



## Episode 1,787: Actor Rob Schneider on Free Speech, Politics, and Comedy

**Guest: Rob Schneider**

**SCHNEIDER:** It seems like when things are just about as crazy as can be, they get a little crazier. And I know you just had an issue where something was taken off of something. I just, I keep track of you now. I follow you, Tom.

**WOODS:** I appreciate that. Yeah, it was the first time I've ever in years and years and years of making videos, the first time I've ever had one taken down. And believe me, I've had some BS videos up there. But this one, this one's full of facts and I've got citations for everything. But it was saying that the lockdowns are a bad idea, and apparently, it's scientifically proven that they're a good idea. So you can't criticize them. It's insane.

**SCHNEIDER:** Well, it has nothing to do with the truth anymore. It's a propaganda thing now. I mean, you made the mistake of having an opinion, and also having an opinion that was backed up scientifically, which is even worse. But that's what politics is right now, and that's where science is. When politics and science intersect, the problem is people will tend to want to listen to the science that's along the political lines that they're thinking. So it's absolute lunacy, but that's where we are right now.

**WOODS:** Yeah, it absolutely is, and there's a lot to be said about this. I want to start off, though, by doing something kind of selfish, which is to ask you a couple things that I'm not sure my audience is interested in, but doggone it, as a podcast host, I've done almost 2,000 episodes, I'm entitled to a couple of questions for the old man here. And they have to do with just curiosity about your career, because a lot of times when I was growing up, I was growing up in the '80s, and people would say, Well, the real — and also the '90s. In the '90s I watched a lot of SNL. And people would say, well, the real heyday was when they had John Belushi and Chevy Chase and whatever. And I kind of liked that stuff, but I never really got into it the way I did when you guys were on it. So I guess I just need to know a few things just to satisfy my curiosity. How did you get the SNL gig? How does that happen?

**SCHNEIDER:** Oh, well, the original show with the — I think the best cast ever was that original cast. I mean, our cast had some really great writers. At that time, the funniest people in the room were the performers, whereas with us, I think in our time the funniest guys were the writers, believe it or not. And I include myself and like Adam Sandler and Dana Carvey as like these writers, but I think the funniest guys were there.

And so what happened was Lorne Michaels brilliantly hired two groups. It was the Lemmings, which was Off Broadway, and then there was a group of the — I guess it was the National Lampoon Radio Hour. And so these groups that had been working together for a while, and he

brought these two disparate groups together to form this really brilliant, brilliant as far as timing, but also these young generation of people that was basically that the first show, I think, in television of people that grew up on television, and this show was for other people who grew up on television. It was like the parents were taken out of the room.

And it was also given a time, it was very strange, unique time that Lorne Michaels was able to kind of seize, which was Johnny Carson at the time, you have to understand how powerful *The Tonight Show* was. And this is the time when there were just three networks. This is no cable. This was pre-1975 now. No HBO. This is when 25% of the network time was, for your broadcast rights, had to be hard news. Okay, Tom, this is like pre-disease-of-the-week 2020 shows. This is like real stuff. And so what they had was they had to do real news and stuff. And so for the profits for the network was Johnny Carson. At one point, Johnny Carson was responsible in the late '60s, after he took over from Jack Paar, he was responsible for 80% of the network's profits. 80%.

**WOODS:** That's insane.

**SCHNEIDER:** Yeah, that'll never happen again in the history of television. So he was doing 90 minutes a night, five nights a week, and a half hour of that was commercials. So that was just pumping money into the network, into NBC. And they also were rerunning his shows on Saturday. And so Carson was like, this is way too much, you guys. You're burning me out, and that's too much. And so Grant Tinker was like, well, we have to get something else, and Lorne Michaels pitched the show. And one of the things he'd said, he'd written for think it was like *Sonny and Cher* or like one of those types of shows. And he was a comedy team — I forget the other gentleman's name — with Lorne Michaels. And the one lie that he said was he also wrote for *Monty Python*, which was like probably the biggest influence for people who were comedy nerds at that time. And you could see the huge influence of *Monty Python* on *Saturday Night Live* in those early days and well into like when I was on there. Those are the high watermarks of comedy in the 20th century.

