



Episode 1,444: Scott Horton on 20 Years of Foreign Policy Horrors

Guest: Scott Horton

WOODS: It's a little belated, but better late than never. You've passed to the unbelievable threshold of 5,000 interviews over the course of your career as an interviewer. That is absolutely amazing. 5,000. As I've said repeatedly, there might be a handful of people in the libertarian world who make me feel like a lazy bum, and Scott Horton is one of them. That's an amazing accomplishment.

HORTON: Thanks.

WOODS: So before we get into any specifics about this – oh, come on, I mean, from one interviewer to another, that's – I'm never going to get to that level. That's never, ever going to happen. That's just probably not ever going to happen. But congratulations to you. So as you look back on it, do you get philosophical? Do you have any thoughts about the significance of this?

HORTON: Well, I don't know, yeah. I guess I'd like to think that at some point in the future, it's going to matter who the libertarians were at the beginning of the 21st century and whether we were doing a good job or not, whether we cared about the right things and did anything about it or what, as we talked about in the interview about Justin. The fact that Antiwar.com, that that URL belongs to the libertarians, is huge. It's everything.

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: So if I can have a walk-on part in the war, in that sense, then hell yeah. I feel like, you know what, the war party, their point of view is everywhere, all the time. And people need a place to go to find the truth. I don't really imagine changing the world so much as just being a place where, people want to find it, they can go, and here's a guy who actually is keeping track for you and knows who it is that's writing the best stuff and is talking about that stuff with them.

I mean, I fell in love with talk radio because of the discussions of books. I still remember this little old lady calling the Carl Wigglesworth show in like 1995, and going, "Now, Carl, are you reading *Clinton, Bush, and the CIA?* My God, these men are all cocaine dealers." And I'm just like, wow, the power of radio to bypass Rather, Jennings, and Brokaw. The Branch Davidians – that was a first talk radio show I ever heard, actually, when I was 16, driving my car. *Huh, I don't know what's on the AM around here, and I've lived in this town my whole life.* I flipped the dial; there's surviving Branch Davidians telling their side of the story. And I'm like, oh, my God, like, who even thought that there was a side of the story for surviving Branch Davidians

to tell? TV would never let you see that, ever. And so, wow, radio, good people, smart people, talking about what to read to get to the truth.

And so that's why my show is all about what Gareth Porter wrote this week, over and over and over and over again, is because I'm like the middleman. I'm here to tell you what's the best stuff to read, and hopefully, you'll find the time not just to listen to the show on your way home, but get home and read *Antiwar.com* and get up to date on all the stuff that I'm trying to bring to you. So yeah, it's the best thing I know how to do. You know, I don't know. I'm not sure what else I could do. Probably if I was a musician, I could have had a lot better impact or – I hate that word – a lot better effect on society. But I'm not, so I can't, so all I can do is just stick to the truth.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, and do what you're best at. How did you get your start?

HORTON: My first actual show my own was on Free Radio Austin in 1998. And I don't know if I told you this, Tom, but I actually found my first interview – or could have been the second, I'm not exactly positive. But my first two interviews were of David Thibodeau, the surviving Branch Davidian, on Free Radio Austin in '98 and '99. And so my first show was called *Say It Ain't So*, and it was mostly not an interview show; it was just me talking. But I had done a couple of interviews on there. And then the entire archive of my show was a shoebox full of tapes that got stolen out of my friend's storage shed, including me predicting 9/11 and all kinds of great stuff, that if I had that, man, that'd be awesome. Anyway, all that's long gone.

But then, somehow YouTube served up in the margin, "Free Radio Austin: Interview of Surviving Branch Davidian." And I would, *Wow, that's got to be me. What's this?* And there it is. It's not the whole thing. It's like 40 minutes of it. And what had happened was, I think Shauna from KAOS Radio, that was the next station after Free Radio Austin, she had somehow had a copy in her archives and had given it to this other guy from KAOS Radio called Mad Dog Duress, who was a cool guy and a friend of mine from KAOS. And he went ahead and made a YouTube out of it and put it up on YouTube. And then I had my friend Jeremy Deal do his magic can take all the static out. It still sounds terrible. You know, it's Memorex. But he took all the static out, so at least it's listenable. And so now if you go to my list of 5,000 interviews, at the very bottom, there it is, '99, David Thibodeau. From 1999, David Thibodeau.

But then the actual interview show, to really answer your question, the actual interviews show started right at the time of the fall of Baghdad in April of 2003. And in fact, it was April 12th, which was, it turns out, the day I finished *Fool's Errand*, and it was also the day that Will Grigg died in 2017, was that same anniversary of my first show. And it was Alan Bock, from *The Orange County Register* at *Antiwar.com*.

