DarkHorse Podcast with Douglas Murray & Bret Weinstein\_ View...

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**SPEAKERS**

Douglas Murray, Bret

**Bret** 00:05

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast, I have the distinct honor and pleasure of sitting with Douglas Murray right here in the studio. he happens to be live. Douglas is associate editor at the spectator author for many publications, author of many books you may know which we will certainly talk about upcoming here. And he is traveling in the US. Now I know your cover story is something like you're here for espionage. But I have deduced what you're actually traveling for. Your most recent book is the madness of crowds, which many in our audience will know. And because you wrote the madness of crowds, you've come to Portland, where we have taken crowd madness to the level of high art

**Douglas Murray** 00:50

that you have, you're the epicenter. I thought that before coming here, but now having been here, confirmed in my initial prejudices, as so often, yeah. And, yeah. It's a thrill to be back in the United States, touring around the country. writing about what's going on here at the moment, and obviously, there's enough news every 24 hours in America for an average six months. And so I've been in a number of states so far, I've got more still to go. One mutual friend said to me the other day, I think it's disaster tourism, isn't it? darkness? There's not, but I could see how it could seem like that was the state of your country at the moment.

**Bret** 01:38

Yeah. So although I mean, you do have the perfect cover story being a journalist. Yes. Yeah. Tourism is actually you letting the world see through your eyes. Exactly.

**Douglas Murray** 01:47

But you know, I just came here as, as you know, from California, I feel somewhat that I shot my bowl. I said in the piece, the weekend that I thought that California beer to be a failed state. But then I came to Portland, and I feel like I stole my thunder.

**Bret** 02:05

Well, thank you. Yes. The State of Oregon, it's really the whole West Coast, I think, right? It all suffers from the same disease.

**Douglas Murray** 02:14

Why the West Coast? By the way? I mean, I'm still?

**Bret** 02:18

Well, this is a very interesting question. And I've been involved in some private discussions along the same lines. And I would say at least what I'm hearing is that nobody has a proper bead on what happened. However, I do think there's something missing from the conversation, which I keep trying to introduce. But I confess I don't have the precise description. There's something about if you take the tragedy of the commons as it just sort of general game theoretic problem, and you try to map it on to our political landscape, I think what it predicts is that you will have essentially ruthless capitalists in some of the most vibrant and dynamic industries of our moment. Who will espouse a set of beliefs and values in public that result in effectively the collapse of the system, the killing of the goose that lays the golden eggs. And basically, you know, it is the tragedy of the commons in the sense that in a classic tragedy of the commons, an individual has effectively no power to protect the commons and has a huge amount of power over their own well being. And so they end up making a decision that when everybody makes it causes the comments to collapse. And in this case, what it's causing, is political movement in a dangerous direction based on everybody signaling to each other, and frankly, convincing themselves that they believe this stuff, when in fact, they are profiting from this other side of it. And why are they going to be shocked?

**Douglas Murray** 03:52

Yeah, yeah, I am. seems right to me, I mean, San Francisco being another base for this. I'm not, I've never been much committed to the inequality discussion, because I think it's never taken on the some of the complexities that needed to in this was oversimplified and early stage by certain people in the latest iteration, but my goodness, the extent to which the actual inequality problem exists on this coast is extraordinary, where you have the richest people in the wild, cohabiting with the world's destitute in such proximity. And they seem to have just got use. That's what I can't quite get over. Everyone seems to have got used to the idea that you can have some of the world's most expensive real estate, facing a parking lot of people who've got a trolley

**Bret** 04:59

Well, yeah, There are a couple interesting phenomena. One is that I'm sure you are hearing the same things. I am about a huge number of people who do have that nicest real estate fleeing from a circumstance that they have created, which I think raises very interesting questions, because To my mind, I will be very shocked if in the end, the most powerful people do not end up with the best real estate, it seems to me that that is an automatic outcome at equilibrium. And that raises the question if they are currently fleeing that real estate. I wonder if it's not, in some sense, a cryptic and maybe even unconscious renegotiation strategy. In other words, the political regime that they have ushered in is now generating perfectly incoherent tax policy, for example, that's going to penalize business out of these places, which is going to cause the economy is to come or to collapse. And the question is, will the wealthy who fled these pieces of real estate be able to demand effectively much more hospitable terms in order to bring them back in and make the economies of these states vibrant? Again?

**Douglas Murray** 06:13

I don't know. I mean, so much of this in the US is just vary in state by state in a way where you obviously don't have in the UK or indeed in Europe, you can't flee across the boundary and find an entirely different tax structure or whatever. But I wonder I'm in New York, it seems to me is going to take a long time to come back, but has the impetus to do so. Like London, it's hard to see New York not coming back.

