



Can We Save the Planet? | Craig Leeson

[00:00:00] Guest Intro – Craig Leeson

Darin: Hey everybody, welcome to show. This is Darin Olien. This is the Darrin Olien Show. What's going on? What are you doing? How's your life? You constructing it, creating it, generating it, lining up everything you want to do in your life and making sure that you break it down in steps, that you can actually start to achieve things. Because as we know, if you are not telling yourself what you want to create, life is going to tell you and then years go by time goes by. My next guest I just have so much respect for this guy, Craig Leeson. He is an award winning filmmaker, television presenter, correspondent media entrepreneur. He is passionate about the earth, about the oceans, about surfing and diving and exploring, being in and on and with the planet. He has done this his entire life in incredible award-winning documentary called "A Plastic Ocean". 2017, really gave a lot of attention to the horrific nature of this Fatal Convenience we have in plastics and how it's in our mother earth being buried, not being recycled. If you haven't checked it out, please check out "A plastic ocean". And he's got an epic new release coming out soon to hit Imax and then it will expand from there. But it's called "The Last Glacier" that's coming out later this year, and we dive into it. Listen, the last thing you need is more people telling you how this planet is screaming for us to change. Well, it does and we need to, I kind of zero it all down to common sense because all these things that we are doing is harming us directly. And that chain of events, that these plastic water bottles, these food containers, these wrappers, whatever it is, we don't see it as a problem in our everyday life.

Darin: But I want you to see it as that because we as the billions of people on this planet, can change our buying habits, our voting habits of our dollars, and switch it for other entities and opportunities to create a new future for ourselves. Craig and I had a great time on this podcast. We share an advisory role for footprint, which is the largest creator of alternatives to single use plastic on the planet using plant-based fibers, recycled fibers, and creating differences in food containers and you name it. We are proud to be with a leader like footprint because we need hope. We need the big boys to make big changes so we all can get behind and footprint is doing that and we are certainly proud to be on their team so that we can all make changes. We all can eliminate the plastics that we are using. Can we do all of it? No, it's almost impossible because it's embedded into everything we do. But we can get better. Don't be into shame or blame or any of that stuff. Just do better and Craig is such an advocate for us, giving us visual representations for what is actually going on in the world. We all can't get there, but Craig gets there, he explores there, he lives there and he shows us directly what's going on. So, sit back, relax, open your expansive vision of a new world by facing problems directly and then making a change.

That's it. That's all we need to do. So, enjoy and listen with my great friend Craig Leeson.

[00:04:34] Podcast Intro

Darin: You are listening to The Darin Olien Show. I am Darin, and it is my life's mission to find and share healthy and sustainable ways of living. In this podcast, I talk to inspiring



people and professionals from around the world to uncover ways that we, as humans can improve our lifestyles, strengthen our mindsets and take better care of this beautiful planet we call home. If you are looking for motivation to take the next steps towards a happier, healthier life then you are in the right place. And I am stoked that you are here. So, let's do this. This is my show, The Darin Olien Show.

[00:05:19] Interview Commences

Darin: Craig, thanks for jumping on dude. We work together with Footprint because we love them. They are scaling opportunities, alternate opportunities than using plastic to 9 of the top 10 CPG companies in the world. because we know we have to turn off the faucet of creating plastic. At the same time we need to gobble up and get rid of the waste that's here. And I know from your first big film, Plastic Ocean was literally pun intended, diving into the challenges around that stuff. Dude I just want to get them all excited? But now we are going to also talk what's behind you right there, The last. As we call an America Glacier, and quite an interesting way that you went into telling that story, which let's unpack it in a little bit, but I just want to welcome you, thanks brother.

Craig: Thanks very much. It's great to be here and we have got some big issues confronting us over the next couple of decades. And like you, there are issues that I really like diving into and mainly because I just have this feeling, we have got to leave the next generation a better world and I don't want my legacy to be something that they have to struggle with. Certainly I have had a great period on this planet and enjoyed everything that environment has afforded me. So that's something I would like to leave the next generation and ultimately why I do what I do with the films I make. And I am sure there's a fair bit of that likewise, with yourself.

Darin: you have had a career in journalism and filmmaking and television and public speaking, but more importantly you have spent your life enjoy what this blue planet is all about and how precious it is and that's a thing. And even with your films, you have to be there and go there and get dirty and be a part of it. That's a different thing than sitting back and having talking heads. Tell us about the problems and everything else behind it. And I am assuming this because it happens with me. You learn from the people, you learn from the land that you are on. You learn from the people that have dedicated their lives to set issues and that's really where they embody and imbue you with that to then be able to at least tell that story or tell part of that story in a way that hopefully gets transcended into some sort of actionable thing.

