



Episode 1,283: Scott Horton on Scott HORTON: The Making of a Libertarian Foreign Policy Expert

Guest: Scott Horton

WOODS: We're doing something a little different today. I mean, we've gotten all kinds of details from you over the years about all aspects of foreign policy. It's unbelievable how much of a sheer knowledge dump you have been responsible for with us, and everybody appreciate it. You're one of the favorite guests on the show, without a doubt.

HORTON: Hey, I was at that Ron Paul thing, this event in Lake Jackson last weekend, and many people who came up to me to talk to me said they first heard of me from your show. So I owe you a big thanks for that.

WOODS: Oh, that's really great. I'm really glad to hear that. If I accomplish nothing else with the show, giving Scott Horton a bigger platform makes me feel like I've been successful. So I want to do something that's a little bit different. And I'm kind of rolling the dice here, because I'm not sure how people are going to respond, because maybe they expect a certain thing and I'm giving them something different. But I want to know a little bit more about this guy who knows so darn much.

And I know you try to downplay it and this and that, but you know, BS, all right? You know a lot, and I'm curious about the man behind it. Because even though I've known you for a long time, I actually don't know you that well. And it's not just because every time I see you, you do all the talking and I sit and listen. It's not just that. It's also because, I don't know, we've rarely — I mean, we've vacationed together on the Contra Cruise, but there you had like 100 people who were who were picking your brain there, so we didn't get as much time to talk as I would have liked. So I want to know a little bit more about how you got to be Scott Horton. Everybody likes, I think, stories about where people started out and what they learned and how that change them and stuff like that. So I want to talk about that and a little bit of your just personal background, because what I'm —

HORTON: For the record, I want to officially protest, because there's some genocides going on and things, and I think that stuff is more important than talking about myself. But it's your show.

WOODS: That's true, Scott, but on the other hand, that would be true for everything. Like I shouldn't play chess or spend time with my kids or sleep, you know? We have to live at some point. But so I do want to ask you, I want to kind of start at the beginning. But when I watched your talk, though, the one at that conference you just mentioned, you did say some things that got me interested, like when you would be driving a cab, and you'd be telling

people, "Hey, there's this one good congressman. Have you heard of him? And he's really good." And you were talking about Ron Paul. This was like, well before even the presidential campaigns. So that kind of stuff confirmed to me that, yes, I want to have this conversation. So are you originally —

HORTON: Yeah, that was in the '90s.

WOODS: Oh, that's really good for you. All right, so are you originally from —

HORTON: Yeah, as I said in the talk, my big Ron Paul-Giuliani moment was actually in 1997, ten years before Giuliani, when he first came back to Congress. I saw him on C-SPAN and just —

WOODS: You saw him on C-SPAN, yeah.

HORTON: Yeah, this is my guy, right here.

WOODS: All right, so we'll get to that. Are you originally a Texan?

HORTON: Well, I was born in Florida, I hate to admit, but I've lived in Austin since I was three months old, so that counts. I did live in LA for a couple of years there in the early part of this decade. But otherwise, yeah, I'm from Austin.

WOODS: Okay, did you go to college?

HORTON: I went to a couple years of community college, and then I dropped out, because, well, I didn't want to go into student debt to the government and all of that. And my dad had kind of tried to retire and he ended up sort of half going back to work so he could help pay for the college I was going to, and to go to the real university was going to be even more expensive than that. And so I just didn't really see anything — so I dropped out of community college with a 4.0 — oh, no, it was a 3-point-something-something, because, well, the truth is I fell on my face and broke my jaw on a lean-to-tail, and so I missed the A+ essay that I had to write for English class. So I had a 3-point-something. Anyway, I had good grades, but I quit anyway. And that was in like '97 or '98, something like that. So no, I don't have a degree in anything.

WOODS: Another big name in our movement who did not go to college is Henry Hazlitt, and he went on to write *Economics in One Lesson*, sold millions of copies, and he wrote editorials in *The New York Times* and *Newsweek* and whatever. Didn't stop him any. He just learned. Why do I need this structure for me to learn? So you know foreign policy better than, you know, a lot of the so-called foreign policy analysts I'm subjected to on television. All right, so what was your first job?

HORTON: Oh, my first job, besides like, mowing lawns and things like that?