**Bret** 06:43

I'm curious to hear how you think that's the case?

**Douglas Murray** 06:46

Well, before? I mean, I think that California, it's very hard. And Portland here. I just, I think I said to you last night, why anyone would open a business in this area. I mean, why anyone would open a business almost anywhere at the moment is a pregnant question. But why they would open anything here? is I mean, what is the question that's answering itself? They're not,

**Bret** 07:16

right, they're not and there's no plan B? No, right? He was the sort of, you know, vibrant, libertarian West that that fueled the place and if you drive the businesses out by effectively allowing a small number of people to demonize business owners and to inflict arbitrary damage on them, then what even is you know, what are these states?

**Douglas Murray** 07:43

Yeah, I was on my mind, I went the first time I got here I went to a rally protest march recall, it was really anti BLM, which was opposed to gentrification was one of those justifications where the marches via through residential areas screaming at householders telling them that they were living on stolen land, and that black people used to live in this area and they've been pushed out. Something that wasn't that evident there were plenty of black homeowners in the area in question. Not quite sure how happy I'd be if I were them that I've been woken up in the evening by people bullhorns telling me, things that weren't true or accurate, but there seem to be a fairly ordinary evening in this in this city. But you know, it seems it seems you have activists who oppose all forms of human betterment. All forms of improvement and actually don't mind the state they've created the the sites in downtown Portland seem to me redolent of nothing so much as a third world city where people who haven't been here may be interested to know I mean, it's much worse than you expect it's not just the it's not just the empty plinths I think there's one statue left standing which is World War Two statue I'm hesitant about saying that because they might find it though yeah it's a little higher up for their their gaze but the world watch use actually seems to be the only thing that they haven't brought down one is tempted to say oh one is tempted to say that you know it's primarily I think outsiders think might think it's primarily about statues but isn't it's so many things that have come together at once it's the fact that these sort of history robbed areas also just you know, are inhabited by homeless people be living in tents with sort of food stalls hanging around outside I mean, it really it's post apocalyptic, it seems to me it's it's, it's something that people should know about, in order to see what happens when you make this number of mistakes in this order.

**Bret** 10:01

It seems to me that you're pointing something out that I think in some sense, only you can point out. Maybe you don't even realize you're doing it. But because of the way COVID has intersected with the George Floyd, protests and riots and what has happened, Portland, the point is, in general, those who are reporting on what took place here are from here and we are held to a particular absurd standard where, you know, I have been absolutely diligent about not portraying Portland as on fire, because it isn't, but that we have nightly riots is a reliable fact. And it has a very distinct implication. And so in some sense, you coming here as a visitor and seeing it and saying it's actually worse than you expect, when we are constantly told, if we mentioned the riots that we are portraying something false, which is obviously not the case?

**Douglas Murray** 11:00

No, I mean, this is this is a maddening hostage situation, that for a population to be in to be told, you know, it's not literally burning down all the time. So how dare you say Portland is burning? I've seen this as you have in areas before I don't, as in this rhetorical move. Oh, yeah. You know, don't, why are you saying things are so bad? It, bad things continuously happening, does not equal a bad situation, right? You know, just because you have x problem every day doesn't mean you have x problem. I don't think there's I mean, like you, I've managed to travel very widely around the world in my life. And it's a great honor and privilege of my life. But it means that I do have some reference points, what people important living through is not normal. It's certainly not normal. In a first world city. There are places in the world where I've seen similar destitution, it's less by choice, and it appears to be here and certain element of it does appear to be by choice. But you have to go to, you know, parts of South Africa, bits of India and elsewhere to find the normalization and acceptance of homelessness at the level it is. And then you have these extra layers on top, as you say, the COVID layer is one that seems to strip everything back. And obviously the Mayan country is suffering very deeply from this and the economic consequences in a lot of countries is unfathomable at the moment. But but you have this this extra virus layer that of, of people who think that it is perfectly normal to engage as a full time occupation, in the ceiling, the state and any front face of the state, as if it is a fascist entity, which needs to be pulled down entirely. And the people who say that that's that some minority or something is it, it clearly is a minority. It's quite a large minority on occasions, clearly in July and August in the city that it was it was a significant minority. It's dwindled a bit now. But it is not normal for drivers to be prevented from going down streets, because they're blocked off by pseudo paramilitary groups, as it's happening in this city. It's not normal, that the police would not be visible for hours in center of the city at night, and that instead militias that are self appointed, barricade those areas off, and the police don't go, none of this is normal, let alone as I saw the other night, crowds of anti fur activists trying to basically storm or something similar a federal building in order that, well what do they want to do burn it down, obviously. And they get into this running battle with the Federal Police, which I saw myself and they set fires to things and then tried to provoke the police to attack them. And that, again, I mean, I've seen running battles before, I just haven't seen them in a first world city that said to be at peace.