Craig: Yeah, for me it's not good enough just to read about it or to hear about it from someone else. If I am going to tell a story, I need to see it for myself and I need to hear it from the people that are witnessing what's happening on the ground. that are involved with the science behind studying the effects of things like climate change, single use plastics, biodiversity loss. And ultimately I think that's the way we get to the truth and we get the audience to understand the truth. I like to take the audience with me and to experience the discoveries that I make because I am not a scientist, I am not an expert in these fields.

[00:08:32] Telling an authentic story through film



Craig: But I really enjoy the process of discovery, the adventure, the experience of meeting new people and hearing their stories. And ultimately I think there has to be some translation in order for everyone to understand a lot of these stories. Science, as you know, can be very dense, particularly on issues like climate. There's so many aspects to the climate story and to how we understand that humans have intervened in the natural cycles of climate that scientists tell it and they have to tell it in a way that they can all understand each other in a very scientific way. But that's not something that the late person, the average person on the street can understand. So one of the jobs that I see that I have is to unpack that science and unpack that language and be able to tell those stories in a way that we can all understand. So I go into my films, particularly when I write them the scripts with the basic line that an eight year old has to understand what I am telling them because if we can reach the eight year old, we can reach everybody else. And ultimately, I love to reach young people because what they do is they get excited about what they are, listening, what they are seeing, what they are learning. And they take their parents along to the films and they help create awareness within their own households. And certainly that's been the experience I have had with the films that we have made on these issues.

Darin: That's such a good point because I too have seen that when you strike the chord with the younger generation, in a weird way, Craig, we have become apathetic to even our modern-day world. We have normalized the way quote and quote we do things, we have normalized buying a plastic bottle of water, we have normalized wrapping food in plastic, we have normalized the way we heat our homes, how we produce things. We have normalized all of that stuff. And a certain point we have become blind to the truth of how this stuff is actually being created. The industry behind it, the profits driven with it. And that's the thing. And like you said, unpacking it to the degree of people then getting to understand it. Because you can't do it by graphs alone. You are just not going to get excited by that. What do you think is one of the best tools right now for people to shake out of their own apathetic dreams and modern day conveniences to go, Oh shit, I didn't know.

Craig: Yeah, look, that's a great question because ultimately the best tool is experience. And certainly I have seen that happen in Australia, my country, which has gone through the worst bush fires that they've ever experienced. And in the last year and a half we have had the worst floods we have ever had. And I have been there during both of those events. I just happened to be back in Australia at that time when these events happened. And it was such a profound experience for so many people who had their homes burnt down, who lost family and friends in the fires who have lost their homes two or three times in the four floods that we have had since.

[00:12:00] What are the best tools for change?

Craig: And as a result of that, what we have seen is we have had a change of government from a conservative led government that was sponsored by oil, gas, and coal to a government that first of all has just legislated to recognize climate and have cuts in carbon emissions by 2030 of 43%. And also to push for Australia to become a renewable energy superpower. And that's because people personally experienced what climate crisis means and they weren't willing to put up with a government or elected representatives that refuse to acknowledge that purely because of the profound profits that are coming in from those



industries. So they voted for change and they didn't just vote out the conservative government and voted in a more socially democratic government. They actually voted out many of the top elected representatives that had held cabinet positions in parliament who not only lost the power of government, but also lost their seats, so are no longer politicians. And what happened was we saw a big push towards independence and green's, politicians with environmental agendas and specifically climate agendas and climate was the big issue of that election. So Australia's turned the corner and now is moving towards a renewable energy future and to limiting its climate footprint. And that's because going back to your question, people felt firsthand that experience. Now of course we don't want people to have to go through that experience because it is ugly, it's emotional, it's a terrible thing. So through the power of films, we are able to bring those experiences, those personal experiences to audiences that don't live in areas where climate has yet reached. It will, if it hasn't already, it will reach you no matter where you are on the planet. But we are able to tell their stories and show why and how they went through those experiences and why we don't want other people to go through those experiences. So, film is incredibly powerful and it's certainly the films that I have made have put me in a position where I have been invited by governments, corporations, petrochemical companies, airlines, all sorts of companies to go and explain to them what I am seeing when I am in the mountains or when I am in the modern-day ocean because many of these executives don't have access to that information or that personal experience and they are willing to learn.

Craig: And they also want to know how they can become part of the transition from legacy industries, how they can be part of the change of the financial and economic paradigms, these models that have failed us up to this point and how they can change but in an orderly transition because we do have to have an orderly transition, a disorderly transition into these new paradigms of course can be almost as bad as what the climate crisis will bring itself. So that conversation is going on and I find that the films are great tools to help with those discussions.

Darin: You brought up a lot of incredible things there and it's really important for people hitting the drum on whatever side they are talking about. We have to work together.

Craig: Yes.