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: Sacking groceries at Albertson's grocery store when I was 15. I've often told the story of the blood thirst of all the upper middle class white ladies at the grocery store for the

Branch Davidians for daring to interrupt their soap operas and game shows with their ongoing siege and their determination that the FBI should just, *Go in there and end it and kill them all. And that guy said he was Jesus. Crucify him. Get him, get him!* And yeah, I really learned a lot about, you know, these are like my friends' moms — basically right? — my mom's peers in the neighborhood. My parents were good on stuff like that.

WOODS: But were you already —

HORTON: That's what sticks out to me the most about that time, was the Waco massacre, and how it wasn't just the FBI and Bill Clinton and the Delta Force that did it. It was the people of Texas who murdered those people. It really was the people of America who murdered those people.

WOODS: Were you politically aware enough at that time to take a side on —

HORTON: Yeah, I already knew that Ronald Reagan was a dope pusher from Iran-Contra and all that, so I was already very cynical about politics. But yeah, Waco really radicalized me a lot and a lot of people too.

WOODS: What were your politics in the very early days when you were first politically aware?

HORTON: Well, you know, my parents are Democrats, so I mean, not very radical ones or anything, just one click to the left-of-the-center kind of Democrats.

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: But so my whole childhood was the Reagan-Bush years, so I never felt any particular pressure to respect them. I guess my teachers were all government employees, so they were all leaning Democrat too. So I feel lucky that way, that the time of my childhood, the president in power was from the opposite party of my parents and my friends' parents and that kind of thing. So it could have been the other way around, right, where I was told how impressed I was supposed to be with my leaders all the time and that kind of thing. So I feel kind of lucky that I got to escape that, in a sense, just for partisan reasons. But Austin is very liberal town in a very conservative state, and so there's a lot of left-wing and right-wing influences all over the place. And so you can either choose the worst of the left and right and become a fascist, progressive, centrist moderate, or you can take the best of the left and the right and then be an antigovernment, extremist anarchist like me. So like Anthony Gregory says, "No prisons, no taxes. No taxes, no prisons."

WOODS: All right, so what was your evolution? So you start off, you grew up in a Democratic household. I grew up in a household of basically like a moderate Republican household, and so I had a ways to go also. But what was the thing that — was there an event or something you read or listened to that started to move you in a particular direction consciously?

HORTON: Well, you know, I talked to an old Facebook friend of mine, and he said, "Antiwar Radio, huh? Well, you know what? That doesn't surprise me, because you've always been very political, because I remember you in third grade and fourth grade, always talking [expletive] about Ronald Reagan" — sorry — "always had something to say, you know. So, I mean, that's earlier than I remembered.

But, you know, *Star Wars* was a big influence on me. The old Republic, which was just and fair and the new evil Empire of the dark times, where the government is the government, because what are you going to do about it? And that's it. And unlimited power and the destruction of the Senate and all of those kind of things. So that was all kind of, you know, a civics lesson, in a sense, about the nature of power — which, it was meant to be, although a lot of people get it twisted around.

And then, you know, music. I'm a skateboarder too. I started skateboarding when I was 11, so I've always hated cops, ever since I was a little kid. Every cop ever I met was the world's worst, you know, Nazi, wannabe *Full Metal Jacket* drill sergeant, criminal. And where I'm from was right on the edge of Williamson County, where the police were just notoriously corrupt, thieves and framers and killers and extremely bad guys. So that set a precedent. Everybody knew that the Williamson County sheriffs were the most dangerous criminal force in the county. That probably is still the case, although I'm not as plugged into things as I was when I was younger. So that was an important precedent to learn there. I'm grasping here. I'm trying to think back.

WOODS: Well, I'm trying to think, because most people —

HORTON: I listened to a lot of Public Enemy. Did you not grow up on Public Enemy, Tom?

WOODS: I knew who they were, but I was a goody two shoes with my music.

HORTON: Okay. Yeah, I mean, a part of that is the skateboard influence too. So in skateboard culture, we listened to metal, we listened to rap, and then later to hardcore punk rock and that kind of thing.

WOODS: But here's my main question: most people who felt alienated from the Reagan-Bush regime did not go on to become libertarians, even though I could think of good libertarian reasons to feel unhappy under the Reagan-Bush regime. So how'd that happen?

HORTON: Okay, that brings up something here. So I was in high school during the election in 1992, and I favored the Democrats, just because I always hated the Republicans more. And I had supported Iraq War I, just because I thought, fireworks show, I didn't care. I was 14, and so I wasn't worried about Iraqis' lives or any of that. It's mass murder, but hey, if the president says it's okay, we're all doing it together, then it's cool, for violence and destruction and jet fighter planes and stuff. I'm a boy, you know, I'm excited by exciting things.