**Bret** 14:31

Now this is, I got to tell you, it's actually quite reifying to have you visit and say this because we have had, you know, Nancy Rahman, for example, who used to live here and came back to report on the situation but you are the person farthest afield to come in and look at it and to the reality check of just hearing you describe what it is that we see and what it is that we are in some sense stalemated in our ability to even describe it to the world is very heartening.

**Douglas Murray** 15:00

By the way, one other thing on that if I make sure it's, it's clearly those politicians who are in charge of the Portland area feel no shame and feel no responsibility for the immiseration of the people over whom they're meant to govern. Ordinarily, one would try to shame them. But clearly they were in a, in a mechanism where that that wouldn't work. Nevertheless, I think it has to be stated. Again, I have never been to a place where it is commonplace and acceptable for people to graffiti and put up signs everywhere saying that a journalist should be murdered. absolutely nowhere. Nowhere. I have been to totalitarian countries where journalists are at this kind of risk. I have been to closed societies where journalists fear that they are at such a risk. But I have never been again to a first world free democratic society, where the local authorities allow paramilitary organizations to demand the killing of a journalist for the crime of reporting and to have such calls everywhere in the center of the city. And I'm not as be we'll see, in the coming days I post on this we'll see I'm not exaggerating this, that I mean, we can we can name one but but the journalists I'm obviously thinking of his name is scrawled over walls and over monuments in the city. Sure. I mean, he's been a guest of this podcast. Okay, so yeah, so Andy, no, Andy, no, who's done more than anyone to report on what these groups are doing. I knew how much are rescued, taken. I knew how brave he'd been. The extent to which he has been braver than almost all the journalists from this state put together in bothering to report what so many journalists just think is not worth reporting, to walk through Center City and to see say on the world war two money man on the massive walls downtown, called the kill Andy No, in big letters stated as such, it's not free speech, that is incitement to murder. And the authorities here don't care about it at all. They clearly don't care about it, or they'd have done something about it. But again, as I say, ordinarily, one would make that point and hope to shame authorities into doing something to, for instance, take down calls to murder a journalist in the city. But the authorities here have let so much go that merely encouraging the murder of journalists. So the crime of reporting is, is a comparatively minor issue for them to address.

**Bret** 17:49

Well, I want to adjust one thing in what you said I of course, resonate with it across the board with one exception, which is I don't think these politicians are insensitive to shame. I think some of them are. In other words, we have a mayoral candidate, who I believe may be insensitive to shame. But our current mayor, I don't believe is insensitive to shame. In fact, I believe he is being puppeted using his shame, it is His compassion that has been weaponized against him, right. And so in, in effect, again, I think this comes down to the game theory, which is you have a tiny number of people, some of whom are shameless, who are using shame as a weapon. And they are arguing, me they've been set up by a political narrative in which one side is understood to be evil, literally evil. And the other side is understood to be the force that holds back evil. And so therefore, anything that maps on to the side that is evil is not deserving of protection. This is the this is exactly the dynamic that unfolds when one population goes to war against another dehumanized and so Andy no falls outside the zone of protection. Yeah, of the authority. And this is frightening. And I fear that the comparison you're saying, you've seen these things, but you haven't seen them in a first world city. I think many of us who are paying attention fear that we are going to square that circle by ending up effectively a third world country. Yeah,

**Douglas Murray** 19:27

yeah. And you're very close to it in this city. Very close to it. I mean, I went to a restaurant the other day, a cafe, much recommended, which just the day before two days before it had its that people are anti fire activists, BLM actors, whatever these ones are now calling themselves fired shots through the windows. Because the cafe in question has first responder photos on the walls. That is, you know, photos of fire. Coming out of flames. And a female cadet in army uniform. It's a cafe run by a black man who is, is obviously proud of the fact that people in this country have historically and today put themselves in the front line to protect the population of the United States. And this is seen as so reprehensible by the local. Well, as I say, I would say fascist militia groups that he is that he has to have that he has to have a situation where you've got boarded up windows, because people are fired rounds of live ammunition through the windows of his cafe. Again, I mean, I've seen that in the Middle East. Yeah, yeah. I've seen people in the Middle East, intimidate business owners, by firing live ammunition at their properties. I've never heard of it happening in a first world city. With the follow on that the authorities aren't interested,