So by the time, cut to 15 years after that initial time, which doesn't seem very long right now to me as a man in my 50s, but when you're like watching the show at 13, and then 15 years later, you're on it is pretty remarkable.

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**SCHNEIDER:** Less than 15 years. I think like 11 or 12 years later. But most of those guys were on — at that point, it was Second City Improv performers, and then you had standup comedians. And so Dennis Miller was a terrific standup, and still is, was directly responsible for having recommending Adam Sandler, myself, and David Spade too.

**WOODS:** That's unbelievable. That's unbelievable. Now, were you actually there the night Sinead O'Connor tore up the picture of the pope?

**SCHNEIDER:** Yeah, I was there. And it's a weird thing, Tom, because that that was one of the shows where like, I was one of the utility players. I mean, basically, I could have done any voice, pretty much, but like Phil Hartman was the best as far as for announcer-type voices, but for small characters and stuff, I'd hit it out of the box. So I was in nine sketches that week. And I don't know how many made it to air, but I remembered like there's little moves

that you do, Tom, like you either do like a little shutter move, which is something where you kind of overreact to something. It always gets a laugh. They're like little go-tos. I guess like golfers have their specific eight iron to chip it out of the deep rough or something. Comedians and actors have those little twerks to their craft as well.

And so I was literally changing, and then I was going to another sketch, and I did my little like body shift where I do this little double thing or whatever you call it, and it didn't get a laugh. And I said, well, that was kind of weird. And then I went to the next sketch, and it was kind of like a *oooooh* feeling in there. And I don't know what it was. And later, I only found out later at the party that she had ripped up a picture of the Pope, which was it to me like a photograph of something or a picture. But I guess it was at a time when it was really, I would say as far as political activism with celebrities, was pretty rare. And I think it just got so much attention for it for that reason. But yeah, I was there. I didn't witness it, but I was changing, getting into some kind of wig or makeup or costume I was doing, but I was there that night, yeah.

**WOODS:** Oh, that's funny. I guess I would have thought that backstage people would have been whispering about it, but you were too busy getting ready and didn't know it had happened.

**SCHNEIDER:** Yeah, I mean, I was just trying to get into my next thing and a wig change and whatever, and so are the other costume people and so are the other makeup people. Sometimes you can watch a little of the show or something, but like, for us in the thick of just trying to get the show, the thing I remember a lot was like, it was just let's just get people laughing till the news, and then people would fall asleep. So there's some sketches that were kind of weak, hopefully they put them on after. But then again, a lot of the really cool sketches were done in the last half hour of the show.

That's when we did like my character, the weed guy, which is like now with legal marijuana all over, even in red states like Arizona now, where I live — unbelievably, marijuana is legal. But like when I was a kid, I walked into this African antiquities store in Upstate, in Rochester. This was when I was on the show. And everything in there looked like something that I remember when I was a kid, my brother, my older brother, Stan, would hide his weed in so my parents wouldn't find it. And so I took it up to the front and I go, "Where does the weed go in here?" And woman looked at me like I was some kind of weirdo. But then that was it. Just a simple idea that you can stretch into a two-, three-minute sketch that I ended up doing with Lou Morton wrote with me. He's like, *This is a Senegalese* — I said, "Where does the" — you know, some guy brings up a like little drum or something or a little thing. "What is this for?" *Well, that's a Senegalese lute. It's carved from deer wood. It's used for fertility rituals. They make one every seven years.* "What do you do with it?" You put your weed in there.

**WOODS:** [laughing]

**SCHNEIDER:** So it was just fun to have like rhythms, and a lot of this show, it's a rhythm on a rhythm on a rhythm, and a funny idea and performed funny. So that was the perfect place for a young guy like me at that time.

**WOODS:** Well, you were mentioning what I kind of assumed had to be the case, that maybe you would rehearse more sketches than, when push comes to shove, actually wind up on the air. And that makes me wonder if it's a traditional show that's recorded, it's up to the editors

to make the show fit in the slot and have enough room for commercials and stuff. But with a live show, presumably you guys also have to play — is there like a clock running? How are you doing that?

**SCHNEIDER:** Well, you know what? That's a very good question and you're one of the one of the few people that's talked about that. But what it really is, what Lorne Michaels was able to do was take "Weekend Update" and use that as an accordion to either contract or expand according to that week's show's needs. So if he cut some stuff that didn't really work, he would extend that, maybe put another person to do a "Weekend Update" piece. Or if the sketches were going good, maybe he'd contract it and do less time.