But shortly after that, I really had realized that that thing was really horrible and corrupt, and they really had killed all these people. I guess George Carlin was a big influence on me on that. And then actually, the very most beautiful girl at my high school was like, "That war was a farce, let me tell you something," and really kind of gave me a schooling on the war about the oil companies and dominating the region and all this stuff, you know? So it's just kind of lucky influences there.

But I remember after Bill Clinton was elected but before he was sworn in, when he was still the president-elect, I got a copy of this chart — you may be familiar with this chart of like, you know, mid '90s, vintage, late '80s, mid '90s, vintage of all the members of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Group. And there had been a

chart like this in the book *Behold a Pale Horse*, which is like way over the top, conspiracy culture book, New World Order stuff from the early '90s, William Cooper. And he had had that chart in there, and it had George Bush at the top of the pyramid and everything on the chart. Well, I saw a brand-new version of the chart, and there was Bill Clinton, and he was a member of all three.

And I went, wow, but he's just the governor of Arkansas. And so this whole illusion that like the governor of Arkansas had just won was completely obliterated, that actually, this is a guy who, regardless of exact control and who bosses him around and Freemason handshakes or anything like that, but here is just a guy who is absolutely directly plugged into the centers of American power in New York City and in Washington, D.C. He is not some governor from Arkansas like in your mythology of the way American democracy could possibly work. And so that to me was a real eye-opener right away.

And as everybody knows now because everybody saw the Tom Cruise movie this year, right — or was it last year, about Barry Seal? *American Made*, where Tom Cruise is Barry Seal, who is running cocaine for George Bush during the Reagan years into Bill Clinton's Arkansas, just like we told you, just like in the book *Compromised: Clinton, Bush and the CIA*, just like everybody knew all along except the people who are liars and the people who believe the liars. But everybody knew all about that. It was it was published all over the place from all different sources about what was really going on there. And that was a big part of me becoming a kind of a New World Order too, was, look at this: Bill Clinton and George Bush and Ross Perot were all in on Iran-Contra together. I mean, I don't know if Bill Clinton was necessarily working directly with Ross Perot, but Perot was running guns from a factory in Mexico, and George Bush of course was running a lot of it out of the Vice President's office. And then Bill Clinton's Arkansas is playing a major role in the cocaine thing. And then this is the election in '92.

So that was like a big part of me becoming a New World Order kook and starting to read *The New American* magazine, which was the heroic and the greatest libertarian we had in his post-Birch days, the heroic William Norman Grigg, who died about a year and a half ago, unfortunately. He was one of my founding partners in the Libertarian Institute. But back then, he was the editor of *The New American* magazine and my favorite go-to guy. And I didn't have the internet and stuff, so that was what I read mostly, was *The New American*.

And you know *None Dare Call It Conspiracy* and all that is a great — oh, and G. Edward Griffin, *The Creature From Jekyll Island*. These are all really great introductions to a right-wing, antiwar point of view, because, wham a hippie and, *I don't like violence, so leave me alone or whatever*, is not a very compelling position. But if somebody like G. Edward Griffin, who is like, *Kill all commies. But the best way to kill all commies is to not kill them. The best way to kill all commies is to keep America a limited republic as best as possible in comparison to really making a total state here in the name of anti-communism* — which is a pretty sophisticated take for a right-wing Bircher. You've got to hand it to him. And so I really liked that, that it was a conspiracist's take, but it's still true even without the conspiracy, that empire is suicide for America. It's murder-suicide. And if it was an Illuminati plot to destroy America, that's what you would do, is you would give it an unlimited list of foreign policy goals to achieve until finally the dollar broke and the thing fell down and died.

And then, you know, the Waco cover-up and then also the cover up of the Oklahoma City bombing two years later, where it was clear that it was — and so clear, and so well reported,

that it was McVeigh and his neo-Nazi friends who did it from the Aryan Republican Army, and that the FBI let them all go, and the Justice Department let them all go, because most of them were state's witnesses and undercover informants and guys who were already compromised by the FBI, and therefore, had compromised the FBI as well. And they even admitted it. And their excuse was that they didn't want to jeopardize the death penalty case against McVeigh, because if they went after the other guys that helped him do it, then that would raise reasonable doubt as to who was really in charge. Maybe he was just the idiot driving the truck, his lawyers might say, and the jury might buy that. And since they wanted to execute him so bad, they decided to let everyone else go. That's their official explanation. When the real explanation is they were covering their ass, because they could have stopped the attack. They knew all about the whole plot, and it all developed right under their nose, and it happened anyway. And then what did they do? Just like with 9/11, they turned around and they exploited it so badly that it was like almost as if they had done it themselves.

