



## 50. Down the Rabbit Hole with Mitch Schultz, Part 1

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With Special Guest, Mitch Schultz.

*Future Sense is a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name, broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at [www.bayfm.org](http://www.bayfm.org). Hosted by Nyck Jeanes and well-known international futurist, Steve McDonald, Future Sense provides a fresh, deep analysis of global trends and emerging technologies. How can we identify the layers of growth personally, socially and globally? What are the signs missed; the truths being denied? Political science, history, politics, psychology, ancient civilisations, alien contact, the new psychedelic revolution, cryptocurrency and other disruptive and distributed technologies, and much more.*

*This is Future Sense.*

**Nyck:** You're now tuned to *Future Sense* with myself, Nyck Jeanes, and my co-host Steve McDonald. Good morning, Steve.

**Steve:** Good morning, Nyck.

**Nyck:** And it's a great pleasure to welcome back to the studio—and we just worked it out, it's been like a year and a half—our friend Mitch Schulz from the US, the Texan Elf.

**Mitch:** Thanks for having me back, guys.

**Steve:** Welcome back, Mitch.

**Nyck:** It's great to have you back here. You've just arrived from Austin, Texas.

**Mitch:** I have, and always great to be back here. I look forward to a little bit of time with you guys. Stuff's happening.

**Nyck:** A bit of a sketch before we play the first track, of what we're going to be doing today.

**Steve:** Yes, we're going to go down the rabbit hole today. For those listening who might not know Mitch, we'll give you a bit of background. I guess he is probably most well-known globally for being the director of the documentary *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*. There's a lot to talk about around that, and maybe what's next—we'll chat about that as well. We'll get your opinion on what the hell's going on in the USA also, which could be useful. I mean, it looks really weird from here, but it's always good to get inside an inside story.

**Mitch:** Let me give the inside to it, yes.

**Steve:** And I did want to just chat a bit about the power of media in terms of how it seeds our imagination and, I guess, plays some role in the creation of the future world, doesn't it?

**Mitch:** Indeed.

**Steve:** And we'll also talk about our film, which we've got coming up, the Australian cinema premiere this weekend of *From Shock to Awe*.

**Nyck:** *From Shock to Awe*, yes. Mitch is also the Transmedia Producer for that film, so you've been on the inside of that; we'll talk about that, and the role of media generally—how it's transformed and changed over our lifetimes and a bit before. That's certainly a whole new area, a whole new landscape, that's emerging in the media.

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**Nyck:** You're tuned to *Future Sense* here with myself, Nyck Jeanes and Steve McDonald, and our special guest, the Texan Elf, Mitch Schultz, back in town.

**Steve:** He is indeed. Mitch, I understand you were born in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Mitch:** Memphis, Tennessee.

**Steve:** Sorry, Memphis, Tennessee. I was wrong. Thank you for correcting me. Memphis, of course.

**Mitch:** Sharing space with Elvis.

**Steve:** And that accounts for the Elvis Presley tattoo that you have.

**Nyck:** You have an Elvis tattoo. He hasn't left the building, clearly.

**Mitch:** He has not left the building. It's the young Elvis, I just want to clarify that.

**Steve:** So you haven't always lived in Texas?

**Mitch:** I have not. I moved there when I was roughly about five years old and I spent a good chunk of my developmental years in Texas.

**Steve:** And of course, I think most of your family is there now, right?

**Mitch:** That's correct, Minnesota.

**Steve:** Awesome, and somewhere along the line, you got interested in motion pictures.

**Mitch:** I did. That happened by reading Jim Morrison's biography, so it was prior to Jim going into music and finding the *Doors*. He was looking at getting into cinema and getting into being a filmmaker. There's one story in there where I saw the power of media, I guess, when they were asked to create a short film for class and come back and share it with their classmates. They caused quite a stir, as you can imagine with Jim Morrison being the provocateur that he was, and it just hit me. I was like, 'this is where I want to go, this is what I want to do.'