**WOODS:** Ah.

**SCHNEIDER:** So that was the modular part of that show, for sure.

**WOODS:** All right, that's very clever. Now, also the live aspect of it. I mean, you were a guy in your 20s —

**SCHNEIDER:** You have to be in your 20s for sure, because it takes it out of you. And if you want to do it right, you've got to be there around the clock. And I just remember, like looking at my eyeballs one night. And my mom's Filipino, so I have some Asian in me to begin with. But I noticed the difference in, literally my eyes are almost shut by the time the live show was, because you've been up for 100 hours by that time that week. So really to be on it and to like to focus and everything, you're just getting tired and more tired. That's why you need guys in their 20s who just — it's the same thing like baseball. There are a lot of guys who can hit the ball and whatever, but can you get up the next morning? Can you pack your bags? Can you get on the bus? Can you get on the plane? And then can you do it again? It's that kind of thing. So that's why it's important to get young people to do that kind of stuff. It's fun, but it really does — I guess the guy who wrote the Jack Nicholson movie, it had been on Broadway, *Cuckoo's Nest*. What's his name? Was it Ken Casey who wrote that?

**WOODS:** Yeah, might be. Yeah.

**SCHNEIDER:** Yeah, he's like, you've got to do it — and he actually worked at a mental institution. He said the writing of it, he couldn't have written that in his 50s. It had to be in his 20s. Because just the hours and the night after night. And so I'm glad I did it then.

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**SCHNEIDER:** It was a thrill. It was a real thrill. Because sometimes something would go really good, and then the next thing you know, you're performing it — I'm sorry. I mean you're performing on *Saturday Night Live*. You think of an idea Tuesday, Saturday night you're performing it, and then you could be at a grocery store on Sunday, and you hear people repeating your bit.

**WOODS:** Yeah, that's amazing.

**SCHNEIDER:** Yeah, and they don't know you're there. That was the most bizarre thing.

**WOODS:** Oh, that's even better.

**SCHNEIDER:** Yes, bizarre.

**WOODS:** But at the same time, I'm sure it was exhilarating and amazing, but at least the first few times, there's no getting out of your head that you're going live in front of millions of people. There's no rewind button on this, right?

**SCHNEIDER:** No, there isn't, but the idea of it, like why they had like standups and other performers, is to not crack under that pressure. Because if you've done it time after time after time, if you've done standup, like thousands of times you've performed by that point, even a guy in my early 20s, like I was, I had done standup thousands of shows. So at that point, you know the good, the bad. You know not to let it rock you too much, and you know how you can kind of get back on point. And if you're getting laughs, when to cut it off, when to ride it, when to push into the next one. So there's a certain mastery that you have to have; otherwise you can't be there, otherwise you would never get in that position. But yeah, sometimes you'd see some people — you try to take that energy, and I was very lucky because when I was really nervous, I found myself laughing or the smile going up on the side of my face. And Adam Sandler was very similar to that way too. And I remember we were both doing a bit with the Italian waiters, which was based on an experience —

**WOODS:** I remember that one. Oh, geez.

**SCHNEIDER:** You know, Kirstie Alley. No, yeah. It was just basically, we finally started to make a little bit of money on *Saturday Night Live*, and then we were able to have girlfriends and then take them out to dinner in Little Italy. And the Italian waiters are going, "Bellissima," and they're kissing our girls and hugging them and everything. It's like, oh, maybe it's just the custom. And then Adam Sandler and Rob Smigel went off and wrote the sketch, and they brought it to me at like two o'clock in the morning. And they were laughing so hard. They literally just handed it to me. They were drooling all over themselves laughing. And then I was reading it, and I literally was falling on the floor laughing.

**WOODS:** Let's just say for people who may not remember the sketch, let's just say it's a very, very exaggerated version of what you saw in Little Italy.