WOODS: Scott —

HORTON: Bill Clinton said: the Oklahoma bombing saved my presidency. Yuk, yuk, yuk.

WOODS: All right, now wait. Now you're drifting away into Scott Horton, the broadcaster. I want Scott Horton, the person here.

HORTON: Oh yeah, no, but I'm telling you why I was turned into a raving kook in the 1990s.

WOODS: No, I get it, I get it. So that's where you were philosophically when you first encountered Ron Paul on C-SPAN.

HORTON: Right, and you know what? Harry Brown was a big influence on me in 1996 too.

WOODS: I thought so too. I thought so too. What did you like about Harry Brown?

HORTON: Well, I mean, just like Ron Paul, he knows what he's talking about. 100% of the time, he's right and you're wrong, so shut up and listen. And just like Ron Paul, totally a classy guy. You know, he was like an investment banker. His bumper music on his radio show was like classical music. He had all this very high-minded, high-cultural kind of attitude, and absolute hatred for the warfare state and hatred for corruption and injustice and was just the absolute best kind of libertarian. Rothbard has that article "Do You Hate the State," where he says I prefer a radical minarchist to a conservative anarchist. You want to give me just some kind of utilitarian case for anarchy. I'd rather have a fire breather like Jacob Hornberger, who believes in the Constitution but wants to fight all day long about what's really wrong. And that's how Harry Brown was, as well. Ironically, those two were enemies back in the day, but anyway, they're both just great.

And when I found Harry Brown, that to me — see, I had thought — I won't name names, but I had read *Reason* magazine, and *Reason* magazine in the 1990s, their idea of libertarianism was debunking the Gulf War illness, debunking the suffering of the Iraqi people under the sanctions. *Oh, it wasn't 500,000; it was only 300,000 children who had died* — what? — and this kind of thing. And so I just thought, well, how very *reasonable* and skeptical of you to be so skeptical of anyone who questions government power and authority and agendas. So forget these guys. I'd rather run around with the right-wing kooks, the militia guys, and the New

World Order guys. At least they care about the Branch Davidians. And I didn't know about Jim Bovard at the time. Bovard was one of the best on Waco in the whole world.

So my exposure to libertarianism was like it was a bunch of milquetoast crap, that you know, I prefer to hang around right-wingers who at least care about the same things as me. So yeah, when I found Ron Paul in 1997, he is a lot like me. He's really libertarian, but he kind of liked that Birch stuff too. And I think Ron and me — and I think Ron is probably a little bit ahead of me, anyway — and Will Grigg, I think we all kind of got over our One World government conspiracy garbage right around the same time at the turn of the century, that if the agenda really is a one-world government under the United Nations, then this isn't how you do that. And it was pretty clear that Dick Cheney's agenda really is a one=world government run out of D.C., never Brussels.

WOODS: Right. Right.

HORTON: So Ron Paul and I, we really saw eye-to-eye on a lot of things — or re I really saw the world a lot of the way he did too. Very antiwar, but from that kind of right-wing Birch point of view, which is great. And I didn't learn about Rothbard till later. So you know, he was really a great guiding light to me at that time.

WOODS: When did you first start any form of broadcasting, either podcasting or radio?

HORTON: Well, I used to be a guest a lot of times on the Alex Jones show back in like 1996.

WOODS: Are you kidding me? Of course. He was in Austin, right? He still is in Austin, right?

HORTON: Yeah, he had an FM show, and he would interview me about Waco and Oklahoma City and stuff back then. He had an FM show.

WOODS: Holy cow. You guys were both young kids back then.

HORTON: Yeah, let's see. Yeah, I was 20, and he was like 22, I guess, something like that.

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: And then so I got my first show of my own on Free Radio Austin, as I mentioned in that talk. It was in a shack .Angela Keaton eventually got a show on there as well. But it was in a shack behind a house in what counts for the ghetto in Austin, a poor neighborhood in Austin. I won't say ghetto, because it's a perfectly nice place over in East Austin. And it was black bloc anarchists, Earth-first environmentalists, and, oh, a really great old Vietnam War era hippie named Atwater, who knew everything in the world. Like you know how you think I'm an Encyclopedia Brown on all this stuff? I mean, this guy was just — man, he knew everything that happened in the 20th century, I swear to God. And just a great group of people. And some right-wing militia guys too. There was kind of that culture in Austin around the access channel and whatever.