**Bret** 21:04

the authorities which are perfectly capable of shutting this down yet, any day of any Absolutely. This is effectively being sanctioned by allowing it to happen. Yes. So I'm always with you caught in the following bind. And I think we, I'm hoping we can address it productively. But I confess, I don't know where this goes. You are nominally a conservative, right? I am very much a liberal. And I know precisely what I mean by that. So I find you. I don't even want to say paradoxical because I don't think there's any paradox in it. But as I accused you of the first time you were on the Dark Horse podcast, you there are things you say that strike me, as more and more usually heard from what used to be called bleeding heart liberal, right? No, but I this is I think this is marvelous. And I must say, my audience is apparently very confused about me at the moment. And I think actually, I've threaded the needle, I'm told by the person who mans the email account that goes with this podcast, that there are many ironic irate people who appear to be perfectly divided over the question of whether I am cryptically in favor of Trump and supporting him, or have the worst case of Trump derangement syndrome they've ever seen. So anyway, somehow, somehow, nobody can figure out where anyone belongs. And I think you speak to something that is not is not commonly seen, which is, I hear in what you say. And frankly, Douglas, I see it on your face, when you say it, you are you actually feel the pain of what is being lost and those who are being run over roughshod. And you know, you're trying to do something about it by spelling it out by describing it in ways that other people haven't seen it. But here's the question. I'm living in Portland with my family. I am watching the political scenario descend from bad to worse, right. We have a completely ineffectual mayor who has allowed the situation to develop and he is actually if the polls are to be believed behind in a race with a an Tifa sympathizer. Yep. So there is no good option on our ballot with respect to escaping this dynamic. And this has been a long winded way of getting to the real question, which is the there is something to be said about the interaction of liberalism and conservatism. And I've said many times that there is an important tension between these that each side keeps the other side honest that they're both necessary. I'm sure you resonate with that, but I think there's another level we have to go structurally speaking. You've stopped me where I go wrong. The magic of the West is the product of liberal ambitions restrained by conservative discipline. Yes. You take either of those away if you take the liberals away you don't get there yet. Right. If you take the conservatives away, you go off into crazy town

**Douglas Murray** 24:43

I would I would I add a thing that which is, quite often people find it hard to work out why something like the dichotomy that used to exist in America exists in my country, it does exist in almost exactly equal Portions? Who, what? Why isn't it the case that the left wins every election? Or the right wins every election? Why do we have this back and forth? And one of the things I think people don't say often enough is that it's because the line goes through all of us know, we all have a liberal, in the American sense, leftist and conservative instincts on a range of issues, and quite often on the same issues. And this very fine balancing act is one that we know in our lives on so many issues. I mean, they day to day, you know, I want this thing. And yet I know I need to buy things that I can afford. And you weigh it up in your cabinet, should I borrow money to get this thing that I want? The the left bit of the brain away says I'd like the thing. And the right wing bit of the brain says, but you can't afford a thing, you certainly shouldn't get into debt and what to do. So we we know that that another obvious one is, I like this thing, whether it's alcohol, food, drugs, whatever, you might want this thing, and another bit of your brain says yes, but is it going to be good for you? And then we know the restraining impulse, because we all have it every hour of the day, particularly after 6pm in my own experience. And yet politically, we don't think in these terms often enough that that, yes, you may, you may want these things which may include hard proposals, you may want all of these rights, you may want all of these liberties. But another thing has to come in that is a restraining impulse on those things. Because we know what happens again, this city knows what happens with an unrestrained impulse in politics as in our personal lives, which is that you enter the realm of complete chaos. And this seems to me as always seemed to me the dichotomy that exists in politics, and it's why there's a roughly you know, 4951 situation or in my country 4852 divide that exists, and that there's nothing that wrong with it, it is it's a perfectly fine contest. Unless, as you say, one side completely disappears. And you know, I wouldn't want to live in a society where all of the restraining impulses that can exist on the ride existed, because among other things, that mean, your society was closed to new proposals, that may well necessarily correct things you should have corrected before and haven't got around to. So I wouldn't want to live in a society where only the right existed. And I wouldn't want to live in a society where only the left existed where the restraining impulse didn't exist. And that seems to be one of the things that you have here. And it ends in this urine stanched. History lists. Pathetic people wasteland aware, you know, look at the, the arrest photos every night in Portland. The photos of the people in those in those mug shots show the the consequence of an unrestrained life that is a life where you think you are free, and you are living in total chaos, where you live in a disordered life with a disordered brain with disordered ideas of your society and disordered ideas of yourself.

