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[00:00:34.980]

So if you can't afford a subscription, there's an option. And Sam Harris Digg to request a free account and we grant 100 percent of those requests. No questions asked. Welcome to the Making Sense podcast. This is Sam Harris. OK, brief housekeeping. Last week, we ran an experiment with a live Zoom call, which many of you seem to enjoy. I hear the chat was delightfully anarchic. I didn't see any of it myself. I was too busy zooming, but I'm told it ran off the rails and in some ways, but to the amusement of many.

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And my surprise guest for that conversation was Glenn Lowry, who always makes sense. Thanks again to Glenn for taking the time. Anyway, that was fun, and I think we'll continue doing that periodically and these conversations will not be released on any other platform, they're not going to be on YouTube. I don't think they'll live on my website. I part of the point for me is to have them be totally informal and ephemeral. So this is one of those situations where you are either there at the time or not.

[00:01:52.910]

But that seems like the best use of the format. Well, today, I'm speaking with John McWhorter. John is a professor of linguistics at Columbia University. He's also a contributing writer at The Atlantic and he hosts the podcast Lexicon Valley. Anyway, as you'll hear, I'm quite excited to get John finally on my podcast, and he did not disappoint. The man is a fount of good sense on the topic at hand, which is what he calls the new religion of anti-racism in America.

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And we discussed many aspects of this topic, we talk about how conceptions of racism have changed over the years. And now the ubiquitous threat of being branded a racist. We talk about the internal contradictions within identity politics, we talk about the strange willingness among progressives to lose the 2020 election, we discuss racism as the all purpose explanation for racial inequality in America, double standards for the black community, the war on drugs, the problem of police violence and our misconceptions about it.

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The enduring riddle of affirmative action, the politics of blackface and other topics. Anyway, I really loved this conversation. And I think you might as well. And I bring you John McWhorter. I am here finally with John McWhorter. John, thanks for coming. My pleasure, as you know, and I think other people know as well, there's been a standing invitation to have you on the podcast, I have long celebrated your contributions to our public conversation.

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And but you you have been a a coy podcast guest. So we were just talking, you know, offline a moment ago. What finally changed your attitude toward doing this? Well, you know, it's really it's pretty mundane, I think, to an extent that would surprise some people. I am a very meat and potatoes sort of person. What I most enjoy doing is sitting in a chair and either reading a book or writing. And there's a part of me that always thinks that what I'm supposed to be is a writer.

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And I've been doing this for about 20 years now, this this race commentary. And I slowly seen that it's gotten to the point that you have to deal with the spoken word that to really be part of the conversation, you can't just write any more. You also have to talk.

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And I'm always a little bit behind when it comes to technological things in general and also the fact that I really do. I am so happy to be here right now. But for me, writing is more fun than talking because you have more control over it. So for a very long time I thought of podcasts, even though I do one of my own, as kind of the other thing, I figure my writing will stand in for me better than anything that I could say off the cuff.

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But I've come to realize that podcasts now occupy the place that writing did a long time ago, and that if I'm not going to do podcasts other than my own, then I might as well not be trying to communicate anything.

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So I'm trying to change my ways, and especially in the case of people like you who do this so well.

[00:05:29.510]

But it's taken me a while. There's a part of me that really just wants to be sitting in a chair with my nose in a book.

[00:05:36.150]

Yeah, yeah. Well, I, I can certainly echo that in my case. I think I'm just a little bit ahead of you in having this epiphany. I mean, if the goal is to actually reach people and alter the currency of good and bad ideas, diminishing the latter, you just have to go where the minds are. And it's just, you know, we just reach so many more people this way. So this is great. I'm very happy to finally have you here.

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And it's your one of the the background facts to this conversation is you are, as a writer, working on a book that the the world is truly waiting for. I don't know of another example in my lifetime of knowing someone is busily scribbling and knowing the truly oppressive need to take delivery of this manuscript out in the world. Is there any undue pressure on your side here as a mother just to give not to give more away than than you want to in this conversation?

[00:06:35.180]

But, you know, you're working on a book that is I'm hoping and you've telegraphed a little bit on this point will be the argument we're waiting for against what you've called the the new religion of anti-racism. Hmm. And how's it going and how is it feeling to be writing, you know, as the the flames of moral confusion crests the hills and begin descending upon our sleepy little Hamlet?

[00:07:05.870]

What a calendar year this is. I don't think I've ever been asked how a book I was writing was going, but the truth of the matter is that I feel no pressure of anything. It's coming out as if it was driven by some kind of water pressure, like from a showerhead.

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I am on fire with this one and I can barely keep ahead of the news in terms of what I'm writing about and why it upsets me and why I think people need to hear what I have to say. This one just came. I told my agent I can't help it. I know they're going to be people who hate me for this, but I have got to write this one.

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It's going to come out of me. What are we going to do with it? And so, yeah, Chapter five fell out of me last week and that's the fifth of six chapters.

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And so I'm pretty much finished.

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And really, this book is just going to get across that this critical race theory infused way of looking at things where people who are like Mitt Romney are on top and everybody else is laboring on the bottom like slave oarsmen in some ship a very long time ago, and that our notion of identity has to be about defining ourselves against the white Hegemon.

[00:08:14.570]

And the idea that we're supposed to go back to thinking of ourselves as stamped by what our racial membership is and exactly the way that old times Southerners wish that black people would.

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The whole dialogue is something that.

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Enlightened people are going to have to learn how to stand down if we're not going to go over a certain precipice and I try to get across in the book, and this is something that I hope people won't miss, that there's no point in viewing the people who I'm calling the elect, you might call them the jokesters, etc. For me, it's the elect because they do think of themselves as elect in that way.

[00:08:53.070]

It's not it doesn't make any sense to see them as monsters, to say that they're coming for your kids, which they are.

[00:08:58.530]

But to say that they're coming for your kids is not to imply that they're trying to do some kind of harm, that they have frowns on their faces.

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They really do think of themselves as ahead of the curve. They think of themselves as bringing a kind of good news. And that's with a capital G and a capital and to the world.

[00:09:13.980]

And they can't be reasoned with is important. We have to realize that there's no point in trying to have conversations with people of those politics, of that philosophy along the lines of saying that they need to understand that we should enshrine free speech.

[00:09:28.620]

There's no point in saying to them, why can't you be open to other opinions? That makes as much sense as trying to teach a fundamentalist Christian that they shouldn't have faith in Jesus, literally. And I don't mean that rhetorically.

[00:09:40.320]

There is no point in engaging with people of these kinds of politics.

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What we have to do is work around them so that we can go on forging progressivism of the kind that we thought could bear fruit. And what that means.

