

# 2024-03-27 Graham and John speak with journalist Ross Coulthart...

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Hi everybody, Tuesday, the 26th of March. Welcome to Club Grubbery. John, it's great to see you back on again, mate. Thanks, Woody. Yeah, it's great to be here and another fantastic interview coming up. Indeed there is. And we have sharing the screen with us now, a face many of you will be familiar with.

Walkley award winning journalist Ross Coulthart. Welcome to the program, Ross. G'day, gents. How are you both? We're doing well, mate. And we're very grateful for you coming on because obviously there's been so much going on in the world of late and a lot of misinformation. Many of, uh, many of those pieces, of course, coming from mainstream media, which seem to have lost their way.

So we, we want to discuss, um, from your perspective, what's happening in the mainstream, but also if you could just unpack a little bit of your history, because. You're renowned for your investigative journalism and you must be chomping at the bit to write stories on all this stuff. Yeah, I will. I mean, I've been a journalist for much of the last 40 years.

Um, I trained as a lawyer and, um, was far too nosy to stay in the law. So I, uh, I became a newspaper journalist, worked in Australia for the Sydney Morning Herald, uh, drifted into commercial TV, worked for Channel Nine with Yarn Event. Uh, then I worked for Four Corners at the ABC, went from the sublime to the ridiculous.

And then, um, I left Four Corners and joined the Sunday program at Channel Nine, the now defunct public affairs show. I think I was there for about 14, 15 years. And then when KP died, God bless him, uh, that show got axed. And that was pretty much the end of commercial TV in Australia funding investigative journalism, you know, quality investigative journalism.

Um, I worked periodically for Sunday night at Channel 7, uh, 60 Minutes, and then Spotlight at Channel 7. But to be honest with you, what we've seen in the last probably 20 to 30 years in Australia, and indeed all around the world, is the slow diminution, the slow decline of public affairs television, news investigation on TV.

And it's happening because There was a conceit, I think, in the free to air TV networks and in the newspapers. These organizations had rivers of gold, you know, back in the 80s. There was just so much money. It was ridiculous. And, uh, they were making a fortune from classified advertising and, uh, on on air advertising.

And um, there was a conceit amongst television executives that this was always going to be the case. And I can remember having a conversation with David Leckie, who was the boss of Nine at the time. And I said, what about this internet thing, Dave? You know, isn't this going to be a threat to TV, you know, when they start downloading TV programs on the net?

And he went, Oh, my. Nah, never going to be a problem. Nah, the TV industry is solid. Nah, free to air is solid. It's going to keep on going for decades. And of course it didn't, and it hasn't. And um, I think what we're seeing at the moment is, unfortunately, free to air TV, when it starts running out of money, when it starts running out of the advertising revenue that it normally gets to fund shows like 60 Minutes, or, you Spotlight or Sunday Night or Four Corners or whatever, these, actually Four Corners isn't a good example because the ABC relies on public funding, more so the pity.

The um, the problem is there's no money left and so what they do on those shows is unfortunately they default to vaudeville more often than not and they um, they go for shows that they think you the viewer want, which is

light stuff. Celebrity interviews. Um, uh, public human interest stories. Um, they think the public isn't interested in big ideas or big form investigations.

I think they are. And I think the UAP subject, the subject of unidentified anomalous phenomena, which I've spent a large part of the last three or four or five years looking at, um, I think the fact that I've had the public response that I've had to the issue, uh, bears out the fact that there really is something to that, that there's a wisdom of the crowd.

I mean, I put a, I put an interview that I did with an attorney in the U. S. called Dan Sheehan up on the News Nation reality check. Website I now work as a special correspondent for a US TV network called News Nation and that one interview Which is just me talking to an attorney has recorded nearly three quarters of a million views in just under a week and it's because people are interested in the phenomenon of UAPs and they're not buying the bullshit that's being put out by governments Particularly the US government and also all the five eyes nations Australia included Which is trying to put a dampener on discussion about the subject.

The fact is, there's a reality there. Um, there's a there there. We don't know exactly what it is, but we know there's a genuine mystery. And you gentlemen and your experience in aviation have probably met people or had experiences yourself where there are anomalous phenomena that can't be explained. And one of the ways the debunkers work is the first thing they try and do is pour shit on what we're saying by suggesting that we're talking about bug eyed little aliens from Zeta Reticuli.

And we're not. We really aren't. I mean, I don't know what it is. I suspect there is a non human intelligence there somewhere, but um, let's wait and see for the evidence. And that's the really interesting thing is now that the public have seen that the Pentagon, because of congressional interest, has been forced into a corner.

It's been forced into an admission that there is a reality there. There is a there there. And they've been forced to admit that yes, there is unidentified anomalous phenomena. That is being seen by pilots, civilian, and military, and other witnesses all over the world, not just in the continental USA. And it's a genuine mystery, so much of a concern is it for aviation, that a good friend of mine, Ryan Graves, who um, is an ex F 18 fighter pilot.

Ryan's set up an organization called Americans for Safe Aerospace and he's very keen to persuade governments to start forcing pilots, mandating that pilots report phenomena. Because as both of you gentlemen know, with your experience in the aviation industry, there's a huge problem with forcing or encouraging pilots to come forward about this phenomena because it's so stigmatized.