**Bret** 28:40

Totally agree now. So anyway, I do. This is great so far, I think I think we are getting to the heart of the matter, right? So I will take a certain amount of flack for having a congenial conversation with you because you being a conservative are taken to be some sort of a stain on my liberal. Oh, by the

**Douglas Murray** 28:59

way, my I make a quick interjection though, please. I hope people notice that it never happens the other way around.

**Bret** 29:06

So interesting. It used to in the US, right? It has not in some time. Yes.

**Douglas Murray** 29:12

When did you think it did last? Um, 80s. So okay. I make the reference because I think that people should reduce the number of things from this. If somebody said to me, Douglas, I can't believe you sat down with Brett. I mean, he is a leftist. Nobody said I wouldn't say oh my god, I had no idea who I am so sorry. I mean, I had no idea he had all these views and he votes for candidates I might not vote for and, and I'm so sorry. And if they said Douglas, you are going to be excommunicated from the right. I'm gonna say Who the hell am I going to I mean, I it's such an unfathomable thing to me. The only explanation I've ever had for why this happens the other way around. It Is the writer stopped being a club of affiliation and the left is a lifestyle choice. I mean everything in your I'm not saying in your case, but in leftists many left, it's fine. everything to do with identity is tied up with their left wing views and left wing activism and therefore, being excommunicated from the club actually does matter. I can see I mean, my leftist friends who who do get excommunicated, and a lot of them do feel it very deeply, because they think I've spent my life on the left, how could I not be wanted by my tribe? I personally as I there's not a tribe, I would want to be a part of the pool that move.

**Bret** 30:38

Absolutely, absolutely agree with you. And there is, you know, there's some tiny group of us on the left, who are neither fish nor fowl at this point, because the fact that we are left in our belief structure does not mean that we are left with respect to who will speak to us, right. So it's, um, this very bizarre paradox. Yeah. But I will say just in passing, I find nothing odd at all about being a very liberal person who has no trouble talking to you, I find what you say is sensible, interesting, frequently raises points that I need to think about. In fact, I think this is almost the expectation, right? It's not a paradox. In fact, there are no paradoxes. I've said, you know, all true stories must reconcile. The resolution that makes it not a paradox is all systems that work work based on dynamic tension, all complex systems, including the body, the body is absolutely riddled with these things that manage your temperature, your pH, every single system, even you know, the motion of an a limb is tension between two systems that pull in opposite directions. So to the extent that I see the possibility, and in fact, the necessity of fixing the problems with society and making it better, I know that the tension on the other side is what makes that plausible, right. So, you know, I think the problem is we're confused over the center. Right? centrism has a very nasty connotation, I admit to feeling this person, I don't like centrists, right, because they're tepid. But I do think we need to meet in the center. And that to people who are, you know, in effect, what I'm saying is, I think you are a kind of specialist, that you see the aspect of the system that requires a conservative bent to see it well, and you see it with a great deal of precision, right? By virtue of that you may have, you know, just as eyes that are tuned today aren't so great at night, right? That specialty may make it harder for you to see things of the opposite. Oh, yeah. Yeah, sure. And therefore, there's obviously value to be had in that discussion. And that discussion takes place in the south. Yes, not necessarily with centrist so

**Douglas Murray** 33:14

obvious example is things to do with compassion. Compassion is a it can be a noble instinct, it isn't always because it has to be balanced out with, well, what would you balance the compassion out with? A sense of having to pay sometimes.

**Bret** 33:34

So this is this is one of the things that I see very clearly about, is that he, people mistake sort of unbridled niceness for compassion. Yes, that's not what compassion is, right? A parent that does a good job with children is a parent that knows how to mete out discipline, how to set goals that are difficult to attain, but achievable, right? It's not like whatever you want, honey, right? It's something much more complex than