Darin: So that those legacy industries, thank God, they are starting to just like, okay, we need to invest. There's enough pressure, even if it's not in their hearts focused quite yet, they are getting enough pressure to start making those policy changes. We need to do those together because there isn't this dreamlike world where we going to have a light switch, we are going to turn off the petrochemical companies and turn on electrification, that's horrible idea. It's going to blow things up and have untold consequences. I don't know if you know, but we filmed all of season two of Down to Earth in Australia, talked to families, we are in Kangaroo Island. Nothing is more powerful when you are in the dirt. And when you are hearing from the people, and that's where taking those messages, man, and listen, season one, this property I am sitting on was annihilated. I lost everything from a 96,000 acre fire. Those things, unfortunately many people wait far too long, but it's like films and what you are doing is transcending and bringing the emotion to someone so that they can potentially move the needle before it punches them in the face.



Craig: I think one of the characteristic traits of humans as a species that probably where we fall down the most is we do want wait for that. As you say, that punch in the face, I describe humans as being like water. We always take the path of least resistance, which is why we have accepted plastics, which is why we go to a drive thru hamburger place and take a hamburger without actually thinking about where the meat has come from and the person who's had to slaughter that animal on a daily basis or that animal, the life that it's had or even the wheat that's been grown to create that bun. The processes behind that small piece of food that you are about to put in your mouth.

[00:17:21] How we rationalize plastic use?

Craig: Because that's what consumerism is about. And the companies that promote it don't want us to think about that because if we didn't stopped and thought about that and then about our footprint, we would never eat these products. We would never fly an aircraft, We wouldn't do many of the things that we do. We certainly wouldn't go to supermarkets and accept the fact that a coconut or a banana, which has the most natural perfect packaging is wrapped by that company in plastic wrap, just so it appears fresher to you. We wouldn't accept these things, but we do because of, to what you said earlier is convenience. And look like you, the executive producer of our new film, The Last Glaciers who lives Not Far from you, lost his home in the fires. And we went back to his house after the fires and I was with him when we walked into his house, which had been devastated. There was nothing left of it, six feet of ash. And we did that because he wanted people to understand what it feels like to be part of that process of the climate crisis and to have that slap in the face, that punch in the face that you talk about. So we do need to wake up to your point, and it's a lot easier to tackle something before it becomes a major problem than it is as that problem is engulfing you. And unfortunately, we are now at that position where we are just about to be engulfed by this issue of climate by diversity loss, and by the single use plastics issue, which is coding the earth like a disease. And as we now know is in our food chain and compromising our own human health.

Darin: Yeah, man, it is so gnarly. I have been researching and working on a book and just diving in and out, incredible talk with another advisor on Footprint, Dr. Leo Trasande, right? So talking about all those endocrine disruptors and you know, we are eating a credit cards worth of plastic every week, and that stuff's bio accumulating that just goes on and on. So on the one hand it's hurting you on so many different levels, just consuming it. And then it's connected to a non-integrated way of growing food anyway, directly connected to hurting the environment. So our systems are failing us from small to large. What I love to talk about is common sense of it all. we have gotten so apathetic to what even what we are consuming, you know, wrapping our food in the plastic and the pfos so the food doesn't stick to the paper, what the hell are we doing? And really can't count on any of the regulatory bodies protecting us either.

Craig: To that point, just go back, I did a talk in Palm Springs, two 1600 chemical scientists who just, all of them horrified by what industries that they are working with and for, and many of them actually work in the industry of cleaning up many of these chemicals that we have released into the environment. And you mentioned pfos perfluoro, alkaline substances, which we allowed and our regulatory bodies allowed to be used in our Teflon coated fry pans



to be sprayed into the material on our couches and furniture into our drapes and on our beds into almost everything we use without, first of all doing testing over periods of time that allowed us to understand what these chemicals could possibly do for us. And that was when it was first released. Today, we know that these chemicals are deadly and they are persistent. They stay, they get passed on from animal to animal, and they are causing all sorts in all manner of human health issues to the point where many countries are now banning them. But how do we get to the point where our regulatory bodies, the people we actually elect to take care of our best interests, how do we get to the point where, or how do they get to the point where they allow these chemicals to be put into the public domain before they are properly tested. Now in America, you are allowed to do that. You can bring a chemical to market without it being tested. And until it's proven that it has some adverse effect on humans, it's allowed to be in that marketplace. In Europe now you have to actually prove that any chemical that you place in any product that goes to market actually has to be tested and it has to be proven that it won't damage humans and other species before it is allowed in that market. So there is common sense that has occurred there, but it's not global yet. And I wonder to this day, how we got to that point where we allowed this to happen.

Darin: Yeah, and that's a thing, 2022 known carcinogens, known endocrine disruptions, known infertility compounds, pfos and teflons and thalates and you name it. And yet the audacity of some of these regulatory bodies writing blog posts or letters about it and still yet doing nothing to regulate it, which is just insane to me. So it's really about this idea of it's hurting the individual and if you divorce nature so much, if it's hurting you, it's hurting nature. You cannot have one without the other that's what's so astonishing.