It's so taboo. And yet, if I walk into a bar or a restaurant these days around Australia or anywhere in the world, I am amazed how often somebody walks up to me and wants to shake my hand because, as a journalist. I'm investigating the UAP issue. They want it investigated. And for me, it underlines what is a chronic failure in media, frankly, the mainstream media, either because of taboo or stigma.

or frankly, laziness, isn't asking the questions that should be being asked about this phenomenon. The Pentagon has admitted it's a real mystery. They've given evidence that this is indeed a threat to flight safety, to national security. Um, if you go to the website of a guy called John Greenwald called the Black Vault, I think about two weeks ago, he published documents that he'd obtained on FOI from a who'd done the actual application.

And it showed how a fighter pilot flying from Eglin Air Force Base in Florida had witnessed a craft. A hovering craft, which clearly was anomalous. It wasn't showing any form of propulsion system that was consistent with what we know as a conventional propulsion system. It was recorded. He drew it. He even got video of it.

What did the Pentagon do? The Pentagon censored the video. The public's not allowed to see it. And so there's the rub. On the one hand, we're being told, this is all rubbish. Go away. Go back to your tiny little homes and let us and the Pentagon and all of the countries around the world deal with this issue.

And don't you worry your tiny little heads about it. Meanwhile, I'm talking to people on the inside, in government, in the intelligence community, in the military, who are telling me, not only is this real, They're also telling me that the United States is concealing a huge amount. Now they may be doing that for laudatory national security reasons, but what they haven't done is provide sufficient oversight.

And now Congress is on their tail because they've realized they've been lied to. And there are key oversight committees in the Senate and the lower house which are now asking questions. And frankly guys, this is all going on with much of the mainstream media ignoring it and willfully trying to pretend that it's not happening.

Well, just like they've done with the pandemic. And, uh, yes, I, I, I have reported several sightings to authorities and, uh, I never, ever regretted it, but it was never, ever followed up on. But, uh, we can talk about that a bit later. But, um, what we've seen with the pandemic has been, uh, has been obscene as far as journalism is concerned.

In fact, at a recent meeting, it was said that there are several isms in our vocabulary, in our vocab that, um, that, uh, are repugnant. And we have fascism, communism, Marxism, and now journalism, because journalism is obviously now being seen to have blatantly lied to people, um, it's clear. Well, I, I, I, to be honest with you, I'm not even sure if it's a lie, because A lie means intentional deceit.

What you can't overestimate is the degree of lack of resources that confounds a lot of media organizations these days. Um, I've been at the pointy end of what passes for hard nosed investigative journalism in a mainstream media organization. I've worked for many of them. And the simple reality is, is that, uh, in the good old days, you'd get told go away for six weeks and see if this is a story.

Check it up. Check it out. Well, here's an air ticket. Go and talk to the people. Check it out properly. Check all the documents, you know, make sure you know what you're talking about before you come back and make a conclusion. Now that was six weeks, maybe 2030 years ago. No, you're lucky if you get six hours.

Um, if you're a journalist in a newsroom, very rarely do you leave the newsroom because there's just no money. And what's happened is, Google, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, they're great swamps of advertising revenue, and that's where young people now are getting most of their information. And I don't declaim them for it.

I mean, I'm making a living now doing a lot of online journalism. I think we have to acknowledge that what's happened is free to air television, free to Commercial newspapers, they're largely becoming irrelevant and the resources that they used to have to throw it investigative journalism, or frankly, any kind of journalism are diminishing and we're seeing more and more newspapers by press release.

I'm shocked how many times when I've written a press release, I've seen it reported verbatim in a newspaper. I was always taught to read a press release backwards because people who are trying to promote something generally hide what they're trying not to reveal in the very last paragraph, but they don't want to ever be accused of not revealing it.

So they try and hide it way down in the press release. And those kinds of techniques that you learn in journalism that I learned as a young man, they're gone now. And I think that what's happening at the moment is we're seeing a transition happening. We're seeing, frankly, the end of mainstream masthead media.

We're actually seeing the end of conventional media. It's not happening anymore. And I think the, um, the upshot is going to be that there's going to be a slow move across to social media. And, I mean, I routinely now do stories on YouTube which generate multi millions of viewers internationally. It's a long time since a show like 60 Minutes or Four Corners generated anything near a million views.

They just don't. And, and the interesting thing is I've discovered there's an international audience out there that are interested in the UAP issue. And the reason they come to me is because they want quality investigative

journalism. It's not that they want to read about the Kardashians all the time in their newspapers and their television.

That's what they're being given. And they're being told they're stupid. This is what you want. Don't you worry your tiny little heads. We know that you guys want celebrity interviews and we know that you want lightweight fluff on your TV. Reality shows, that kind of mindless crap. But the reality is, yeah, we don't want to watch boring, drudge documentaries.

God almighty, I hate them just as much as the next person. But what we can do is we can investigate issues. And when you talk about, for example, the vaccines, Um, yeah, I do think there was a failure by the media to be sufficiently critical about assertions that were being made by governments and by health agencies and by epidemiologists and supposed medical professionals making claims about mRNA vaccines that frankly aren't supported on the evidence.

And, um, I was really struck at the time by how a lot of the, um, A lot of the people that I've, uh, uh, met in the course of my career, people who work in epidemiology and who know about, um, antiviral medicines, how much they were warning me about the dangers of some of these vaccines. Now, I haven't done the research, so I can't pontificate about it, but I do think that journalism owes it to, um, the subject to actually start taking it seriously.

Ross, um, I think many people would agree with you about the aliens, but I think, uh, the majority of the people watching us would think that, uh, they're, uh, they've taken over Macquarie street and, and, uh, all these other bureaucratic organizations. Uh, there's been very few. journalists that have been willing to call this out.