**Nyck:** I want to cause a stir.

**Mitch:** I want to cause a stir.

**Nyck:** And not just one.

**Mitch:** Right. So that was the seed of getting into filmmaking.

**Steve:** And how old were you when you read that?

**Mitch:** I was probably 14 or 15 at the time.

**Steve:** Ok, interesting. So then where did you study first? Did you study in Texas first?

**Mitch:** It was at the *University of Texas* in Austin. I studied communication theory in general, but focused a lot on film production and television production, and then I did my graduate work at *New York University* and looked a little bit more towards the digital end of that spectrum.

**Steve:** Right, so like the nexus of technology and motion pictures, yeah?

**Mitch:** Right.

**Steve:** Cool. I think I remember you telling me once that you did an interesting sort of art installation at the airport.

**Mitch:** Yes as part of my graduate studies, there were a few of us that did an installation for *JFK* through their international terminal, and developed a piece that was kind of a passive sculptural piece, but also had an interactive element to where you could find out practical things about your travel. We were also pulling in live data from the airport information systems. It would go out on the Web and pull images and sounds and things related to whatever destination or whatever place that plane took off from.

**Steve:** That's pretty cool. What year would that have been?

**Mitch:** My gosh, I think that was 2003.

**Steve:** Because that seems fairly futuristic for 2003.

**Mitch:** It was pretty early, yes. Just coming up with 'how are we going to pull this information from the airport systems?—and this was after 9/11, mind you, which was also an interesting piece of the development. It was 'how do we get in and how do we pull this information for people that are at the airport to take a look at?'

**Steve:** Interesting, and what happened next?

**Mitch:** Well, during my time at *NYU*, and actually towards the end, I found out about dimethyltryptamine and that was the impetus for me to start looking into *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*, although I didn't know it at the time. But that research led me down a path to find Dr. Strassman's work and I guess in 2007, we started shooting that. So there were several years in there, but once I found out about that, it did—it led me down a rabbit hole.

**Steve:** Without incriminating yourself, was that something that was going around at *NYU* at the time? Was that a recreational thing that was happening there?

**Mitch:** It wasn't. It was an interesting how it all came about. My roommate at the time was a Brazilian man and he was moving back home, and one night just called me up and said, a group of us are getting together. We'd never heard about this, it wasn't part of the regular thing that was going on at *NYU* or even part of our programme, but one of his friends had something and we said, let's try this out.

**Steve:** Right. Interesting, and that was, I guess, a life changing experience for you.

**Mitch:** Completely life changing. You know, late 20s thinking you have it all figured out—this is where I'm going, this is what I'm doing, this is how I understand reality—and that all changed in about 10 to 15 minutes.

**Nyck:** So for those who don't know what DMT or dimethyltryptamine is, *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* is the film that you are referring to that you made. DMT is a natural occurring chemical in the human body and in many, many plants and animals, isn't it? Just a bit of a sketch for those who don't know these sort of things.

**Mitch:** Oh, go ahead.

**Steve:** I was going to say, N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT) or one of its precursors is found in almost every living thing, it seems—they're finding it in more and more places—and it seems to be throughout our body, in our spinal fluid, in various organs and things, and of course, Dr. Rick Strassman really kicked off, I guess, the rebirth of psychedelic research, didn't he, in the 90s when he got permission to do his study on DMT? It was a really early-stage psychedelic study and done in a very clinical, typical hospital setting, which is kind of weird from a set-and-setting point of view, and I'm sure that contributed to some of the strange experiences that people had during this study. Nevertheless, absolutely ground-breaking and opened up what has become a psychedelic renaissance, which is in full flight now, globally.

**Mitch:** DMT is such an interesting one for me *because* it is found in the human body. It's an endogenous compound that is part of it, but it's also all over nature and potentially in every living organism, which was the one thing that really just caught my attention, because we know that living organisms have the precursors to make DMT. Whether or not it's there, we don't fully know, but it is in a lot of different plant varieties and in humans—mammals in general—so it's fascinating.

**Steve:** It is fascinating. The research hasn't progressed to humans yet, but they've been researching mice, I think, and they believe that DMT is produced in the pineal gland.