[00:09:54.810]

And this is the final chapter and it's going to actually be the toughest one, because I want it to be constructive rather than destructive, is that we've got to learn how to stand up to these people and say no. And it can only be the occasional weird person like you or me who doesn't mind an argument and for some reason doesn't mind when people yell at them. Everybody's going to have to learn that you stand up to this sort of person. You tell them that you are not going to agree with them, and that includes that you do not think of yourself as, for example, a racist.

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And then this is something that is going to be a major adjustment.

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And goodness, we've had to make a lot of adjustments this year. But I think it's important that people learn how to make an adjustment, which is that they're going to get called a white supremacist, for example.

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You're going to get called a dirty name by a person who's usually educated and or very articulate.

[00:10:40.770]

And they're going to call it to you loudly. They're going to say it again and they're going to spread it on Twitter. We have to realize that that can happen without the sky falling in. And I'm gathering examples of people who actually have the nerve to stand up to it, who keep their jobs, who watch progressivism continuing to happen.

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Because if we don't do this, we're going to see our institutions taken over by this perversion of what progressivism is, by people who genuinely think of themselves as doing good. But we can't be scared of being called a racist to such an extent that we let all of this utterly misguided, under thought out, manipulative nonsense shape what we thought of as intellection the arts and moral philosophy. Hmm. Yeah, well, I should remind people of your background as a linguist, because it's relevant here, because this trend we are opposing in so many cases seems to have language on its side.

[00:11:44.040]

Right. And you I can only imagine that you as a linguist must be amazed at some of the the clever, if not albeit cynical, moves made with language here and and the kinds of people who get taken in by them. So there's a few examples I have in my head here when one recently on Twitter, you may have noticed that Joyce Carol Oates, the quite famous, accomplished, well regarded fiction writer, lacking any irony or self-awareness, wrote on Twitter the other day that antifa means antifascist, right?

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So that there could be nothing wrong with this group simply because of how they had branded themselves. And I mean, I think they're you and Steve Pinker should probably show up at our house for foreign intervention. I mean, that's just amazing to see. But even more widespread is the effectiveness of the branding of Black Lives Matter. Right. As though, I mean, it has the exact same pretense of being morally unassailable. And everyone seems to be taken in by it, as I mean to say, any word of criticism about Black Lives Matter as an organization or as a movement or, you know, with respect to its tactics or or, you know, extreme positions held by some of its loosely affiliated members to utter anything other than mere assent to the branding is to be on the back foot trying to argue that you're not racist.

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And it's very clever and really insidious. So I would just what has been your your linguistic ride through this morass in the last few months?

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Well, you know, I wish that I could talk about dynamic and frightening synergy between the use of language and the ideology here in question.

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But to tell you the truth, I think that a lot of it really is just a matter of what people's ideas are not.

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To an extent, people are seduced into thinking these are valid notions because of, you know, large, often Latinate words. You know, intersectionality is a pretty cool word. If you don't want to say tear things down or if you want to feel like you're doing something constructive by teaching people to walk

around feeling guilty about their privilege, then saying dismantling structures is satisfying. I don't think it's even cynical. I think it's satisfying because dismantle and structure are biggest words and they've got a certain crispness in them.

[00:14:11.430]

So you can say dismantling structures and that kind of holds a lot of people off because you are and this is the main thing I don't think is so much language. It's that people are afraid. We have gotten to this weird point. It's very interesting. Starting in the 1970s and continuing through the 80s, we have this massive psycho social revolution in this country, unprecedented in the history of the human species, and that is that the typical person comes to think of it as a horrible thing, to be called a racist, practically like being called a pedophile.

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That's that's progress. It doesn't mean that their minds are completely swept of all possible racist feeling.

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But that was new. And it's at the point where people even under 50 are beginning to forget how new that was. Forget if you're under 30. But that was new.

[00:14:57.030]

But once you've got everybody in that place now, here comes something a few beats later where what it threatens you with is you being tarred as a racist in public that wouldn't have been processed as such a threat in even 1980. A lot of people would have just said, basically, if you think I'm a racist, fuck you.

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And we think of that person when we look back and we think of them as callous and they would have been.

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But now ordinary people, the ordinary good person is so scared that they will do things that they don't mean. They will say things that they don't believe.

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And so one of them is that you don't say anything about what can be put under that umbrella of Black Lives Matter. And it's not necessarily that people don't, in some part of their mind, understand that a lot of this stuff doesn't make any sense.

[00:15:38.910]

But they're afraid.

[00:15:40.290]

They're afraid of being called a name. They would rather avoid being called a name, then make sociopolitical sense. And part of why it gets up my nose, as Mrs. Slocum used to say in Are you being served the British sitcom?

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Part of what gets up my nose is that it's condescending what any white person who is paying court to this sort of thing is doing is saying black people don't have to make sense. It seems like black minds don't matter. So I will say anything that I need to say to keep these people from embarrassing me in public and making me feel bad about myself. And if it doesn't make any sense. Well, black people kind of don't, do they? I'll bet some people in their bedrooms are saying that when black people can't hear and yet we're not supposed to talk about that either.

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So it's all very disturbing. But I don't. I think in saying this is we may differ on this, we may not I don't

think it's cynical. I think very few of these people are thinking to themselves, we are going to take power and we're going to do it by manipulating language and by playing with people's minds. I think these people are quite sincere and that's what makes it harder. It's almost harder to have to hurt somebody's feelings when they genuinely think that they're giving you a present.

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But unfortunately, the people in this case who think they're giving us a present are you know, some of them are very naive.

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I think more of them are if they're white, they're hell bent on feeling good about themselves, is not racist, and they'll let that Trump sense. If you're a black person who subscribes to this sort of thing, you have been tricked by this sort of person and a lot that was going on going on before into thinking that what makes you significant and what makes you special is your victim status rather than you as yourself.

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That's understandable, given black people's history, that you might need to reach a little further than some people to find a sense of well-being and significance and security. It's completely understandable. But that means in this case, that a lot of people think that the most interesting thing about themselves is what they suffer in terms of what people who aren't them are or maybe aren't thinking.

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That's not a healthy self identity. So all of this is just a complete mess. But no one is malevolent in these cases. We're not dealing with cynics. We're dealing with people who are tragically misled.

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Hmm. That's really interesting. I think based on the cynicism point, maybe I'm putting the line between good and bad faith at a slightly different point. I guess. So let's just I want to plunge into a conversation about racism here. And, you know, what the what it means as a as a term, what it should mean and just how the mission creep of the concept is causing a lot of suffering to step back for a second. The reason why I want to talk about this is I'm I'm really worried about this trend.

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We're speaking about that the the capture of our institutions and our language by this, I would say cultic behavior. I mean, you know, I've referred to it as a cult of weakness. You're talking about the very much the new religion of anti-racism. There's a there's a kind of moral extortion going on. And, you know, it's a a Stockholm syndrome. And I mean, all of these, you know, analogies seem apt. And I'm worried about it for two reasons.