One of them's been, uh, Chris Ullman, uh, the former Channel 9 political reporter. And he, he actually said that when, uh, Albanese said they weren't having a real commission into the, uh, the COVID situation, that, uh, that was a great mistake. Uh, that we needed to, uh, have a royal commission so that, uh, we could review what was done right and what was done badly.

So we could, uh, make the necessary arrangements for, uh, for future, uh, issues. And we needed to look at the iatrogenic harm that's been caused and how these politicians just gave away their, uh, their, their power to bureaucrats like Dr. Kerry Chant. Uh, and they're able to, uh, run, run these, uh, states and, uh, countries by default.

And I mean, this seems to be what's happening now at the World Health Organization level as well. I mean, people are unaware of this, but there is actually a move in the federal parliament to default our, uh, our leadership to the WHO in the event of a future pandemic. Um, surely we need to investigate what's going on in that.

Well, look, the thing I was shocked by was, um, I don't know about the WHO thing, but I was quite shocked that at one stage there was even a push for the media to be formally controlled and for stories that did not conform to the executive narrative to be actually stopped from being published. And when I still remember during the pandemic, you know, there were people whose homes were because they'd queried the science behind.

You know, the, uh, the certainty, the rectitude that was being declared by the government about the safety of these vaccines. And, um, you know, I don't think Australia should ever go that way again, frankly, and I don't think they would. I mean, I think what fascinates me is, as a country, we meekly rolled over and agreed to some of the most extraordinary, I mean, essentially, We're in a form of martial law.

I mean, it was quite extraordinary, you know, you had these absurd laws that were imposed on people with very little scientific explanation or justification. We were just told to take the assurances of the scientists and to accept it and to accept that it was a law and therefore we should put up with it.

Meanwhile, countries like Sweden, which. didn't follow those laws and didn't heed those rules. They had far lower morbidity and mortality rates. And there's been no investigation into why countries like Sweden, which

essentially didn't intervene anywhere near as much, all they did was lock up their most vulnerable people, the people who were most immunocompromised and the elderly.

And most people in society were allowed to go out, and go to restaurants and go to pubs and just lead normal lives. Sure, some of them got COVID and sure some of them died, but people also die from flu. Now, I don't think there's been any proper investigation into comparing the morbidity mortality rates in countries like Sweden with the morbidity mortality rates in countries like Australia, where we adopted an incredibly interventionist strategy to try to, um, control the virus.

I don't doubt that. For a moment that it was well intentioned. I mean, I'm sure the health officials thought they were doing the right thing, but even privately, I was having people in epidemiology whispering to me on the phone saying, yeah, look, I've got concerns about this. These vaccines are not properly tested.

And one of the areas I think really does beg for investigation is the long COVID effects of mRNA vaccines. Have we caused heart damage to a whole generation of young people who would not otherwise have suffered heart damage. I mean, there's been the most extraordinary incidences, huge leaps in, um, swelling around the heart.

I had a good friend of mine who's another journalist who had to be hospitalized and put in intensive care because even though he's incredibly fit, he suffered severe symptoms after he'd taken a vaccine and it struck me. You know, when I've gone to the doctor and complained about things like this.

inordinately high blood pressure that just came out of nowhere and um, tinnitus. Uh, all of a sudden doctors would sort of sagely nod their head and go, yeah, yeah, you're another one who've had a vaccine. And, and there's all these connections that were made, but nobody's doing the scientific investigation.

And frankly, unless the population ask, it's not going to happen. And the last thing the government wants to do is to be held to account for things that might show that they failed to do their job properly. We should always. Question science. We should always question any assumption that's being made with a scientific basis.

And what I found really unhealthy was the way that journalistic discussion about the merits of vaccines, uh, mRNA vaccines in particular, um, they were shut down. You know, you were basically told it was almost a crime to discuss these things. And I know on the pages of the major newspapers and on television, it just wasn't a subject you could do a story about.

Well, Ray Hadley was referring to everyone as a cooker. Uh, you know, it makes it very difficult for people to speak up when, when they're being labeled. Uh, you know, in my case, for instance, we've got six kids, every one of them is vaccinated. Uh, I'm not somebody who hasn't had a vaccine in my role, but Ray Hadley was calling us cookers.

Uh, so. Well, it's funny. I'm a, I'm a doctor's son. I mean, I was raised in a family where, um, you know, we lived in, uh, New Zealand and, um, there were people in the community that we lived in. who had alternative ideas and whose children weren't vaccinated and some of them died. And I remember being really shocked that little children were dying from diphtheria, whooping cough, really easily treatable diseases that could have been treated with the triple, um, triple antigen vaccine.

And, and, So yeah, I'm a pro vaccine person, but what fascinated me as a journalist was that there were people saying to me as an investigative journalist, you should look at this. You know, there is a, a real concern in epidemiology about the lack of sufficient testing to validate the merits of these vaccines and to ensure that there are no morbidities or mortalities associated with their use.

And frankly, you know, they were brought into production within months, whereas most Vaccines take years to develop. Now, I know governments like to say that this probably saved thousands of lives. And sure, that might well be the case, but prove it. Ross, I can't think of a legacy media organization that didn't go along with the government narrative.

I think they all succumb to that pressure. But we need to ask the question because I've given up thinking that I live in a democratic country anymore. When, when, uh, when corporations and government band together for the common good, that's the definition of fascism. And I think that's what we've descended into under the guise of democracy.