**Douglas Murray** 34:09

that. And empathy. The overriding urge in our age to be empathetic, is again, I mean, it's one that requires serious balancing. I, I in some sense, has endless empathy with people, except it can't be endless, because we have to do other things with our day. And if I just had empathy all the time, I'd melt in a puddle, right? You'll be paralyzed by and again, it comes back to this thing of do you pay for when you screw up? And the answer has to be yes. Now, the balance is clearly To what extent do we forgive mistakes? And how far can the mistakes go before actually something else kicks in and other mechanism, again, came back to this city. mingling and the antiva protests the other night against the ice facility in Portland. These reprehensible mainly young, mainly white people, the ceiling government facility, were desperately trying to provoke the police to be violent against them in order that then they could say they had been treated badly. By the way, I might take some practice. But the extraordinary restraint of the federal police who I saw in action was remarkable to me. And because everybody has understandably spent part of this year fixating on American policing, maybe this needs to be said in terms of balance as well. That seeing the seeing men of every race, racial background, in federal police uniforms, being taunted and threatened in the American street by people screaming at them through bull horns, that they were not just fascists and Nazis. But what are the one young one that was screaming repeatedly, you know, your family hates you, your children will be will hate you. You never see your family, you're destroying this country and all this other. And and these agent they haven't to clear me out of a bit of the prototypes in and, and they did so with extraordinary politeness. Considering that it was nearly the middle of the night, we were all wearing black face coverings, they couldn't have seen who had arms and who didn't. And they very politely will be it with heavy, heavy weaponry that got us away and cleared people out. And I fought as I've thought I've seen videos of certain American particularly black American policemen being taunted and insulted and provoked by anti fur activists and others. I think the restraint that these these men are actually having to exercise is nothing less than remarkable. But these people on the streets of this city, are clearly people who need a restraint. And they need to be stopped from hurling projectiles from smashing up business after business to the extent that large portions of the city have more shuttered businesses with boarding over them than open businesses by a very long way that this has come about because nobody stopped from throwing the damn rocks. Nobody told them, You can't start to set fires in buildings and in the streets and get away with it. This doesn't seem to have happened. The restraining mechanism has totally broken down. And by the way, the fear of that and this is a legitimate fear of the decent part the left is what if the overreact what is the reaction is an overreaction,

**Bret** 38:16

which, I must say, I haven't seen it yet. But that is inevitable.

**Douglas Murray** 38:21

Oh, yes. I mean, I, I thought it myself. This week, each time I saw these people I thought, you know, the ignoble instinct kicks in, I wish somebody would beat the crap out of you. Just beat the crap out of you. You know, appointing yourself to just destroy private property running around looking for hoping that somebody lays a finger on you in order that you can pretend that you are now oppressed when you have been rampaging through a town and a misery. its inhabitants. Yeah, you know,

**Bret** 38:56

terrorizing citizens in their own house, people you don't know you have no idea what they think or want or anything.

**Douglas Murray** 39:05

But as I say, I mean, it's an ignoble instinct. And I would hope that it would settle somewhere. Again, it comes to meeting in the middle, it would settle somewhere in terms of just ordinary down policing and exercise of justice. That means that people who do this sort of thing, get arrested and go to prison.

**Bret** 39:23

Right, which is, so Okay, this is unfolded. We have a mayor who, for reasons I cannot quite fathom, has misunderstood that there is nothing he could do to find favor with these people. He is effectively let them do what they do.

**Douglas Murray** 39:44

And they think he's a sort of alt right. His opponents, they see

**Bret** 39:47

him as just another version of fascist. Right, yeah. So the right reaction, from his perspective, if he saw with any clarity at all would be well, there's no

**Douglas Murray** 39:58

yeah, I'm not gonna be able to woo Oh, That percentage of the lunatics,

**Bret** 40:02

right, nor should I want to therefore, you know, doing right by the majority of the population of Portland is the obvious thing to do. But, you know, what is he being threatened by in this election? It's not something from the right, where people are calling for Law and Order. They're so busy virtue signaling to each other, that they're actually in danger of electing somebody even crazy. Yes,

**Douglas Murray** 40:26

that's, that's why I say that. I mean, I have less hope for this place and other places. And it would seem to me obvious that New York, although it's a bit beleaguered at the moment, like London, and as a lot of shuttered businesses, and a lot of things are not going to come back fast. Nevertheless, in terms of law and order, and things, it seems clear to me Maybe it's because of the accumulation of capital well off people, businesses, just they can't allow to go down the market and much more. Whatever the reason, I think that New Yorkers will, will be voting in a right wing law and order matter very soon, they will get a Giuliani like figure because New York's been through this cycle several times in our lives. Yes, it has. And I would expect New Yorkers to do that, because they're not going to put up with, you know, rapes on the subway and killings in the streets on a regular basis without voting for somebody who knows how to sort some of that stuff out. And that therefore the and they will deserve the return of their city. But if this is the contract the growth at some point in the building port of Portland have decided not to do that, or it hasn't thrown up people willing to do it. And so at that stage, the people of the city bear responsibility for what has happened.

**Bret** 41:46

Well, as I keep saying, and nobody seems to, to respond to it the way I expect, they are going to get what they deserve. Unfortunately, we are also going to get what they deserve. Absolutely, absolutely. And which I can't believe this is being allowed to happen. No, but you know, it also the way the left and in particular, the Democratic Party under the corrupt rule of the DNC is playing this. They have created a legitimate argument in favor of Trump. Yes, right. There wasn't one. And what they've done is they've created one by leaving the federal government as the only potential restraining force against this insanity. And, you know, I sure don't want to see that happen. On the other hand, what happens if the democrats, you know, take the White House and who knows what in Congress? And, you know, what does protect Portland from this nonsense?