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One, I'm worried, you know, in the near term that it will be the thing that gets Trump re-elected. And I you know, I put myself in second position to I think no one in my desire to see to see Trump's political career ended in November. I think it'd be nice. I really do think that, you know, this will be why we get four more years of the Orange Goblin in the White House. But beyond that and a much longer term concern is that I think it is doing and will do damage to race relations in this country, and it'll do precisely the damage that I think it's pretending to expose in many cases.

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And the analogy that came to mind recently, I was on someone else's podcast and I just wound up blurting this out. But I think I stand by it. I mean, what I feel like is happening over the course of many months is analogous to what happened, you know, on a single ghastly afternoon when the O.J. verdict was delivered. Right. When you saw you talk, you know, those of us who are old enough, remember this, as I assume you do saw on you split screen on every television in the country.

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We saw this these opposing reactions to a single moment and to see. And so when white America, you know, America, obviously there were exceptions in both camps, no doubt. But the general experience was of white America seeing black America erupt in jubilation over this verdict. Yeah. And this is where this is why I use the term cynical here, because it's not that you can't explain that reaction in terms of, you know, all the terrible inequality and grievance that has preceded it.

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Right. I mean, we have the history of of white and black America to explain that moment. But within the frame of that trial and that verdict and that moment, there was something cynical about it, because I think it was widely understood, if not universally understood, that he was obviously guilty. Right. And everyone knew it and everyone knew that. Everyone else knew it. And so there was no sense that all of these black faces that were, you know, tearful in joy over the outcome here thought.

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That this man hadn't nearly decapitated his wife and a stranger, right? They were playing a very different game that had nothing to do with truth or justice in this case or putting an actual murderer behind bars or setting an innocent man free. And so that's where the maybe cynicism isn't the right rubric here, but it's a lack of purchase on on what is true that I think is so awful here. And it's you know, again, the analogy has to change a little bit to cover the phenomenon we're talking about now.

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But it's the dishonesty and bad faith, the notion that you need to break a lot of eggs to make this equity omelet. And so, yeah, there's a lot of people who we know really aren't racist who are going to go down for this because, you know, it's just this is this is the way we have to play our political game. That's the kind of thing that is so toxic. And so, anyway, I put that to you as an analogy, but I mean, that that's the I feel like that the spirit of that dissociation from honest conversation about facts.

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I mean, I guess the the frame here would be there's something like a default position now in polite society, you know, at The New York Times that, you know, in universities, in corporations, that every disparity, every significant disparity we're seeing between white and black America, whether it's violent crime or educational outcomes or employment, you know, how many Fortune 500 CEOs are of whatever skin color? The only way to explain those disparities is either white racism or institutional racism or systemic racism and nothing else need be thought about.

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And to think about anything else is to essentially volunteer to be cast as yet another racist who doesn't get it. Or you get another, you know, troglodyte, another Archie Bunker character who doesn't get it. And there's a commensurate attempt to deprogram our whole society along those lines. And then, you know, we have this cast of characters like you, Ibram Kendi and Robert D'Angelo, spreading really the the doctrine of a new religion to, you know, to people who are avid to pay for it.

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That's where I'm placing the cynicism in this movement. Yeah, I see what you mean.

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And you touch on you touch on very important points. One of them is something that you see that can be really confounding, which is that the central members of this elect group are willing to hold on to this ideology, even if it means losing elections.

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And that's one of many things that shows that this isn't about politics. This isn't about dismantling structures. This is mainly it's a religious creed. We are like Romans watching the birth of Christianity. I genuinely think within my lifetime I have watched a really influential new religion information, isn't it, in its way. Interesting.

[00:24:28.540]

And that's why I saw, for example, Mark Lilah's book from a few years ago where he said that we need to tamp down identity politics with the purpose of getting this moron out of office, that a certain kind of person basically circled the wagons and called him all kinds of names, including white supremacists, because he wasn't with the gospel.

[00:24:48.040]

And it's the same way now where what is most important is to talk about institutional racism and call the requisite people white supremacists and to really, really annoy as many people as possible, regardless of whether it could mean that we have another four years of that narcissistic, insouciant simpleton as the person running this country.

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They really have a different sense of ranking than anybody would, except if it was a religion. And what you're talking about otherwise comes down to what really is the keystone problem of the whole way that we're being urged to see the race problem.

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And that is this idea that any problem that black people have, any kind of lag is due to racism.

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And it's partly you talk about language partly because of the way the use of the term racism has drifted. I don't think anybody was pulling the term along in order to throw up some kind of smokescreen.

[00:25:43.030]

But racism starts as Archie Bunker and his personal bigotry. And then starting in the 1960s, it comes to prefer not to active racism, but to results of racist behavior or even just racism, meaning that black people are behind in some way, such that you can say that the society is racist in that disparity by analogy with what racism originally was. And so it ends up being a very muddy term. Language tends to be muddy, but our new idea is indeed what you're mentioning that say, Ibrahim Kendi or Robin D'Angelo say, which is that if black people lag behind, then it's racist.

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And with Kendi in particular, you can feel him holding back the indignation because he really feels that if you know, if this.

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Perfectly obvious. And I don't know what isn't and the fact that I have to write a book saying this or two books saying this is an indication of the racism in question, although, of course, now we're getting into this extremely protean sense of what racism is.

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But the problem with all of this is that the racism in cases like this, whatever we want the term to mean, gets to be so abstract, so difficult to perceive that if it is racism, we're talking about such a Rube Goldberg game of mousetrap, that there's no way that you could meaningfully convince any dominant segment of any public of normal people that this made sense. And so, for example, you know, every summer the number of teenage and 20 something black boys in distressed communities who are killing each other goes way up.

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And we haven't wanted to talk about it. But that's been including in the wake of the murder of George Floyd.

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We've been talking about George Floyd and lately various other men who have suffered really grisly fates at the hands of the cops. And in the meantime, black men have been killing each other with abandon in city after city across the United States, as happens every summer. Now, that is a tragedy.



It has nothing to do with any kind of inherent depravity of the boys and men in question. But tell me how it's about racism.

[00:27:50.330]

And if you're going to call it being about racism, if you're going to talk about not having fathers, if you're going to talk about the fact that the war on drugs was created partly with black criminals in mind 50 years ago, all of that is so indirect at this point that to just hold your hands out and say that the reason they're doing that is racism in the way that, for example, a Kendi would.

[00:28:13.910]

It's just a vast oversimplification. Once again, white people are being told that it's OK to pretend that when race issues come up, you let your IQ go down about 50 points because apparently black people's IQ are just stuck there and so it won't work.