How important is it? Uh, what, what sort of, how important is the role of the fourth estate in keeping a democratic society healthy? I don't think it's that important anymore, to be perfectly honest, because I don't really think there is the kind of media that we all grew up with as young children. When I was a kid, the newspaper mastheads all had hundreds of thousands of readers who religiously, studiously bought and read their paper every day.

Television news was watched by everyone every evening at 6pm. There was inordinate influence on the public affairs programs like Four Corners and 60 Minutes. And I've worked on those shows and I can tell you that they're in a period of declining influence and the reason why they're in a period of declining influence is because whereas maybe 20 30 years ago they were getting 3 or 4 million viewers, now they're lucky if they get 400,000 viewers.

And, and what they're not doing is servicing their audience more often than not with quality investigative journalism. And it's sad because, um, what these programs used to do was provide a public service that dug into things that needed digging into. And so there was, there was a fourth estate. There was a, essentially a, a media that was well funded that did aggressive investigative journalism.

Didn't always get it right. Sometimes we cock things up. But You know, that's the way that things work, but the, the reality is the media generally try to do a good job to actually do aggressive, rigorous investigative journalism. And that era, I think quite frankly, is well and truly over, but I'm actually optimistic.

I actually think that what we're seeing is we're seeing a transition of that kind of investigative journalism onto, I beg your pardon, social media. And I think the, um, The interesting thing is, um, uh, not everybody on social media knows how to do it. You know, there's going to be a slow transition, but I predict that probably within five or ten years, people will be streaming, you know, like for example, Joe Rogan, Tucker Carlson, the left love to hate these guys, uh, because they're often asking embarrassing questions and posing interesting issues that, that need public discussion.

But I don't think it's any coincidence that both of those guys operate primarily on social media. You know, they're not. They get lampooned and attacked by the mainstream media. And the reason the mainstream media does that is because it's almost becoming irrelevant in comparison. Joe Rogan gets 17, 16, 17 million viewers or listeners, I think a month.

I mean, it's, it's incredible how many people he draws to his show. American TV has never got those numbers ever. And the, the interesting thing is, um, Tucker Carlson with his new show on Twitter, Um, I know the government would love to ignore him, but the simple fact is, you know, he brought Trump on, gave Trump a voice, Trump elected to go and speak to Tucker Carlson on Twitter, because he knew that was the best way of communicating directly with an audience.

And whether you like it or not, this is what's happening. The change is happening as we watch the major newspapers are making themselves irrelevant by frankly, I think getting over obsessed with woke ideology and nonsense and a lot of commercial TV sadly is too under resourced to do the kind of quality investigative journalism that it used to be able to do.

So inevitably, I think that we're going through a pretty low level, rubby sort of period in, um, in journalism where, um, you know, not a lot of good stories are being broken anymore in, in, um, public affairs TV. It's a long time since I got excited about a piece of television investigative journalism. Um, and the interesting thing is some of the most imaginative and interesting work is happening online.

So I'm optimistic. I just think that, um, People who cry over the loss of these masthead media organizations have their sympathies misplaced. I mean, for example, we had this ridiculous situation where these dying media organizations were being propped up with money from Facebook, Meta, and Google. And, uh, just recently, Facebook announced that it's no longer going to give money to Australian media organizations to pay them for the use of their journalism on Facebook media.

And, um, there was the predictable declamation from major media organizations saying how outrageous this was and what a threat it was to the continued, you know, dominance and efficacy of mainstream media because this money was so important to quality investigative journalism. What a load of horseshit.

It's a long time since they've done the kind of quality investigative journalism that warrants that kind of accolade. Um, you know, basically media organizations have allowed their budgets to be ground down in the very area that the public want, which is long form investigative journalism. Yeah. I don't think people may realize it.

If you asked somebody on the street and said, what do you want investigated? I don't think they'd say, well, I want an investigation into UAPs or an investigation into mRNA vaccines. I don't think they might say that, but by golly, they'll appreciate that journalism when it exposes something. And, and that's the issue is I, I just find it hilarious that we're in a period of history where the major online giants have been asked to put their hand in their pocket and share some of their revenue with dying mainstream media organizations that frankly, the reason for their existence is No more.

They should just be allowed to die. I mean, why do we prop up a dying industry? Let it die and let independent journalism thrive online. There will be no something that replaces it. How will independent journalism thrive online with organisations like ACMA imposing misinformation bills that will be passed very soon, probably by the end of the year, where these organisations decide on what is misinformation and what's truth?

How do we negotiate that? That is a threat. I mean, I, I, I, I've dealt with ACMA myself. I mean, they're a woke, boring government organization, but they're only within Australian sovereign territory. Powerful. Uh, so if you have a registered organization that's broadcasting from online from a different country, sovereign state, they can't stop you from, I mean, this is the great thing about the internet.

The internet is the worst nightmare of tyrants and authoritarian dictators, because try as they might, people can use VPNs to get around censor blocking. They can avoid attempts to gag information, and they do that. I mean, I've helped people in China and other repressive countries use VPNs so that they can access my journalism.

And, um, Uh, you know, I, I, I think the simple fact is that there are technologies that mean that, that online, uh, is actually going to, I think, usher in a completely fruitful new period of investigative journalism. It does mean, too, though, that you get every whack job and crazy espousing their favorite conspiracy theory online.

But I also think the public are capable of making a judgment about what they perceive to be quality. What they're looking for is. A professional filter. And that's where I think eventually journalists like myself are going to make that transition to online because those big behemoths, the so called mainstream media mastheads, the big newspapers, the big TV networks, as much as they like the idea that they are the champions of investigative journalism, more often than not, they're not.