**SCHNEIDER:** Yes, very much. So like Dana Carvey's got Victoria Jackson on the table, then we're licking Kirstie Alley. So it was a — yeah, you have to just kind of take part of life and exaggerating to the point of absurdity. But I remember like before the show, he said, "Should I shave off all my private" — I said, "Yes, yeah, absolutely," just because I know how uncomfortable that would be and how hairy he is. We're sharing a dressing room. And the next thing, he's out there, basically and like his rear end is showing, and I'm completely naked from the back. And the audience is screaming, laughing. And we're four feet away. We could barely hear each other talk. But we're looking at each other like, wow, this went really good.

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**SCHNEIDER:** And so that kind of stuff is what I remember the most.

**WOODS:** Yeah, sure, sure. But I can't help asking, on live television — I mean, obviously, this or that little thing might go wrong. Did anything ever really go seriously wrong?

**SCHNEIDER:** Well, I was on one time, and I think Lorne Michaels would say this one went wrong. The makeup person turned down the speaker in the makeup room, which he said never happens, but apparently it did happen because it happened to me. And so this is when Woody Allen and Soon Yi were a couple, which was causing quite a stir in the tabloids and especially in New York, which is where he lived. And so we did a cold open with Dana Carvey was playing Woody Allen, I was playing — the only Asian cast member, I was playing a Soon Yi by default. And anyway, so I was in the back there, doing my hair, trying to make it look nice. I've got high heels on. I look up on the screen, and I see Dana Carvey out there by himself, and he's going, "Where's Soon Yi?" I see him mouthing. And so I ran in high heels back out there. And it was fine. I got out there. And Dana and I both memorized and knew what we're doing. We're catching up. But the cue card people were trying to find it.

And then of course, there's certain cast members like Chris Farley who never memorized his stuff. And he walked out, and he was always funny, but he never memorized sketches. Or if he did, I was never part of it. He looked and saw the credit card mess behind us and slapped Woody Allen, played by Dana Carvey, in the back, like, "You're real scumbag," which was not the line, which is supposed to be like, "You're a real sleazeball," or, "You're kind of a sleazeball."

**WOODS:** Okay.

**SCHNEIDER:** So it just made an edge that was unnecessary.

**WOODS:** Oh, gosh, okay.

**SCHNEIDER:** And that happened, and Lorne yelled at me in front of everybody, but that was his right. I mean, there's no excuse for that. But it happens. And the thing about it is you never panic, and you've just got to go out there. And the guys who handle it — the thing is, your guys can handle it, but you've got to handle it and have fun, too. And that's the hardest part. I remember being in my early 30s in show business and talking to Adam Sandler, we're both doing movies at the time back in just right after SNL. And I went like, are we enjoying this yet? Because it was just so much pressure. We were just trying to get through it, but like to really get yourself to enjoy it was, you know, what I spent the last a couple of decades trying to make myself do. Because you could get into the pressure and it could crack you, and it could be less fun and you find yourself not having fun.

And then actually, the reason why you make it I think is because of the energy, that excitement about loving what you do so much that it just draws — I think it's like a universal attraction. Not to be metaphysical here, but I really think there is something to it. If you're so excited about something so much, and you're laughing, some people want to be part of that. And I think that just draws people to you. And the next thing you know, that can happen. But that can go away too, and I think that's part of it, is being an artist, finding it again and trying to stay in that more than not stay in it.

**WOODS:** You were telling me that you've been doing some shows in minor league baseball stadiums. Is that for the sake of social distancing or whatever?

**SCHNEIDER:** I just want to do whatever is allowed. And it's interesting because I really feel like now — I'm sure that you can confirm this too, Tom, because I'm following you now, is that it's a very interesting time to talk to people, because I really feel like standup comedy — and I think also a public speaker like yourself, you really get the sense that people want to connect with you, and they also want you to make sense of the world for them. And it has to do with a combination of factors. I think they're so busy. There's so much distraction. They can get caught in their own internet echo chamber, and they just don't know what to make a thing.

So I do think that like it's important for speakers like yourself and for a comedian like me — though I have to be careful that I'm not just there to like spout whatever I'm feeling about particular issues. I've got to be there to entertain. But I think at the same time, you can get people to question things. Like when you say things to people like, you know, there's been a lot of plagues in the history of man, and I don't know of any where somebody had to be tested to find out if he had one, you know [laughing]?