And essentially, Tom, it was all just a scam. I mean, the idea was if I interview enough of these guys, then at some point, I'll be one of them and then people will listen to me, which I guess worked. [laughing] it took a long time to finally work, because it turns out interviewer is not that sexy of a description, really. The idea is any boob can ask questions; the whole point is being the person being questioned. And it took really until the book came out, I think, before anybody took me seriously to really get my opinion on stuff. But the reason I know so much is, as I told you yesterday, all that work I did putting those links in Justin Raimondo's articles for about ten years there or so, and then the show that I've done, day in and day out this whole time, covering this stuff day in and day out. So that's how come I can

remember what exactly was going on in 2011, was because I covered it then, and in 2013, I covered that too.

WOODS: Well, I want to let people know that, by the end of this conversation, we're going to be talking about a really great and important book project Scott is working on this very minute, and we can all chip in and help out with it. But for now, let's stick to the 5,000. I remember asking you once, looking over the list of guests you've had on – it includes a Daniel Ellsberg and all kinds of illustrious figures – and I asked you if there was some kind of secret, like how do you get guests like that? This was before I was really in podcasting. I'm just curious. And you said, I just asked them. And that just surprises me. And I bet there are some youngsters out there who don't bother trying, because they figure there's no chance. But yet, you've had these people on. And after they talk to you, sometimes I wind up talking to them, and they respect you tremendously, because they know they were talking, I think, to a peer.

HORTON: Yeah, no, I get you. Well, thank you for that. I mean, essentially, on the first part, anybody who wrote an article is happy to talk about it. And that's how I do it, right? I only go by this subject matter by the article, and so my guy, if he ever emails you, it will be, "Scott wants to talk to you about this," and a link. And so it's always substance. On my 5,000th interview, I interviewed Gareth about himself, which is something almost unheard of. I've done very, very, very few interviews along those lines. And so essentially, whoever it is I'm bothering, they wrote something that week, and they'd like to talk about it. And then my questions are always essentially on topic, even if I do kind of talk over my guests and go on and on and on in my questions sometimes and stuff like that. But essentially, I'm trying to move the conversation forward, like, *Okay, here's what I already knew, but this is what I learned in your article, so talk to me about that.* Because I don't want them to rehash the whole everything. I'll do the rehashing, and then let's you and me now develop the idea further with your new thing that you wrote. And then essentially, I'm promoting their work, and then they're helping me out too by helping me fill time on my show. So it's a symbiotic, mutually beneficial type of a thing.

And then I would say to young people who want to do that, make sure you read the article very carefully, and you have a good discussion ready to have. You don't want to just bother people and waste their time. But if you can get a productive interview out of somebody, then they'll appreciate it, of course.

WOODS: How do you prep for interviews?

HORTON: I used to write out a lot of questions and stuff. Honestly, I just jot down a couple of things.

WOODS: But the thing is, you know enough that you can have a really engaging conversation with a lot of different people on a lot of different topics, and it won't just seem like you're asking questions, and they're giving answers, and you're asking a question. You can make it into a give-and-take conversation because you know so much. But that's not an overnight project. I mean, that's the result of years of work on your part.

HORTON: Well, and I think it's probably annoying to a lot of my listeners too, that I won't just shut up and ask a question. A lot of times, I can't figure out how to phrase it in the form of a question. All I can think of to do is go on and on about this is how I think it is, so what's your reaction to that? You know what I mean? Like I say, I don't want to waste everybody's time

with the guest explaining what we already know. I want to move it kind of forward. But I think there probably are ways for me to refine my questions a little bit better to be substantive in the way that I want but without taking up so much of my guests' time talking [laughing]. But I'm just stuck like this, man. I don't know.

WOODS: Let's try to think back to, I guess it was March of – it was early 2003 when the Iraq War started.

HORTON: Yeah.

WOODS: Now, that's probably the most momentous event, like world historic event, in terms of US foreign policy, since you've been doing the interviews. Well, okay, 9/11. [laughing] I temporarily forgot about 9/11. All right, leave 9/11 aside for a minute. 2003 that Iraq war, who were you talking to on *The Scott Horton Show*, and what was I learning on *The Scott Horton Show* that I wouldn't have gotten from other sources?

HORTON: Well, it's funny, I'll tell you, that first interview of Alan Bock, if you go back and listen to it and ignore how young and silly I sound or whatever and how bad I am at interviewing – but if you go through that, Alan and I combined, essentially, that conversation, we cover everything. We cover all the lies that they used to get us into the war. Alan perfectly predicts the rise of the Iraqi insurgency against the occupation and the cycle of violence to come. And all of it. It's everything. I'm really proud of that first interview, and Alan, of course, for people who are not familiar, he was a great libertarian for many, many years. A very productive writer, wrote the book on Ruby Ridge, and had a column at Antiwar.com for many years, and was just a great guy and a great writer.