John, you, you were talking in one of the last interviews we did about the, uh, the new head of the ABC coming out with a, with a slam on agenda based journalism. Yeah, it was the, uh, the incoming chairman. I can't remember his name, but, uh, he essentially, uh, Kim Williams. Yeah. Yeah. He's a good guy. I mean, I, I, I totally endorse what Kim says.

I mean, I, I've worked at the ABC. I worked at Four Corners for four, four and a half years, five years. And, um, back then they did, they had a fantastic commitment to doing investigative journalism, but there were certain

stories that you knew you'd never get up on the ABC. And generally they were stories that were laudatory of business or stories that were challenging accepted isms.

I mean, one of the areas that we haven't traversed is climate change. I mean, um, I'm not a critic of the fact that human beings are causing change to the climate. There is anthropogenic change. Global warming. I'm sure the issue is whether the mathematical models that are being used to predict the extent of that warming are accurate.

I don't think they are. And journalism, uh, every time anybody gets their heads up and actually talks about this and tries to explain it to the international audience that's interested in these stories, they get whacked. You know, seriously, if you do a climate change story and express any skepticism at all about the establishment science on global warming, you get walloped.

But the simple fact is there are people inside even Australia's CSIRO, our Commonwealth Scientific Organization, which, um, who espouse grave concerns about the algorithms that are being used to make mathematical predictions about the of human caused climate change. And then You know, there's also the fact that these models that are used to predict climate change, they don't take into account sufficiently, I think, the impact of other environmental effects.

And, um, sadly, if you look at the claims that have been made over the past 30 to 40 years about global warming, very few, if any of them, have worked out to be accurate. I mean, there's quite hilarious Predictions that have been made over the years that, you know, by now, you know, we'd be swamped, most of our, um, farm would be non arable and, uh, you know, extraordinary predictions and claims have been made.

And whatever the merits, the point is, is that whatever the merits of those claims, we should never suppress rigorous questioning. And one of the mistakes that governments make is they go from embracing science to embracing scientific dogma. And, and the same thing is happening in the UAP issue where there is a truism that is accepted in conventional media, that there is no truth.

to the notion that there might be an anomalous explanation for the phenomena that we're seeing in our skies, in our oceans, and indeed in orbit. And so therefore it can't possibly be true, therefore we won't do stories about it, therefore it must be stigmatized and treated with taboo. When you actually look at it, when you look at the science and when you look at the, um, the evidence, there is sufficient reason to take it seriously and to actually engage with it as a subject for discussion.

And the thing I find fascinating is that if you build it, they will come. To my great amusement, I never expected when I wrote my book five years ago, I never expected that I would still be working in the area of UAPs because I did a book thinking I was essentially going to debunk the UAP issue. I thought I was going to discover a United States black program and discover some stealth aircraft still in development that could explain all of these mysterious objects.

And yet, the more I dug, the more I was getting deeper and deeper down the rabbit hole of an entirely new reality. That there are people in the U. S. government, the defense department, and the intelligence community who do talk about a non human intelligence. And who do talk about phenomena that cannot be explained.

prosaically. And yet, when you try and talk about this in mainstream media, there is a disconnect. And again, it's because of scientific dogmatism. And we should never let dogma get in the way of good, solid, rigorous, independent science. Do you think, um, Ross, just in regards to the, uh, the characters in, in, in the media, um, the hard heads, the people that, uh, used to control these newsrooms, are they going white now?

Are they, are they people in charge that, uh, don't want to ruffle any feathers, do as they're told? Look, it's hard to generalize. I mean, um, I'm very critical of the ABC, but I'll save that for another day. I mean, I've, I've worked there and I've seen how it works. There is a certain degree of political correctness at the ABC that I think softens and dulls their journalism at times.

I mean, frankly, I just think a lot of what I see on the ABC, which is funded to the tune of, I think one and a half billion dollars by Australian taxpayers. It's just as boring as batshit. I just, I'm not interested anymore. It's dull. And the reason it's dull is because of it is a lot of it is politically correct.

I mean, I mean, I've done a lot of stories, for example, about, um, endemic social problems in Aboriginal Australia. And there are some great leaders in Aboriginal Australia, like Jacinta Price, who have been vilified on the ABC because she's had the courage to stand up and say that some of these problems are problems that Aboriginal communities need to fix themselves.

That no amount of taxpayer money can be thrown at people who sadly, fall into drunkenness and drug abuse and let their children walk around in dirty nappies and, you know, she's called racist for saying that and yet she's an Aboriginal woman with great pride who loves and cares for her community. And one of the problems is I think both government and large arms of the media are so paralyzed by wokeness that they're not addressing the issues that ought to be addressed.

Properly to be being addressed. I remember just a few years ago, I had a, a really good friend of mine. He's a tough, hard as nose ex cop and he's ex fed police, ex state Northern Territory police, a really honorable man. And, um, Um, he was asked to investigate the death of a very small Aboriginal infant in appalling circumstances where this poor child had been raped in the most awful way and she died.

And he rang me and he was crying, you know, he was shattered at what he uncovered in the course of his investigation. And the tragedy was the reason he was ringing me because he knew his report would be suppressed. He knew that the chances of that report ever seeing the light of day were next to impossible.

And that's exactly what happened. And I counseled him against going public. Because I knew he'd get crucified. He'd never get another job. And this is what's happening, is that whistleblowers get intimidated. They get, you know, people who want to come forward. Um, they're met with this impenetrable, um, political correctness inside government that means that we don't talk about issues, for example, like Aboriginal Australia.