I should mention Bill Hicks was an incredible influence on me, an insane man, and then especially the Rant in E-Minor at in Arizona Bay, and all his great antiwar stuff, And there's a guy who just never took untruth for its face value at all. And I like thinking about what he

would have become if he'd lived through the Clinton years and through the Bush Jr. years and that kind of thing. But anyway, but I should give him credit, because he was a major influence. I learned about him right after he died in '94, but really studied every syllable of all of his most important work after that.

But yeah, I forgot. Where was I?

WOODS: Well, so you got on the other side of the microphone then.

HORTON: Oh, yeah, at Free Radio Austin, yeah. Oh, and so yeah, my first show was about Waco. I did a lot of Oklahoma bombing shows. I wish I had those tapes. Really, my best friend in the world there had my box of tapes in a shoe box, and they got robbed out of his storage shed, along with the rest of everything else that he cared about, and I'm sure just dumped on the side of the road somewhere. But in there, you could have heard me predicting the Bush presidency and 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and all the rest of it. If — man, I know I had the very best example that. I know it was on tape, because I remember that I had heard it later and thought, man, I better save this one, that kind of thing. And I usually never tape my best shows, but that was one that I really had, but is gone now.

WOODS: Well, as you know, I first got to know you because you hosted something called *The Weekend Interview Show*, and you just interviewed all kinds of people, in and out of the libertarian movement. How did that get started? Was that attached to — that wasn't attached to Antiwar.com, or was it?

HORTON: No, well — yeah, it was, sort of. I mean, the original, *The Weekend*, it became attached to Antiwar.com. So what happened was, after the FCC destroyed Free Radio Austin in 2000 — I think it was in 2001, like shortly after September 11th. It could have been an early '02. Some friends created Radio Chaos 95.9, and rather than like leftists and environmentalists, that one was more just punk rock and metal and hardcore and beer drinking and having fun, kind of station. And I had *the* political show on there, which yeah, it started out under the pseudonym Philip Dru, because they wanted me to use a pseudonym, so that's Edward Mandell House's book about creating a liberal fascist America, if anybody's interested in that. It's an interesting story.

WOODS: And by the way, that's a that's a book that Birchers push quite a bit.

HORTON: Yeah, and Will Grigg had actually written the introduction to it.

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: And I still think it's still valuable.

WOODS: Oh, yeah.

HORTON: That's why used the name Philip Dru, because I wanted people to be curious about it. Because the story is this —the story is Woodrow Wilson's Cheney, basically, right? The guy behind Woodrow Wilson telling him what to think about everything ,who represents the Morgan interests. And they're progressives, and what their idea is is to create a fascist state. And when fascism was introduced in Italy, House bragged that, *Oh, yeah? Well, I anticipated*

Mussolini by several years. You can read it in my book Philip Dru. And yet this is the blueprint for wartime America under Woodrow Wilson and World War I, and this is further the blueprint for the New Deal in America, which raises an important question, that if the liberals are fascists, then what does that make the conservatives in this country? Yeah, pretty bad. And that may be why Americans killed a Holocaust worth of people since World War II or something like that, you know?

WOODS: Anybody who's interested in that, by the way, it's *Philip Dru*; it's spelled Dru. You would enjoy reading it. Anyway, by the way, in your talk that you gave again over the weekend at the Ron Paul event, I loved that you talked about having Ron Paul on pirate radio.

HORTON: Yeah.

WOODS: And you said that you admitted that you told a lie, because you were asked — I don't know if it was McAdams or one of Ron's —

HORTON: Deist, yeah, Deist was his chief of staff back then.

WOODS: Yeah, and he was asking, is this pirate radio, and you said it wasn't, but it was. And then you said, "But look, hey, it was war time," which I love that, because, look, the truth always suffers in war. Come on. I thought that was really funny the way you handled that.

HORTON: Yeah, exactly, and that was the excuse for torturing people to death, right? It might as well be an excuse for getting a congressman on your radio show.

WOODS: Exactly. Exactly, right, it's nothing. No problem. All right, so —

HORTON: And the worst punch line is: yeah, and it still is war time. So much good it did, you know?

