**John Torpey** 00:05

With the rise of QAnon, 4chan, and many other conspiracy theories and outlets in recent years, conspiracy theories have emerged as one of the hottest topics in contemporary political discussion. Why does it seem that conspiracy theories, which are, of course, quite old, have come to play such a large role in our politics? How does the appeal of conspiracy theories vary across time and place?

**John Torpey** 00:29

Welcome to International Horizons, a podcast of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies that brings scholarly and diplomatic expertise to bear on our understanding of a wide range of international issues. My name is John Torpey, and I'm director of the Ralph Bunche Institute at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Today we explore the past and future of conspiracy theories with Joseph Uscinski, professor of political science at the University of Miami. His book American Conspiracy Theories, co-authored with Joseph Parent, and published by Oxford University Press in 2014, examines why people believe in conspiracy theories. He's been widely interviewed on this topic in the mainstream press during the past few years, for reasons relating to my introductory remarks about the apparent upsurge in conspiracy theories in our contemporary life. Thanks so much for joining us today, Joseph Uscinsky.

**Joseph Uscinski** 01:28

Thank you for having me.

**John Torpey** 01:30

Great to have you here. So maybe we could start by just talking about a little bit about what exactly conspiracy theories are. Can you explain what that term really means?

**Joseph Uscinski** 01:41

So, a conspiracy theory, if we're to define it, would have two prongs. One is a substantive prong and the other is a epistemological prong. So the first dealing with the allegation is of a conspiracy taking place. And the second being that we're not sure that it's true or not. So when people ask me for a definition, it's this: it's an allegation that a small group of powerful people are working in secret for their own benefit against the common good, and in a way that undermines our bedrock ground rules against the widespread use of force and fraud. And further, the appropriate knowledge generating bodies have yet to determine that this allegation is true or likely true.

**Joseph Uscinski** 02:35

And that definition sets conspiracy theory apart from conspiracy, which we think is true or likely true, because the relevant experts have said that conspiracies really happen. So for example, no one calls Watergate a conspiracy theory, we call it a conspiracy, because admissions were made an open court. The FBI, Congress, and other bodies investigated all of that data and evidence is out there for anyone to examine and refute if they wish to do so. But right now, the consensus by the relevant experts is that yes, Richard Nixon did conspire with his, some members of his administration to subvert the constitution.

**John Torpey** 03:22

So I mean, in the end, this relies on some kind of belief that there's something that's true. I mean, this reminds me a little bit of a conversation I found myself having once 25 years ago. I found myself sitting next to a very erudite - I was alone, having dinner in a sushi bar and found myself sitting next to an erudite guy with whom I was having a lovely conversation. And then eventually, I don't know how we got into this exactly but somehow he was sort of saying, "Well, you know, you have your numbers about how many people died in the Holocaust. And, you know, we have very different numbers." And, you know, I sort of realized what was I going to say, at that point? All the experts agree, all the serious experts agree that this is the case. Well, he didn't believe that and seemed to have some sort of numbers based on what exactly I don't know that told a different story. I mean, what do you do with somebody like that? How do you address these kinds of, as you say, sort of epistemological problems.

**Joseph Uscinski** 04:32

Wish them a good day. There seems to be this view out there that somehow if you just send the right link or fact check to someone, it can change their mind on something but, you know, with a belief like that, it's probably the case that that particular belief is just an expression of an underlying worldview. So you can argue about the numbers all you want, but that's not really the issue. The issue was what's undergirding that particular belief for him, which is probably a whole lot of stuff, which is going to take more than a few fact checks and a few conversations to overcome.

**John Torpey** 05:18

Yeah, I mean, in fact, it turned out, he was a member of a Catholic order, the name of which I'm now going to forget, but which is deeply conservative itself involved in all kinds of conspiracy theories and that sort of thing. I've forgotten the name of it now.

**Joseph Uscinski** 05:36

But that's a very interesting point. Because when we put the focus on the conspiracy theories, we're putting it on an idea. And we're focused, well, can we get that person to stop believing that idea? What's the effect of that idea on the person? When what's really going on is that the things that really matter are already inside the person. You know, so the person has a set of beliefs, they're probably extreme in certain ways, they're probably anti-semitic in this particular example you're talking about.