**Mitch:** Yes.

**Steve:** At least they found the precursors there and they found DMT there in animal studies, and it's believed to be implicated in our dreaming process. What we do know is that when we go into our night time cycle, our body produces melatonin and it also produces something else called pinoline, which, as it sounds, is produced in the pineal gland, which acts as a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI). What that means is that it stops the body from breaking down DMT, so it allows DMT to accumulate during our sleeping hours, which may well be why we have colourful dreams. Anybody who has experienced ayahuasca or something similar will know that it's like a waking dream—it's like being in a dream but being awake at the same time, isn't it?

**Nyck:** Yes, I mean, that study actually began with his research into melatonin, I believe, which is interesting.

**Mitch:** Yes, I think it started there, and serotonin also leading the way in some ways.

**Nyck:** It's a bit of a rabbit hole itself, isn't it?

**Mitch:** It is. Just this simple compound existing in our bodies as we know it and going through the blood-brain barrier, it opens up a lot of questions and we still don't know a lot about it.

**Steve:** I often think of DMT and similar psychoactive substances as kind of like the channel control on a television, where you're just switching channels and you're tuning into something completely different. You'll flick over the switch to tune into some wacky show that's hard to believe, and then, you know ...

**Mitch:** Well, I think there's a lot of things happening now looking at consciousness as that receiver.

**Steve:** Yes, absolutely.

**Mitch:** It's not just the psychedelics that will take you on that, but the brain being a receiver of consciousness as opposed to the generator of consciousness, which I'm sure you guys have talked about.

**Nyck:** You mentioned Aldous Huxley before the *Doors of Perception* where the *Doors* got their name from, of course—from that very famous book. I always remember reading that book way, way back then, and that notion, as you were talking about there, that consciousness, or the availability of information, is so vast, but the brain actually acts in normal consciousness like a funnel, and funnels just what's necessary to maintain the status quo; to keep the default mode network in operation and just make sense of reality. But to open that funnel up, either with psychedelics or meditation or other practices, perhaps, allows a flood of other information to come through. Looking back, of course, that seems quite naive, that metaphor now, and yet at the time, for me particularly, it was very opening. When I read that, I went, 'oh, oh, I see. There's actually all this out there and I'm just receiving', as you said, 'I'm channelling, I'm tuned into just a small part of that; and what's the rest of it?' And that, for me too, in one way or the other, has been a bit of a quest in my life too.

**Steve:** Yes, very interesting. It's also interesting to look at different substances—DMT, but all the many other psychedelics that are out there—and how each of them has its own particular flavour to the information or the way the information is presented to you, and yet there are these core elements that come through, regardless of which channel you're tuning into—this core concept of the unity of consciousness.

**Nyck:** It's pretty universal, isn't it? I guess that's still the research that hasn't been finalised. We don't really know that rabbit hole, where we're going, but the truth is that people with these kind of experiences, one way or the other, have this kind of unity consciousness experience at some time or other, that seems to be coherent with other people's experiences, not to mention telepathic possibilities that exist in those sort of spaces as well.

**Mitch:** Yes, whatever cultural baggage or viewpoint that you're coming from, those seem to be pretty common, which is a fascinating thing to explore. Particularly with DMT, the commonality of the experiences is something that should not be ignored.

**Steve:** Exactly, yes. We might take a break and then come back and just talk about how you approached making that documentary.

**Nyck:** Here on *BayFM 999*, you're on *Future Sense* with myself, Nyck Jeanes, Steve McDonald, and our special guest, Mitch Schulz, the Texan Elf, back from the US of A. You can also text in, as always, with anything you'd like to add to or comment on or bring our attention to here at *BayFM*.

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**Nyck:** On *BayFM 999*, you're on *Future Sense* with Nyck Jeanes, Steve McDonald and Mitch Schultz this morning. We're talking today and little bit about alternative media, and particularly with our special guest, Mitch Schultz's experience in producing and creating, well, let's say, transformational media.

**Steve:** I guess it's been almost a decade now, Mitch, since the release of *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*.