[00:28:29.180]

I can understand a lot of people's good intentions here. To be honest. I don't think that Kendi or D'Angelo quite understand the matter beyond this. I think, to put it most politely, I think neither one of them quite understand that these issues would be worth a kind of sustained sort of engagement. They don't realize how complex these things are, partly because although they wouldn't use the word, they're under the influence of a religion. How complicated is the Bible supposed to be beyond the world of theologians?

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But they're not thinking about it all that hard. But this is the proposition that will never work. Irish people, Jewish people.

[00:29:05.870]

There are certain people listening to me now who are just sitting on the edge of their seats waiting to say, but they were white. Hold on, folks.

[00:29:10.820]

I've heard it before. Think about it. Have I not heard that before?

[00:29:13.520]

Let me make the point. There were Irish people. They were Jewish people. They were Italian people. And they used to practically be thought of as black and well, they became white and they did it without there being any grand psycho social revolution in society. Now, the idea has always been, well, it wasn't fair to expect black people to do that. And you know what? Maybe it wasn't. And that's why we had a civil rights revolution that gave us a real boost.

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And nobody can deny that we did get a real boost in the 60s and early 70s there all sorts of things in place that allow that.

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So we get that real boost and there's a further psycho social revolution in terms of how the country thinks about racism. But the idea is somehow that it's only going to go that far because since we're brown, the prejudice against us is stronger. And therefore, this is what white people who are on the fence and I think white people even who wouldn't call themselves on the fence, but deep down, when they're having a drink, think about is that black people are always waiting for the rules to be different.

[00:30:16.220]

For us, there's this idea that everybody else just had to claw their way and that with black people, even though there was a civil rights revolution, still not enough. In our case, the rules have to be different. Now, we have people with lots of letters after their names who can put that sort of thing in very elegant language. I don't think they're doing it on purpose, but the intersectionality is one way of doing it.

[00:30:38.330]

People like Abraham Kendi's idea that we recast what we think of as intelligence and make it things like, quote unquote, desire to know. That's from one of his books.

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The whole notion that we recast what we think of as talent, the idea that we're going to reform the subject of STEM and change how we think of physics, etc. The mathematics is racist.

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All of this stuff, what all of this translates into is for black people, the rules have to be different. And, you know, people are sick of it. And it's at the point where it's understandable that they will be.

[00:31:08.960]

This whole new ideology is based on an idea that we're going to teach a significant number of people in the United States to have so creative, so transformative a view of how human affairs could go in this great nation, that change could actually happen. And, you know, it's not good. Part of the reason that I find all of this so disturbing is because they're poor black people who need real help and people who consider themselves to be speaking for them are sitting around in rooms, putting their hands up in the air and saying they understand their white privilege and teaching black people to think that their main role in society is to be the people who they should be grateful that white people consider themselves privileged over.

[00:31:51.700]

And now we have people who are trying to teach this to our children, sometimes with actual books. And in the meantime, Donald Trump gets re-elected and somehow all of this is progressivism. I seriously doubt it. But I say again, these people don't know what they're doing. They're not mean. They think that they're giving us the good news. They're like Mormons. But we just have to realize that those smiles on their faces are deceptive and we can't let them win.

[00:32:18.410]

Well, it really is a complex picture, but there's there are so many ways to notice that its complexity has to exceed at every point the simple diagnosis that it's white racism or, you know, systemic racism that is not yet fully rectified because white people simply don't care enough about it. That explains all of these problems because I mean, just to two things that occurred to me as I was listening to you, when you think about the variable of race and you notice that there are some communities like African immigrants, you know, Nigerian immigrants who succeed disproportionately, you know, per capita in our society right there among the most successful people in our society, white racism should be cutting against them in the same way.

[00:33:12.140]

Right. So that if really if it were that pernicious, if we just had racists and all these companies in Silicon Valley who just don't want black people in the office, it would show up there, too. And this is a point that Coleman Hughes has made in various contexts, just thinking of him.

[00:33:29.000]

And then there's also the fact that if you if you take the problem of, you know, violence that you referenced in a city like Chicago, that you can you really can set your watch by and you can know the color of people's skin in advance. I mean, this is what's so depressing, right? If you tell me that, you know, 30 people were shot over the weekend in Chicago, you know, I could make money all day betting that they were non-white.

[00:33:54.710]

Sadly, yes. Yeah. So to obfuscate that fact is, as you know, virtually everyone left of center is inclined to do at this moment is really kind of sanity, strange and totally unproductive. But when you ask what a non racist who would want nothing more than to solve that problem could do to solve it. Right. If we could, just with all of our goodwill of non racism or anti-racism, come in there and fix the problem,

what would that solution look like?

[00:34:25.220]

It's not whatever the solution is. It's not a matter of just making sure that everyone within a thousand miles of Chicago is no longer racist. Right. I mean, there we have a cultural problem there that is being expressed that it needs some remedy and people need to be given somehow a totally different aspiration. That has something to do with getting educated and something to do with integrating in polite society is just hard to see how even someone like Candy can think that.

[00:34:58.850]

That's the full story. Mm hmm. You know, it's it's an interesting thing. And I'm glad you brought up Nigeriens because, you know, there's a little bit more to the story that I was mentioning, which was that it used to be said that, well, white people are only going to let black people get so far.

[00:35:13.760]

Then after about 1990, we started having a high level of African immigrants to this country, not to mention Caribbean ones who'd been coming before.

[00:35:22.010]

And it's become painfully clear that these are people who are often subject to exactly the same kinds of racism.

[00:35:28.070]

It's not that racism doesn't exist, but they thrive. They make the best of the least.

[00:35:34.340]

Now, people who speak for black people, black ones and fellow travelers have a standing response to that, which is that those people have what's called immigrant pluck. And it's not fair to expect native born black people to have it. And, you know, one answer to that question is why? You know, what group in the history of the human species has ever had a motto of, yes, we can't. That's what that is. The idea is that you're supposed to be proud of saying, no, we can't be expected to have that kind of pluck.

[00:36:04.220]

What that is, is self-heating. And it's interesting because there's a grand old tradition of calling someone like me self-heating. Apparently, I lack confidence.

[00:36:12.710]

Apparently, I wish I were white. Well, you know what? I'm afraid not. And the truth is that from behind my eyes, I see people who are willing to settle for this weak vision of what black people are supposed to be as the ones who don't like themselves inside, which is part of why I almost never get really angry at them. I think to myself, if you don't like yourself, then of course you're going to settle for this.

[00:36:33.350]

And of course, you're going to get mad if somebody like me who does comes along and says that you need to buck up. I understand that anger. But yeah, the other problem is that we're not allowed to talk about that. All human groups have negative cultural traits and that being a descendant of African slaves at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st doesn't somehow make that untrue. And so instead of talking about the cultural problem, there's this assumption that you're saying that there's something biologically depraved about black people and you must have your wrist smacked about that.