**WOODS:** [laughing] Right.

**SCHNEIDER:** And I just think that you can get to people and subvert them to your point of view through humor and through television, through film. You can. I mean, that's one thing Hitler really realized, was like the media and how powerful it is to completely encapsulate them and to surround them with your ideas and the way you think is a real warning for humanity, that as we are dealing with right now, Tom, as you well know, you're seeing the consolidation of media. You're seeing the consolidation of the internet. You're seeing smaller and smaller number of avenues to express opinions, and that is being squeezed, and that is going to continue to get squeezed. And that's very dangerous, and very interesting to see how the public is going to react to that.

Like when they talk about hate speech, and they talk about it, we're seeing now and witnessing now a real contraction and a real threat to free speech. And for those who say yes, but these are private companies, and they're allowed to do what they want. It was for Congress to not enact laws that would limit free speech — I get that. However, if these are public forums, and if they are acting like public forums, and if these public forums like Facebook, like YouTube, if they are getting the protections, congressional protections — like for instance, they keep having these hearings in Congress, but no one's doing anything. I really feel like we have to — I mean, Chomsky, Noam Chomsky, who I don't think anybody would argue is — he's not conservative. I don't think any person would say Noam Chomsky — he says free speech, hey, Joseph Stalin was for free speech, as long as you agreed with him.

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**SCHNEIDER:** So it's the opposite. We have to protect the speech of people who are repugnant who say things, and it's very much like the Nazis in Skokie, Illinois. These are people that the ACLU — well, they used to. I don't think they do it anymore. But in the '70s, like '78 or '77, when the neo-Nazis wanted to have a parade in Illinois, the ACLU went to go fight for their right to have that march. And they did the right thing, because if we silence these people, then they can silence anybody. And I think right now, I think even repugnant speech, all speech needs to be protected.

And the idea that somehow we need to be protected by them or that there's some subclass of people who are so delicate that we need to protect these people from the words that they

can hear, I think that that is very elitist, and I also think that is very condescending to these groups, very condescending to these people who can defend themselves. And I'm not talking about physically defending themselves.

There are already laws on the books, and I'm so sick of hearing like the great moron of the North, the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, to say that it's not legal to yell fire in a crowded theater, well, that is the most tired, boring, rundown argument and such illogical — there are already laws on the books for incitement of violence and for endangerment.

**WOODS:** Well, not to mention, it's the theater owner's rules. Presumably a theater owner would have a rule saying, if you come in my establishment, you know that you can't threaten everybody with a riot by shouting out "fire." Everybody gets that that's the rule on somebody else's private property. It's not analogous.

**SCHNEIDER:** Right, it is not analogous. However, that is being stretched out into finding ways to — unfortunately, like even I see comedians doing it, which is to me nonsensical. Sacha Baron Cohen, Borat, which was brilliant, he's for trying to limit hate speech on Facebook. And look, these are horrible people. Let's make no mistake about that. These are not good people. But the idea of who gets to decide, and what is hate speech, and who is really being protected, and who gets the final decision on that, and how far is that going to go, and what can you define as hate speech — I mean, once you go down that path of contracting free speech, you're in trouble.

And I tried to reach out to him, and I didn't hear back, but I did say like, well, when you in Borat, that very funny thing about he had like there was a festival in Kazakhstan or wherever that character Borat is from, about like, "Throw the Jew down the well, throw the Jew down the well," no one in that theater was thinking that was anything but just absurd racism in these backwards people. No one was going to take that and go throw a Jew down a well. So I think using his own logic against him, I just don't think that trying to limit what people can say, even if it's horrible, we have to be really careful to draw a line there and say I think people can decide for themselves that "throw a Jew down the well" didn't mean throw a Jew down the well, that that was making fun of racism.

And that's what's scary now, is that you have like school districts in California that are deciding to take off *To Kill a Mockingbird* out of their school because there may be some insensitive words. And yeah, there could be insensitive words; however, can we look at the intent of what the writer is saying? Can we see that there is a bigger lesson here that has to do with morality and societal morality, individual morality, and immorality? Because we can also learn how to live our lives by examples of how you shouldn't live your life.

So Tom, I think we are going down a slippery slope, no doubt. I mean, I talked about this in 2015. I said fascism and totalitarianism is coming to America. And this time it's coming from the left. And I saw that, and it's contractions of personal liberties. And we're seeing that now. And I don't know where it's going to lead, but I'm going to tell you what, it's going to get worse.