**Joseph Uscinski** 06:12

And that's what's really in play here, not so much just this particular view about numbers, it's a whole set of dispositions that really matter. And those are what's driving behaviors and particular beliefs, and whatnot. And those are tougher things to overcome than just a particular belief. And let's put it this way, even if you could get him to change his mind on some particular thing, it doesn't matter, because you're still playing "whack-a-mole". Right? Because his underlying worldviews and dispositions are still there. He's gonna have all sorts of other conspiracy beliefs and, you know, other unsavory attitudes that will keep popping up, because you haven't changed that person in any meaningful way.

**John Torpey** 07:09

Right, it felt like a thankless task to try it. You know, I just kind of, as you say, kind of said, well, let's talk about something else.

**Joseph Uscinski** 07:17

It's even worse with something like this. So in my research, we find that some conspiracy theories are rather widespread, like, "Oh, I think there was a conspiracy behind the Kennedy assassination." And you'll get half of the country believing in that, and sometimes as much as 80% of the country believing in it. But there are some conspiracy theories, where those theories are sort of considered anti-social, and out of the mainstream, and unacceptable by polite society. So imagine views like "no one died at Sandy Hook," or the "Holocaust was faked." You know, those are beliefs that are considered outside normal society; they're largely considered unacceptable.

**Joseph Uscinski** 08:14

And what we find for those beliefs, the people who believe in those, they tend to have higher levels of antisocial traits, higher levels of narcissism, psychopathy, these are people who tend to exhibit more conflictual traits. So these are people who are themselves somewhat antisocial; they're picking up anti social beliefs. And good luck trying to change the minds of precisely the kinds of people who don't want to listen to you and don't want to have their minds changed.

**John Torpey** 08:45

Right. Well, maybe this gets us into a question about what are the most important conspiracy theories that are out there now? I mean, you just talked about one of them. You know, this is the reason we're having this conversation, right? Is that things like QAnon are now playing a significant role, it seems, in American politics, in German politics, and for all I know, elsewhere, but I'd be interested to hear what you have to say about that.

**Joseph Uscinski** 09:14

So it's tough to give an answer to that, because what's important? You know, it's one of those terms, I don't really know what it means. And I guess I can take it wherever. I can say this, that conspiracy beliefs are widely believed - some of them. I guess, their importance to me would be driven by what the consequences of those beliefs are in some ways. I'll get to that in a second. But I guess I can make the case that you know, COVID conspiracy theory beliefs are really important right now because we're in a pandemic, but it's really the pandemic that's driving the importance of the conspiracy belief.

**Joseph Uscinski** 09:58

If the pandemic wasn't deadly and wasn't killing people, so what if you believe it's fake? It wouldn't really matter, right? But given that this does kill people, people believe the wrong things, and then act the wrong ways, in a way that winds up leading to more death. And I would say that's pretty important. But even with that said, importance is driven by the pandemic itself and not so much by the anything special about the conspiracy theory.

**Joseph Uscinski** 10:27

And even then, I don't think it's clear right now that the conspiracy theories are necessarily doing the harm themselves, right? It's absolutely clear from lots and lots and lots of survey research that people who believe COVID conspiracy theories and misinformation about COVID are less likely to get vaccinated and less likely to engage in pro-social disease preventative behaviors. But that's correlation and not causation.

**Joseph Uscinski** 11:00

What could be going on is that the people who aren't going to get vaxxed anyway, are just adopting COVID conspiracy beliefs. The people who weren't going to go along to get along, the people who weren't going to wear masks, or do pro-social behaviors, probably are going to do that anyway, regardless of what conspiracy belief or piece of misinformation they may have been exposed to or have adopted.

**Joseph Uscinski** 11:24

So I guess to bring this back, once you start digging in and saying what's causing what, what I would sort of say is, people don't always do the right things for a whole lot of reasons. And sometimes the reasons that people do the wrong things, like refuse vaccination, and refuse to wear masks, and refuse to act in a pro-social way. The reasons driving that are the same reasons driving the conspiracy theory beliefs, right? So, you know, we could put the conspiracy stuff to aside and say, "there are things about some people that are just leading them astray. And that's what we have to deal with." And the conspiracy stuff is sometimes just a sideshow. It's just a marker, it's a marker of what's there, of what's lying underneath that we have to deal with.

**John Torpey** 12:16

So, people point a lot to QAnon, as, I don't know exactly what it is, a network of people, a set of ideas, etc, as having taken hold as an important correlate at least of, you know, support for Donald Trump. I mean, is that significant? You know, I mean, Trump is retailing the idea and motivating supporters on the basis of the idea that the last election was stolen. Now, I assume you regard that as a conspiracy theory? Maybe not. But it seems to have all the earmarks of an idea that seems manifestly from the point of view of, you know, the consensus of experts not to be true.

