

Scott: I kind of live my life with a lot of American filters. And so I was kinda thinking about it, you know, cause it at one level what you're talking about, it's absolutely right that we give people this place here where they can come in and they can talk about American politics or society or the economy or

Liam: Foreign policy, what America's doing in the world. What am I going to doing to the world?

Scott: Yeah. And [inaudible] where you strip away those filters where we're actually talking about the reality of what happens Zeller was in the rubber meets the road. What are you talking about with immigration or healthcare or the economy, but that, that pushed me to say, well, what, what do I mean by those filters? And I guess, you know, everything was with me is not being an academic. It's just that you, you see your country from where you sit or where you stand. And the big filter for me was that growing up in the States and I was born in 62 and he mapped, I came in here in the 80s. You don't completely leave your country behind, is that we're number one now. We know where we are. We are the best. We don't have many chance at our sporting events. We're not like these, uh, these learning folks on the football terraces here in the UK or across Europe.

Scott: Uh, but by golly, we, we've got that one chant, which is, we're number one. We're number one. We're number one or when we go to the Olympics, USA. And that isn't just the Chan, when you, when I grew up, I taught how lucky, how privileged I was to be born and American. Uh, I've certainly, I didn't want to be born a Soviet cause I was being a communist where they took children away from parents and that I didn't want to be Chinese cause they were all starving to death. I didn't even want to be Canadian because Canadians kind of wanted to be Americans, but they weren't really Americans. And I'm not saying it to be offensive to anyone. That is honestly how you kind of grew up in the American culture. Uh, and that type of what analysts like to call it American exceptionalism. Um, in a lived way,

Liam: it is very much America

Scott: In a very real way. It's America as the exceptional as the place, which on the one hand is going to be different from all you folks here in the old world, Europe, different from all your folks in Africa, different even from our backyard in Latin America. But while we're different, you all should try to be like us. So in other words, the American exceptional becomes universal. And that filter has been with me all through growing up during the cold war. And then after we got out of the cold war and thought everything, it might be hunky Dory, but it really wasn't. And then post nine 11 and now all the way to the era of Donald Trump.

Liam: Yeah, that's quite a journey. And maybe we can say or think a little bit more about that. Um, your, your, your, your childhood filters seem to shift it a little bit. You know what, my childhood filler wasn't that different. I was growing up in different part of the world, a rural Northern Ireland. Um, uh, but I was looking at America. I was looking at it all the time. I was looking at it in magazines and newspapers. I was looking at it on the television. Uh, I was, you know, planner on end been John when on the playground. Uh, you know, there's a way in which Sue's ideas of America were being just performed and pled all around the world, uh, you know, at the end of the 20th century. Um, and those were positive use for the most part. I mean, certainly it was for me, but there comes a time and it's not just with growing up and maturing, it's about, you know, looking more carefully, I think at the United States from where you stand in the world and giving it more thought. And that's not to be not positive about it, it's not to give up on it. Uh, but it's really to, you know, have some tough love and ask some tough questions about it.

Scott: So you think the American exceptionalism kind of indented if you're in Northern Ireland or if you're in Dublin or if you're in some other part of the world?

Liam: I think it's there, but it can mean different things to different parts of the world. I mean, let's face it, if you are growing up in let's say, um, parts of the Soviet union in the late fifties and early 1960s, you good chance you'd a pretty positive view of American culture, you know, and uh, it, it seemed to promise ideas of freedom and possibilities of another life that we're not there for you. You know, if you're a growing up in, um, let's say, I don't know, maybe Iraq or Afghanistan 15 or 20 years ago, you might have a different view on American culture as you may have in other parts of the middle East today. In other words, your perspective in the United States is going to be formed in part by, you know, big geopolitical issues as well as those everyday cultural issues.

Scott: Yeah. But you know, what's interesting to me as we are here in 2020 is that just simply because American exceptionalism has been dented or in some sense this has been stripped away, uh, doesn't mean that the filters have been stripped away. And in fact, what happens is, is you get an exploitation of those tensions. Let's talk about the Trump filter. In other words. Uh, and that Trump filter, you know, really came home to me during the 2016 election when, um, and we can talk about a lot of reasons why he won unexpectedly. But for me, it came down to four words. And there were those four words that his, his people skilfully mobilized was just make America great again. You know, not just the chance, it was like putting it on the hats, but in on the T shirts, putting on all the merchandise and that idea of make America great again.