It's very hard to generalize, but there are certain communities around Australia that just frankly needed a lot of help. And uh, You know, I, I, I know I'm almost skating with nervousness on thin ice here talking about it because you don't want to attract the ire and the hatred. But a lot of the people who contact me are Aboriginal women in those communities who remember stories that I did way back on the Sunday program, 15, 16 years ago, where we talked about corruption in Aboriginal communities.

Where money was just being stolen, hand over fist, money from the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islanders. Islander Commission. And um, a lot of these communities still contact me and plead with me to do more investigations into what they perceive as corruption inside their communities. Now, I'm not saying that's the be all and end all of the problems that Aboriginal Australia confronts, but if we don't confront those problems, and if because of political wokeness and political correctness, we choose not to look at them, even though there are great Aboriginal leaders saying we should be talking about them, there's no hope.

Ross, you've obviously come to investigative journalist journalism with a real passion. Who were the guys in Australia, or the people in Australia that you looked up to in that field? Who were your mentors?

Next question. Did you have many, or were they hard to find? Oddly enough, um, Look, I've been privileged over the years to have some really good bosses. Um, and I have. I've learned skills off certain people. To be honest, the people who I've modeled most of all have been overseas journalists. I mean, I became a member of an organization called the International Consortium for Investigative Journalism, ICIJ, that was set up by a guy called Chuck Lewis, Charles Lewis, who was a CBS US 60 Minutes producer.

He broke the story about Big Tobacco that ended up being made into the movie called The Insider. And, um, You know, back in the days that he was making CBS 60 Minutes story, he was telling me that he'd make one story a

year. Like, one 15 minute story a year as a 60 Minutes producer. And he would go away and he would spend hundreds of thousands of dollars investigating that story and, and digging into it.

And that's the amount of money that CBS had to throw at investigative journalism. And, you know, I'm not going to attack individuals or, um, Individual organizations because the simple fact is what we're seeing is a legacy of the slow decline of advertising revenue to investigative journalism in mainstream media.

Um, the budgets of major media organizations. I mean, when I first started working on the daily show, A Current Affair, with Jana Vent, back in the days when A Current Affair actually broke some serious stories in the eighties, Petterson for a year before I put the story to air. And we defended that story successfully in the defamation courts when a businessman called Sir Leslie Tease sued us and we successfully proved that Sir Joe Bilkey Pedersen had taken bribes off a businessman called Sir Leslie Tease in Queensland.

That was a, that was a daily, that was a daily current affairs show run by Yarn Event at the time. Uh, that show at the time had a budget in excess of 20 million a year back in the 80s. That was a lot of money. And if you went over budget, nobody really gave you a hard time about it. So there were the resources to do the digging, and I thank those organizations for funding that journalism back then.

I can't criticize them now for not having the money to do that kind of work. The simple fact is, there isn't the money anymore because the Facebooks, the Googles, the Instagrams, the TikToks, they're making a bloody fortune out of marketing dross. And this is the issue, this is what worries me, is that a lot of kids are not growing up with that backbone of quality investigative journalism that we all had when we were younger, because it's not being made anymore.

And there are bits of it online. And God, I'm hoping that it starts developing with more regression online. I'm quite excited, for example, about what Elon Musk's talking about doing with Twitter. He's talking about setting up, um, TV channels. On twitter where people can have shows like Tucker Carlson's and uh, I think that's a really positive thing I just think we have to accept that the mainstream masthead media organizations Are dead.

Let's put a stake through their heart and move on. Why prop them up? I mean we killed off the Australian car industry when it was no longer productive Why the hell are we propping up a media industry and allowing? plutocratic media barons to continue to make money when frankly, they're not really servicing their audience anymore with quality investigative journalism.

They're not doing the stories that should be being done. John. Ross, do you think these organizations like New South Wales Police, New South Wales Ambulance should be allowed to hire these spin doctors, uh, to, to, to protect, run a protection racket for these incompetent fools that are running the show? Uh, I mean, Karen, when Uh, Dr.

Dominic Morgan. I mean, they employ these journalists on 400, 000 a year. Basically to promote to the public that they're doing a wonderful job. The reality is they're not. Uh, I mean, I worked in the ambulance media. There was no journalists in there then. I mean, we just gave a grab to the TV journalists when they rang up, we provided a bit of traffic information.

That was it. I mean, what I, what I will offer a comment about is that in my lifetime, in my career at journalism, I've just been amazed at the amount of money that governments spend on corporate journalism. Media spin doctors. It's mind blowing. I mean, um, in the very early days, a minister might have a single spin doctor, a media advisor.

Um, now there are entire flints of media advisors and, uh, I don't know what they all do, but they're all very well paid. And they're servicing, frankly, a media that is no longer equipped to be able to publish most of what they run anyway. I mean, um. Again, I mean, this is a problem with the public not being able to get access to information because if I was to ask, for example, for the costs under FOI of all of the media staff employed by,

say, the New South Wales police or New South Wales corporate affairs or whoever we're talking about, they'd probably claim some kind of privacy exemption because they don't want to be scrutinized.

And the problem we have is that in, Inordinarily, ordinarily what I would have done is I would have been challenged that under the FOI laws. I would have gone to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal and said, look, that is an unreasonable withholding of information. And the reality is that for media organizations to spend that money on going to a court, giving me the time to go and sit in a courtroom and make an argument, it's, time away from telling stories and they're no longer prepared to do that kind of work.

