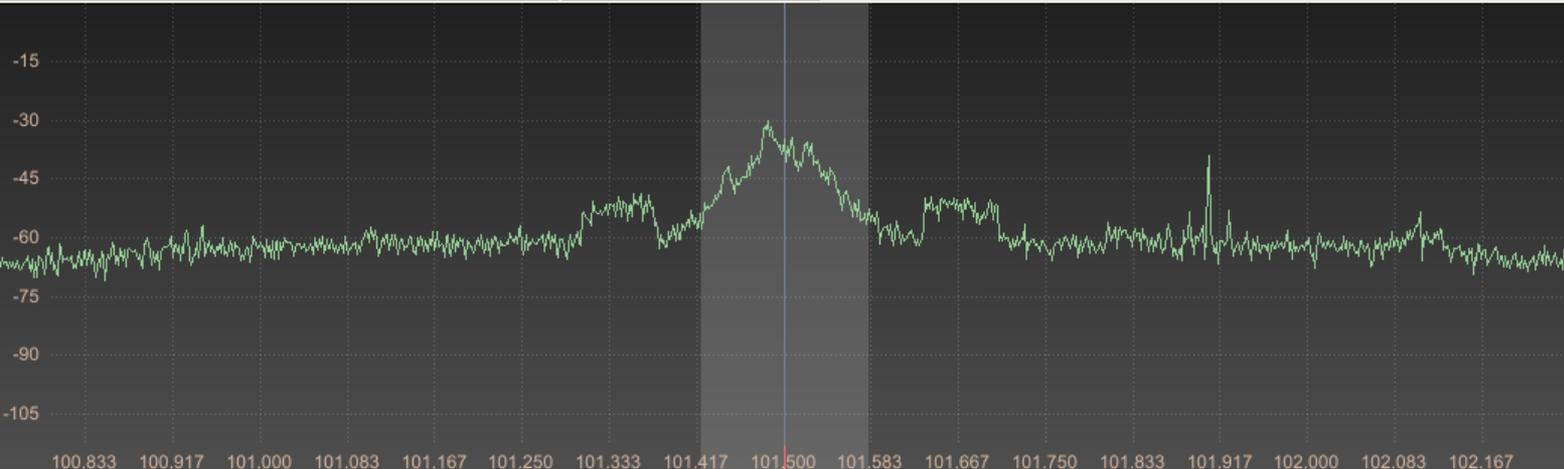
Trying to fill up 1 missing channel(s) with gaussian noise.
This is being done to prevent the application from crashing
due to a gnuradio bug. The maintainers have been informed.
```

# So...

- If permission error, check udev rules
- If device error, make sure you picked rtl8dr and not another type of device
- If compiling it yourself, make sure you included gr-osmosdr, etc



101.501 000 MHz



Receiver Options

1.000 kHz

Hardware freq: 101.500000 MHz

Filter User (50k)

Mode Wide FM (mono)

AGC Fast

NB1

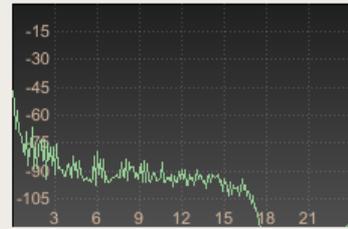
NB2

SQL -150 dBFS

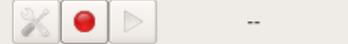


Input controls Receiver Options

Audio



Gain: 8.4 dB



FFT Settings Audio

# Cool!

- Now set the mode on the right to “Wide FM” (mono or stereo)
- Move your slider to the middle of a channel
- You should be hearing some radio, I hope!

# What Else Can We Look At?

- ISM bands are interesting
- Technically some bands are illegal to look at
- Consult your local laws ([fcc.gov](http://fcc.gov))
- In general, ISM bands are legal to look at
- Cell phones and pagers are not
- Lets assume looking at spectrum maps is “ok”
- When it doubt: Don't look, and do research!

# What Am I Hearing/Seeing?

<http://www.rtl-sdr.com/signal-identification-guide/>

Lets check some of these out...

Of Note:

ACARS, P25 Phase 1, MotoTurbo, POCSAG/FLEX, APCO P-25, NOAA Weather Satellite, Numbers Stations, and more

# Do some cruising

- Look around at some frequencies
- 451MHz or so is interesting (often radio repeaters)
- 548MHz should be ATSC TV
- Around 915mhz can be interesting devices

# That Weird Spike

- Notice that weird spike always in the center?
- It's called DC offset
- The two components of the signal (I and Q) are just slightly out of phase
- This is very common with many radios because it's very expensive to solve in hw

# DC Offset

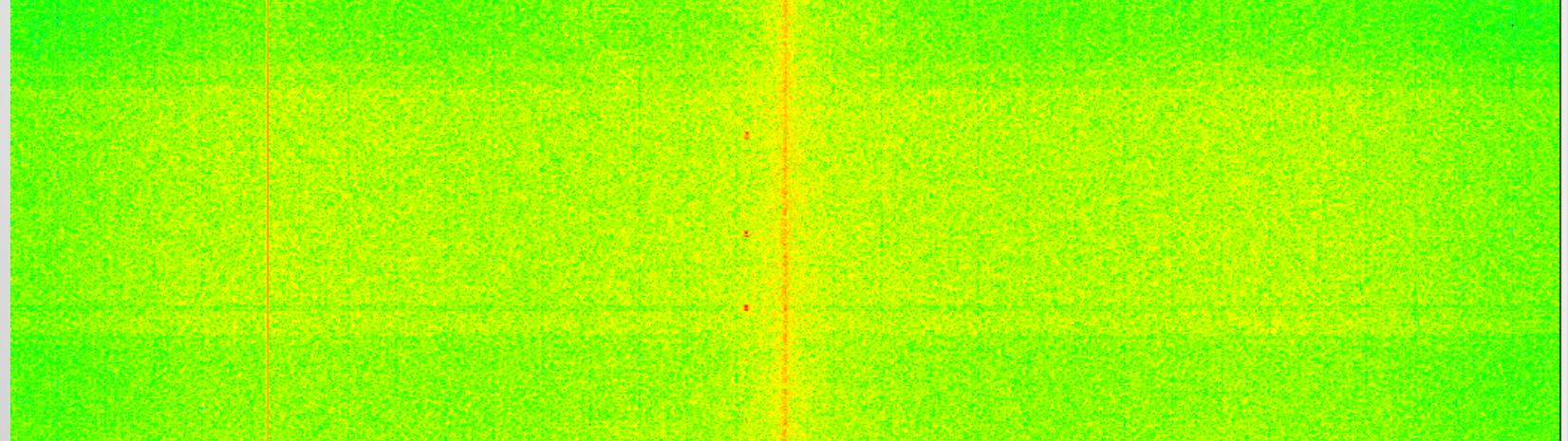
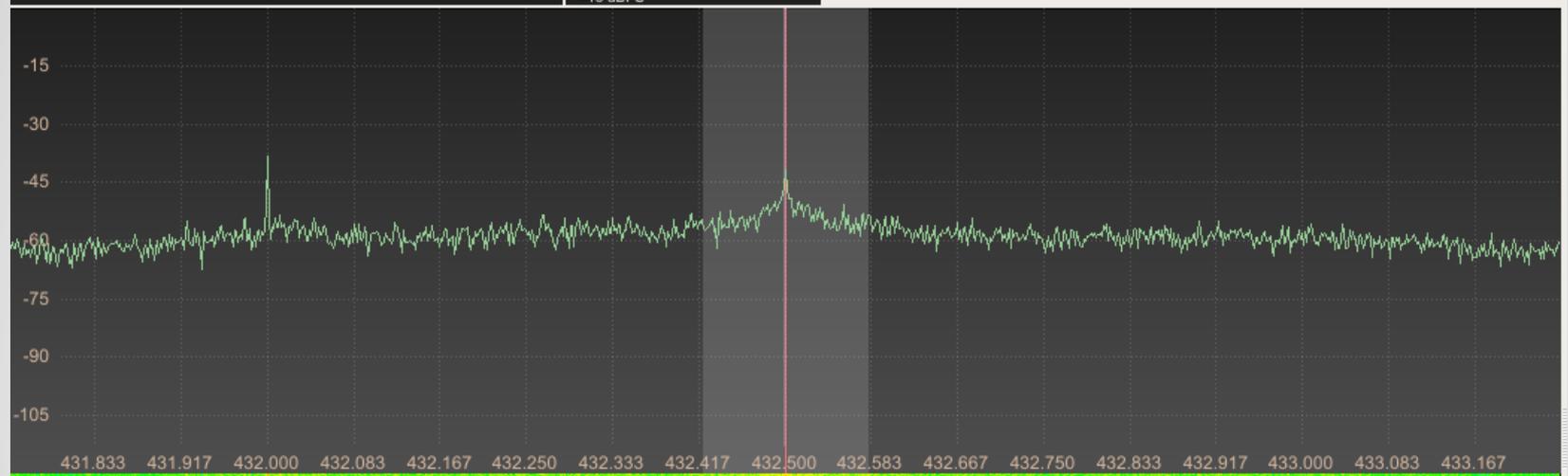