**WOODS:** I want to ask you as a comedian how you balance something, because I saw Lewis Black last year do standup. And a good chunk of it was: Trump is an idiot. And to me, that's just lazy.



**SCHNEIDER:** It is, because there's —

**WOODS:** It's not funny.

**SCHNEIDER:** Well, it's also pandering to your own audience. It's like, I got into a beef with a bunch of people and it got all over the media, because I said the jokes on late night TV are completely interchangeable. In other words, Steve Colbert and Jimmy Fallon and the other guys, their jokes, you can just take them out from one guy's monologue and give it to the other guy. There's no individuality in there anymore, because it's just they are in their own little — overused term — echo chamber of just kind of cheerleading. And it's no longer trying to challenge the audience, which I think good comedy should try to challenge them. It's just pandering, and it's also easy, and I guess it's like some kind of indoctrination, political indoctrination by comedic imposition.

**WOODS:** Well, I watched your Netflix special not too long ago, *Asian Mama, Mexican Kids*, which I enjoyed. First of all, when did you record that? It must have been before all the craziness.

**SCHNEIDER:** Just right before, yeah. It's funny, but like there's some stuff that I took out, and it was just some stuff about racism and reverse racism and how it's in people's minds that they're so worried about racism that they end up acting differently from it. And I just like, at that time, because literally we filmed it on the February 29th, and then basically the world shut down about a week later. And so there were some bits that I did take out.

I mean, I do regret that, because I talked about like how Harvard University had limited the number of Asians. I said the last people you can be prejudiced against are Asians. And I said, and Asians take it, because they just don't want to rock the boat. I mean, then again, there was a lawsuit saying that you can't limit the number of Asian people at your university. And then Harvard University said, yeah, we can, and then went to court, and the court agreed with Harvard. I mean, you try to limit the number of gay people at your university, women, lesbians, trans people, I said that they'll burn your university down. But if you do it with Asian people, they'll go, *Eh, they'll be fine. They're Asian*. And they will be fine. That's the thing about it. So I do think that like the idea of this democracy and this republic that we're in, is that it's going to be messy. And I don't think that like the Democratic idea of cleaning it all up is going to do anything but make it worse, if that makes sense.

**WOODS:** Yeah, no, I hear you. Well, a couple of weeks ago I was in Vegas. I stayed at the MGM Grand. Actually at the MGM Grand, they've opened a couple of shows actually, so I saw David Copperfield, who's always great, a couple shows. Then they had a comedy club, and I love going to comedy clubs, but I actually decided not to just because — it's not like I approve of everything Trump does, but I don't want to sit through a "Trump's an idiot" rant, and I can't guarantee that it's not going to be that.

**SCHNEIDER:** Yeah, no, it is. To me, it's not a challenge at all. To me, what I try to do is challenge the audience by going the other way. But I went with like the idea of — and this is a few years back, when the idea of, for people who were still complaining about Trump two, three years in was analogous to like complaining about your pilot once you're already in the plane at 30,000 feet. It's too late at that point to go, Hey, this guy's a racist. This guy's an asshole. You know what? And the way that I described it is: let's not distract our pilot. Obviously, this pilot of Trump is very easily distracted. He's on Twitter in the cockpit, for

sure. Let's just land the plane, because guess what: we're on the plane too, okay? Let's all land this together.

**WOODS:** [laughing] Yeah.

**SCHNEIDER:** And that kind of gets through, because the idea is I think you need to be — I just quoted the artist Banksy the other day, because I had a couple of people that complained from my show the other night. And the British street artist Banksy says, the idea of art is to comfort the discomfited and to discomfort the comfortable. And I think that's what we really need to do. And I think you have to challenge people. The good ones, the best ones do that. And the idea of George Carlin shitting on the government and stuff, it's fun and it's great, and it's also he's saying something, but you have to be there to entertain. And also not just to just tell people what they want to hear. That's true. I mean, I think I want to challenge the audience.

And now is a very good time. I mean, I have to remember A) that I'm there to entertain, but I also have to entertain myself as well — that's the tough part — and nudge them along. Because there are people that are really scared. My mother's 92. She got this virus and recovered from it. And so I had it. And it ain't a walk in the park, but for most people, it goes right through their body. And it's a 99.8% recovery rate, and for people under 65, it's even higher. So these are facts from the CDC. This is not something controversial. But you have to respect the fact that people are afraid and that people are inundated.