Craig: Well, that's a great point you made there, those two words, divorce nature, and this is where I think we have got it wrong. We have divorced ourselves from nature. We think nature is something that we keep outside the house, at the front door. And our job is to keep it as far away from us as possible. So it doesn't hurt us or mimos, we don't understand. We have lost the understanding that we are nature, we are part of nature, and that without nature systems, we simply will not exist on this planet. And as we assist those systems to collapse, because we don't take care of them, then what we are witnessing is our own demise. And to that point, in my lifetime, 68% of all wildlife on this planet has been destroyed, has gone. And most of the reason for that has been because of human intervention in some way, shape or form. And as a result of that, we are seeing life support systems collapsing in many ways, whether they be glaciers on mountaintops or coral reef of the Great Barrier Reef, or the destruction of phyto plankton because of warming seas. And of course, as you know, every second breath we take comes from the oceans, comes from plankton that provide us with the oxygen we need to breathe. And yet we are polluting the oceans, we are heating them up to a degree now where corals are dying, phyto plankton are dying and all other species are being threatened. And we need to get back to an understanding that we are part of nature and as we harm nature, we harm ourselves.

Darin: Yeah, I mean that's such a good point. And people don't realize that obviously the Amazon is vital and important, but the majority of the oxygen on the planet is coming from the phytoplankton in the ocean. And that's the thing that, again, we are mostly blue man. If that ocean is going sideways, that's not a good plan. So for me, being a blue collar kid from Minnesota, I like to break it all the way down so that people understand this climate change



is not so big, but it's actually so granular that it's affecting you and those choices of those plastics and those polyesters and those clothing and that all of that stuff is supporting industry that is having massive effect and all of those things that you are using hurting you now. That bip, that's easily wiped off, that's pfos and that's around your child's neck, that's crazy. So we need to wake up to that granular understanding, and that's where it's like the films and the education brings that emotion to the regular person so that we can go, Whoa, whoa, whoa, those products not a good idea. Those cereals not a good idea.

Craig: Yeah, and look, it's so important to empower people and help people understand that they can make a difference. They can make a difference to their own health starting right now simply by choosing the food that you eat and making sure that that food comes from healthy, clean sources. And it's not expensive to do that. It just takes a little bit of research and it takes changing habits. And habits, particularly at our age, are very hard to break, which is why single-use plastics are a harder habit to break for someone of my generation than it is for someone from generation Z. But we can do that. We can become smarter consumers. Of course, the greatest way to solve many of these problems come from systemic change.

[00:26:30] Empowerment through changing habits

Craig: we have talked about that, it comes from banning single use plastics. And that's what we have to do. I mean, circular economies are great for existing plastics, but we have to stop producing this stuff. But at an individual level, you can improve your health so much by getting rid of single-use plastics from out of your home, from getting rid of forever chemicals like pfos, by not using pans coated in Teflon, get a cast iron pan, cooks a steak better. Anyway, it's a far better flavor for you. And by getting rid of these chemicals, buying furniture that doesn't have forever chemicals in your home, getting these chemicals outside of your area of health putting air purifiers in your home that can detect and get rid of these chemicals is another way of protecting your family. So, it is very easy to make that start. And in fact, where these changes have been measured and there are institutes that have done medical studies on families that have, for example, simply changed their vegetable purchases from those that are GMO and sprayed vegetables, normally industrially crop vegetables to local market sourced organic chemicals. they have noticed a change in their blood levels, in the chemicals, in their blood levels within a month. That has changed also the way that, for example, their mood, their ability to get to sleep at night, their health has improved dramatically within a month of simply changing their diet. So, these are things that are very easy to do in terms of the execution, but difficult to do in terms of changing your personal habit. And that takes a bit of self-control.

[00:28:06] Barukas Ad

Darin: How organic is our organic food in reality? Do you know the process and the impact of the foods you are eating and the impact it has on you, your family and the environment? Probably not right. That's why I do fatal conveniences. Unfortunately, most of the store-bought food is full of unwanted chemicals and preservatives and certainly lower and nutritional quality. Introducing my favorite superfood Barukas. The healthiest, most delicious



tasting nut on the planet. Raising the bar of organic is not easy. However, Barukas is a brand-new superfood, entirely cultivated in the wild. That means no chemicals, no pesticides, and no artificial irrigation. Because after discovering Barukas on my global search for the world's most powerful superfoods, my team and I knew if we were going to share this gem with the world, preserving its natural process was vital. With that being said, every single bag of Barukas, is handpicked in the Savannah and just as wild as the next one. It's like a coco dusted cashew mixed with a peanut. Baruka is not only tastes amazing, but it also has 25% fewer fat calories, more protein than almost any nut, more fiber and infinitely more antioxidants than ever recorded in a nut. And it is the best tasting every five pounds of baruka sold allows us to plant a bazetta tree in the wild. So, whether you are looking for a new healthy snack in between meals, a delicious peanut replacement, or just a quick source of powerful complete protein, join us. You can discover more about Barukas and our mission on our website, barukas.com. That's B-A-R-U-K-A-S.com. And you know what, I am going to throw this in as well. 10% off promo code. Use DARINPOD10 to get 10% off your purchase.