- The solution is basically “don’t tune directly to where you’re interested in”
- Tune slightly to the side and then use software

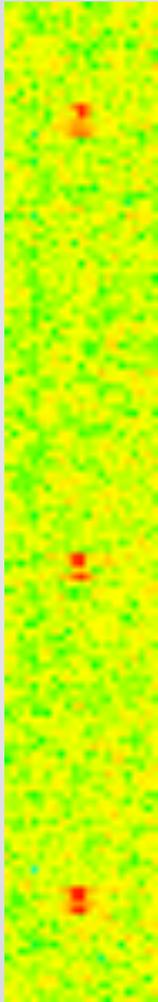
# Lets Look At Something Real

- What do we all have?
- Car keyfobs!
- As numbers they're not too interesting, as something to explore, they're cool
- I happen to know Subaru is OOK at 432MHz



432.501 000 MHz





- It was hard to see before
- But see those little bursts?
- That's our data...

# Recording

- RTLSDR comes with recording tools

```
$ rtl_sdr /tmp/capture.bin -s 1.8e6 -f 432.5e6
```

- This sets the bandwidth to 1.8e6, or 1.8MHz
- And the tuning frequency to 432.5e6, or 432.5 MHz
- Yay, scientific!

```
wifi@pentoo ~ $ rtl_sdr /tmp/capture.bin -s 1.8e6 -f 432.5e6
Found 1 device(s):
  0: Realtek, RTL2838UHIDIR, SN:

Using device 0: ezcap USB 2.0 DVB-T/DAB/FM dongle
Found Elonics E4000 tuner
Tuned to 432500000 Hz.
Reading samples in async mode...
^CSignal caught, exiting!

User cancel, exiting...
```

- Remember we want to tune slightly off center
- Let it run for a little while
- Then cancel with control-c

# Looking At Files

- The best right now is Baudline
- Unfortunately it's not OSS
- And it's a weird license
- So we have to download it manually..

# baudline

[SigBlips DSP engineering](#)  
Contract design and development.  
Hire us!

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- [What is baudline?](#)
- [Screenshots](#)
- [Download](#)
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- [Solutions](#)
- [Mystery Signal](#)



# Quirks

- Baudline doesn't like large files
- Larger than ~50MB
- Your capture is hopefully less than this
- If not:

```
$ dd if=/tmp/capture.bin of=/tmp/trim.bin  
bs=1M count=50
```

- Or use 'split'

# Uncompress & Run Baudline

```
$ cd ~/
```

```
$ tar xvf Downloads/baudline...(platform name)
```

```
$ cd baudline..
```

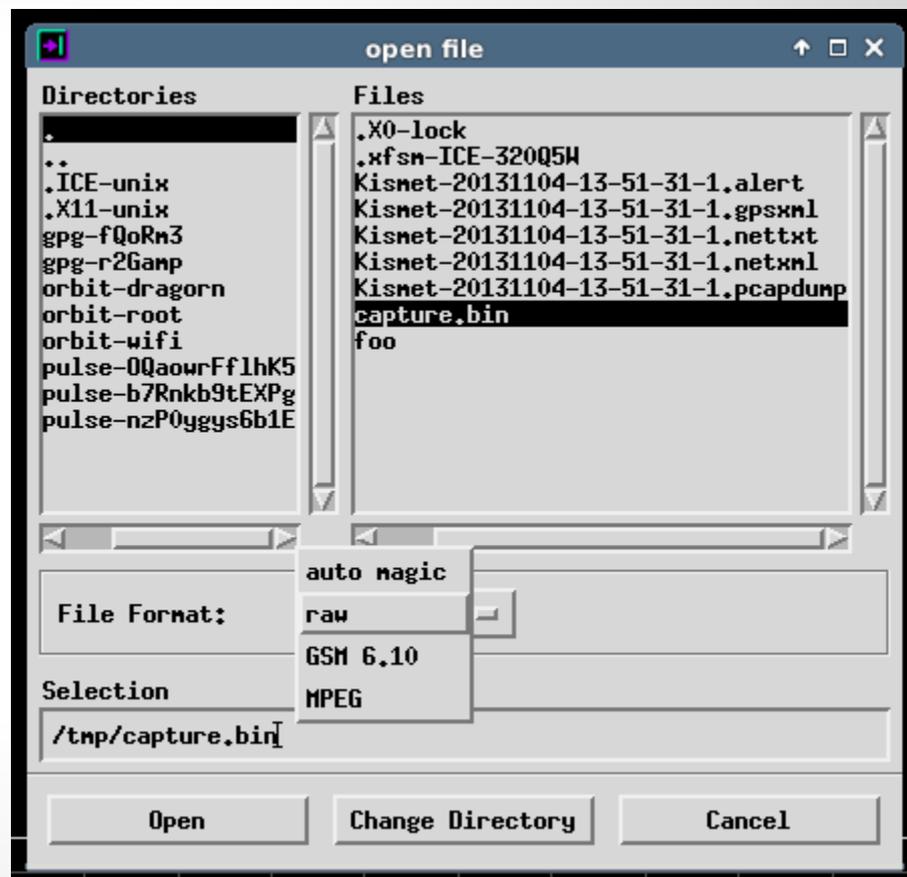
```
$ ./baudline
```



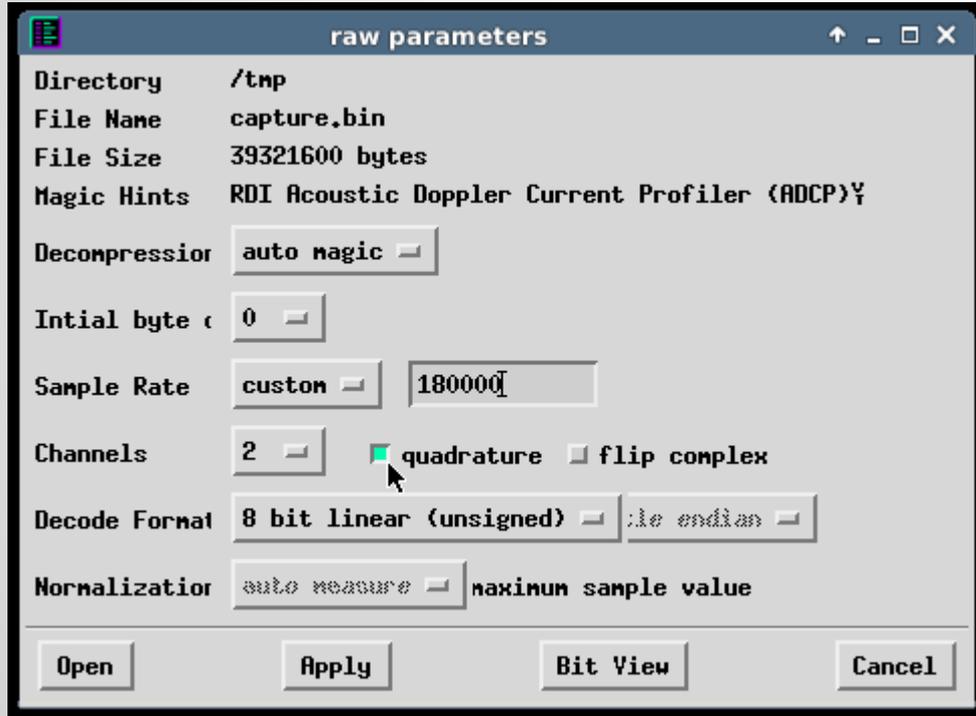
# Weird UI

- Yeah, the UI is weird
  - It's the old tkinter UI
  - Sorry.