**Joseph Uscinski** 13:09

Yeah, I mean, I, I would most certainly refer to voter fraud beliefs, particularly the ones that former President Trump has put out, as conspiracy theories, right. Now, here's the interesting thing with that, and I'll talk about voter fraud first, maybe QAnon second. Going into presidential elections, between 30 and 40% of both parties think that if the other side were to win, it would have been due to fraud. So there's a chunk of each side that think, you know, "we're going to win, and if we don't, it's because the other side cheated us," you know, in politics as in sports, people don't like to lose, and sometimes losers accuse the winners have cheating. No one wants to look in the mirror and say, "hey, you know, we could have done better, but we didn't and things were fair, but they didn't turn out the way we wanted." Who wants to do that? Right?

**Joseph Uscinski** 14:06

So generally, after elections, when we repoll, it's the winners no longer think that fraud had anything to do with it, just the losers. So in that sense, I tend to say that conspiracy theories are for losers, right? It's the winners never complain about the umpires or the referees or voter fraud. Very rarely do they do that. In this case, we have something very different in 2020. So, you go back to 2015, President Trump built a coalition of conspiracy-minded people. You know, he got into the race and he wasn't going to be able to just run as a conservative Republican with good governing experience because he wasn't any of those things. So he ran on anti-establishment, conspiratorial rhetoric: drain the swamp, everything's corrupt, only an outsider can fix it.

**Joseph Uscinski** 14:59

So he appealed to people who already believed in voter fraud and election fraud and whatnot. So, that's his coalition. So they're already prone to these beliefs, right. And now tack on a bunch of other things. So you get to 2020, Trump loses, so it was going to be some amount of Republicans who are going to think they were cheated anyway. Then you add on the fact that many Trump supporters were already highly conspiratorial. Okay, so now that's going to raise the numbers somewhat higher. And then you add on to the fact that Trump and his allies in Congress and the conservative media pushed nonstop the idea that there was election fraud.

**Joseph Uscinski** 15:47

So now you get numbers 60, 70, 80% of Republicans thinking that the 2020 election was rigged, right? Where in a normal year would probably be 30 or 40%. Right. So this is always out there, it's always there. It's just the fact that you have a sitting president saying "it was rigged." And that's going to carry a lot of weight. And that's going to get a lot of people in that president's coalition and in the party believing as such.

**Joseph Uscinski** 16:14

So now go to QAnon: this is an area where I think the media got it completely wrong in a whole lot of ways. So the big claims made by the media about QAnon was that it was big, getting bigger, going mainstream, and was far right. I don't think any of those things were ever true in any meaningful sense. So in 2019, national polls showed, when you ask, "Are you a believer in QAnon?" They got 5%. I followed up this question two years later, in May of 2021, 6%. So no statistical change. When you break that down by party in 2019, it was 6% of Republicans and 6% of Democrats who said they believed in QAnon. In 2021, it was 7% of Democrats and 5% of Republicans who said they were believers in QAnon. No difference. There's nothing about QAnon that makes it far right.

**Joseph Uscinski** 17:16

Right? And first of all, we have to deal with the logical problem of, if the media says QAnon is mainstream, and also extreme in far right, how does that even make sense? How can you be both mainstream and extreme? So let's just put that aside for a second. I've also been polling on QAnon with a feeling thermometer, both nationally and in Florida, and we say to people, "Hey, tell us how much you like the QAnon movement from 0 to 100, with 0 being you hate it and 100 being you really love it." In 2018, it came in around 24, on average, which is bad. That's a no stunning endorsement. In my most recent poll came in on average 16. So it's gone down rather than up. And that says more people got to know what it is.

**Joseph Uscinski** 18:06

And just to put those numbers in perspective, when we ran it on our Florida polls, we also put Fidel Castro on our polls and had people rate him. And if you know anything about Florida, you know, we don't like Castro down here. People danced on the streets when he died. I think QAnon came like a point or two ahead of Castro. So again, no stunning endorsement of QAnon. So the media got in their head, based on really lousy evidence, that QAnon was big, and then it was getting bigger, but they never had evidence, no good evidence of this. They went with lousy polls, some of which didn't even say QAnon on in the poll questions. They never had good over time data. But what we find when we repeat the same measures over and over again, we don't find evidence of growth. And when we break it down by party, we don't find that partisanship is really driving identification or support for QAnon specifically.