[00:30:26] Interview continued

Darin: So, dude, we got to talk about The Last Glacier because that's been your journey for the last what, four, five years?

Craig: Yep.

Darin: You worked at Extreme Sport. I checked out your trailer. I was like, oh my God, I can't wait to watch this thing because again, I think you are also finding your way to open up people in a different way to see this stuff. And I wanted you to talk about it more because I know for me when I've went and around with indigenous people, they have been there for generations and they are like, oh yeah, in the last 10 years this has happened, that has happened. And so, your muse of the glacier, I am so interested in what you discovered and what people you filmed shared with us.

Craig: Yeah. So, it was four years and 12 countries that we went to so, film the documentary. It started out after a plastic ocean. I just wanted to do something that was not so depressing. And so, I've always been interested in extreme sports and what drives people to do it. And the producer of the film, Malcolm Wood, is into extreme sports and a particular kind called Para-alpinism, which is where you use skills such as ice climbing, alpinism and paragliding to climb mountains and then fly off the top of them. And we wanted to do a documentary because there's only a small group of people that actually do this sport. But when we went into the mountains, and this was four years ago into the European Alps to start filming, it was the middle winter.

[00:31:52] The Last Glacier

Craig: And instead of white snow-covered peaks, we found brown. This was odd to me and so I started talking to people who had been living and working in the mountains for decades. And they said to me, look, this is the new normal. This has been going on for the last 30 years where the mountains are heating up, the glaciers are retreating, we are going to lose our jobs, it's getting more dangerous. And this was something that I hadn't really understood. I immediately went down and spoke to the local meteorologist in Grano in France. And he



told me that yes, what the stories, the anecdotes they were telling me were true, the science backed it up. Certainly, the atmosphere was heating up. The mountains were getting warmer, the glaciers were retreating, it's all measured. And I went back to Hong Kong where I was living at the time, and I gave a talk. And at that talk at the event was a scientist from Grano, from the oldest ice to institute on the planet Jerome Chappelle's, who showed me and presented a project called the Ice Memory Project, where scientists went around the planet taking core samples from different depths of glaciers and in those cause of frozen bubbles. And in those bubbles are gases that go back a million years. So, they can tell what methane levels were, what the CO2 levels were, what nitrous oxide levels look like, what the temperature was, what water vapor was in the atmosphere going back from today, back a million years. And it tells a very accurate story. And what it showed was that over the past eight ice ages during those million years, there had been this natural oscillation of these gases as the earth spun around the sun, as it got closer to the sun, it heated up, it's got further away, cooled down. And these gases as they were released and contracted, just went like this up until 160 years ago. And then there's this hockey stick that goes like this, me saying, Quadruple CO2 doubles, nitrous oxide goes through the roof temperatures spike. And you know what happened 160 years ago? It was the start of the industrial revolution. And so, what they are also finding within these gases are not just the increases, the spikes in these chemicals, but they are also finding sort. they are finding the result of burning coal that's actually in the layers of ice. So, we know first of all that temperatures have spiked enormously that these greenhouse gases have spiked and we know that humans are responsible for it. And that was a story that I hadn't seen scientifically explained in a way that I thought everybody could understand. So, it was profound, it was an awakening for me. So I went to Malcolm, my producer, and said, look, we have got a real story here to tell. And we decided to pivot the documentary from being one of just about extreme sports to being one about the climate. And we decided to follow these scientists around the world and film what they were recording, and to use the extreme sports as an exciting vehicle, an exciting narrative bark to tell the story.

Craig: And to do that, it was decided to train me who's not a mountains guy. I have a fear of heights, I am an oceans guy; to be able to get into these mountains with these scientists to be able to tell this story. And we thought that was good for two reasons. First of all, it's an exciting way of taking the audience on the journey, come and experience what it's really like to throw yourself off a mountain with a Hank Achi above you and paraglide your way down. Learn what it's like to actually train to be able to do that. But we also thought that the fear that you saw in my eyes, which is real by the way, as we are climbing these peaks above 19,000 feet, we thought that the story about the challenges that I was facing was very much an analogy of the story that we as humans are facing, the challenge we are facing with the climate. And so, we decided to tell it in a way that an eight-year-old could understand that would create awareness about the client. So, it's not a film for scientists, it's not a film for people who are environmentally aware. It's a film for the ordinary person, the average person who doesn't understand climate perhaps, who would go and watch a documentary that had some excitement about these extreme sports and along the way, way learn about the climate and why we have reached this crisis point.