WOODS: Scott, a couple things I get a lot is, number one, how do you learn and retain so much? For example, you want to really stay on top of these things, you've got to really read the news and whatever. What does your routine look like? Do you wake up and you're just scouring? I mean, I guess you've been doing some work for a while for Antiwar.com, so you're naturally scouring the internet for news? What's your method?

HORTON: Well, you know, one big cheat that I had for many years was I put all the links in Justin Raimondo's articles.

WOODS: Oh my gosh. I don't know how you didn't have a nervous breakdown.

HORTON: Yeah, I mean, you might have noticed the overkill, and you know, I would spend about three hours a night, three days a week, you know, really digging deep, researching into all of these things in order to make the best out of those columns that I could.

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: And so I mean, that was something that really helped a lot. And then just interviewing the people that I interview, I basically am in the position of asking whatever

follow-up question I want of whatever journalist I want about whatever topic I want. And then, as you're saying, I've been doing the same thing for so long in a row, that I've seen all these crises come and go.

WOODS: Yeah, but the thing is, something could —

HORTON: So it's pretty easy from my point of view, whereas other people maybe who are new at it are saying: oh my God, how could you possibly get your head around all of this stuff? It's like, well, I saw half of it happen before my eyes, you know?

WOODS: Right, right, right. So then, when something new happens the next day, you already have something to fit it into. you know the context; you know the history and everything.

HORTON: Yeah.

WOODS: So it becomes easier to take that news and not have it just be a bunch of random facts you forget by the next day. You can plug it into what you've already got there.

HORTON: Right.

WOODS: Then another thing people want to know is, what you cover is, you know, it's pretty depressing. It's not fun. On my show, I can talk about some libertarian has got some new app that screws the cops or something like that. And once in a while, it's something refreshing. And you don't get much if any of that. Some people say, I don't know if I would have it in me to just to carry on consistently. What do you say to that?

HORTON: Well, I don't know, man. I mean, honestly, what I'm covering is the worst of human suffering. So that's a point, right? That's your point, so that that's kind of hard to deal with. But at the same time, they're the ones who are doing all the suffering, not me. So I'm supposed to be like this comfortable white kid, sitting in Austin, Texas, crying for myself, when the worst thing that I have to put up with is knowing about what my society — and I know that's kind of a commie term or whatever. I don't know. People have their varying degrees of responsibility. But essentially, we allow this to continue, you know? We the people, those of us between Canada and Mexico, this is our doing, in a way. And certainly we're not stopping it. We're not doing what it takes to stop it. And so it seems to me like doing anything less than everything we can do is horrible. I don't know how I'd live with myself.

Look at the way Ron Paul is too, man. On that *Liberty Report*, he and Dan McAdams, all they talk about is foreign policy. All they talk about is the wars, and all they talk about is the suffering of the people that's inflicted on them by the United States, because that's all that matters to Ron. I mean, you know, Ron. He's a doctor and an obstetrician, so you might think that abortion would be his biggest issue or he's we know a gold bug, an Austrian school economist and a hard-money guy, dating back to the '60s. He barely ever talks about that. He talks about that on Fridays with Chris Rossini. But four days a week, it's him and Dan McAdams versus the Empire, nonstop, because what else matters compared to that?

And so I understand that, you know, maybe I guess I'm not as happy of a person overall as I would be if I didn't care. But then I think I would feel pretty bad for not caring too, or not being willing to bear witness to this kind of thing. You know what I mean? I don't know.

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: I've had a lot of day jobs, man, in my life, and I always felt like my efforts would be better spent criticizing my government for killing people than delivering this or listening to that, you know?

WOODS: I agree. Well, I don't do exactly what you do, because I only occasionally talk about foreign policy. But still, I feel like what I'm about is generally truth telling. And so if I went off and — I don't know. It's not that there's anything not honorable about other professions. They all need to be done.

HORTON: Right, yeah.

WOODS: We all need these, —, you know, but I just feel like for myself, given that I think I'm good at it, I think I would be misplaced if I were selling insurance or something. That's not what I'm supposed to be doing.

HORTON: Sometimes I do feel guilty, like, I should be helping to manage a factory that produces something somewhere. I'm such an ideological capitalist; I should be really doing capitalism in a real kind of sense. But then, you know, I don't know.