[00:37:06.500]

But, yes, the question becomes, what racism would you withdraw to solve a problem? And so, for example, a lot of why black guys are killing each other in cities is based on.

[00:37:17.840]

Things that trace back often maybe two or three steps, but trace back to the war on drugs, so one solution might be to fight tooth and nail against that ridiculous war on drugs because its effect would be when you withdrew that, that things in the inner city would be quite different because there would be no drug turf to fight over.

[00:37:37.430]

There would be no tempting black market if you went to a lousy school and had a lousy life to use to keep the wolf from the door.

[00:37:45.530]

If there were no way of making half a living selling drugs and noticed folks, I said half a living. I know the factoid that none of them get rich except the occasional person, but still it keeps the wolf from the door.

[00:37:56.960]

If that weren't possible, then the same men would go find legal work and claw their way up from the bottom. And it's not fair that they have to. But that would be better than getting killed or going to prison for a very long time and leaving children to recapitulate their lives because their dads weren't there. Let's face it, it would be better.

[00:38:12.950]

But you don't talk about that too much. Now, many of the people will say, well, yes, we need to talk about that, too. But why is it that their favorite topic is just to get rid of, quote unquote, racism with the idea that, you know, protesters about what happened to George Floyd actually putting their bodies on the ground, white protesters and bowing down to black people standing up there above them is somehow more important or is even a necessary preliminary.

[00:38:39.020]

All of this energy that people are putting into, for example, putting out statements that their organization is going to fight white supremacy.

[00:38:47.420]

And the organization is like a school of nursing. The organization is a school of music theory. It's a math department.

[00:38:55.670]

All of these profoundly racist places. Why is any of that necessary when really all that energy could go into getting rid of a war on drugs that would solve probably about 65 percent of the problems that most ails you? Don't talk about it because we're talking about a religion. It's not because the people are dumb. It's not because they're crazy. It's not because they're mean and not to, you know, push this too hard. I don't think it's that they're cynics.

[00:39:18.590]

It's that they are pious.

[00:39:20.840]

They have taken on a way of thinking that means that you sequester a part of your brain for thoughts and responses that are not based on logic. And we can't say that that's crazy because most of the world's human beings are religious. Yeah, yeah, and I totally follow you there, that is I mean, I tend to think of it as a cult or what, but, you know, the difference between a cult and a religious total numbers of subscribers.

[00:39:45.670]

So it's you know, as it grows, it certainly could have the shape of a new religion. Let's talk about how to move forward. I mean, just what would a sane path through the wilderness look like and and how we should think about identity and just what the goal is? I mean, in my mind, the goal is something like a colorblind society. I mean, so that to truly overcome racism would not be to arrive in some

future where more and more of us are passionate, anti-racist.

[00:40:23.440]

It would be to arrive at a future where where we could never dream, really, that skin color could have moral or political significance. Right. I mean, just just as is the case with hair color today, I mean, no one is trying to figure out how many blondes or brunettes or redheads are in various positions in society and for good reason. Nobody cares. And if we perversely started caring about that right. And started advertising, our grievances with respect to hair color would have taken a significant step away from basic human sanity.

[00:40:58.180]

And so we have to recover sanity somehow with this variable of race. I mean, just to give a little context, I mean, anyone who's been listening to my podcast for a while knows that and who knows anything about my views about, you know, the nature of the mind and the nature of the self knows that I don't think a person should even at the end of the day, identify with the face that he or she sees in the mirror.

[00:41:23.710]

Each day like that is not the proper locus of one's self concept. But, you know, how much less should one identify with a group of people, you know, most of whom will be strangers forever, who just happen to superficially resemble the face you see in the mirror each day? I mean, just it just seems completely nuts to think of oneself in those terms in any kind of ongoing way. And the idea that I would spend any part of today thinking about my whiteness or feeling solidarity with other white people because we share some skin tone in the midst of my life that would be synonymous with me suffering some kind of brain damage, it would be a kind of illness of the mind.

[00:42:06.580]

And yet what is being advertised to us from all quarters is that group identity. And again, this, you know, within the weakness knows this extends beyond race. This is covers sexuality and gender and other variables, but that there's a primacy of group identity that is apparently there's no vision any longer of getting beyond. Right. It's just but as much as I want to get beyond it, it's that's not to say that I believe I'm colorblind now.

[00:42:37.090]

Right. Because that is actually I mean, it strikes me as impossible as long as one is aware of statistics. I mean, so, for instance, what I just said about being able to predict who is committing all of these crimes in Chicago, the fact that I know these background facts about the you know, just the the identities of of people, you know, who are committing robberies and other violent crimes gives me a certain expectation. I mean, I'm very surprised to hear it when it turns out to be a Hasidic Jew.

[00:43:07.750]

And not at all surprised when I hear it's yet another black man who's guilty of whatever the crime is. And so it's just that that sort of background expectation which violates any principle of colorblindness now. And I guess of the flip side of it for me, I mean, recently I remember I was watching one of these Space X launches and when they went to the press conference side of things, one of the people on the panel was a black woman who was one of the rocket scientists emotions and engineer of some kind.

[00:43:40.420]

So, you know, the reality of that situation for me is, you know, I'm watching that. And it made me inordinately happy to see a black woman, rocket scientist. And so and the only way to understand that, you know, psychological change in me is two things are going on. One is I have some you know, though I never thought about it up until that moment. I had some background, you know, statistical belief that it was fairly uncommon for a black person, much less a black woman, to be a rocket scientist.

[00:44:13.450]

But in addition to that, there's a deeply positive, albeit not at all colorblind emotion, which is I'm overjoyed to see a black woman, rocket scientist, I mean, like that. I want there to be more black women in those roles. And, you know, conversely, I want there to be fewer black men in the role of yet another booked suspect. Or a robbery or a homicide in a major American city. So just the mere awareness of the statistics kind of overrides any aspiration for being truly colorblind at moments like these.

[00:44:47.560]

But that failure of colorblindness cannot be the same thing as racism. Right? Because what I want is all of these good outcomes and more good outcomes and fewer bad outcomes for black people in either case. And beyond all of that, I what I want more than anything is to get to a society where I wouldn't even be tempted to notice the color of a person's skin, whether they're a rocket scientist or a criminal. Right. Because it just it would make no sense to notice it because I didn't notice their hair color either.

[00:45:19.660]

Right. It's just it's like and so the question is, how do we get there? So but it it does strike me that there's this this transitional period where colorblindness isn't quite the prescription. And I guess I guess the question of affirmative action, you know, land right in here is like, what is the right policy to be implementing, given that? You know, I think the goal really is to get beyond any kind of politics of identity.

[00:45:49.660]

And, yeah, that's what we were supposed to want. And that's become unfashionable and there are reasons for it.