- 
- Right click for menus

# Special File

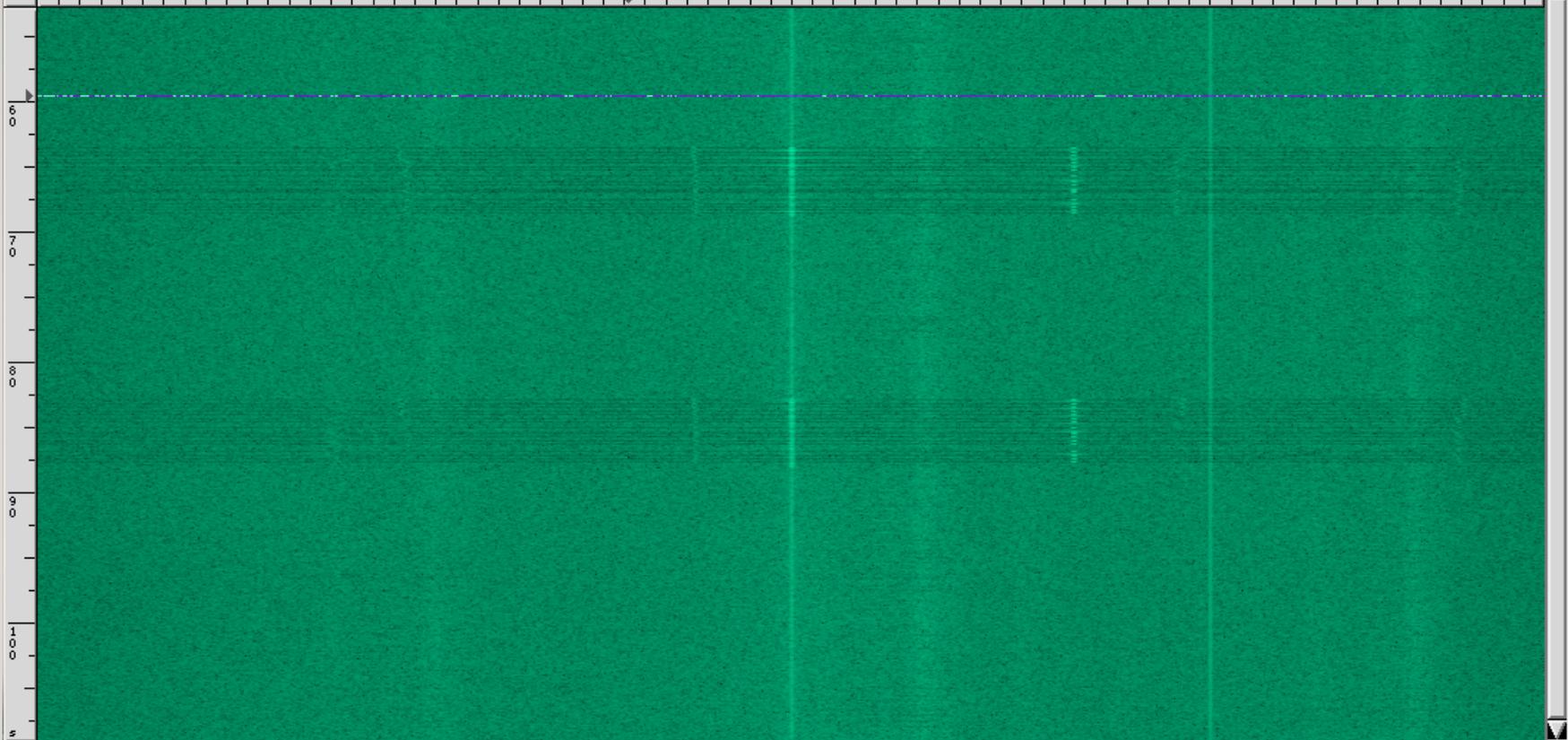


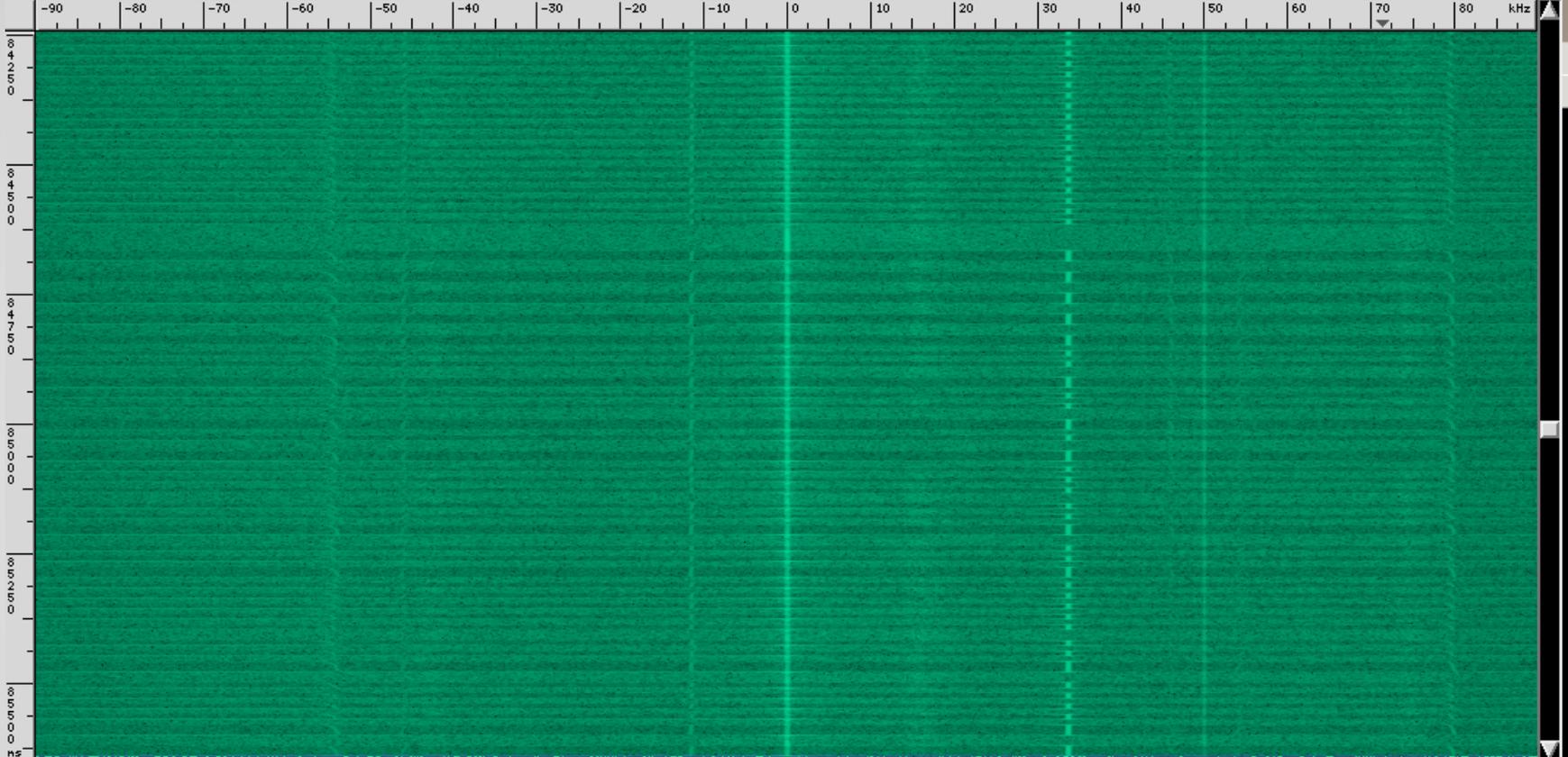
# File Options

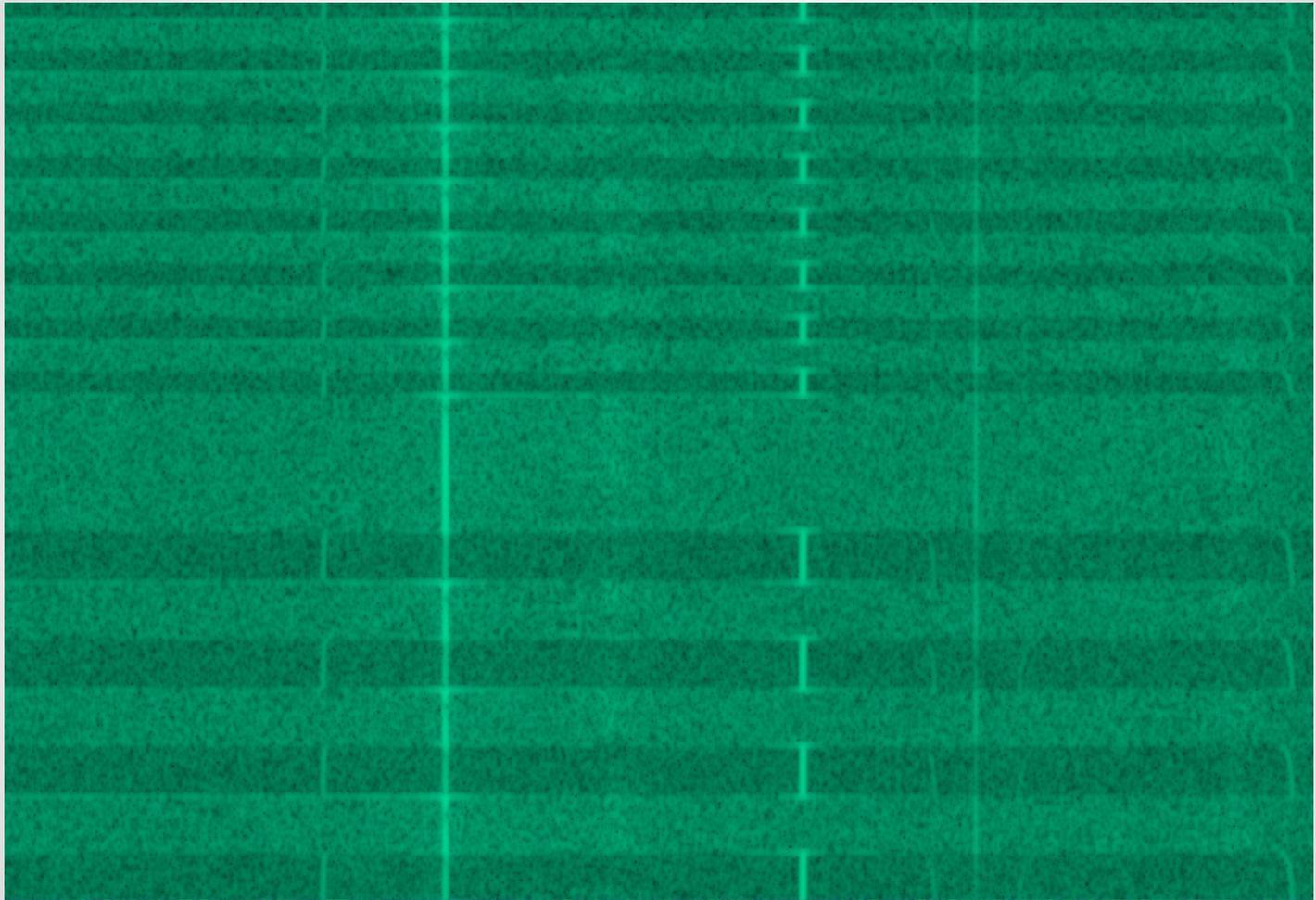


- Custom sample rate - remember, 1.8MHz
- 2 Channels - I and Q
- Quadrature (Q)
- 8bit unsigned data

-90 -80 -70 -60 -50 -40 -30 -20 -10 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 kHz







# What Are We Seeing?

- ASK / OOK data - Amplitude Shift Keying, aka On-Off Keying
- Transmitter is on, or transmitter is off
- IE we've increased the amplitude, or power
- Shows up as series of dashes

# Looking deeper

- Notice the pattern at the beginning
- Preamble tells the receiver to pay attention
- Sequence of 'on' and 'off' patterns
- Notice the equal length on and off segments
- Then notice how it pauses and then goes to variable length

# Processing Data

- So we know we've got reasonable data
- How do we process it?
- GNU Radio comes with a ton of modules to do so
- Lets crack into it...

# GNU Radio Companion

- GRC is a GUI environment for connecting GNU Radio modules
- Works as a flow graph
- Saves as XML
- Compiles to Python
- Amazingly, this actually works. I know.