WOODS: Yeah, but —

HORTON: Oh, and by the way, back to the question of how I know so much: Antiwar.com. I mean, that's my recommendation to the people in your audience is — and this is something that I forgot to say in my speech the other day, where I talked about how much I love Ron Paul and my media experience and all that, is when I first found Antiwar.com it was 1999, and my friend Shauna pulled it up on her computer and said, "Hey, look at this, Antiwar.com." It was when Bill Clinton was bombing Kosovo, was bombing Serbia to break off Kosovo. And I said, "Oh, Antiwar.com. What's that, some kind of socialist thing?" And she goes, "No, no, look." And she like clicks a couple of things, and I'm not sure if it was actually on that site or not; it just linked right to something by L. Neil Smith called "Lincoln, the American Lennon."

WOODS: [laughing]

HORTON: And I was like, "All right, man, who are these guys," you know [laughing]? And then I was just absolutely thrilled, like not only is Antiwar.com, that URL, Antiwar.com, owned by libertarians, but even it's cranky, old, right-wing paleo libertarian Justin Raimondo up there, who, the more right-wing he gets, the more antiwar he gets. Look at him go. And that's just the coolest thing, man, to see. It was then. It really blew me away. And I wish, thinking back now, that like right after September 11th, I should have contacted them and just said, "Put me on the payroll, dude. I'm with you guys," from the very beginning. It took me years to figure out that they would have had me.

You know, Lew Rockwell said in his speech at the Ron Paul event — oh, it was the night before the Ron Paul event. It was the small event at Ron Paul's house for the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity donors and friends and that kind of thing. And Lew quoted Murray Rothbard. He said that war and peace is the key to this whole libertarian business.

WOODS: Right.

HORTON: That there is no libertarianism to talk about when you're in a state of permanent war, especially when you're the world empire.

WOODS: Yeah, he said that in 1956, so right at the beginning.

HORTON: And how true has that proven to be? That's the heart of why do we have this government that's just too big to fail? Why does it go without saying that we will have an income tax forever? Why is that not even — why is that 100 miles from discussion? I just sounded like a kook for bringing that up, that someday American society would go ahead and abolish income tax station. That is so far out of bounds. And why? Because we have a world empire to run. So that is just out of the question for the slightest consideration, when in fact, the income tax is one of the worst crimes our government commits. It's one of the most insane and horrible things about our society, life-destroying things about our society. It's an absolute nightmare, the income tax, and yet, hey, what are you going to do when you have a Middle East to rule and a Central Asia and an East Asia and an Eastern Europe and everything else, you know? Africa next.

WOODS: Just a few days — because of course we're in the centenary of the end of World War I this year, and this month, in fact. So few days ago, I talked to Hunt Tooley about it, and he said something that I knew already, but it's just always fun to hear it. He was saying, well, when the US entered the war, of course, it was the greatest economic powerhouse in the world. Now, stop for a second there. It was the greatest economic powerhouse in the world, even though it had only just created an income tax and had only just created the Federal Reserve. It had been the greatest powerhouse before those things were created. And yet, as you suggest, those things, we're kind of told that, well, all respectable countries have those. It's crazy to think about life without them. But life without them led to the US being the greatest economic powerhouse in the world. It's possible to think this way. We just don't.

HORTON: Yeah, well, and seriously, as long as we're on this, the income tax is just — think about just the very concept that you're fined for producing things. And the more you earn, the greater your guilt and the more you're made to pay as a penalty for earning. And if you cross them, and they come after you, and you have your settlement issue or what have you — I mean, I know a guy who's going through this right now, where they basically made him an indentured servant, where it's actual — not just hyperbolic — where it's actual slavery. Where, you know, we think about because we pay them at the end of the year, instead of halfway through, or something like that, right? We're like, you're actually being forced to work for these people. And then, but it really becomes more clear, when you are on your settlement and you have to pay them 2,000 a month or else, that you're really working at gunpoint, basically, for the national government, which is just going to take your money and either spend it on a tire for a plane that never even gets installed, or paying a salary of some torturer, or some madness, something that you absolutely would disapprove of in every way. Or, at best, something completely wasteful, if you're lucky, they don't hurt someone with the money they take from you.

And in fact, the guy that I know, he had his own small business. This is only the most recent anecdote. A friend of mine had his own small business, was doing okay. They decided that he owed them more than he had even grossed the year that they said he owed them for. But oh, well, what are you going to do? And then they enslaved him. And then his business folded, and now he's looking for work as a wage employee again, instead of having his own business that was thriving for a decade. And the margin was erased by the IRS. I mean, that's just the slightest example.