And then, essentially, that was where I got everything, was Antiwar.com. Essentially, whoever Matt Barginier was picking – he was the editor then – whoever he was picking to run his Viewpoints, that's who I was talking to, essentially. He was sort of a shadow producer of my show all those years. And so it's the usual suspects: Jim Loeb, who like Justin Raimondo, is an absolute top-tier expert on the neoconservative movement; Bob Dreyfus, who doesn't really write anymore, he's a *Nation* magazine lefty, *Mother Jones* lefty, but man, he was so good on the neocons and on helping keep track of who's who and what's important that you need to know about the different factions in Iraq War II. So a lot of what I learned at that time about how the American war for not just the Shiite side, but the specific parties, Dawa and Skiri and Sadr, and how they all interplay together and all of those things during the war. He contributed a lot to that.

Of course, the now famous and always heroic Michael Hastings, who – it was I think a suicide when he died in, what, 2014? His brother was satisfied that he was having a real PTSD nervous breakdown, at the time. But it was a suspicious, single-car accident. I've got to admit that. In fact, I'll go further. In his book, he did write that one of Stanley McChrystal's guys, who was a British SAS officer, threatened with no irony whatsoever to murder him if the *Rolling Stones* story on McChrystal didn't come out right. And boy, did it not come out right from their point of view. And so that's real. But his brother is convinced it was – and look, he had been through two wars. He should have never gone to Afghanistan. I'm sorry to go on this tangent. I love this guy, and he did such great work on Iraq and Afghanistan. But he should have never gone to Afghanistan. He was already a wreck after Iraq. And in Afghanistan, he saw a suicide bombing and all this stuff.

WOODS: Yeah, I know that that was your view on that. I know people had some conspiracy theories there.

HORTON: Which was fair enough. I mean, it was fair to be suspicious that he was murdered, but I've got to go with what his brother was saying. And I saw him, me and Sheldon used to, whenever he was on TV, Sheldon and I would always email each other, "Ooh, Hastings is about to be on," you know? And we could tell he was kind of a wreck on TV. A couple of weeks before, Sheldon and I had had a conversation like, "Oh, man, I hope he's doing okay." I kind of wish that I'd reached out to him then. But his brother did a really long-form interview with their childhood friend, who was a journalist, so it they'd done a real thorough job, and his brother had come to LA to try to care for Michael. So he was certainly – and listen, I live in Central Texas, and guess what: this is what soldiers do. This is how soldiers kill themselves. They get on a Yamaha crotch rocket. They get in their truck, and they put their pedal to the metal on I-35, and they just go as fast as they can until they crash and die. It's part of it.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

HORTON: Anyway, I'm sorry.

WOODS: I was about to say, "On a happier note," but it's not.

HORTON: Yeah.

WOODS: The thing I was about to say is not happy at all, but maybe it's a little happy. Given how long you've been at this, you remember how in the lead-up to the Iraq war, there was some skepticism, certainly much more than there was in the lead-up to the Persian Gulf War of '91. There was more skepticism this time. But still, there was a lot of dumb argumentation from a lot of people who you feel like in their heart of hearts, they have to know better. Do they really believe this stuff? And then as time went on and the wheels started coming off of the war, it became fashionable to say, oh, yeah, that was a mistake and whatever. Do you think things have gotten better? Do you think there has been building up some kind of skepticism? And can you include the current situation with Iran as part of your answer?

HORTON: Yeah. Yes. I mean, I think there's just – even after Obama pulled out of Iraq, there were a lot of people, especially on the right, who were like, *Well, I don't care, it was still the right thing to do, and I think that they're better off now* and whatever. But then Obama started back in al-Qaeda in Syria, which blew up – the Islamic State is nothing but al-Qaeda in Iraq. That's all it is, al-Qaeda in Iraq from Iraq War II. And they split off from al-Qaeda leadership and created their own under Baghdadi, and they created the Islamic State.

And so, whoa, now anybody saying, *Yeah, we liberated Ramadi; we liberated Fallujah; we liberated Mosul*, yeah, no, you didn't. Whatever it was you did, if you call it liberation, putting those Sunni cities under Shia dominance, fine, but that's all over now with the rise of the Islamic State. So then you had real dissatisfaction at that point, never mind that there were no weapons of mass destruction. But now we have the Islamic State, where Western Iraqi Sunnistan used to be, and you can't spin that, man. That is an absolute catastrophe.