**John Torpey** 19:07

Well, that's disheartening to hear.

**Joseph Uscinski** 19:11

It's good news right? I mean, QAnon was never big, that shouldn't be disheartening, right? The media got it so wrong,

**John Torpey** 19:18

That's the part that's disheartening. So maybe you could talk, I mean, this of course, gets into a question I wanted to ask you, you know, I mean, conspiracy theories are old, are there really more of them now? Or maybe it's really just a matter that it's caught the media's attention and imagination, and they're playing it up big and it's not really much of a thing from the point of view of somebody like you who's been studying them consistently over time for a long time.

**Joseph Uscinski** 19:46

So, to the first question, it's hard to know if there's more conspiracy theories, right? Because conspiracy theories are like fan fiction. Anyone can make up anything they want, anytime they want for any reason. And they're all over the place. They're not just online, they're at the watercooler, they're on the subway, they're in the park, they're everywhere. There's no way to measure how many conspiracy theories are out there. They're just ideas. So it's hard to know.

**Joseph Uscinski** 20:13

In terms of are particular conspiracy theories consistently believed more than in the past, the answer to that is no. I mean, I repoll conspiracy theories over and over and over again and don't find evidence of growth over time. Even though we're constantly warned that this is the golden age of conspiracy theory and these conspiracy theories are spreading everywhere online, and everyone's going to believe them, we just don't find that, we don't find evidence that these beliefs are consistently going up. More often they're going down, than they're going up.

**Joseph Uscinski** 20:49

So what is going on here? Well, one, in general, we are paying more attention to conspiracy theories. When I first got into the topic, I started a Google alert on the term conspiracy theory, so I got back every news article and blog posts written every day with the word conspiracy theory. And 10 years ago, I would get back four or five articles a night, and none on the weekends. Starting in 2015, I was getting between 50 and 100, every night. And I could tell you, you know, from 2010 to 2015, when I was working on the topic, I'd get maybe a handful of calls from journalists every year about conspiracy theories. Starting in 2016, my phone started ringing a lot, and that only increased so by 2020, I think I took 270 calls from journalists just to talk about conspiracy theories, which professors don't get that many phone calls normally.

**John Torpey** 21:49

I know I don't.

**Joseph Uscinski** 21:50

Yeah, so journalists are paying attention to the topic and most major news outlets have teams dedicated to just covering conspiracy theories, misinformation, online information environments, and whatnot. But there's something else underlying here too, and QAnon makes a really good example. So QAnon, the only new thing there was that you had an anonymous person pretending to be a secret agent putting out secret clues in an anonymous chat room, that people can go and decode. That was sort of the only new thing. And then you tack on the idea that, you know, people adopted a group identity with it, like, "oh, yeah, we're all following these clues, and we're gonna watch this thing unfold. It's going to be great." That normally doesn't happen.

**Joseph Uscinski** 22:42

But the ideas that QAnon trafficked were largely old. The idea of massive sex trafficking, child molestation rings have been around seemingly forever, and these were things that were said millennia ago about the Jews, 100 years ago about the Catholics. I lived in the 80s as a kid through the Satanic Panic, where they thought Satanists had infiltrated the schools and the daycare centers, and it was widespread satanic ritual abuse everywhere. There's never good evidence for any of this. But those beliefs are out there, and we haven't paid attention to them, and we haven't rectified them.

**Joseph Uscinski** 23:18

And in fact, our elites and many of our media outlets allow these beliefs to fester. Right? So when we poll on something like, "how many children are currently being sex trafficked in the country?" And we say "a lot of experts say it's 300,000. Do you think the number is more than 300,000, around 300,000, or less than 300,000 children?" we get a majority of Americans say it's 300,000 or more. But that number has been fact checked numerous times, because members of Congress have put that number out there. It's a bogus number of vastly overestimates the real number. Now, the proper number should be zero, we should be intolerant of any form of sex trafficking or any amount, but doesn't do anyone good to vastly overestimate it. And if you look through the statements that our political leaders put out, like "sex trafficking ring foiled by a police sting", and you see these headlines everywhere. But most of them are bogus. They're never busting sex trafficking, they're busting adult prostitution, things like that. Like with the Robert Kraft case, the owner of the Patriots who was busted down here in Florida, and so "we busted the biggest sex trafficking ring ever." And then the next day you say, "how many arrests or charges of sex trafficking will there be?" Zero. Zero.