untitled - GNU Radio Companion

File Edit View Build Help



**Options**  
ID: top\_block  
Generate Options: WX GUI

**Variable**  
ID: samp\_rate  
Value: 32k

Blocks

- ▶ [ Level Controllers ]
- ▶ [ Modulators ]
- ▶ [ Waveform Generat
- ▶ [ Synchronizers ]
- ▶ [ Peak Detectors ]
- ▶ [ Measurement Tools
- ▶ [ Filters ]
- ▶ [ Error Coding ]
- ▶ [ Fourier Analysis ]
- ▶ [ Message Tools ]
- ▶ [ Misc ]
- ▶ [ Networking Tools ]
- ▶ [ Type Converters ]
- ▶ [ Variables ]
- ▶ [ Audio ]
- ▶ [ Boolean Operators
- ▶ [ Byte Operators ]
- ▶ [ Debug Tools ]
- ▶ [ File Operators ]
- ▶ [ Math Operators ]
- ▶ [ Stream Operators ]

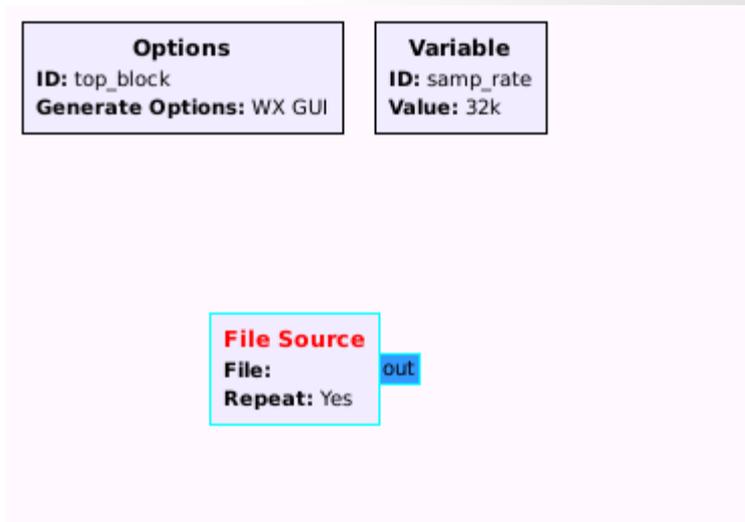
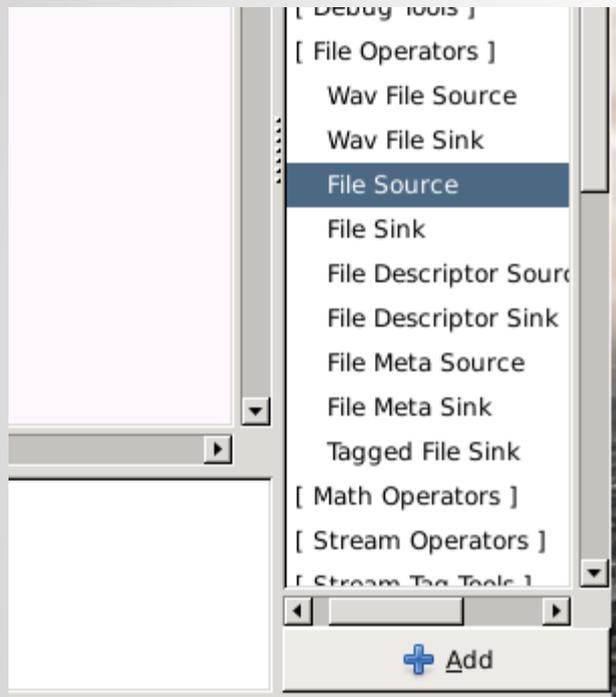
<<< Welcome to GNU Radio Companion 3.6.5.1 >>>

Showing: ""

+ Add

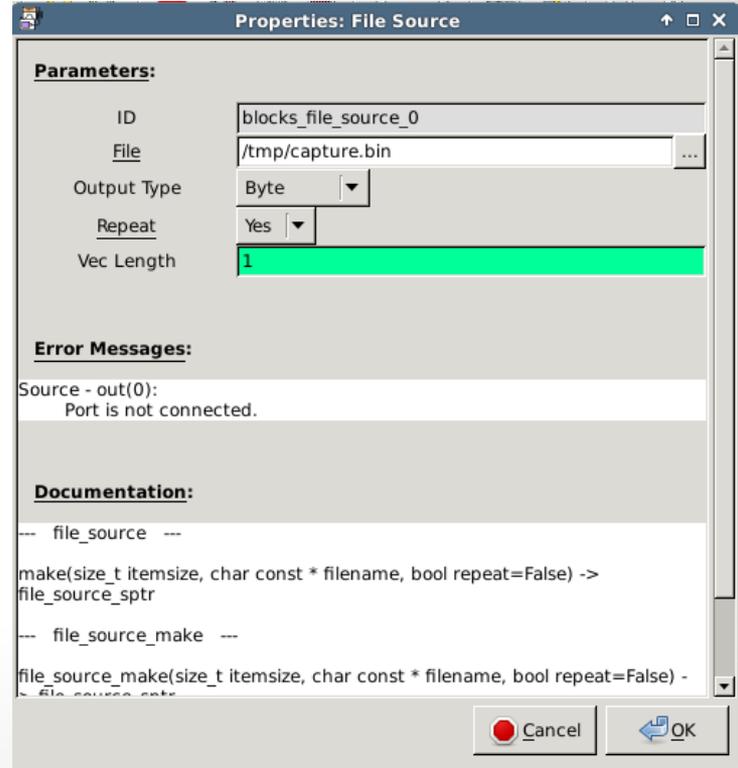
# Basics

- Modules are on the right
- There are a lot of them
- If you can't find what you're looking for, you can try typing part of the name and you'll get a 'search results' category



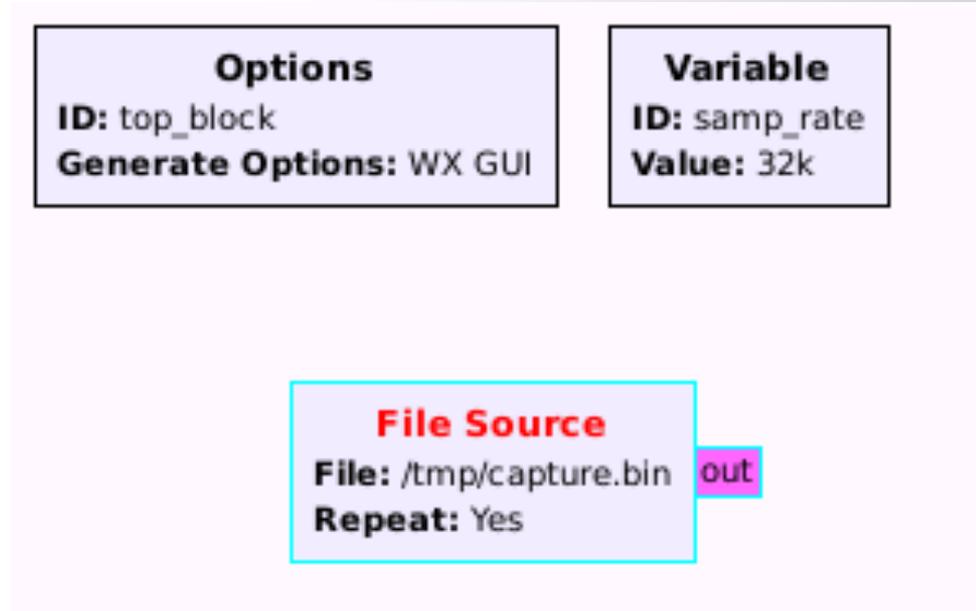
# Edit a module

- Doubleclick on the File source
- Set the source
- Output type byte



# Things have changed

- Notice the color has changed
- Color indicates output type of each module...