And I put this on Twitter at the time in 2014, but everyone was thinking the same thing: if only Uday and Qusay were here, then Baghdadi would not be. And same thing for Iranian

power. And the entire change of dynamic in the whole Middle East, it was USA that did that. See, out of all the evil things in the world, it was the unforced nature of the error, where just out of the clear blue sky, America attack Iraq. It isn't like Iraq had put us under an embargo, like Roosevelt had done to Japan or anything. They had done nothing to provoke us nothing. Nothing. Saddam turned over a 12,000-page dossier to the UN, going, *Man, we don't have anything, we swear to God.* And we invaded anyway. Ruined everything.

And I think people have learned from that. Al-Qaeda, whatever it was, the reality is it was 400 men in 2001. Bin Laden wasn't trying to create a mass movement; he was trying to gather a very elite group of Special Forces types to carry out some really dangerous missions behind enemy lines. It was a very small group of men. So how can we possibly be at war for 20 years against 400 men, half of whom didn't live to see 2002, and the other half of whom really have been killed since then, or arrested? And so you don't have to be expert at all, you don't have to be a foreign policy thinker to look at the calendar and say: how can this still be going on? I mean, 20 years? I was born in '76. So that's like if 9/11 had happened in '76 when I was born, then that's like, we're still at war in 1994, against a group of –

WOODS: Yeah.

HORTON: You know? It's absolutely crazy. And so yeah, I think anybody who wants to hawk it up against Iran, and people are just – even if they're not thinking it all the way through out loud in English in a complete sentence, they're sort of feeling like, well, geez, if we really had to bomb Iran, why didn't Bush and Cheney do it? Why now? Where's this coming from? Other than we've picked this fight, and everyone knows – there's no question about it, they didn't spin this. They tried to spin it the other day, but it amounted to nothing. Everyone knows America broke the deal, not Iran. America left the deal.

WOODS: Scott, let me move over to Afghanistan for a minute, because the same kinds of arguments that you hear, really in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, all these places, I heard repeated when Trump himself was asked – I don't know if he was talking to Tucker Carlson or who it was, but he was asked about what he wants to do in Afghanistan. And he gave an answer along the lines of, "I think we should get out, but my generals say to me, 'Sir, we would rather fight them over there than over here.'" So he apparently has been told that. And of course, we've heard that on every neocon talk show since the beginning of time. But that one, that's been a persistent one throughout the war on terror. We have to be – so all throughout most of the 5,000 Scott Horton interviews, that's been the backdrop. *We're over there to prevent them from coming over here.* How do you assess that argument?

HORTON: Well, so on Afghanistan, specifically, I have an article all about this at *The American Conservative* magazine called "War Without a Rationale," and it's essentially adapted from the book *Fool's Errand*. If anybody wants the longer version, it's in there, too. But essentially, the argument, as fast as I can, is that Jimmy Carter started this by backing Saddam's invasion of Iran and by backing the Mujahideen terrorists against the Soviets in Afghanistan, not just the local Afghans, but the Arabs who traveled there to fight. Okay, then Bush Sr. stabbed Saddam in the back, invaded the country – I mean, really, invited him to invade at least the northern half of Kuwait – and then stabbed him in the back and launched Iraq War I, and then stayed in the bases in Saudi in order to contain Iraq and Iran both, the dual containment policy under George Bush Sr. and through the entire Bill Clinton years. And in Iraq, that meant bombing them regularly on the no-fly zones and enforcing a total blockade that killed approximately 300,000 children.

And so that was what motivated – support for Israel, too – but that was what really motivated the al-Qaeda war against the United States was, again, Carter and Reagan backed them; Bush Sr. and Bill Clinton stabbed them in the back and twisted the knife; then they attacked us on 9/11, got away with one good one; and George Bush did exactly what was expected of him by the enemy, which was exploit that attack to the worst degree possible in order to invade Afghanistan. And then all of the rest of the wars that have taken place since then in the name of fighting terrorism – which in fact, is all taking on states, none of whom had anything to do with al-Qaeda. Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, none of these had any tie whatsoever to al-Qaeda or support for them whatsoever. Iran either, who are still being targeted.

And then the whole goal was to get us to invade Afghanistan, to provoke an overreaction so that we would replicate the Soviets' failure. The ultimate irony here is that when America backed the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, it was to provoke the Soviets into intervening in 1979, so that we could give them their own Vietnam, which meant a terrible, no-win, horrible quagmire that breaks the bank and disrupts the society back home. And it worked. And ask a Reaganite right now, they'll tell you it help destroy the Soviet Union. Well, ask the al-Qaeda guys. They'll tell you the same thing, that that war in the 1980s helped break the USSR, and that then they're doing the same thing to us again. Give them their own Afghanistan.