Darin: What a brilliant way and as you know, film making presents its own as you say yes to something. The information that's given is like you have to pivot because it almost, once you say yes to a project, it now is its own entity. Kind of presenting the story in front of you and the fact that you dove in yourself and we are facing your own fears. Because everyone's going to acknowledge that, because it's gnarly from that perspective. So that creates an invitation for people and I love what you said because that was one of my questions. I haven't seen directly science like that where it's literally 160 years. Here's soot here's the gases, here's the pollution. And yeah, on the one hand I've read on the hallow scene events similar to what you are talking about, these 10,000-year cycles where you are like, oh, it cools, it heats, it cools, it heats maybe we are just in a cycle. But at the same time, in the back of my mind I am always like, well, we are doing stupid shit, like regardless, I can't understand the science enough. I just know that we are using fuels that are unsustainable. we are using pollutions and plastics and we are creating waste. So, for me that's just insane and we can do a lot better.

Craig: Absolutely. And look, when I try and explain to people what it's like being on planet earth, this tiny island, people often forget we have just got this very thin atmosphere that surrounds us, that protects us from oblivion, it protects us from radiation that's constantly bombarding the earth, that protects us for this enormous heat. It protects us from all this UV. And it does that because it's a shield. Now, when you encompass something in a shield, whatever you do within that shield affects because it can't get out. There's nothing beyond their except the void of space. So, it's like putting yourself, locking yourself in your car and smoking cigarettes.

[00:38:11] Finding solutions to the plastic problem

Craig: And eating takeaway food that's pushed through the window. Eventually your car is going to be filled with plastic and wrappers and empty drinking cups and straws and you are not going to be able to breathe because it's filled with the carbon dioxide that you are expelling and all the smoke that you have been putting into the atmosphere from the cigarettes. And that's not going to improve. And that's what we have kind of got with the earth because we are trapped in this vessel that is protected. And the more we burn fossil fuels, the more they go into the atmosphere, the more they supercharge the atmosphere and that carbon pump that regulates life that allows plants to grow. When they take in carbon dioxide and synthesize and turn it into energy and give off oxygen, that carbon pump is completely interrupted. And that's the very simple message, a very simple concept of how it works. But certainly, it's a lot easier to think of it in that way I think, than when you dive into the science, as I said, which can be very dense.

Darin: I think that's a great example. It's like this microcosm if you put yourself in this case, a car or a bubble. So that's this thing. And so, if we do the same thing with our precious planet, if we are doing same thing in our cities, hell, if I just leave all my trash out at front and I tell the guy not to pick it up, what do you think shows up? The bacteria, the worms, the bugs, the vermin, the rats, because that's part of the system. So, it's almost like the earth has a fever. There's stuff that's being created here by our hand, the billions of people. I just go back to



when you break all of this down, why would we do things knowing that it hurts people, individuals, insects, bees, animals, our fellow neighbor. And when you continue to open up the aperture, you are seeing the pollution, you are seeing that, I mean, I was just reading an article, the heavy metals that are in our soils is so astonishingly scary from pollution. It's just like you look at every little aspect of this and it's like, we got to get our shit together.

Craig: Yeah, well there's a study that just came out that showed that you would think it would be healthy to have your own chickens and grow your own eggs in your backyard. But the study came out and showed that hen eggs that are propagated at home actually have heavier more concentrations of heavy metals because the earth in urban environments, in most urban environments is so polluted. And you are seeing that happen through the fact that these hens go out, they eat worms, they eat grass, they eat seeds that are in your home and in your backyard. And of course, the grasses and foods and animals and insects that are growing in that environment are also feeding from the soil and the what the soil produces. And they are pushing these chemicals and these heavy metals further up the food chain. When you look at that. And at the same time, there was another study that came out that said the air we breathe now is just so polluted that it doesn't pass the many world standards in terms of safety levels. So, we have polluted absolutely everything and it sounds really grim and it's very easy to become despondent about it. When we finished making a plastic ocean and I watched the film, I was so depressed, we had been traveling for four years, we have been making the film for eight years, and you would think we would just become numb to what we were seeing and witnessing, but we were so depressed by what we saw at the end of the film that we decided we had to go out and change the third act and introduced solutions because we didn't want people leaving the cinema feeling there was nothing they could do that it's just time to give up. So, we went and did that and we spent another six months doing that. And we did the same with The Last Glaciers because traveling the earth, going into mountain areas and seeing these glaciers that are disappearing, seeing the Himalaya, for example, which is considered the Earth's third pole because it has that much ice.

Craig: It doesn't just provide water for the Hindu Kush watershed and 2 billion people globally in the products that are grown in Asia and distributed throughout the world. For all of us it also acts as a reflector and as heat comes in through that shield into the earth, it reflects heat back into the atmosphere and it regulates the planet, the temperature on the planet. But since the seventies, more than a third of ice has disappeared from the Himalaya, which absolutely shocked me when we arrived there where we found that out. And this new study that had been done by the Scientific Institute, put together by the eight countries that surround the Himalaya area called Esmond, they said that by the end of the century, more than two thirds of the Himalayan ice would have disappeared. Now that provides so much for so many people, as I just mentioned. And it's not just the locals while we were there. There was migration already happening, many villages that rely on glacial water and run off, for example, for hydro power, those glaciers had receded so far up the mountain in some cases disappearing completely that they no longer had a hydro power. So, people were on the move and as they move from these mountain areas, they go down into the big cities and they put more pressure on those city areas. And so, the resources become a lot more difficult for people that are already there. And that's another point that we are going to face.