**Mitch:** It has. It's amazing that it's been that long. It was 2010 that we came over and did a five city tour here in Australia.



**Steve:** Was that towards the end of the year?

**Mitch:** It was. It was actually through December and the first part of January.

**Steve:** Yes, because that coincided with Rick Doblin's talk at the *Entheogenesis Australis* Conference in Melbourne, which I went to, which was key in the launch of our research organisation *PRISM* (<https://www.prism.org.au>).

**Nyck:** Just to remind our listeners what *PRISM* stands for ...

**Steve:** Psychedelic Research In Science and Medicine.

**Nyck:** Very good. Had to test him to make sure he was on the ball today.

**Steve:** So Rick Doblin came and spoke at a conference in Melbourne, called *Entheogenesis Australis*, which is a remarkable international-class event that happens from time to time in Melbourne. It's still going—all credit to the boys and girls behind that—and Rick offered some money at that conference for anyone who was interested in getting some research happening here in Australia, so I volunteered along with a bunch of other people and we actually launched *PRISM* in early 2011 as our local non-profit research organisation. We're just about to start our first official legal psychedelic study in Melbourne pretty soon, at *St Vincent's Hospital*, which is very exciting.

**Nyck:** With psilocybin.

**Steve:** Yes.

**Mitch:** It's great to see that that's pushed forward with you guys and that you've stuck around long enough to make all that happen.

**Steve:** Yes, it's been a long, slow road, but we're getting there.

**Nyck:** Rick Doblin, in particular, was the founder of *MAPS* (Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Medicine; see <https://maps.org>) way back in '84 or somewhere around there.

**Steve:** '86, I think, or thereabouts.

**Nyck:** He's been really on the one path for such a long time, and you could ascribe a lot of success in this area of the new psychedelic revolution to his absolute dedication.

**Steve:** Absolutely. He started on that road, I think it was in about '86, shortly after MDMA was made illegal in the US, and I think it was 2003, if I remember correctly, before he actually got a research study happening, so Rick Strassman did get in earlier. I think it was about 1996.

**Nyck:** 1995, I think that was.

**Steve:** Was it? Yes, so he certainly led the way.

**Steve:** Mitch, you mentioned in the break that you screened *DMT: The Spirit Molecule* at the *Chapel of Sacred Mirrors*, which is Alex and Allyson Grey's (<https://www.alexgrey.com/cosm>).

**Mitch:** Yes, they had just moved up to upstate New York out of Manhattan, and we interviewed them in their Manhattan location back in 2007, so it was it was nice to kind of have it come full circle and then screen there for a small—well, I say small group, I think we had over a couple hundred people show up and the facilities were not made for that at the time—and then we came over here and went on this five city tour here in Australia, which really kind of solidified me being part of this wonderful country.

**Steve:** Absolutely, yes. From the time that you started shooting to the time of release, how long was that?

**Mitch:** Roughly, it was a five year process from the time that we started talking to Dr Strassman, putting together kind of the nuts and bolts of how we wanted to do this, then the interviews started in 2007; and then we didn't actually release digitally and to the general public—particularly in North America—until late 2011.

**Steve:** Right, and I know that you shot, what, over 100 hours of footage, which got compressed down to ...

**Mitch:** 1% of the 100 hours of footage, so the post-production process was interesting. I learned a lot. We interviewed fifty just amazing minds. Dr. Strassman was key in helping us put together the dream team, if you will, of who we were going to interview, and really, once we sat down in New Mexico for the first round of interviews, it became very clear that this thing was going to be much bigger than just a psychedelic film—that we were going to be looking and talking to some people that have been exploring consciousness in general, and what reality is, in some ways. DMT played kind of a key role in that, but there was much more to it than just the psychedelic effects.

**Steve:** Absolutely, and then the movie was, of course, very well received once it was released, and I think it was picked up eventually by *Warner Brothers*, right?

**Mitch:** Yes, *Warner Brothers* was the distributor, through *Gravitas*, and we shot right up to the top of the *iTunes* doco and independent list, which was great, and then had about a seven year run on *Netflix*.