**Douglas Murray** 42:51

The things been on my mind, in recent days has been that so much it seems to come down to a fundamental misapprehension about the nature of the society that you're in. As I see it, I don't say that there's no white supremacists in America, there must be some but my gosh, are they pushed to the margins? And I think that a white supremacist group doing what so called an Tifa are doing on a regular basis to an American city would have been not tolerated from day two. Right? And rightly so. But what seems to have occurred that you made, I can't get out of my mind, is this like a magic lantern trick that's occurred in this society that in this area, that, you know, there's this like tiny residual, reprehensible, neo nazi white supremacist, you know, people and the some, somehow the society has put a light behind that. And it's blown up onto a wall into this huge monster against which these people in Portland and surrounding area are are fighting. And the politicians, unfortunately, have encouraged this perception. They haven't said you're totally wrong, right? The the American police may have all sorts of things that need to be done to improve them, but they are not the Nazis. And you know, there may be injustice is in society, but we are not a reprehensibly unjust society that requires burning down in order to get through the furnace to some better state. They haven't done that. They've been willing. Nancy Pelosi did it. Well, that's the thing. They've been willing to make people believe this thing because they think they're going to be advantaged by

**Bret** 44:45

it. Yes. individually. They're advantaged by it and what they are doing is up ending the structure on which we all depend, right. Each person is serving their own individual interests at cost. To the structure that undergirds everything. Yes. And so there's so many things ready to go here. But one, let's just say the sin quantum of white supremacy. Right? If you were to define that term in any reasonable way, it can't be that you are allowing something that advantages white people to continue. A white supremacist would have to be rooting for that. Yes. And so if we take that, that a white supremacist must be rooting for white people above others, right, then the answer is exactly what you said. Those people are vanishingly rare. They weren't always vanishingly rare. They're not non existent. But you're right, Magic Lantern, they've been projected onto a wall at huge size. And then everybody has said, okay, you know, who, who is in league with that thing? It's everybody who isn't on our site. Yeah. Right. which creates, basically a race to the bottom that we are now seeing the product of but I have the sense. Well, one other thing I want to say the the thing about the graffiti on the wall calling for Andy no to be killed. The shots fired into the cafe, owned by a black man who would dare have first responders on his wall. This is a matter of policing narrative. Right? Why is Andy know the target of their ire? Because Andy no makes it impossible to sell the story, that you have people protesting racial injustice on the streets of Portland, and facing a fascist crackdown from the federal government, you cannot believe that if you just simply pay attention to the video that Andy now puts out on his channel get right. Yeah, you know, you could say all sorts of things about it's not a complete picture, whatever you want, but the fact is, you can see what it is. Yeah, right. Yes, things are taking place. Likewise, a black man who is running a successful business, doesn't hold truck with any of this. Yeah. You know, white supremacy is everywhere nonsense, is very inconvenient to the narrative. And the result is, you know, we've said it before, but, you know, yeah, you've got the police are standing back and allowing this to happen, you know, having been restrained by the municipal authorities, you've got, you know, basically paramilitaries enforcing their, their own laws, this, you know, this, this was evergreen blown up to major American city size. So the, I guess the question is, A, is there an example of a society that has gone this far in the direction of one of these nominally justice oriented, utopian revolutions that has turned around as a result of reason?

**Douglas Murray** 48:27

That's a very hard question to answer. Maybe people can answer in the comments underneath this video.

**Douglas Murray** 48:38

The problem is, is the combination of factors here. That's what disturbs me. You have the the imminent decline in living standards of everybody in the society overlaid on top of a number of existing problems, including a misperception about the nature of state they're in a belief that they are in great user life and death struggle against if not non existent, then very mildly existence and enemy. The last lack of purpose and meaning and individuals as well as a wider society that means that any cause is worth getting on board with if it'll give you purpose in your day and in your life. I could go on the problem. The problem is all of these things, it seems to me, and it's perfectly easy to see how and it's happened many times and the misery to the city can be brought back from the brink of poverty and made into a vibrant and dynamic financial proposition again, and that's that's happened in all of our contracts repeatedly. That's