And so everyone who says that we have to stay in Afghanistan to fight the terrorists, they are actually the slaves of Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. They are doing the bidding of the enemy, destroying the American Empire the hard way, instead of just acknowledging the fact that the middle part of North America doesn't have the right, not one person on this continent has the right to be the dominant power anywhere else on this planet, period. And that is how to save America, is to stop following the script that bin Laden wrote.

And I want to reiterate. I said George Bush exploited it. People think that I say if he's stupid, that means he's innocent. But that's not true. Bin Laden was counting on him being a faux-macho, fake-tough-guy, corrupt, Texas, corporatist, Republican, conservative businessman who would exploit the crisis to the nth degree because of what a horrible, cynical leader he is. Same thing with Cheney. I quote in the book, bin Laden's son said that bin Laden was thrilled when Bush won the recount in Florida over Gore. Here is somebody that he can provoke into overreacting and doing something stupid. Here is a brainless fake-macho, pretend-tough-guy mark to be exploited.

And Bush was that stupid, and his whole group of people were that stupid. *Oh, we'll show them. We can do whatever we want.* And they're playing right in the enemy's hands. That doesn't make them innocent. Look at all their wide and varied motives that they had for exploiting the crisis for their own good. Hell, they might as well have done it themselves, like in the conspiracy theories, if you look at the degree to which they exploited it. But every single person who supports the war on terrorism, they are the ones who are serving Osama bin Laden.

And so then look at Donald Trump. Donald Trump says, let's just get out of here. And the military pretends that there are terrorists all over Afghanistan. Who? I don't know. They just pretend. *Oh, we killed some al-Qaeda guys today in a fight in Herat in western Afghanistan.* Oh, you did, huh? Why don't you show me a picture of a dead Egyptian then? Show me a dead Arab. If you killed an al-Qaeda guy, show me. You can't because you're lying. The whole thing

is just a lie. There's no al-Qaeda guys in Afghanistan. There haven't been al-Qaeda guys in Afghanistan since 2002. 2001, really, for the vast bulk of them.

The whole thing is a scam. ISIS-K? Those are local Pakistani Taliban who are refugees from Obama's drone war and support for the Pakistani army's war in Pakistan in 2010, who then sought safe haven on the Afghan side of the line. And then the CIA and the Afghan government were trying to use them against the Taliban. Oops. But now they pretend, oh, because it's the name ISIS, that means that they can reach out and touch you. But when has ISIS ever attacked inside the United States of America? All they can do is send a Facebook message. Our government wants to act like Afghanistan is a magic portal to Boston Logan Airport, when in fact it's exile. Afghanistan, the Afghan-Pakistan border, that's as far as you could ever get from anywhere without being headed back the other direction again. There's no magic access to the United States of America from there. And that's assuming the premise that there are international Arab terrorists there who mean to fight us on our land, which is just a hoax.

And now, so Trump has sent Khalilzad to negotiate an exit with the Taliban, and essentially the condition is, look, we'll leave if you guys promise that you will never let an al-Qaeda-like group stage attacks out of your country. Well, the Taliban have been promising to do that all along. And as I wrote in the book, we shouldn't even be negotiating with them, because it's too hard to get consensus on the American side. You're going to really concede anything to these medieval bastards? It's better to just go. And I'd be amazed if Donald Trump can go through with this. I mean, on one hand, Zalmay Khalilzad has been hard at work negotiating with the Taliban for like two years straight. That is proof alone that this is a serious effort. This is not some BS. And not only that, but Khalilzad doesn't work for Pompeo. He works directly for the president as the special representative there. He has a mandate directly from the President to see this through. There's no other way to interpret that.

And yet at the same time, a general says to Trump, "Boo." And he goes, *Oh, no, well, I don't know, because it's a safe haven, and I got told you the safe haven thing, and then what if they attack us, and they might attack us?* Which is the same thing that he said when he announced the escalation in August of 2017. He said, *Well, look what happened when Obama pulled out of Iraq. ISIS took over.*

Now earlier, when he was running for president, for example, in his speech at the National Interest Foundation that Khalilzad introduced, he began it by correctly saying Obama supported the al-Qaeda terrorists in Libya and in Syria, and that's what led to the rise of the Islamic State, and then because he had pulled the troops out of Iraq, there was no one there to keep them out of western Iraq. Well, later, by the time he announces the Afghan escalation, he forgets the whole first part of that syllogism and just says, *See? There weren't any troops in Iraq to keep ISIS out, so that's why we have to stay everywhere.*

And what's funny about that is this is a guy who right now is waging a war for al-Qaeda in Yemen. And that is al-Qaeda that bombed the USS *Cole* in the year 2000, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; the guys that tried to blow up the plane over Detroit on Christmas Day 2009; that did the *Charlie Hebdo* attack and at least one other attack in Europe in I think 2015. Those guys, real ass al-Qaeda. This is the group that, they ran the switchboard to coordinate between the terrorists in Afghanistan and the terrorists in the United States in the run-up to September 11th. Read Bamford's book all about that, James Bamford, *The Shadow Factory*.