**Joseph Uscinski** 24:49

So there's headlines out there making it sound like this is much bigger than it is, and you have politicians beating their chest about this. And, hey, you know I understand why people are for it, because nobody wants to see sex trafficking. Nobody wants to see kids getting abused in any way. And tough on sex trafficking is a great political position to take. But it does no one any good by overestimating its prevalence, and that sort of lays the backdrop for what QAnon draws on. Right? All these ideas have been out there, they keep getting pushed, often by authoritative sources. And it's easy to make the leap to begin overestimating the amount of sex trafficking, overestimating the amount of Hollywood and government involvement in that sex trafficking. And it's not too far, you know, a hop, skip, and a jump from that to QAnon.

**John Torpey** 25:52

Interesting. I mean, all of this in a way points to that our attention should be focused on things other than the actual conspiracy theories. You know, the question of what the media regard is news, what politicians think is important, or is valuable for their political fortunes, and that sort of thing. But I guess I wanted to sort of explore the question of, you know, the extent to which this kind of thinking, again, may be more prevalent than it used to be. Or, and I know, you've sort of answered that, but whether it varies from sort of country to country. You know, maybe I'm thinking more about the idea of rumors, and the way in which rumor, the role that rumor plays in the political life of various countries. And it's, I think, said, that is the case, when the government is less authoritative when it's, you know, has less legitimacy. It's statements are not believed, because they're frequently false in fact, and I wonder whether there's anything to kind of idea, you know, is there more of this in one kind of place than in another?

**Joseph Uscinski** 27:19

So, let's start with the US. So I've repolled a lot of conspiracy theories, sometimes repeatedly. And in the last study that I just finished up, I think we did around 50 conspiracy theories, and we found growth in only a handful. But the vast majority either stayed the same over sometimes long periods of time, or most decreased. So we're not finding increases across the board in individual conspiracy theory beliefs.

**Joseph Uscinski** 27:49

In terms of the overall worldview, are people becoming more conspiratorial now in just how they see the world than in the past? I've been polling on that for 10 years and found no increases at all. I've done a little bit of this with some data from a handful of countries in Europe. And just over a few years with a handful of conspiracy theories, I found that there were no increases there, either. But I did that in 2016 to 2018. And that's precisely the time when a lot of media were saying: "conspiracy theories are running rampant across Europe", but we didn't find evidence of increases. Right?

**Joseph Uscinski** 28:29

So these beliefs are there, they're probably stable. And again, I would say we need to focus on the people and less on the particular theories themselves, because once you start focusing on the people, we realize it's a human problem. It's that we have people who want to believe weird stuff, or based on shoddy evidence, or people who want to believe things that accuse the enemies they don't like. They want to reject authoritative accounts. Once we focus on this is a problem of people rather than a problem of the wrong idea got out there, then I think it's one that's maybe harder to solve, but at least we'll be solving it in the right way.

**Joseph Uscinski** 29:14

But in terms of rumors, I think the issue is that we can see human communication now and track it in a way that we never could before. Because we can see people talking to each other on Twitter, on Facebook. We can measure these things. Our conversation at the water cooler 30 years ago, no one would have known it was there, it was here and gone. There's no way to track it. Right. So we don't have any evidence of how much misinformation existed or believed before the internet. We really don't even have a great measure now; we just know that it's there, and there's some amount of it, but we don't know what the denominator is. Right?

**Joseph Uscinski** 30:00

So we can't really claim that somehow people are spreading more rumors than they did in the past. No way to know that. And I have reason to doubt that that's true. There's no way to say that there's more conspiracy theories now than there was in the past, there's no way to really determine that. There's no way to say people traffic more information now than they did in the past, there's no way to know. I mean, people believed a lot of wrong stuff in the past.

**Joseph Uscinski** 30:29

There was no - like when they say, "Oh, we live in a post truth world." Well, when was the truth world? I don't remember living there. You know, there are a lot of times just in our country's history where we weren't all that truthy. So, you know, are you going to make the case that things are worse now than they were during the Red Scare? Than when we were drowning and crushing witches 400 years ago? Is it really worse than that? I mean, I think people are just attracted to this idea that things are worse now than they've ever been and people see the past with rosy hindsight. But to me, it's just not. There's just not enough evidence to make this claim that somehow things are really bad.