And that's where the power of propaganda comes in. And if you look at historically, if you look at it, propaganda was actually — well, the congressional record, it was approved to have congressional approval and a law for propaganda was under the Woodrow Wilson administration, where they were like, hey — and he was against the union activists, and also any antiwar people. And they literally threw them in jail and their constitutional rights were just thrown out. So it can happen, and it happened then, and it can happen again.

So the idea of like, a war very, very far away, you're talking about like when 80% of Americans were farmers back then, the ones who didn't live in the city, you're talking World War I, they didn't want to be — you know, Europe was way over there. I mean, you thought Europe was way over there. New York was way over there. So the idea of getting involved in some war that was way over there in Europe just seemed like it was none of our business, and that was part of the — So the propaganda was done was like, hey, we've got to get these Huns. They're tearing apart Belgian babies. And it's like, you'll get a farmer in America to put down as hoe at that point. *Excuse me. What? Who's doing what?* Yeah, these Belgian babies, they're getting ripped apart by these Huns. *Who are these Hun people?* Well, these German people over there. And the next thing you know, you get people — and it turned the tide. And then people said, yeah, let's go over there. But it's all a lie. So it's this manipulation and this propaganda, it does work.

So it's interesting when you can also decide what you decide not to say, or how you decide — and so you have like a kind of inverse propaganda where people are excluding the unfortunate facts or uncomfortable truths. And that's what we're seeing in our media now. And again, it's consolidated media, and there are fewer outlets. And if you step out of line, like you did, Tom, they're going to say, even though what you had was scientifically confirmed by some scientists, that's not the right science anymore, because like I said, science is now politicized.

**WOODS:** Now, having said all these things, you might — well, here's a thing I want to ask you. I had Vince Vaughn on the program, and I asked him, you have — he was a Ron Paul supporter. He's been fairly outspoken about his political views. Does this ever get you into any trouble with other celebrities? And he absolutely, resolutely insisted that nope, not at all, no problems at all. Now, I don't know. Maybe I touched a nerve or like maybe he didn't want to talk about it. I don't know. Maybe that's true. I don't know.

**SCHNEIDER:** Well, I think he's a big enough star, and I don't think he's an — the problem with political identification is like, the idea that somehow America is only represented by two distinct groups only is silly. I mean, I'm a 1970s liberal, which apparently makes me a huge conservative now, because I want equality, equal rights. And so this whole thing, equity is new to me, like, well, we don't just want equal rights, we want more than equal rights. Because we're not just white, we're gay and we're Thai and we're also trans. And so there's this idea that you get should get more because you have these more inequities. And so that is new to me. So I guess if I'm not up to that, I think everybody should be treated equal and not be judged on the color of their skin, and yet there are some universities now in America, that it is a shame, but that exists, that it says these seats are for people of color. Like, not for white people. I said, shit, are we going back to 1962 here? So again, in trying to make the world better, be careful that you don't make it worse.

But to answer your question, yeah, I'm sure that I've gotten some shit for my political views, but my political views is to be the contrarian. And so I don't agree with everything that Republicans do. I mean, I'm definitely more of an environmentalist than most of the Republican Party is. I definitely think that there's — you know, I align myself with more libertarian views for sure. I mean, the idea of individual liberty, I think that's what this whole country is founded on. And so I think that there was a departure by the Democrats, where they really were looking out for the poor.

Like, I really do believe. I mean, I know Robert Kennedy, Jr., and he's a good man. And his father was really good man, Robert Kennedy. And I do really believe that he had an awakening, because this is a guy who also was like working with Joe McCarthy, was very much a zealot of against communism with McCarthy. But I think he really did have an awakening. When he saw what some Americans lived in in Mississippi and the poverty and the depth of the poverty, the generational poverty, that that shook him. And I think that there's still great disparity now in America.

And so I go back to like what I talked about with Noam Chomsky, I really do agree with him that Americans really are allowed to have fierce conversations and fierce debate and argument, up until very recently, but only on a very narrow number of things. If you really want to find out like about what are the real issues and how we can improve the human condition, I'm in. I'm all in. But let's not get sidetracked in the superfluous stuff that's happening on the university campus. And I say this, Tom, and I mean this to everybody out there listening: we are all on campus now. It's official. Campus is no longer on campus anymore. It's out there. We're all part of that now. So it's in politics, this whole woke thing, and if it gets in the courts, that's when it's going to be real trouble.