And so if we have any enemies in the world – I'm not saying we should bomb them, but I'm just saying if there's anyone in the world we should not be siding with, this is them. Real al-Qaeda, not pretend al-Qaeda that you can't prove to me exists anywhere in Afghanistan. Real al-Qaeda. Well, Donald Trump is guilty of high treason, all day, every day, since January 20th, 2017, fighting a war *for* them, against their enemies, the Houthis. And yes, Obama started that war in 2015, but Trump has only continued and expanded it. So now we've got to sit and hear a bunch of, *Oh, boo hoo, there's a safe haven for al-Qaeda, mythical al-Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan?* When we're backing them in Yemen? When every time Russia and Syria try to attack and kill al-Qaeda in the Idlib province in northwest Syria, we condemn them and threaten them? *Don't you dare bomb al-Qaeda*, is still the position of the US government in the Trump years, too. But the safe haven is why we have to stay in Afghanistan, Tom.

WOODS: This is like a trip down memory lane of Scott Horton interviews on this particular show. I don't know how many there have been, Scott. It's got to have been dozens. And I ask you sometimes, every few episodes I might ask you the same thing, and I'll get brand-new information each time. It's the one of the great things about having Scott Horton on. So Scott, if I were to think about the people on my show – now, I know you've covered a lot of issues other than just war, but obviously you focus primarily on foreign policy. And I have a broader array of guests, so I'll bring you on for foreign policy and other people for economics and whatever.

HORTON: I started out that way, by the way. If people check out –

WOODS: Yeah, I remember the weekend interview show, yeah.

HORTON: Yeah, if people check the earlier interviews, I was interested in all things libertarian and interviewed Libertarian Party presidential candidates and in did interviews about free-market environmental projects and whatever kind of thing, lot more like your show, a lot broader. And then I just decided I only care about the wars.

WOODS: Yeah, right. Right, right, and you focus on what you're best at. So if I were to think about some of the real all-stars of *The Tom Woods Show* that I know are real crowd-pleasers, people like them, they're knowledgeable, they're full of energy, I don't have to drag information out of them, you'd be on that list. There's no question about it. Now, in your foreign-policy-oriented show. Who would you say are your real all-stars? You know you're going to get a great episode out of this person. The person's really sound, knowledgeable, all the qualities you look for.

HORTON: Yeah, well, I have to say my very best guys are Jason Ditz, news editor at Antiwar.com; Grant Smith, the director of the Institute for Research: Middle Eastern Policy, IRMEP.org, who is the world's greatest expert on the Israel lobby and their power inside the United States; Philip Giraldi, the former CIA and DIA officer and longtime writer for Antiwar.com and TAC and is now at Unz.com, who has just been great on a million things this whole time. I first interviewed him in 2005, I think, and I'm almost positive he'd be second place behind Gareth Porter for all-time most frequent guest.

And then, of course, there's the great Eric Margolis, who I believe is also a friend of yours, who I've interviewed. He wrote *War at the Top of the World* and *American Raj*, which are both just absolutely incredible. I mean, I don't know what to tell you. They are so good, those

books. It just will absolutely blow your mind, the things that this guy knows. Eric Margolis, just the best.

And then Alex — Patrick Cockburn. I interviewed Alex once, and I love Andrew too, the three Cockburn brothers. Andrew is a great book author and long-form investigative reporter. But Patrick Cockburn, he's my hero. Patrick Cockburn is the greatest Western war reporter. He writes for *The Independent*. He's written a ton of books, *Chaos & Caliphate* and *The Age of Jihad* and, oh, his biography of Muqtada al-Sadr, I mean, this guy, he is just — and he's got polio, you know? He got polio when he was a kid. And he has a bum leg and I guess a crutch or a cane. And he'd just trudge around all over war zones, all over this planet. He was in Afghanistan, during the very dawn of the terror war. He covered everything about Iraq War II. And boy, you want to talk about the rise of the Islamic State and what all was going on in Syria, how it led to the rise of ISIS and the Islamic State in western Iraq and all of that, I mean, he's the guy.

WOODS: All right, now we're up to the present. Now I want to bring us right up to the present, at this moment in 2019, to tell people about the project you're working on right now. And there is a way people can help you with it, and I want to help you with it because it's an important thing. As soon as people hear what you're doing, they're going to realize this is important and needs to happen. So explain to people what you're going to continue to be devoting time to over the next several months.