**John Torpey** 31:19

Got it. So I guess the question then maybe to wind down with is, you know, having now sort of moved the focus from the conspiracy theories to the people who hold them, as you're recommending, what's the treatment, so to speak? What's the response? You know, how does one respond then to the fact that there are certain kinds of people who tend to embrace these kinds of ideas? What is it about them that we can do something about?

**Joseph Uscinski** 31:52

So that, and this is going to be rather unsatisfying, but I don't know. And let me just say this first a disclaimer, there are a lot of great researchers working on ways to overcome conspiracy theory beliefs. And they're all well intentioned, and I support their efforts. However, we have to understand, too, that do we really want to develop the tools to change people's minds? Because if it can be used to make somebody give up a conspiracy theory, that same tool can make them adopt a conspiracy theory. The truth of the matter in the proposition doesn't really matter. Right?

**Joseph Uscinski** 32:30

If we can get people to give up beliefs and misinformation, then that same tool can get them to believe misinformation. You put that tool in the wrong hands, and that's a powerful tool that can be easily misused by the wrong people. So I guess in some ways, it's perhaps good that a lot of the treatments that my colleagues have developed for changing minds don't work all that well. Right?

**Joseph Uscinski** 32:55

So it is true, that there are things we can do in how we present information that can change the minds of some people to get them to adopt, you know, truthier ideas, and that's probably a good thing. But for the people who are dug in, for the people for whom that belief is just an expression of something underneath, a fact check, a link, a fancy graph isn't going to change their mind. And it's going to take a lot more than that, to change them.

**Joseph Uscinski** 33:25

And then, you know, the way you phrase the question, this is something I think about a lot. Do we really want to change people? You know, if a conspiracy belief is an expression of their religious views, their personality traits, their underlying worldviews, do we want to get in and tinker with those? Do we want to change those things? Is that a goal we should have for ourselves? It's sounds rather dystopian, right?

**Joseph Uscinski** 33:57

And I guess, when you're in a pandemic, and you're like, we've got 30% of the population that doesn't want to get vaxxed, we got to do something about it, because it's life or death. It's easy to put aside the idea that, you know, maybe we don't want to re-educate the populace and change their personalities somehow with some government program. Because the vaccination program is so important, right? But if we sit back and take a breath and say, "Well, where's this going?" We might say, "okay, maybe there's some dangers here," and we really have to think carefully about how we balance those. So, and again, I'm not saying that we shouldn't make every effort to make people believe the things that are most likely true. But just to say that once we get down to it for some people, I mean, do we really want to get into deprogramming folks? And my answer would be, you know, that sounds really, really dangerous.

**John Torpey** 35:05

Well, perhaps particularly since it's actually a relatively marginal phenomenon, at least it sounds like from what you're saying.

**Joseph Uscinski** 35:16

Well, conspiracy theories aren't marginal. I mean, most people believe in one, if not a few. Some conspiracy theories get majority support, like JFK, or Epstein didn't kill himself. You know, but even COVID conspiracy stuff. I mean, there's - we get sometimes between 20 and 30% believing in conspiracy theories about the vaccines, and whatnot. But here's the thing, even if we were to get them to give up their particular conspiracy belief about the vaccine, it's not clear it's going to make them go get the vaccine. So then you got to start drilling deeper into this person's psychological, social and political motivations to really change that person to get them to do what you want them to do. And I think we need to understand that.

**Joseph Uscinski** 36:05

I guess the best way to put it is this: human society, trying to get them all to do something is like herding cats. There never should have been an expectation that everyone was going to do the same thing, just because they were told to do so. And it doesn't make it good. I would have preferred more people locked down and wore masks and got vaccinated. But, you know, the expectation ought to be that there's always going to be some amount of naysayers, and we have to we have to figure out ways to deal with it that aren't more odious than the problem.

**John Torpey** 36:37

Got it. Well, fascinating discussion. Thanks so much. That's it for today's episode. I want to thank Joseph Uscinski for sharing his insights about conspiracy theories and their role in contemporary politics.

**John Torpey** 36:49

Remember to subscribe and rate International Horizons on SoundCloud, Spotify and Apple podcasts. I want to thank Hristo Voynov for his technical assistance as well as to acknowledge Duncan Mackay for sharing his song "International Horizons" as the theme music for the show. This is John Torpey, saying thanks for joining us. We look forward to having you with us for the next episode of International Horizons.