**Steve:** Yes, and for a lot of that time, it was one of the most downloaded movies, right, on *Netflix*?

**Mitch:** I think the first two weeks—I had to go back and look at where I got this information—but for the first two weeks it was on the *Netflix* platform, it was, from what I understand, one of the most streamed films on the platform.

**Nyck:** In a way that's quite amazing, because we're talking already about a few years ago, and so much has already transformed in this space now. We're talking about it here on radio in this way, very openly today, which even five years ago, probably we wouldn't be doing very often, in very many shows, even here. Were you surprised by that level of success of this subject matter at that time?

**Mitch:** You know, yes and no. I knew that it was going to have a strong impact and a connection with people that I see, well, from my own experiences, but it was also having to explain that to *Universal* and to *Netflix*, to say, look, there is an audience out here that really wants to see this, and it's not just the underground audience; and it has expanded and reached so many more people than that. Some of our estimates are that probably over 60 million people have potentially seen this film.

**Nyck:** Wow. So do you see that as that the time is ripe for this? Is that how you interpret it? Because I know that we're sort of on the same page—we feel this; we know this

between ourselves—but is that true outside the bubbles of our experience? It would appear to be so.

**Mitch:** I think so. I think even people that are not necessarily in the psychedelic scene or community have responded well to this film. It at least opened up people to some ideas that may not have been part of their normal day-to-day, and so I think that's happening more and more. It's interesting, when travelling around the world, I'll be in the most random place, sitting in a bar or sitting at a restaurant or some coffee shop, and somehow DMT comes up and someone will say: 'oh, have you heard about this film?' It feels great to have that experience, but it shows that I think it's getting out there a lot and that people beyond, again, the psychedelic community, are really responding to it and interested in the content.

**Nyck:** One of our themes today is the transformational potential for media now, because arguably media has been less than willing to approach subject matters that don't fit the status quo, so to speak—don't fit the agenda of the business model and so forth; don't fit the agenda of legal drugs, for example, and pharmaceutical companies and so on—you could talk about a lot of stuff here. It would seem, though, that in recent years, over the last decade or so, a lot more media is being produced with a focus on, in one sense or another, consciousness raising, for want of a better term.

**Mitch:** The Internet obviously playing a huge role in that—in people being able to produce their own content and get it out there. There's still a lot of the top-down approach, but there's this grassroots element, too, where there are large, large audiences out there that want to see this type of media and other media that is about transformation.

**Steve:** And I guess the documentary, also, was riding the wave of the psychedelic renaissance that was happening. Ayahuasca, which has played an enormous role in that renaissance, of course, also contains DMT, so there's a parallel thing happening there, and a lot of it, particularly in the ayahuasca rollout, has been underground because of the legal issues. I mean, of course, DMT is not legal either, and yet, I guess we don't really have a solid understanding of how widespread its use has been globally, but the indications are it's been very, very influential in the consciousness shift over the last 10 years or more.

**Mitch:** And it's interesting, the messages and the experiences that people have within those experiences tend to push for that transformation—seeing the planet in a different light and how people want to change themselves to be able to fit in with that.

**Steve:** And of course, the movie has got a tremendous following, and your social media presence, I think, has played probably an important role in the whole psychedelic renaissance, just bringing people together around the movie, which our good friend Matt Humble from San Antonio has done an amazing job of co-ordinating over the years.

**Mitch:** Big shout out to Matt Humble. He's done a great job with our social media.

**Steve:** Yes, we're talking about the *DMT: The Spirit Molecule Facebook* page in particular there.

**Mitch:** Yes. It's been great to kind of expand on those ideas and not just have a continued focus on the DMT, but what else is happening in that space, and how are people coming to this, whether it's psychedelic-oriented or if it's meditation or just in general about transformation and what's happening on the planet.