Scott: Or hashtag Maga, you know, he did two things. I mean, one is it tapped into that notion of, Hey, we're, we're, we're great, we're great, we're exceptional. We should be the best. Uh, but secondly, somebody has stolen that from us. You know, other Americans have stolen that from us, whether they're Democrats or lefties or radicals. And the combination of those two in an extremely abstract way, because the Trump campaign certainly really didn't have anything very concrete in terms of what American greatness would be economically or politically or socially. Well, that was a very, some would say a toxic, but it was certainly a powerful potion. But what's interesting to me is that that filter continues. I mean, the number of media interviews that I do that come back to and talk about, yeah. But the Trump base, the Trump base, you know, what will the Trump base mean when he's not convicted in the current impeachment truck?

Scott: What will the Trump base meet in November when he runs for re-election and it's like that's a filter. There is no Trump base in the sense of a party in the sense of a movement that's out there. It's this idea that I'm sure Donald Trump would claim 99% of Americans, like all except the radicals, but that there's a percentage of Americans who are so deeply intense with Trump that it becomes like this reality, this core of America, and of course it's not. It's manufactured whatever the Trump base is, because people support Donald Trump for different reasons. Some of them will support him in perpetuity. Others may not, but it becomes Americas. It becomes American exceptionalism defined as Tropic sexualism in this wizard of Oz moment that until you remove the filter, until you pull back the curtain, then you don't actually see where the wizard is and you don't actually get to what the reality of the yellow brick road might be or might not be.

Liam: Yeah, that's a good way of coming back to the idea of fillers and, uh, you know, the idea that there's a reality there to be, to be revealed. Um, sometimes in my worst nightmares, I think maybe there's no reality there to be revealed. All we're left with are these fictions and these myths and these

things that were being sold and that Donald Trump has really become the master of that. Please tell me I'm too cynical and that there's something real there that we can all get hold of and come together on.

Scott: You're too cynical. I say this as someone who is authentic as well, but it's like, I'll come back to this, which is, and this is true or not only think of America, but by stripping the filter back from America, we do actually discuss ourselves as well. And that is at the end of the day, our today experiences are in our communities, right? And we have communities, some of them are villages, some of them are towns, some are cities, some of them were centered on the church. Some are centered around schools. So you can, your listeners will be thinking, right now, this is where I make my connections on a day to day basis and those connections are really powerful. Those connections are really powerful because they can believe to a politics which is of dialogue rather than division. They can lead to a politics which is a common interest rather than competition.

Scott: They can lead to a a politics which is being inclusive rather than us versus now, but what happens on a day to day basis, whether we're talking about our schools, whether we're talking about our hospitals, whether we're talking about immigration and we'll bring this back to America. The reality in America is you get this polarization which is because there are those who will feed upon division who will try to profit upon division and you will try to exploit division. Now sometimes they beat upon it to the extent that they believe it. It becomes entrenched, but by and large, if you were to bring this back down to what people really, really want on a day to day basis, you would find these common areas. They want their kids to have a better life than they had. They want a decent education. They want to have jobs that they can hold and not risk losing.

Scott: They want to be able to get treated if they're ill, they want to be able to retire at some point and not feel that they'll be in poverty. They'll want to breathe air and have clean water. Even if you've got climate change deniers like Donald Trump's a monster mist, and the more that you bring the conversation back down to that and that you emphasize a decency rather than a division, that's a starting point. Can it be done? All I would say is as that, while everyone has gone back in 2020 and going, Trump, Trump, Trump, Trump in November of 2018 and the midterm elections, which of course although they're on a national basis, quite often these are local. These are for state legislatures as well as national, as well as for Congress, that you did see a change, not just in the sense that the Democrats want a large number of seats in the house and took control of that body, but that you saw a focus on issues in that campaign and a focus on dialogue in that campaign, which at least for that window in November, 2018 did offer a vision of a political way forward, which is just simply not dominated by hashtag hashtag make America great again.

Liam: Yeah, I liked the, I liked the optimism I'm signing up for. I really am. Um, but I'm also very wary of the hashtag side of that. That is to say that the, the, the new media, the social media, uh, has clearly not led to, but it's magnified these divisions that you're talking about, um, on whatever one thinks of a Donald Trump as a, as a political leader. Uh, he is, um, a tremendous media manipulator.

Scott: Yeah, he is a manipulator. But let's talk about why America unfiltered and why that's a necessity precisely to deal with that type of manipulation. We know that Donald Trump has a very loose relationship with the truth. Uh, I think the Washington post gave an update, uh, this week in terms of the number of lies that Trump has told lies, not mistakes, not misinformation, lies. And it's now the tens of thousands. Like, I need to check my own self in terms of statistics, but our question is this more than 30,000. Now we need to have a space where we removed the filter of the lie and say, well, no, in fact, this is the reality of what you're talking about. And that would be, for example, just to give you a current

example, is that at Davos, the world economic forum this week, Donald Trump in a rather sedate way because he was reading off the script, but he still said that the danger to the world was those who spread hoaxes about the environment.