[00:45:59.470]

It's interesting, if you could go into a graduate seminar in a humanities department on just about any subject and you could, you know, hook up wires to every student after they had been assigned a certain protocol, making sure that everything's OK, knowing that nothing unpleasant was going to happen to them, put some wires on everybody, EKG or something like that, and then just get up in front of the class and say identity.

[00:46:25.000]

And you could watch people's blood pressure go up a little bit and you could probably measure if you did a quick blood test, endorphins going through their veins. There's this notion that what it really has to be about is identity.

[00:46:37.750]

And what I mean by that is that these days we're taught that the enlightened black person centers their sense of self on their relationship to what white people are doing or not doing.

[00:46:53.620]

And so what exactly is your identity? And your identity has to be caught up in this idea of not being white and also being in eternal complaint about what white people are doing or not doing that is considered the advance thing, that is higher reasoning, that is the equivalent in this religion to having faith in in Jesus.

[00:47:17.470]

And so if that's what you're doing, then the idea that we're going to get past race is inconvenient because for that kind of person and unfortunately, that kind of person is common for that kind of person. If you're not thinking of yourself as colored, so to speak, you don't have anywhere to grab on to.

[00:47:34.120]

To even think of the idea of a colorblind America is to imagine an America in which you cannot imagine just where you would fit in.

[00:47:42.520]

What we're dealing with is ultimately what happens to Homo sapiens when groups get larger than about 150 people where nobody has to wonder what they are with white elect in this case, a lot of it is that you want to have a sense of purpose. And if it can't be that you're just somebody's brother and somebody's son and you marry somebody and all of you go out and you hunt whales or something like that, you don't you don't have any existential crisis. Once you're in a large, modern society, you want to have a sense of what you are good for.

[00:48:11.440]

What's your purpose? It can be hard to find that it is not natural to wish to be an individual. And yet that is what modernity forces upon us. So one thing that you can be is this crusader where you're battling racism. But that means, especially with the way it's being put these days, that you must think of yourself as this evil white person who's always going to be racist no matter how many good things you do for black people.

[00:48:33.040]

And you feel good about being able to say that about yourself.

[00:48:35.650]

If you couldn't say it, then who exactly are you? And it's wrong to suppose that any of these people on either side, the white side or the black side. And of course, that's a vast oversimplification.

[00:48:45.850]

But it's not that anybody's trying to make money. It's not that anybody's trying to have power. If anything, it's part of the self definition of the elect to think of themselves as not having power. It's just it's what makes you feel like a person. And so what we have is a situation where here is the black female rocket scientist. And I'm sure that the the typical elect person applauds that in a kind of perfunctory way. But what they want is for it to be made easier for black people to become rocket scientists by getting rid of all of the really tough math.

[00:49:20.620]

And I'm not exaggerating.

[00:49:21.670]

You can actually hear people saying these sorts of things as I have walking next to them. You can read people saying things like this.

[00:49:28.060]

There are tenured and hot shot black professors who stand up in front of August, bodies of people saying. That it's racist to expect black scholars to be mathematically competent and I'm not exaggerating. And so the idea is that if we're going to have a colorblind society, it's going to have to be one where how we do rocket science is changed or that you can become a rocket scientist without learning a lot of the things that until now it's been thought of as absolutely necessary and even defining for a rocket scientist to know.

[00:49:57.990]

And that's really dangerous stuff, again, partly because it's horrifically condescending. If the idea were that you could be a rocket scientist by not doing the things that rocket scientists are supposed to do, everybody would know the ones that had not done the things that you're supposed to do and everybody would be reinforced and thinking there was something wrong with black people, which the elect wouldn't mind.

[00:50:19.230]

It's not that they're going for it, but they wouldn't mind because that would give them further fuel for talking about how indelibly racist society is.

[00:50:26.520]

But, yes, ultimately, we want to get past these distinctions.

[00:50:31.080]

And yet, my friend Thomas Chatterton Williams, whenever he tries to talk about how we need to start moving back towards the colorblindness that we see people in black and white newsreels singing of, well, he gets roasted as some kind of Uncle Tom or he's a white supremacist.

[00:50:48.600]

And of course, Sam, we have to talk about the fact that for a lot of people, the instant answer here is the cops. So for many people, the idea is that, for example, my identity must be focused on how I am not white because of what happened to George Floyd.

[00:51:06.210]

Now, the problem there is that with O.J., I had a whole kind of bildungsroman about that.

[00:51:12.030]

I was disgusted watching those black students on TV cheering when it was painfully obvious what O.J. Simpson had done.

[00:51:18.930]

It took me a while to fully get that.

[00:51:22.800]

Yes, everybody knew what he did. It was painfully obvious. And I couldn't stand listening to people pretend not to know at the time because I like to have all the ducks in a row.

[00:51:30.780]

But it was seen as a vigilante justice against a genuine terrorism that the L.A. cops had exerted against particularly black people in Los Angeles. And there was a similar feeling across the United States for reasons which statistically made sense then. And even if they didn't make sense exactly in 1997, people's sense of how the world works for them is not going to change instantly because of gradual changes over time. So nowadays I see that the O.J. Simpson performance art had a certain understandability.

[00:52:06.960]

It disappointed me a lot in my first book about race losing the race.

[00:52:10.500]

I'm still white hot about people's willful refusal to understand the real facts on that case.

[00:52:17.280]

Now, I kind of get it, but goodness, it's been a while.

[00:52:19.650]

O.J. was there was that 1994. So here we are 26 years later. There are people who weren't born then who have two or three kids and real jobs. It was a very long time ago.

[00:52:32.370]

And at this point, we're in one of the most challenging situations that I have ever known in terms of how we move forward, which is that if you look at the statistics, it is quite clear that the idea that cops even subconsciously kill black people out of racist animus or even subtle racist bias is simply insupportable. It just it doesn't work. And I was somebody who thought that that was true until about four years ago. And I was in a conversation with my sparring partner, Brown University economist and black man Glenn Lowry, where he and I were arguing about this.

[00:53:10.890]



And I said, Glenn, you'd have to prove to me that this sort of thing happens to white people.

[00:53:15.120]

And not only does it happen to white people, but are further arguments that make it clear that even if black men are killed disproportionately to their numbers, then unfortunate facts about who commits the most crimes, including homicides, not to mention just factoring poverty and how that affects interactions with cops, whether you're white, Latino or black makes it clear that the simple idea that's so intuitive that George Floyd died because of the color of his skin simply doesn't go through.

[00:53:47.310]

And yet, Sam, what does worry me is that we are at a point where because of the religion and its imperatives, you can't get that across to a critical mass of people. I have watched people much smarter than me presented with the very simple facts who simply can't hear them. And these are people who are usually rather even tempered people who get upset. This really presses a button.