**Nyck:** What do you see, trend-wise, when you say that? Because that's really interesting. What are you seeing?

**Mitch:** Oh, where do we start here?

**Nyck:** It's a rabbit hole, so you go where you like; you can go down it any way you wish.

**Mitch:** Well, being in America—let me just pull it back to my own country—Steve had asked me about that just a little bit ago, and the media, playing such a huge role from the top all the way down, right? Who's producing the major news cycles all the way down to independent media and where all those things are converging and how people are gathering, getting their information and how they're understanding it? Sometimes people can say it's completely conspiratorial if it's going to come from this element, and there's not a true line anymore as much as there used to be. People touch with these ideas or this type of media because of the control mechanisms that were in place before. We're just having little bits of access. It's definitely playing a role in, at the very least, opening up people's minds to some different ideas and helping push that transformation.

**Steve:** That just made me think about DMT appearing in more mainstream pictures or series. I remember there was a scene in the *Sense8* episodes on *Netflix* where they were doing DMT, I think right up at the start of that series.

**Nyck:** A lot of people see that many movies actually are influenced by some of the producers, writers, directors and other creatives being involved in this kind of work, perhaps tripping down to South America and doing ayahuasca retreats or similar, and bringing that that back to their work. Do you see that in America? You think that's true? I mean, it's a bit of an urban myth, but it's probably pretty likely to be true.

**Mitch:** I think there's a lot going on in Hollywood, as well as in tech, with people having experienced these things and then bringing it back and putting it into, again, not just the stories of the media, but into our technologies.

**Nyck:** Films like *Avatar* clearly have a resonance with this kind of work in terms of the tribal perspective from there.

**Steve:** Yes, there was a definite link to ayahuasca in that movie, without a doubt. And of course, there's a whole *Burning Man* movement which has grown, very much stimulated by psychedelics, I'm sure, and very much connected to the IT industry in the US.

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**Nyck:** You are tuned *BayFM 99.9*, on *Future Sense* this morning.

A couple of texts came in. We might just deal with one of these right now—a nice little comment: "Hi, guys. Could that universal consciousness and the mysterious dark energy be one and the same thing?"

**Steve:** Absolutely, we agree with that. That's kind of the meaning of unity of consciousness, is like everything is one thing, right?

**Nyck:** Very good.

**Steve:** Well spotted.

**Nyck:** Thank you.

So we're talking to Mitch Schultz here about his experience making *DMT: The Spirit Molecule*, the film, and the purpose and meaning and the status of where the media is as a transformational media for consciousness; for our growth, for our evolution on the planet. Particularly since you're in America, you've probably got a fairly good take of what's going on down home there, in the United States of. Wow, what's it like living there in this time?

**Mitch:** Lots happening, obviously, and it's been a little challenging, I have to say, you know, with people pushing back in so many different directions. I hate to go right to left, and everything in between, but it's been a challenge, and the fact that we have guns and these guns are becoming a bigger issue, I think more and more people are feeling targeted—no pun intended in that at all—and it's getting quite serious, just due to the fact that guns are so prevalent there.

**Steve:** Yes, after the shootings—the one in Texas and the other one that happened soon afterwards—I saw a clip of *Times Square* in New York where there was a motorcycle backfire and people just ran, which was quite scary. Clearly a lot of people are on edge.

**Mitch:** People are on edge, yes, and that's what I guess I'm seeing more and more of. In some ways, people talk about just getting numb to what's going on, but it doesn't feel like the numbness is there. It feels like people are more and more on edge. I mean, that just a backfire is enough to send people running should say a lot.

**Steve:** Yes, very interesting times. We've been talking most recently on the show about the growing crisis of confidence in government and in our institutions, and how 2020 is actually shaping up to be a fairly disruptive year. It's looking like we're in for a major financial hiccup of some sort early in the year, and then, of course, we've got the US elections in November, 2020, and the question hangs over that: how people are going to believe the result?

**Mitch:** Well, and that's the tough part right now, that a lot of people just don't know where to go. Traditionally they've had their answers from the mainstream media or the government, and they're questioning all of that across the board, and, yes, there is a lot of information out there and a lot to decipher.