Scott : Uh, that talked about overpopulation killing millions in the 1980s and that talked about dramatic disasters that would overwhelm the world in the 1990s. And what he was doing when you strip that filter back is he was saying that those people who are scientifically studying climate change, producing reports on climate change, discussing whether it's what needs to be done about climate change or wires. That's what he was saying he was lying about. In fact, the reality of those who want to deal with climate change issue by turning the light against them, you take the filter off of that and it's not just Trump. You take the filter off of, let us be very honest here. That is when you have media outlets, they do not necessarily inform us. They do not necessarily speak truth to power in this 21st century will not only have new media but an older media.

Scott: We have to get empowered to be able to take the filter off. So guess what? Fox news by and large is not news. Fox by and large is Fox TV, which is polemic, which is there to make assertions, which may or may not have any type of support. And when you have a host, like I took her cross and like a Sean Hannity at the very start, you need to identify what they are, which is they are polemicists, they're demigods in the tradition of a father Koslin of the 1930s. And then we can discuss what they say with the filter removed. Will we be accused of being locked as well? Yeah, I will be accused of that even though I don't actually identify as leftist. But that in fact I think is the challenge that we take on when we deal with America. And by the way it is not just simply taking on those who might be on the right. There are those, some of those who were put on the left of American politics who have their own filters and those needed to be stripped back as well.

Liam: I completely agree. I think fillers are not the preserve of one political party. And um, that's why I think we'll have to give close attention to all kinds of ideological fillers that are telling us one thing or another. But the United States, that includes really the big national filter itself. And what I mean about that is that, um, the United States often seems like a bubble to itself. Uh, if you go to the U S and you watch and listen to news media there, there's not a lot of international news. Um, it's very nation centric and very nation centred. So again, with the American filtered, we're looking at the United States from the outside. Uh, we're doing that with an interest in what's happening there, but we're also interested in what it means to have that outside perspective and also to look at what America is doing in other parts of the world and report on that. Um, Americans are not hearing as much about that or seeing as much in that realm as they have before. So Scott, just as we move to wrap up, uh, looking through to 20, 20, uh, you know, there's a good metaphor for seeing clearly 20, 20. Um, how would you look at 20, 20 on filtered? What would you point us towards? Just briefly in closing?

Scott: Well, I think the narrative, you know, initially set out because we will have the impeachment trial of Donald Trump or the Republicans would like to wrap this up by the end of January. It is almost certain that it will end in his not being convicted of the charges of abuse, of power and destruction of Congress. But of course the wider question will be, will we actually get the evidence where we get the documents and the witnesses or will in fact, Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell and Republican senators buried that evidence the way that they buried the Trump Russia report, which actually documented a great deal of evidence of Trump's possible crimes such as obstruction of justice and indeed, uh, his cooperation with Russia and the 2016 campaign. Uh, if they do bury it or if they don't successfully bear it and some of the evidence does continue, it will feed into his attempt to win a second term in office another four years.

Scott: As well as we mustn't forget the elections for a third of the Senate for all of the house. That will determine, I think the immediate future of American politics. It will be important, however, not to look at this as just a horse race, but both for the sake of that election and also for the sake of what really matters because one day Donald Trump will be gone. Is those key issues that are there that have been there well before 2020 there's the issue of the economy. Donald Trump this week claim credit for creating 7 million jobs for the stock market rising by 50% for the American economy being generally resurgent. All of that was a deception and the sense that the American economy has been growing since the great recession of 2009 but it has been slowing down in part because of Donald Trump's trade war. Whether or not it slows down, it stagnates before, after the November election could affect his political fortunes, but it will be slowing down and it's something that we'll have to be confronted because that will feed into an issue like healthcare, which is an issue which affects each and every American.

Scott: You cannot put healthcare to the side as an issue because people get sick. They need to know that they will be able to be provided for, uh, if they or their relatives are ill. and that means the question of public versus private provision will continue. We will have the issue of immigration, which will persist because you will have the filter, the mythology of the wall, which will never be built with Mexico. But you will then have the reality of the indefinite detention of thousands of undocumented migrants, of the continued separation of children from families. What do you do about that? In not only the short term, but in a system which can last, which can be fair, which can be just, and the issue of climate change because the issue of climate change, which should affect every American does in fact every American. But we should be recognized as by Danaher. Narcan. You've got to clear away the brush of climate change deniers, including Donald Trump himself. And of course you have to do that not only for the sake of America, because America I'm filtered means we have to recognize that issues no longer stop at American borders. You take that filter of the border away, they affect all of us.