HORTON: Okay, well, I've got a great segue too, which is that one more favorite guest of mine is the greatest American hero ever, Ron Paul. And guess what. I'm putting out a book, *The Great Ron Paul*.

WOODS: I'm sorry, I forgot about this project too.

HORTON: Yeah, no problem. But this is a great segue to the other one, too, so this one should be done anytime now. I had a very generous donor help pay for all the transcripts to be done, and I've been through editing and editing. It should be just another few weeks. And I'm putting this out — I got Ron's blessing to do it, too, no problem. This is all my interviews of him from 2004 through this year, including just a couple of weeks ago, when I hit 5,000, I interviewed Ron on that day, too. And so that was our 38th interview. And then also my speech I gave about how much I love the guy last November too at that Mises event in Houston.

And remember how when Willie Nelson, the IRS came after him, and he put out the IRS tapes to try to pay the bastards off? That's sort of what I'm doing here. I've been working for a nonprofit for peanuts for 20 years, so of course the IRS is trying to nail me to the wall upside down. So this is my attempt — I figured it'd be a nice little irony that the guy who introduced the Liberty Amendment every year to abolish the income tax and repeal the Sixteenth Amendment entirely, that I could use a book of his interview transcripts — which is so good, I'm so proud of it. I mean, I'm so proud of him and how great he is and everything. I know everybody's going to love it. It's not the same interview over and over again. There's a lot of talk about blowback, of course, yes, but there's a lot of other stuff too. And so I'm really proud of that. And of course, he's, along with Bob Murphy and Bob Higgs and Mark Thornton, these are my favorite economists who I've interviewed many times on the show too, for those of you who are interested in my Austrian economics interviews. We talked about that boom-bust — Tom Woods, too. There's some of that in there. But so there's that.

And then that I hope will help to get the IRS off my back and help me make it through the summer, because I am getting hard at work, back hard at work on my book, which is tentatively titled, *Enough Already: Time to End the War on Terrorism*, although people told me they hate that. And I can see why they do, but I can't come up with anything better. I thought about calling it *Just Come Home*, like Ron Paul says, but, eh, I don't know.

WOODS: That's better. That definitely better. It's more descriptive.

HORTON: Yeah, it certainly is. But yeah, I don't know.

WOODS: I've been advised – because I had a terrible title for one of my books years ago, and I was advised that you can't make the subtitle bear the whole burden of telling people what the book is about.

HORTON: Yeah, that makes sense. It makes sense, for sure. So what happened was, one day, I was sitting at my desk, and Tom Woods called and said, "Hey, you want to write a book together?" And I was like, "Yeah, man, that sounds cool."

WOODS: Most important thing I ever flaked on was this.

HORTON: Yeah, no, it's okay, because what happened was, I said to you, "I'll send you an email and like ten minutes with the entire outline of the thing," which I did. Well, it probably took me like an hour.

WOODS: And that outline could have been a small book, I tell the listening audience.

HORTON: Yeah, it probably could have. It was certainly a book proposal in itself.

WOODS: Oh, was it ever. Yeah.

HORTON: But Tom had no luck with the book proposal, because they said, you guys aren't left-wing enough to publish at a left-wing publisher, and the right-wingers won't have you because you're antiwar here –

WOODS: And the mainstream – and the thing is, and this is so weird, because I've published with lots of mainstream outlets, and I've had some pretty good success, so I thought this would be a breeze. It was like pulling teeth. I mean, we got a couple of offers, but I didn't like either of them.

HORTON: Yeah, so I didn't even know if we got any offers at all.

WOODS: Oh, academic and awful, and it would have cost \$125. I'd rather not do it.

HORTON: Yeah. So I put it off too, for another, what, couple of years after that, I guess. And then finally, I just decided at the beginning of 2016 that, forget this, I'm going to quit my live show, and I'm just going to focus on this book and get this book knocked out. And then, I think I've told you this before, that that's what I was doing when I ended up writing *Fool's Errand*, because chapter one a *Fool's Errand* is "Getting into This Mess," Jimmy Carter through Bill Clinton. And then chapter two was Afghanistan, but chapter one was already like 50,000

words or something. I had no idea how I was going to cut that down to anything reasonable. And then I started writing on Afghanistan and immediately got bogged down in the Afghan quagmire. I swear, I had this brief little outline, and it just got bigger and bigger. And I have to have a section about torture and Guantanamo and stuff, so that then grew into a whole thing.