But that's some soul-crushing stuff when that happens to you. That's the kind of thing that leads to divorces, that leads to children in foster care, that leads to men sticking pistols in their mouths, because of the IRS. And to think that in American society, we're just like, oh, yeah, well, that's just how it's going to be, including on the day we die, and after too, and forever. That's just how it is from now on, because Woodrow Wilson says so, or something, because we've got an empire to pay for.

WOODS: Yeah, I agree. And by the way, I'm going to use your line about it's a fine for producing things. Here I've been thinking about this for, I don't know, almost 30 years, and I never thought to put it that way. I love that. I absolutely love that.

HORTON: Yeah, it's completely sick. It's horrible.

WOODS: All right, you've got a lot of interviews; you've given talks; you have a book, *Fool's Errand*; you have a project you're working on now. Is there any one thing or any broad part of your life or anything that you would look back and say? this is the thing I'm the proudest of? I did that.

HORTON: You know, I've got 4,800 interviews now, where I am pretty sure I was on the right side of things and trying to persuade people to be on the right side of things. So you know, all those archives are there at ScottHorton.org, by the way, every one of those for free in the podcast feed and everything, if people are interested in that. And then I guess the book, as far as that goes. People seem to — it's gotten a really great reception, and people say it's the kind of thing they give it to their friends and their family and their mom and their dad, and it really changes their mind. They really get it now, and it kind of works first try on people. Presumably, seemingly, it's doing its job of persuading like that. So I mean, I can't really think of a time I stopped a war, Tom, or anything good like that, but like Bill Hicks said, "You do what you can."

And as Ron Paul said, actually — it's funny, I quoted Bill Hicks in that thing. I should have ended it with quoting Ron Paul, that the first time I interviewed Ron Paul was at the Libertarian Party convention in 2004 in Atlanta. And I had my kind of list of questions, but I was really nervous, and I wasn't sure if I'd come up with enough good-enough stuff. So Karen Kwiatkowski was there, the great Pentagon whistleblower and LewRockwell.com writer.

WOODS: Oh, yeah.

HORTON: And so I asked her, I said, you know, "What are we going to do? What should I ask him?" And she says, "Okay, ask him this. Say, 'If there's only one Ron Paul, and if there's only ever been one Ron Paul in the House of Representatives, what hope do we have? I mean, what are we going to do in the state of this crisis?'" And so I asked him that. And his answer was:

Well, you know what? Just a few years back, we thought the Soviet Union would outlast our lifetimes at least, deep into the next century. We didn't think it was going to just cease to exist like that. It was nearly miraculous. It happened right before eyes. And so the lesson from that is, it's not our job to predict the worst. It's our job to just keep teaching people about liberty, keep teaching people about peace, keep teaching people about sound economics and what the right thing is, and don't worry about the rest. You know, hopefully it'll work itself out, but just make sure you're doing the right thing in the meantime.

And so you know, that's kind of the way I look at it.

WOODS: Yeah, I think that makes sense. Well, if there's anybody out there who doesn't yet know who Scott Horton is, now you know. What would be the place they should go next to get more Scott Horton?

HORTON: Well, we skate every Wednesday at my buddy Isaac's house. Oh, you mean on the internet.

WOODS: I know some people would love to come see you [laughing].

HORTON: Yeah, no, I still skate the big ramp. I'm not too old yet, not quite. So yeah, let's see. I've got interview archives, more than you could ever listen to in your lifetime there at ScottHorton.org. I run an institute with Sheldon Richman and Jared Labell, the Libertarian Institute, and we do have a small but high-quality stable of writers there, and we're recruiting more. So check us out at LibertarianInstitute.org. The book is *Fool's Errand*, and it's out in audiobook too. If you like me that much, you want to hear me talk for nine hours about Afghanistan, the audiobook is available. And I don't know. I'm writing a new book about the terror war.

WOODS: Yeah, that's going to be great.

HORTON: Working title is God Dang It, Bobby. Time to End the War on Terrorism.

WOODS: [laughing] Good, very good. Well, that is going to be great. You and I've talked about it, and it sounds really excellent. All right, I'm going to let you go, but I appreciate this conversation, just kind of freewheeling, just asking you some stuff, and now I know a lot more, and people who listen and love you already love you twice as much now. Thanks a lot, Scott.

HORTON: Cool. Thank you, Tom.