[00:54:12.210]

And so, unfortunately, a lot of the people who identify as X, Y or Z and seem to be going directly against what Martin Luther King was calling for would say that they're doing it because the cops killed George Floyd because he was black.

[00:54:27.960]

And that kind of thing keeps happening. And as long as that's what they know and as long as they won't listen to what the truth. About black men in the cops, which is that the cops are a serious problem in this country, but that when it comes to who they kill, the data simply doesn't support that black men are being killed because cops are racist against them. We can't really get anywhere. That's the hardest thing about this, the cops.

[00:54:53.600]

Interesting, yeah, so as most people are will recall, I did a podcast in the immediate aftermath of the George Floyd killing, I believe was titled Can We Pull Back from the Brink, which was a solo podcast. As I said at the time, I consciously resisted the impulse to bring on someone like yourself to sort of to midwife that conversation, because I just felt like the idea that I couldn't say what I thought needed to be said on my own as a white guy was was pernicious and worth not capitulating to.

[00:55:28.730]

So I did it solo and got a lot of support and also a lot of criticism. And people, you know, can't shake the feeling that a white person shouldn't be saying these things very much along the lines of what you just said. I know you read the transcript of that podcast. I'm wondering, is there anything you think I got wrong or is there any place in history, is there any daylight between us on this issue?

[00:55:54.500]

You know, Sam, the honest truth is what you said on that podcast was all spun gold as far as I'm concerned, in terms of bravery.

[00:56:05.780]

I was struck by your mentioning something that even I have hesitated to ever say anything about because of the nature of the situation, which is that really, you know, if the cops, you know, grab you and they want you to do something, you need to let them do it. The idea that you're being some kind of hero to resist that you're supposed to think about the cosmic social politics and kind of flip the bird at the cops or do worse.

[00:56:35.090]

And that that ends up creating a lot of these problems. Frankly, as people say, there is some of that. And I do think that ideally we would say one way that some of these things wouldn't happen is don't resist the police. You know, basically just do what they say. And as you said, putting your objections later after the heat of the moment has passed, if you feel that you've been stopped unfairly, if you feel

that something has gone wrong, you can lodge the complaint.

[00:57:04.510]

These days, they're more channels for getting your complaint out than there used to be, social media means that you can basically have your say and possibly have it picked up much more easily than you could have and say, 1974, but not then none of the walking away, none of the yelling and screaming, none of the spitting, etc.. And I feel like, you know, I'm black.

[00:57:28.240]

And I can't say that because I feel like a lot of people feel that these people are having their say in a society that is dedicatedly set against the well-being of black people and black men in particular. And I just feel like many people simply couldn't hear that there's a part of them that feels like this resistance of arrest in cases like this is a kind of new form of civil rights.

[00:57:52.750]

And I sense that I could cut through that even less likely. Then I could make people understand that a George Floyd, who was white, such as Tony Tempa four years before him, very similar situation, could have been killed under the same indefensible conditions. So it's a tough one. But know what you said, I stand behind you. You were correct.

[00:58:15.790]

And I thought to myself, it's kind of sad that you're not allowed to make this kind of logical sense when talking about these issues, because so much of it has been encrusted in what's thought of as higher reasoning, but is really a kind of performance art that serves more to make people feel secure in themselves within the structure of elect religion, then to prevent bad things from happening to people.

[00:58:45.280]

And so, for example, George Floyd, take away the war on drugs and the cops would have much less reason to patrol disadvantaged black communities and many negative interactions. That's not what happened to be happening with George Floyd. But many negative interactions wouldn't happen simply by virtue of that. There's an educational crisis with kids that disproportionately affects disadvantaged black kids, which has to do with how reading is taught. And to be very quick about it, reading should be taught by teaching kids how to sound out words.

[00:59:19.480]

You think that was the most natural thing in the world. But there are other reading philosophies where you teach kids to recognize words as whole pieces because English spelling is weird and you let them do that instead of frankly learning how to read.

[00:59:33.130]

You and I probably learned by reading chunks, and that's because we are middle class A, all kinds of people.

[00:59:39.910]

But for kids who come from not book lined homes, from kids who come from places where most communication is oral rather than on the page, you need to be taught the good old fashioned way.

[00:59:51.460]

It's surprising how that does not happen for a great many black kids who really need it. And once you're just an OK reader, you're never going to be all that great in school.

[01:00:01.780]

And you can't make the most of, say, a moderate, although not great school, because you weren't taught how to read.

[01:00:07.270]

Right.

[01:00:07.540]

I have seen this happen. And finally, there needs to be free, easy access to long term acting contraceptives that are reversible, but for five years, make it so that you can do family planning without having to work too hard. Way too many births of children are accidental. And if a lower income mom does not want to have kids until she's gotten on her feet away to avoid the kinds of accidents that happen to almost anybody in the course of life, is to have these contraceptives be available to as many women as possible.

[01:00:46.000]

And this would, of course, Cofer Black, as well as Latino and white women.

[01:00:49.870]

Women of that demographic in all colors have been shown in studies to like these. No talk about eugenics is appropriate here.

[01:00:56.290]

It's just about being able to plan your family without thinking too hard and without so many births being accidents, especially if you're somebody who would prefer not to interrupt the growth of a child once it started.

[01:01:09.190]

Yes, I'm talking about abortion. If you don't want to have an abortion, great. But the larks, as they're called, make it so that you don't end up having to deal with those choices. If you did those three things, just those three, it would solve so many problems for black people who need help.

[01:01:25.690]

And all three of those things would go a good 80 percent of the way towards solving the problems we're talking about. Regardless of how Derrick Chauvin or however you pronounce his name feels about black people in his heart of hearts, however privileged white people are or aren't, it would really put black America back on its feet.

[01:01:45.850]

But we're not supposed to think about anything so proactive because those aren't religious thoughts. We're supposed to think about things that are more emotional, things that are more interpersonal, things that make you feel like you've got the Lord in you. And that's where you get books like books like White Fragility. That's where you get. Books like How to Be an Anti-racist and oh, my goodness gracious, that's where you get how to raise an anti-racist baby, which means that my children, five and eight are going to have teachers.

[01:02:15.190]

This is what scares me to my socks. My kids are going to run into this and I'm trying to think of what I'm going to do about it. They're going to be these teachers with shining eyes, not cynic's, shining eyes, teaching my biracial daughters that they need to primarily think of themselves as black girls who are going to suffer racism at the hands of their white classmates.

[01:02:39.250]

And I say, no, no, no, no, no.

[01:02:42.880]

But I'm afraid that we're getting to the point where there's no school that I could put them in, where I could keep them from that and I don't have time to homeschool.

[01:02:49.720]

That's what's worrying me.

[01:02:51.400]

But we need a real race, socio politics that's about getting out on the ground and doing real things. And instead, we are engaging in a kind of charismatic navel gazing.