And then before very long at all, I realized that there's no way I'm going to be able to finish this book without it being 800 pages long or some ridiculous thing that no one is ever going to read. And you had told me, "300 pages, kid, forget it." And I said, "301?" And you said, "No." So I said, "Okay, I guess I'm just writing a book about Afghanistan then," and I'll just have to flesh this thing out and finish it out. But *Fool's Errand* is essentially chapter one and two.

So then what happened was Thaddeus Russell invited me to give like an online PowerPoint presentation type of a deal for Renegade University about Afghanistan. So I did that in the very beginning of 2018, January 2018. And then a month later, I did one about all the terror wars that was based on the outline that I had written up for your and my project in the first place. And so Thad had — his great guy, which I think is your old guy — was it Aaron? I'm sorry, I'm so bad at names.

WOODS: A.J.

HORTON: Yes, yes, yes, A.J. Yeah, so your guy, A.J., was also Thad Russell's guy, brilliant genius. This guy took all of my footnotes — I mean, not my footnotes, but my outline, and turned it into a perfect PowerPoint presentation. And then so I went through that, and it was like five and a half hours long. And then I got my brilliant and generous and wonderful friend Joanne from Australia to transcribe the entire thing for me. And then so that's the rough draft of the book. Now, I'm just going through and pasting and stuff that I had cut out of "Getting into This Mess" for *Fool's Errand*, where I covered the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and Iraq War I. All that had gotten cut to the floor for *Fool's Errand*. So I put all that stuff back in, and then essentially I have to edit the heck out of it and footnote the heck out of it. Because after *Fool's Errand*, no one is going to accept anything for me less than every footnote I can possibly think of for every assertion I can possibly make in there. So that's going to take me a little while to finish, through the summer, but essentially, the rough draft is written. I've got a ton of notes I've got to go in and incorporate and whatever. It ain't done.

So that's the project, and it will be what we tried to do in the first place there, a brief take on all of the terror wars: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Iraq War II, Iraq War III. There's a whole chapter about Iran, which is the center of all this intrigue, even though we haven't bombed them yet. And then at the end, a whole thing about the invasion of Africa. And then hell, I guess I'll need a little afterword about: I'm not saying target China instead or Russia either; I'm just saying knock off the terror war and be like Ron Paul. So that's the deal.

WOODS: Well, now, as everybody who knows Scott, has heard him on this show a lot, listens to Scott's show, you know how much he knows, you know how he's able to convey it. If you've read *Fool's Errand*, you know how brilliantly he's able to convey it. This is an important project. Scott is not a millionaire, so it's not easy to take all this time off to be working on this. So there is a little crowdfunding going on, and if you would like to support that, I want to give you an opportunity to do that. It's going to be set up at — well, at least it'll redirect from TomWoods.com/Horton. That's how you can chip in and help make this a reality. And

he's not asking for a million dollars, but just to see him through until the project is done. And we all know that it'll be worth it. We all know we need this thing and that it'll help all of us in our day-to-day interactions with people, be able to really land good arguments with people we encounter. So TomWoods.com/Horton.

HORTON: And that's really what it's for, Tom, right, and this is part of what I did wrong in *Fool's Errand*, was I wrote it like I was writing to the meanest critic, and I kind of lost sight of the fact that what I was really trying to do was write a book for my people and your people to be able to give to their people, right? *Hey, listen, you know how I'm always saying this and that? This is essentially the case I'm making here.* And then beyond that, broader than that, we have an election coming up. And *Fool's Errand* came out too late, but for this book, I really want – I mean, the only goal, really, the main goal of this thing is I want this book to be part of the conversation of the presidential campaign next year, that it's just easy for people to say, "You know, there's this new book out that makes the case that, really, we don't have to do any of this. It doesn't have to be this way at all." And people need something to stand on to say that, and that's what I'm going to give them.

WOODS: Well, it's great, and as I say, of course, I've seen the initial proposal and outline for what it was going to be. And it's fantastic. It's everything you would want. So check it out. Help out Scott and help out the world, basically, by helping to make this possible. TomWoods.com/Horton will take you to the page where you can do that. Scott, best of luck with that. Work your tail off, and we will promote – when you're done with that, or maybe even before. Maybe we'll do two of these. We've got to do a Scott Horton week one of these weeks, you know? I've done that a couple of times, theme weeks. We'll do a Scott Horton week. We should do that sometime soon, and then when your book comes out, we'll do another Scott Horton week. I don't think anybody's going to say, "Oh, it's terrible. I have to hear from Scott Horton." Whoever says that is a terrible person I don't want to have anything to do with.

HORTON: I'm a little bit more forgiving of that point of view, honestly, but thanks, Tom.

WOODS: [laughing] Okay, my pleasure. Thanks again, Scott.

HORTON: Appreciate it.