# Variables

- Variables work like you'd expect
- Allow you to set data and use it throughout
- Allows math
- Better than hardcoding everything by far
- Doubleclick on the 'sample rate' variable

# Set The Rate

## Parameters:

<u>ID</u>	samp_rate
<u>Value</u>	1800000

### Options

**ID:** top\_block  
**Generate Options:** WX GUI

### Variable

**ID:** samp\_rate  
**Value:** 1.8M

### File Source

**File:** /tmp/capture.bin **out**  
**Repeat:** Yes

# Quirks

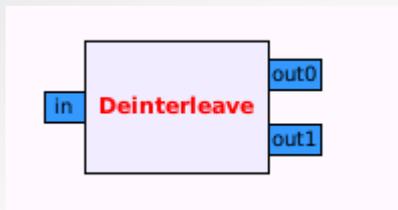
- Notice it changed to “1.8M” in the description
- You may also notice “1.8M” is not a valid input syntax for a number
- Thanks, GNU Radio
- You can use scientific though: 1.8e6
- Yeah. Why not.

# Handling Data

- So we have a weird binary format
- We need to turn that into something useful by GNU Radio
- GR expects 'Complex' data - Float IQ in a stream
- We have to get from 8bit interleaved to Complex

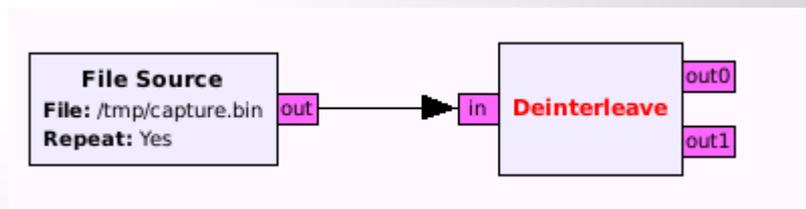
# De-Interleave

- De-interleaves a stream
- That is, splits every other byte
- One input, two outputs
- Turns IQIQIQIQ into IIII and QQQQ, basically
- Add module, set type to byte
- Link by clicking 'out' of file and 'in' of deinterleave



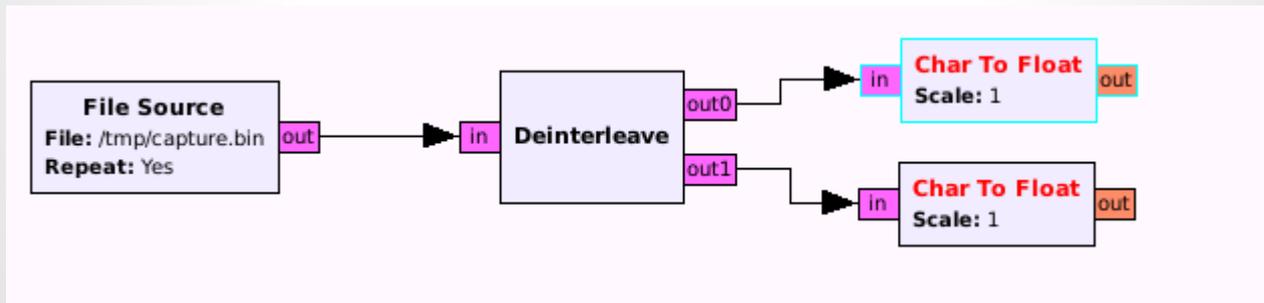
#### Parameters:

ID	blocks_deinterleave_0
IO Type	Byte
Num Streams	2
Vec Length	1



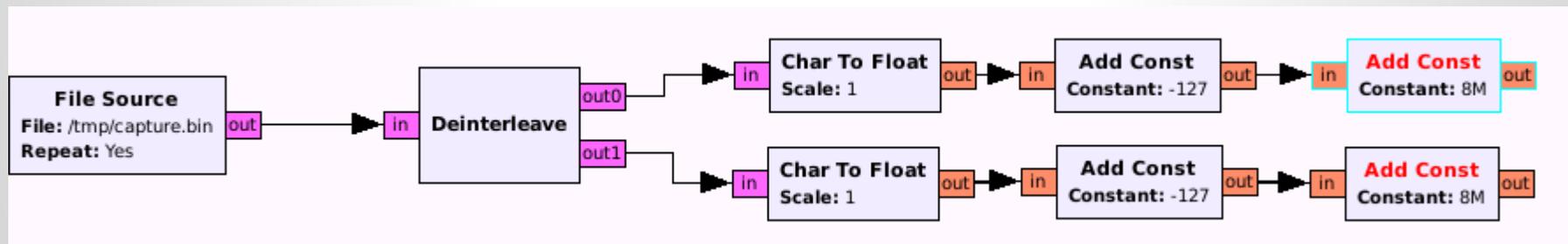
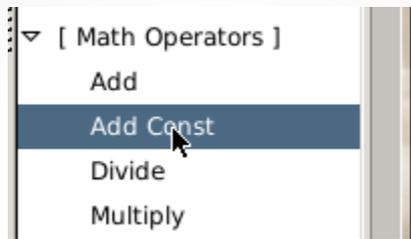
# Changing Types

- We need a 'float' to turn into a 'complex'
- So lets change both the I and Q data into 'float'