**WOODS:** Yeah, I just remember being on campus in the early '90s and thinking, well, if any of these crazies ever got in power, then we'd be in real trouble, but thank goodness, they're just on the campuses. And now I think we're getting a taste of what could be in store for us. Well,

listen, you've been super generous with your time. I don't want to keep you, but before I let you go, can you just say a quick word about your Netflix special?

**SCHNEIDER:** Well, I mean, I really wanted to do something that was about my mixed heritage and how — like the problem, the blessing of mixed heritage is that you're exposed to — like, my dad was Jewish, my mom's Filipino. And the problem is sometimes you don't feel like you belong to either, or so you belong with no one, to no group. But that as an artist — and sometimes you think about that, as a young person, that it makes you very sensitive, and it takes you maybe 20, 30 years for you to realize that's your strength as an artist.

And then I just wanted to do something that was some of the jokes that I had done the last few years, and just put it out there for people to see. And then I wanted to work on something else, and I was lucky to get it out there, and I was very happy that Netflix was decided that they liked the material and put it on their platform. And I'm going to work on the next part.

I don't know exactly what's going to happen, because I really feel like, as we are going down this road, there's going to be more and more people at this tribalism that's happening in America. Whereas it's like they're killing people in their own tribe who don't vomit their own virtue signaling, you know? So it's their virtue spewing, as I like to refer it. And if you dare step out of line with that, you're out forever. And that's fine for me, because I never felt like I fit in in any group anyway. And I think as an outsider, like the great comedian Will Rogers was in America, and he critiqued the Republicans and Democrats. You never know really where he stood, if you ever read any of his writings. And he just was able to mock, and it was deserving of both sides. I mean, the idea that everything's going to be fine because the Democrats are in power, I would say, oh, just wait.

I will say, though, that it does feel like there's a big sigh of relief, and you're not going to have the same kind of attack dogs in the liberal media that you had when Trump was in power. And I'm all for both. I mean, I think you have to dig in and do your dirty work. And it's going to be interesting to see what's going to happen, because the free pass that Obama got, while there's never been a greater attack on journalists and whistleblowers than under the Obama administration, that doesn't seem to come up. And just ask people in Libya what happened to that country. So I will continue to critique anybody in power, and I think that needs to happen.

And hopefully, the media, whether it ends up being like a license plate for Jeff Bezos — *The Washington Post*, it's like a vanity plate for him. But at the end of the day, I'm hoping that they can regroup and not just be journalists by name, but to really dig in and do stuff, because it is irritating. I really like Glenn Greenwald. He's extremely liberal. He's all for socialism.

**WOODS:** Yeah, but he's honest.

**SCHNEIDER:** He's honest. And you can really talk to him, and he will critique both sides. And both sides do need the critiquing and to see the phoniness of it. And especially this new group that is going to come into power, because unfortunately, my prediction is that they will be bombing places in eight months. I hate to say that, but if you take a look at American foreign policy, whether it's Republican or Democrat, it doesn't change. They just want to keep going around, smashing up the world, and they're going to try to get other people to pay for it,

because there's a lot less money here now. So we just have to keep an eye open and to use the same scope for people in power and to keep that checked. Unfortunately now, with like what you're seeing, is that there are going to be further and further impinging on personal liberties and freedoms and the freedom to speak your mind and the freedom to critique people in power. And that is very worrisome. That worries me more than anything.

**WOODS:** Well, you and me both. Well, listen, I'm going to let you go, but I can't tell you how much I've enjoyed talking to you and that we were able to make this happen. I'm going to link to your special, also to [RobSchneider.com](http://RobSchneider.com), on the show notes page. It's [TomWoods.com/1787](http://TomWoods.com/1787). That means we have done 1,787 of these blankety-blank episodes over the years.

**SCHNEIDER:** Fantastic.

**WOODS:** And thanks so much again for doing it. I can't tell you how much I appreciate it.

**SCHNEIDER:** All the best to you, Tom. Continued success. I wish you the best.