One of the conclusions we came to in the last glaciers was as these polar ice caps melt and these glaciers melt, the migration that it's causing is what's going to be the greatest challenge that many countries will face. Because as you mentioned, this is a blue planet.

Craig: 71% of the earth is actually water that doesn't leave a lot of ground for 9.8 billion people, which is how many people will be on the planet by 2050 to live on. Now when you live at the available land, most of that's area, there's only a small percentage of that that's actually habitable and that's along the coastlines and some of the mountain areas. And so, there's going to be intense competition for the resources that's available in these areas that will remain habitable. And people won't care about borders, they won't care about laws when they are trying to feed their kids and hydrate their family. People are going to move; we are already seeing that happen. And many governments, I've spoken to national security advisors all over the world and move; they say that the biggest threat to them isn't other countries. In the case of the US, it's not China, it's not North Korea, it's not Russia. It is mass migration caused by climate change.

Darin: Yeah, it's full-on climate refugees and it's happening right now, I didn't know that. I was in Bhutan in 2007 and I fell in love Himalayas and the hydropower and you are just like, you are celebrating, you are utilizing the natural resources. So obviously there's a lot going on. And the thing that fuels me the most is in order for things to change, Craig, we have to face it. So, you are facing it, you are looking, you are finding the scientists, you are facing it. Just like any relationship, if you can't have the hard conversation, you are going to have a shitty relationship. Both are going to be become distant, you will probably get divorced and separated or whatever it is. So, it's like the same thing with us. We have to turn and face this world and face what we are doing that isn't working or is not working very well. That said, I think there's a lot of incredible people, organizations, and systems that are starting to emerge. So, from your perspective, what are some things you are excited about from that solution side of things?

Craig: Yeah, great question. First of all, it's young people. I love giving talks all over the world to young kids because they have a long future. And look, this is part of the problem, it's generational. Most of our political leaders, corporate leaders, they are in their fifties and sixties and seventies. They are looking at a very short future. So, for many of them, they don't have the energy to change. They don't have the energy to be part of the change of the systems because they just want to take what they think is owed to them, whether it be a bonus or retirement, 401k, whatever it is. And they want to go and enjoy the rest of their life. But for young people, that's not the case. They have got 60, 70, 80 years ahead of them.

[00:46:46] How young people are going to solve climate crisis

Craig: And hopefully longer with the way that medical research is going. And so, they have to be, they have got to be optimistic. So, they give me optimism. So, in terms of what encourages me and gives me optimism, it's young people. But when I go out and talk to corporations and I dive into systems that where we do need change, such as in the political arena, such as at corporate level with proper corporate leadership, there is so much going on. The finance industry has a big role to play because the finance industry lends money to governments. It lends money to corporates so that they can build the companies that they



do, they can do the research and development that they need. And so, if we can encourage the people who have the hands on the leaves of finance-to-finance appropriate development, research and design and design is a big thing. It's very much a part of the solution. Single use plastics were just a terrible design. So, design failure, if we can design single use plastics, we can design another product that replaces them, that actually does good for the planet, we have the capability of doing that. And if we put the money into young entrepreneurs and research and developers, we can help them achieve that. That's actually happening when I talk to financiers who have turned the corner, who have worked in industries that have not produced goods, that have been good for the planet, have seen the light and now want to pivot. People like Mark Carne and others who are the heads of European Banks and UK Banks and institutions. they are telling me that there's \$145 trillion that they and their colleagues and people within the financial sector they are working with are putting into capital markets to fund renewable energy, to fund renewable energy projects, research and development. That is a lot of money and that's not money that they are forecasting. That's money that's going into markets now. So, what I find is that governments are generally reactive, they are not proactive. So, I look towards what's happening already, what corporations are doing, what young people are doing, what research and development and universities, what they are doing as opposed to what governments are legislating.