- Add module, set type, link - same song, different verse



# Tweaking Data

- It comes in as an unsigned byte 0..255
- We need to scale it to +/- and re-center it as a float
- Add 2 constants; -127 and 8M
- Add 'const' module, set type to float, enter constant



# Getting Complex

- Convert Float to Complex
- Basically re-interleaving
- Takes I and Q streams and turns them into a Complex stream that GNU Radio expects for just about everything

(HINT: MAKE SURE THE COLORS MATCH FOR IN/OUT)

▼ [ Type Converters ]

Stream to Vec Decim

Char To Float

Char To Short

Complex To IShort

Complex To Float

Complex to Imag

Complex To Real

Complex to Mag

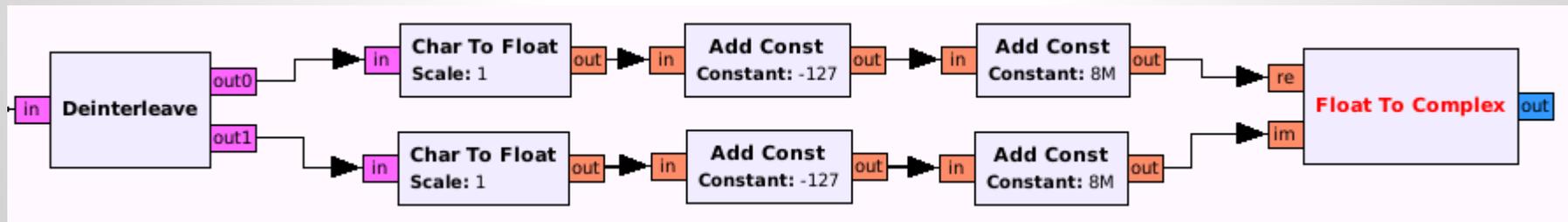
Complex to Mag<sup>2</sup>

Complex to Arg

Float To Char

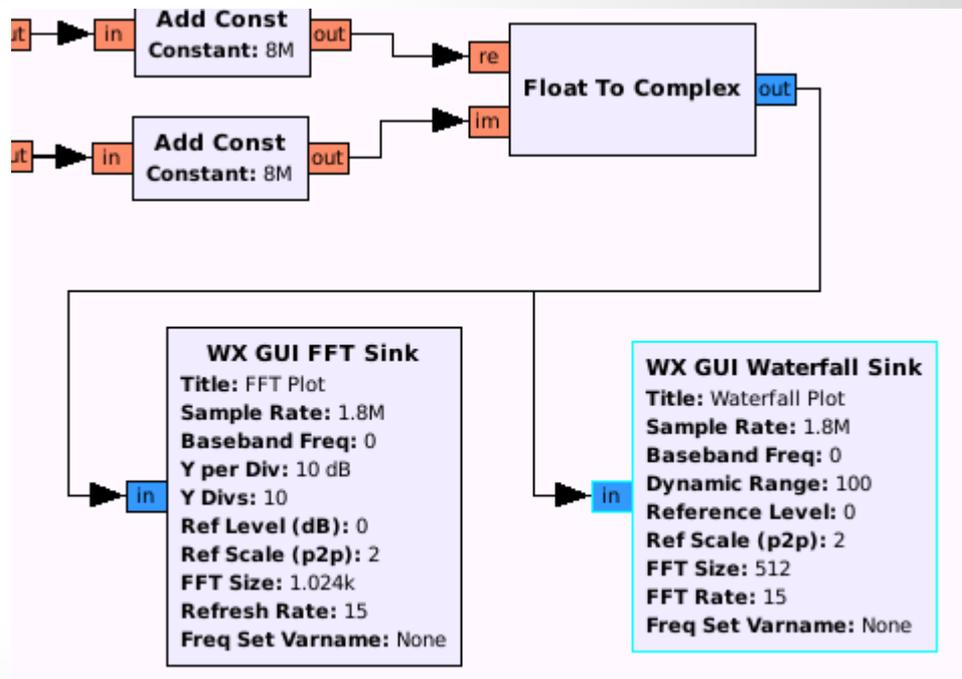
Float To Complex

Float To Int



# Lets Look

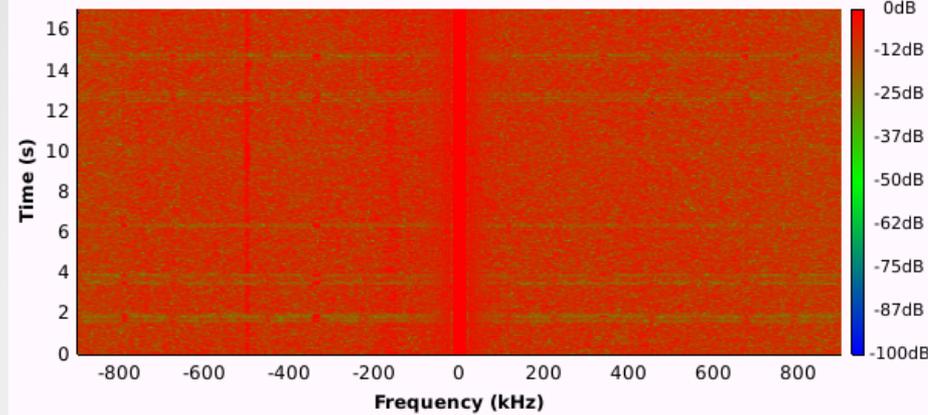
- Lets look at what we have...
- Add a scope output
- Notice the sample rate
- It has to match the input or things go weird
- Sample rate is conflated with bandwidth for IQ data
- Because reasons.



# Outputs

- One output can be wired to multiple inputs
- FFT is the spectrum-analyzer display we're used to
- Waterfall is the historical level display
- We've basically recreated GQRX!

### Waterfall Plot



**Options**

Average  
Avg Alpha: 0.1333

**Axes Options**

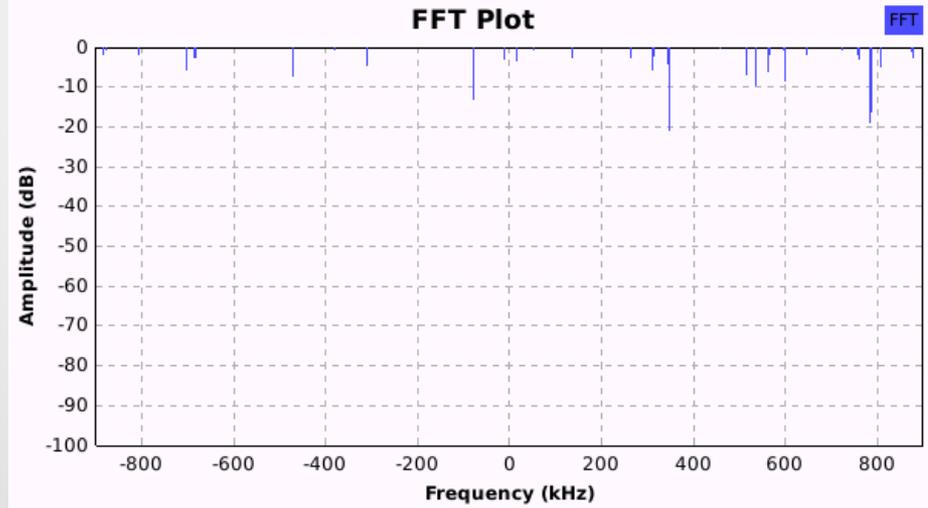
Time Scale: + -  
Dyn Range: + -  
Ref Level: + -  
Color: RGB1

Autoscale

Clear

Stop

### FFT Plot



**Trace Options**

Peak Hold  
 Average  
Avg Alpha: 0.1333

Persistence  