And, and this is why, um, governments know they can get away with this kind of thing because the public is generally very badly served by the media these days, not because of any malign or ill intent by the media, but because basically the budgets that used to exist to do the digging, they're not there anymore.

Um, you know, literally, uh, uh, programs that used to make 3 million views. And now getting, if they're lucky, 400, 000 views. Um, Newspapers that used to sell hundreds of thousands of copies a day. They're lucky if they're selling 60, 70, 000 copies. This is a dark secret that nobody's talking about. And a lot of these newspapers talk about views.

They talk about eyes on page. They use any amount of deceit to try and make their advertisers think that what they're doing is getting more numbers than they really are. But the simple fact is that the evidence shows. There's a huge transition at the moment where people no longer engage with mainstream masthead media.

People don't go and buy their newspapers anymore, you don't see stacks of newspapers on the street where people are buying them with coins and reading them on the way to work. Um, what they're looking at is their phones, they're engaging with social media on their phones. And yes, just in the last couple of weeks we've seen Facebook withdraw its willingness to pay for the use of that media news on their platform.

And so what we're going to see is less and less of that mainstream media appearing online. And are we going to lament its passing? I don't think people will notice. We've, we've done some interviews where our viewership was greater than CNN. Um, you know, some really top line interviews and that, that staggered us, because if you saw the technology around what we're doing, you'd, You'd be blown away.

But look, given, I know you've got to go, but given that, um, UAP is the big thing that you're working on at the moment, what is the one big story other than that, that you would really like to sink your teeth into? Ah, well, I mean, at the moment, I'm very focused on the on the UAP issue. But another issue I'm really fascinated by is, um, ancient civilizations.

I mean, I'm, uh, I'm going to Egypt later on this year, and I've been invited to be on a tour where we're looking at some of the more inexplicable ruins that exist. in modern Egypt that are over, we're told, over five and a half thousand years old. And for example, there are granite vases in the Cairo Museum that are so thin, you can hold the pink granite vase up to the light and see through it.

And just recently, there's a young Australian called Ben Van Kirkwyk, who's got a fantastic website called Uncharted X. And he's done an analysis on these vases and whatever it was that built them, they are accurate to within micrometers, micro millimeters. Nobody can explain how these objects were made in an era where they were bronze adzes, if you were lucky.

And, and this is the thing that intrigues me as a journalist, is that there's a lot that, um, is happening on this planet that's not being talked about. Another story I would like to make, I would actually like to know what China thinks of the idea that we're all going to war with them. I'm amazed at how many people I talk to in the defence and, uh, intelligence community, both here in Australia and in the US, who just matter of factly say that it's only a matter of time before we go to war with China.

And I don't for a moment think that any such war is remotely winnable. But if you read the commentators, there's almost a kind of a, uh, fever pitch commentary that suggests that we should just stand aside and let this war happen. We're in a more dangerous period in human history than in any other time in our history.

I mean, I was, um, only a one year old baby when the Cuban Missile Crisis happened. But, uh, Actually, no, I wasn't even born. That was 61. But um, you know, we're actually in a more dangerous period even since then. That, that period is less dangerous than what we're in now. We're on the edge of potential nuclear war.

And something's going wrong with the geopolitical balances that we have. Absolutely. Do we understand enough about the way that Russia and China think about the West? I'd actually like to see some quality investigative journalism looking at why Russia feels the way it does about the West. Why the Chinese feel that they have to rearm and take such a strong nationalistic defensive posture against the West.

What is it that we're doing? Are we, are we in the right or are we in the wrong? That kind of stuff needs to be investigated. Journalists need to ask those questions because if we don't, I've got a horrible feeling we're slow walking inexorably towards, God forbid, another world war. Unbelievable. Before we let you go, given your interest in UAP, and I can edit this out if we need to, is there any question you would like to ask me?

Have you ever seen one? Yes. Look, I've, I've seen, I've seen. And you didn't report it, yeah? No, I reported it. Um, I saw several and we thought, no, I'll let those go because who knows. But there was one flight going from, uh, Melbourne to Wellington at an evening flight. We departed Melbourne about eight o'clock and, uh, getting to, uh, Wellington very late.

It's funny. I, I, one of the people I met once was a guy called Captain Startup. who was the pilot of an Argosy aircraft that was flying from Christchurch to Blenheim in the north of the South Island. And Bill Startup swore to me, blue and blind, that he, he saw Kraft come up to the cockpit window and then zoom away again.

And the poor man was ridiculed and attacked and, uh, stigmatized for much of the rest of his life. And, um, the journalist who investigated that case, um, Quentin Fogarty, uh, he too copped a lot of criticism. But, um, there are a lot of pilots, military and civilian, who see things and they suffer terribly because they speak out about it.

Well, everybody already thinks I'm an idiot anyway, so it doesn't really matter that much. But, but, um, Yeah, we were preparing for descent, we were approaching New Zealand, we could see it was a reasonably moonlit night, it was about a quarter of a moon I think, and the, uh, the cloud cover over New Zealand was this long, broad sheet of high level cirrus cloud, and it was reflected, reflecting the moonlight, and we were preparing for our descent, deciding, you know, briefing each other on how we were going to fly it, and we both had our heads down in the cockpit for a moment, and we were dazzled by this incredible blue light.

Uh, it was, it was huge. It just took our breath away. And when we looked through the windscreen, um, in front of us, between us and Wellington was this massive blue light that took five seconds. Yeah. It's all right. We'll come back. You there? Hello? I've lost you. You there? Hello? You got me? You got me? Yeah.