Craig: Because by the time it gets to government and policy makers, it's generally already happened. And what you find is that legacy industries that are going out the door like oil and gas lobby, very hard at a political level because that's their last gasp. That's the last place that they can get influence to help them see them through the transitions that are coming. And that's what's actually happening with oil and gas. Now we have to transition. We are transitioning and we are seeing universities, we are seeing insurance funds, we are seeing governments in countries all over the world that are transitioning their investments out of oil and gas portfolios because they recognize infrastructure there is an asset, a legacy asset there, stranded assets if you want to call it that. And they are not going to make their money back off that in the years to come. So, they are better off taking that money and putting it into what is coming up towards the future. And that is renewable energy, solar, wind, hydro, all of these other ways of making energy that are kind to the planet and much cheaper as it turns out. And we are going to see governments pivoting towards that because there's no point building infrastructure for a legacy in industry like oil and gas that's only going to last another 20 years. you are much better putting all that money into infrastructure that has a long future. And that's what we are already seeing happen. And you know, you can go to place like Costa Rica or Scotland, Scotland, which held COP 26, the climate change conference last year is 98% renewable energy. Most of its electricity already comes from renewable energy. Where I come from in Tasmania where carbon negative, we have got hydroelectricity. Our most of our electricity comes from river systems and solar and other systems like that. So not only is it possible, it's already being done in places around the planet and people who say, look, you can't do it. You can't build electric cars because the energy it takes to build those cars is still coming from oil and gas. they are not seeing that energy is actually being extracted from renewables already to make those cars. we have already seen, for example, carbon negative steel now being produced from renewable energy and we are seeing manufacturers like Volvo who are the first to actually take that carbon negative steel and put it into the manufacturing process. So that's what gives me hope. I am seeing it happen, I



think in the media we need to help bring these stories to light so that other people see what we are happening and so that they also understand there is hope there and that we have got this small window of about eight years to make this transition happen. We just went in the wrong direction because we were lured by the promise of what money could provide us in terms of improving our lives, which of course it has in some ways in terms of the medical field and everything else, but ultimately, it's just allowed us to trash the planet in a very quick way. When you look at the time scale of how long this planet has been here and how other organisms have developed and looked after it until we came along. So, we have got a lot of work ahead of us. The good news is it's doable, but we have to do it now. We can't wait for that smack to the face because it's going to be too late by the time, we pick ourselves up off the ground and realize.

Darin; Yeah, and it's such a good point. And most people won't realize that we had many of these solutions already. I mean the Chicago subway was run on air compression until Edison said, no, no, no, let's use electricity. It's things like that and there's many stories like that. Popular science magazine had all this stuff on the cover and Nicola Tesla had all of these incredible technologies and free energy technologies and then the God of profit started taking hold. So, I agree and that time is now and I just appreciate you, dude. I appreciate what you are willing to do, the time that it takes to produce films like you have produced is like that's blood, sweat, and tears. And also, I also want to give a shout out, you lost a DP in the process.

Craig: Yes, yep. Cody Toddler was our director of photography for The Last Glaciers. Unfortunately, he was training for the Himalaya Expedition in the Sierra Nevada in California and he suffered a collapse of his paraglider and hit the ground and didn't recover unfortunately. You know, we go through, and it's not unusual in these sports to have these accidents happen. We witnessed several deaths on the mountains while we are there as well and film them. But we all were aware of the dangers and we spoke about this before we fully embarked on the film and were all very adamant that no matter what happened to us as individuals, we wanted this film to be made. We wanted it to go ahead. And we have worked with Cody's wife Cherice to get the film finished. She came with us to the Himalaya. She was incredibly brave and she wanted to carry on his story as well. And the effort that he put into not only making films in environmental films, but also helping people like the Nepalese recover from the earthquakes of 2015. And there's a couple, they had done a lot of work there. So, the film is in memory of him and we are very proud that he was able to be a part of.

Darin: Great, beautiful work, man. I am just honored and grateful that we are able to have this time and just grateful for all the work you have done and hopefully we can do some more stuff together in the future. So how can people see the film? What's the scenario? When do you think it's coming out?

Craig: Thank you. So, we have made a special 40-minute version, which is being released by IMAX now in North America. If you go to the IMAX website, you'll see where it's screening and all the dates. It's about to be launched in Europe where I am; I am in Italy at the moment



and at in fall and in Australia on October 14. And we have got the long version, the cinematic version, which is an hour and 40 minutes long and we are still working on how best to release that, which distribution networks we can to get that out. And as a director and a storyteller, we would rather people see and also witness the long version, which goes into a lot of the science and a lot more depth. we are hoping to bring that to people within the next couple of months and fingers cross be able to share it globally.

Darin: Right on Craig, I am honored and thank you for the time and you are the best dude.

Craig: Thanks mate and likewise with the work you do. And I look forward to working with you in the future and the work that we are doing for companies like Footprint and creating awareness around what they are doing and making some more content because ultimately, we enjoy what we do, don't we? And making content and creating the awareness can be tough, but it also brings great reward and it's something that I enjoy immensely and I know you do too.

Darin: 100%. Thanks brother.

[00:55: 22] Podcast Outro

Darin: Thanks for tuning in to this episode of the Darin Olien Show. I hope you took something valuable away from this conversation that will help improve your life in some way. If you would like to learn more about my incredible guest, you can find all of their information in the show notes on my website. If you enjoyed this episode or even you didn't like it, please rate this podcast, the team and I value your feedback so we can continue to give you the most value possible. We want you to get the most out of every podcast. So please rate, subscribe, share - anything you feel called to do. I truly appreciate it and I love and value your support. So, thank you and I will meet you in the next episode.