Persist Alpha: 0.1887

Trace A Store  
 Trace B Store

**Axis Options**

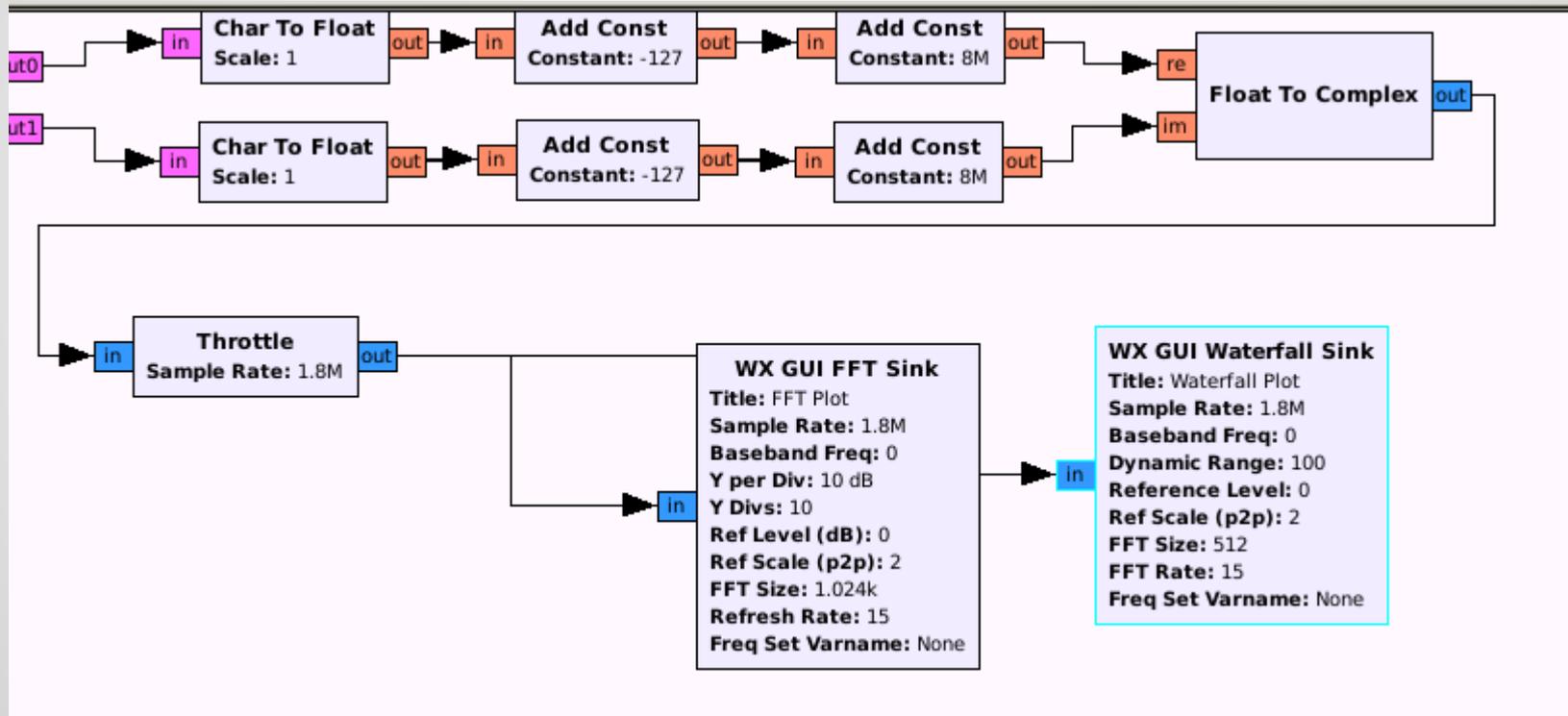
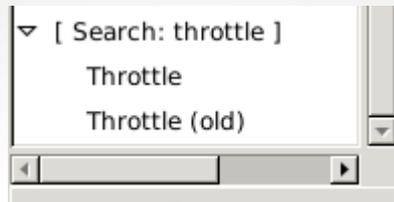
dB/Div: + -  
Ref Level: + -

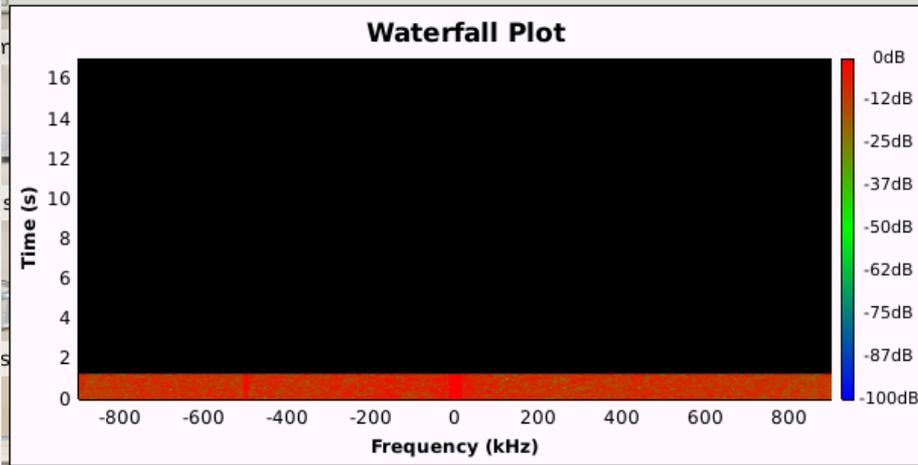
Autoscale

Stop

# What Happened?

- Depending how fast your system is, something went wacky
- GNU Radio is shoving data as fast as possible into the graphs
- Lets slow it down...





#### Options

Average  
Avg Alpha: 0.1333

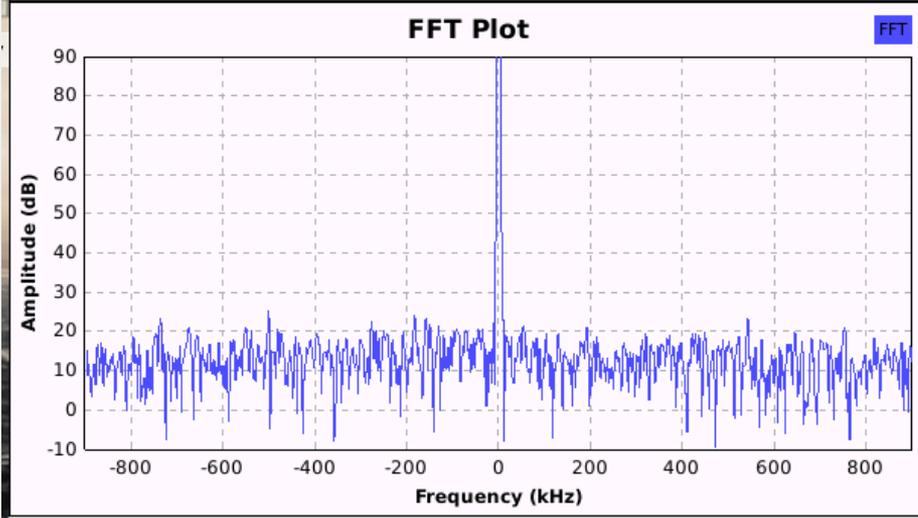
#### Axis Options

Time Scale: + -  
Dyn Range: + -  
Ref Level: + -  
Color: RGB1

Autoscale

Clear

Stop



#### Trace Options

Peak Hold  
 Average  
Avg Alpha: 0.1333

Persistence  
Persist Alpha: 0.1887

Trace A Store  
 Trace B Store

#### Axis Options

dB/Div: + -  
Ref Level: + -

Autoscale

Stop

# Scaling Display

- Click the '+' on 'Ref Level' to scale the display to center the signal
- Should look like what we saw in GQRX now
- Save this grc! You'll need to do this conversion on every recorded session.

# What other tools exist?

1. dsd (audio input selection problem)
  - Demodulate P25, Mototurbo
2. multimon-ng
  - Demodulates almost ALL THE THINGS
3. smartnet-scanner
  - More P25 goodness (uses radioreference)

# Linux Only?

- For most of the tools, yes.
- To look around, no.
- Use the same dongle
- Opposed to GQRX
  - SDRSharp - plugins
  - HDSDR - one we've seen

# Where is there more info?

<http://www.rtl-sdr.com>

<http://www.radioreference.com>

<http://www.dangerousprototypes.com>

Oh, and <http://www.kismetwireless.net>