You were talking about a blue light and then you dropped out on me, mate. So we saw this massive blue light that got our attention. And when we looked up, we were dazzled by this huge light. I mean, it filled the windscreen and it was descending. It took about four or five seconds to get out of our sight.

And it descended below the cloud. And when it descended below the cloud, all the cloud lit up like a bright blue sheet. And we looked at each other with amazement and said, what was that? We called up Auckland Air Traffic Control and we said, look, have you got any, anything on radar that's just passed near us?

And they said, no, nothing at all. Why, what have you, what are you, what are you asking for? And we said, well, we've just seen this massive blue light descend through the cloud in front of us. And the controller came back straight away, quick as a dart and said, have you guys been on the wacky backy? And I said, no, I said, no, we haven't.

But luckily for us in New Zealand, in an A320 was 60 miles behind us. And the captain of that aircraft popped up and said, well, if he's been on the wacky backy side of work as we've seen it, and we cannot believe what we've just seen. That was not covered in the media. There was no mention of it. There was no reporting of it.

But as we commenced our descent, we descended through a large round hole that was made in the cloud. That's amazing. Gosh. And, um, did it get reported to the civil aviation authority or the New Zealand civil aviation people? Well, normally what we thought would happen would be that we reported it to air traffic control and we'd then be approached, but nothing came of it.

Nothing came up, but every, everybody that I know in aviation's got a story like that, at least one. Yeah, I was, I, I, I once went to a party of Qantas pilots and, um, literally every person there had a story. And, uh, I said to them, did any of you feel comfortable about speaking publicly about it? And they all went, nope.

And that's the problem. It's, it's so stigmatized. There's such a taboo surrounding the whole subject matter that, um. Uh, I don't think we'll ever get to the bottom of the mystery unless people feel okay about talking about it. And, and that's the difference, is that what I'm proud of with my journalism is I'm championing the willingness of people to speak publicly about this issue for the first time in 60, 70 years.

Uh, and there's been an attempt, quite a deliberate and aggressive attempt by governments, particularly the American government, to shut down public commentary by using ridicule and taboo and stigma, and it's not working. Because the Congress wants to get to the truth and they're going to. Well, Ross Coulthard, it's been incredible talking to you.

John, go ahead. I'm not going to cut you off. No, I was just going to say, well, it, it, it, um, it's obvious there is something happening. Otherwise the Royal Australian Air Force wouldn't have UFO officers and they've had them previously. Yeah, they have. And, uh, I've, I've literally had, Uh, an F 35 pilot sitting in my living room here at home telling me what he's seen and, uh, the interesting thing is, um, uh, they're terrified about speaking publicly about it because the Chief of Air Staff for the Australian Air Force has made it very clear that he's not taking the issue seriously.

And yet, men and women under his command are concerned that there is a potential flight safety, national security risk posed by these objects, whatever they are. Well, I wouldn't have liked to have been closer to that object that I saw, because I think it would have been perilous.

You've got to go. So look, it's been great talking to you. Thanks so much for your generosity of time and your insight. Uh, we really appreciate it. Ross Coulthard. Thanks for joining us on Club Grubbery. Real pleasure guys. Thank you. Bye bye. And John and I will be right back after the break. Hi everybody and welcome back after the break.

What a great interview with Ross Coulthard, John. Yeah, look, what a great journalist, Hoody. A journalist that's got integrity and all those things that we expect from investigative journalists of years ago. And what he demonstrated in that interview, Hoody, that there's a real back of house problem with, uh, Uh, it's not just the health and the aviation sectors, you know, they're, they're obviously suffering, uh, back there as well.

He, he advised that there's no money for investigative journalism to, to break down these, uh, BS narratives that are going on out in the community. Uh, it's very unfortunate. And why is there no money? Because nobody trusts them anymore and nobody watches them. Therefore the advertising revenue is down. I mean, it's a vicious circle, but I loved his, uh, uh, Narrative about just let the mainstream media die and get it over and done with.

Let's bear it and get on with what's going to replace it. Which is, he did say pro, he didn't say mentioned club robbery by name, but he's talking about citizen journalism. And I guess that's what we're trying to do for no other reason than we want people to, um, have as many facts as they can and make decisions accordingly.

So, well, I suppose what he, uh, you know, there's a real opportunity for, for, um, social media programs like Club Grubbery to have a real crack at doing some investigative stuff down the track. Who knows? We're going to need a staff to do that, John. You and I just aren't going to cut it on our own, brother, with you making coffees and me trying to keep the grass cut.

Maybe someone could get some microphone things made up for us with Club Grubbery, uh, so that, you know, when we stick them, stick them in people's faces, they, they'd know where we're from, that'd be. There you go. That means we've got to go out in the street and do Vox Pop. Red carpet stuff. Red carpet stuff, mate.

What could possibly go wrong? Let's have a prayer. Let's have a prayer. Lord, Father in heaven, we thank you for, uh, for wisdom, grace and mercy and forgiveness as well, Father God. And we just, we pray that the light of truth will shine brightly so that people can make rational decisions. based on compassion and understanding.

For this is our prayer in Jesus holy name. Amen. You've often been heard to say, buddy. You just couldn't make this stuff up. You couldn't make this stuff up. Stay out of the trees. We love you guys. We thank you so much for your, your beautiful comments and your support, your messaging and your prayers. Most of all.

So thank you so much and we'll see you tomorrow night or the night after with another Club Grubbery because we're stacking the, the uh, interviews up this week. We've been at it all day and it's going to be great. God bless you and bye for now. We'll see you next time. Mhm. Mhm.