**Nyck:** I mean, for those people who are still sort of aligned, or tried to be, or want to be, or think they should be aligned to one of the major parties or not, the Democrats in the United States seem to be in incredible disarray, with a hell of a lot of potential

candidates—not many of them are going to see through—and some of the leading candidates, like former Vice President Joe Biden, proving to be a bit of an idiot, often.

**Mitch:** A bit of?

**Nyck:** In the way he's expressing himself, so how do you see the Democrats facing off against Trump at this point, from inside America? What's the tone going on there?

**Mitch:** Well, you know, the Democrats in general have always shied away from utilising the anger that they've kind of had bubbling up, but that has started to shift because of, I think, all the gun issues now. There was a heated response from a lot of the Democratic candidates. What is interesting as well, though, is that the Republicans, back in 2016, had 20-plus candidates when they were coming back in, and so now a similar thing is happening with the Democrats where they have a whole range of people coming in to push back.

**Steve:** Yes, and this is a general trend globally. We're seeing a fragmentation of the major parties as we're evolving beyond this black-and-white one party versus the other party scenario, which we've had for a long time. We're seeing a lot more diversity come into politics for various reasons, and the major parties are fragmenting along all sorts of different lines.

**Mitch:** One of the interesting things the other day is that Elon Musk backed Andrew Yang, the Chinese-American man running for President and very much aligned with the tech industry, but has, I think, a wider range of views than most of the other candidates, so Elon Musk jumped on board.

**Steve:** Is Andrew Yang aligned with one of the major parties?

**Mitch:** He is a Democrat, but it was a big endorsement, needless to say.

**Steve:** Interesting.

**Nyck:** What about Marianne Williamson, who many would know in the sort of New Age realm. She's a very well-respected New Age author, and of course, she wrote that famous piece that Nelson Mandela used in his acceptance speech as President of South



Africa back then, about what we fear most is our greatness, so to speak, to paraphrase, and not our weakness and our faults. She's there, and of course, highly unlikely to get very far, and yet she has got a lot of people in the United States who give her a lot of time and a lot of energy.

**Mitch:** Yeah. I don't know much about her personally, but she has risen quite a bit. I think Elizabeth Warren has shot up, more so than Bernie Sanders, and with Biden—Biden seems to be the obvious choice for a lot of people because it's still kind of safe in some regards. But at the same time, he's showing some of his cracks, if you will, to say the least.

**Steve:** I was most impressed by his recent statement in what looked like a campaign speech, where he assured everybody that they put truth over facts.

**Mitch:** Right. Yeah, well, that's the thing. There's so much going on that this whole black-and-white two party system is just not cutting it anymore, and that's what we're getting to. So those that are expanding out of that and at least finding ways to explore other ideas, I think, ultimately, are going to have the success. I don't think Biden can really deliver on what he hopes to, and what a lot of people hope for him.

**Steve:** Yes, and it's probably still a slightly outrageous attitude or perspective at the moment, but it looks to me like some time down the track, we're probably going to see a break-up of the United States. That's the way it's shaping up, along the same lines as the way the USSR broke up years ago.

**Nyck:** That would be interesting. Do you see that as a possibility? Clearly, a state like California, which is one of the richest countries, so to speak, in the world, anyway, by itself—it's something like the fifth largest economy in the world, I think.

**Mitch:** Yes, and Texas also, but I could see the United States breaking up probably into four or five different countries, almost—almost like an EU—that have very different backgrounds and value systems depending on where they were.

**Nyck:** And that's key, isn't it? That the United States is such an incredible country in this particular way. 330 or so million people there, probably as divided as any nation on the Earth in terms of its internal consciousness. There are pockets of, and major cities and states, which represent a whole kind of worldview. Take guns, for example, in this place, and then go across America, and there's a completely different view over here, and this

pretty much applies to many different things now. I'd suggest there's almost more disparate views inside of America than within any other country in the world that I can think of.

**Mitch:** Yes, and I think the diversity leads to a lot of that, but it's interesting to look back at the start of the US, see what we came from, what we were fighting against, and now how all that is shaking out again. I could see that there could be a time when the US breaks up, when those states really taking on their state rights. There is a big power struggle between the national government and the states—that could be an issue.

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