[01:03:01.840]

And I think that we really need to get past it. I'm in precisely that same position with respect to the education of my daughters, and it's it's amazing to witness, I think you just have to at the appropriate moment, have the conversation with them to inoculate them against, you know, the brainwashing that's coming or that has already started. But it's a fascinating thing to try to navigate. I want to linger on this this issue of the police videos, because they have such an outsized effect on on everything that's happening here.

[01:03:37.910]

I mean, there's, you know, comparatively very few of them that have been, you know, widely seen. We really are talking about something like a dozen or two dozen videos that have defined this moment culturally. Now, no, no doubt there are thousands upon thousands of them available. I've watched, you know, many more than dozens. The thing that I just want to reiterate about these videos is that they are very hard to understand, much less understand dispassionately.

[01:04:08.000]

Right. I mean, these are functioning, as you say, they have a religious significance. I mean, these are, you know, held up as icons in, you know, orthodox Christianity. I mean, this is like this is the the moral core of the religion, the injustice that is patently obvious here with the name of of this phone. And yet they're functioning. Tamai much more like a kind of pornography of grievance and distrust of institutions.

[01:04:39.170]

And again, they're just reliably misunderstood by even very well-intentioned people who are who are not implicated at all in the video. You know, it's just, you know, my mother can't understand these videos. She just she reflexively sees everything that Ibram Candy would want her to see, you know, naively coming to one of these videos. So, I mean, the thing to point out is that for every video you've seen, whether it's the George Floyd video or, you know, Eric Garner or or any of these other ones, I mean, one, there are differences among them that are incredibly important.

[01:05:13.310]

Right. I mean, that is for anyone who understands, you know, violence and what cops can do and should do to protect themselves and the public once things start running off the rails. All of these videos are highly, non analogous with one another. And yet that is virtually never acknowledged. And, you know, the cases where we don't have video, but where we know something about what happened, like the Michael Brown case, just a totally unlike these other cases, each is the dissimilarities need to be noticed.

[01:05:41.330]

But then there are for every video you want to fasten on as emblematic of the problem of racism and police violence. You just have to know that there are other videos where all the relevant variables are reversed, where the skin color of all participants, you know, cops and victims are reversed. Writing is are swap that all out, you know, and you can find that video. And one thing that largely goes unacknowledged is their videos where the thing that the cops are most worried about suddenly getting shot in the face by the person who until a moment before showed no sign of being armed.

[01:06:21.410]

You know, those videos are there to be seen to. Right. So the thing that explains how spun up the cops often are in these circumstances where they're shouting commands and going increasingly berserk in the presence of a noncompliant person, one, it's so often speaks to their lack of training, they simply don't have all the tools they need to nonviolently control somebody. We're speaking now on a day, the day after a video that's, you know, especially disturbing has circulated, which makes many of these points for me.

[01:06:55.610]

And there's a video out of Tulsa, I believe, of a white person being pulled over where the cops, two cops are attempting to make an arrest. And it's not clear from at least the version I saw, which now has several million views. I saw it on Twitter. It's not clear how this all started. You know, I mean, I'm sure this person was driving like a maniac or you you don't know why the cops are so spun up.

[01:07:20.240]

But, you know, once they're engaging him in the car, they are, you know, getting ready to tase him. And they do. And it doesn't work. And again, tasers often don't work. Then they begin pepper spraying him. The guy just refuses to get arrested. He does not want to come out of the car. They're trying to pull him out of the car. They don't have the skills to physically do this well where they can keep themselves safe and actually immobilize him.

[01:07:43.520]

So they're yanking on him every which way and shooting him with, you know, with pepper spray and the guy complaining about the injustice of this all. And, you know, he's he's innocent and, you know, that is a violation of his rights. And why are you doing this? And, you know, had he been black, you know, up until the final frames of this video, this would be yet another case of, you know, monstrous misbehavior on the part of COP.

[01:08:05.810]

I would have heard of that. I know, right, exactly. Yeah, and you know, the sovereign citizen lunatic cult in white society, I'm sure it also is emblematic of, you know, the overreach of state violence. But what happens at the end of this video is this guy is wearing a T-shirt and shorts. I don't think it's even clear where he pulls the gun from. I think it probably was on in his waistband. You know, he might have retrieved it from his car as he was being pulled out.

[01:08:33.290]

But up until the last moment, we think, OK, I'm not sure why they're tasing him and spraying him with pepper spray. But, you know, the cops are really freaked out. And this guy, they're just not successfully arresting this guy. He's got his cell phone in one hand. And the next thing you know, both cops are shot. I think one has died, I'm not sure at the state of the other. And every cop knows on an hourly basis that this is a possibility every single time they have an encounter with a member of the public.

[01:09:07.190]

It is absolutely obvious from the cop's eye view of the world that it is very hard to tell who the bad guys are. And we live in a society awash with guns. And so you owe it to yourself. If you're someone who has been successfully propagandized by the Black Lives Matter, take on all the famous videos. You need to see a few videos like this one from Tulsa to know what cops are dealing with. This is a traffic stop.

[01:09:36.020]

And, you know, you get to watch two cops, you know, at least one copy executed because of it. And, you know, that's the complete conversation about this. And so, yeah, I mean, the punch line is whatever you're being arrested for, it doesn't matter that, you know, you're innocent. You have to follow directions so as to minimize the possibility that the cop is going to feel that something you're doing with your hands is presenting such an intolerable risk to his safety or her safety that they have to, you know, draw their gun and pointed at your head and and now you're risking, you know, being killed for no good reason.

[01:10:14.510]

Yeah.

[01:10:15.470]

So often it's it's about somebody who reaches and it's clear that the cops are really, really afraid of somebody reaching for a gun and killing them.

[01:10:24.770]

And I would have to assume that they're not afraid of that for no reason. And yet there seems to be a notion out there that that's something that the cops are only afraid of when it's a black person. And it leads me to something that I've come to realize over the years about these cop cases. And I should say, and I think it's very important for me to say this, I was not thinking this way until about four years ago.

[01:10:45.710]

I had the the BLM the thought about this.

[01:10:48.950]

Many people who don't like me don't know that in my books I have written about this, I have a whole essay about the police and profiling.

[01:10:55.760]

I knew this was the one thing that that justified the way people like this thing as opposed to, frankly, everything else about being black.

[01:11:04.640]

But the thing about this is that whenever you see a video such as, you know, the ones that we've seen now from Minneapolis and kind of, you know, that seems to be a new one in about every week these days is first of all, I think is there. If you'd like to continue listening to this podcast, you'll need to subscribe at Sam Harris. Doug, you'll get access to all full length episodes of the Making Sense podcast and to other subscriber only content, including bonus episodes and Amma's and the conversations I've been having on the Waking Up app.

[01:11:37.350]

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