**Bret** 49:54

a city though,

**Douglas Murray** 49:56

right? The The number of things that need to be corrected here seems to be so significant in number that, that I don't at all blame, as in California, I have friends who say, right, that's it, I'm off. And the more that happens, the more all you have left behind are the people who either can't move, which is apart from thing else. Those who are less financially fluid, flexible. That means the poor just can't move. And those who really do think that the wasteland is what they want to inhabit, but there is, yeah, it's hard to I can't think of anything that that comes around from all these factors simultaneously. No, yeah,

**Bret** 50:51

that that's worrying me quite a bit. So let's just, I think this is this should be obvious. I'm sure it will be to you. But I think it needs to be said because I never hear it said and it seems the core you have a society that generates a huge amount of well being that well being is not well distributed. I do not mean to say it should be evenly distributed. But it is not well distributed is not efficiently distributed with respect to producing the kind of incentive that you would want, you know, a dyed in the wool, libertarian ought to want opportunity better distributed because it results in more people discovering more things that serve us collectively, right? So we've got a society that creates a hell of a lot of wealth. It's not fairly distributed. It's not well distributed. The revolution that we are watching begin has misunderstood the difference between the noise in the way and you know, there's a lot of signal and how its distributed. But I would argue there's even more noise and how its distributed. They've misunderstood the basic fact that their lives will get much, much worse if the engine that creates the well being that is unfairly distributed is turned off. Yes. Right. Yes. And so the point is, if you just wanted to talk about absolute well being and you are compassionate for all sorts of people who have less than they ought to, or who were given tools that are less useful than they might, right, you want those people to be well off. You are about to hurt them egregiously by turning off the engine on Yes, we are all

**Douglas Murray** 52:46

Yeah. vs This is a misunderstanding of the manual can't describes the famous dove analogy you know, the the the canyon can starve is the dog flying in free air may make them mistake of thinking of the air under its wings is the thing that's holding it back. Yeah, that's it. And may imagine that in free air could fly further faster.

**Bret** 53:18

Yeah, right, in a vacuum. Yeah. And

**Douglas Murray** 53:21

that's what these activists and a significant portion of the American public now make the mistake of thinking they think, and we've had, we have this in my own country as well, though, thankfully, at the ballot box, it keeps being seen off. But there are significant numbers of people in our societies who think if I could only stop capitalism, not not a form of capitalism, or or some extreme versions of capitalism or capitalism gone wrong, or bad capitalism or anything more, but capitalist capitalism, the exchange of services, financial incentive products, it always, if I could just stop that we would be fairer. And it's incumbent upon anybody who knows history as anyone as well as anyone with eyes to say, the situation you are dreaming of that you think will allow you to fly further and faster will make you plummet. Yeah, plummet. And the people with the most capital from the capital system capitalist system will be able to leave your benighted results, right. But most people will not.

**Bret** 54:33

He will collapse on Yeah, all of those who don't have the

**Douglas Murray** 54:37

mean. I mean, this is this is obviously the case with property in all of our countries at the moment. I mean, once you see the differential between average wages and average property price go to near five times or something, you know, and much more than places like San Francisco I mentioned earlier, far more the average salary to average property price. You You end up in this system where you think all the corrections you can see are catastrophic. I mean, what happens in a society where the average cost of a home is over a million dollars or $1.5 million, and the average wage certainly isn't there, but you have the asset. And there's no one to buy it from you at some stage. We get into this, we get into this realm of, you know, all of the all of the words for what happens after that are terrible, right? Yeah, collapse.

**Bret** 55:33

Yeah, gulag killer. Right. So, friend, I didn't clear it with him. So I can't I can't use his name. But a friend posed a question. The other night in a clubhouse discussion, whether there were any new ideological movements, or whether we were just simply rehashing all of the familiar ones? And it struck me as very good question. Good question. I do think I do think I have something I would describe as roughly new, but let's put that to the side for the second for the most part back to it. Okay. But for the most part, we are rehashing prior ideas and dressing them up in new ways and, you know, tinkering around the edges. But here's, here's the reason that I think that is likely to be true. The fact is, what we have is a description of a roughly optimal system. liberalism, in its sort of theoretical form, is the right answer. Yeah, right, a system that provides liberty that distributes opportunity evenly, right? That is the ideal form. Now we're nowhere near it. But the point is, the reason that we are not looking at new ideologies is that we're really talking about the corrective for the degree to which we fall short of an ideal that we have already discovered. Right? Yeah. And I think this is really important, because I think we're just fighting over the wrong thing. Right? I think even you know, the idea really ought to be, you know, we have to find our way to fixing the remaining obstacles to are actually living by our liberal principles on which almost all of us agree. Right. And as we get there, the conservative force that prevents us from having utopian ideas beyond a functional liberal society, that is very fair, right, that force has to prevent us from seeking some place that doesn't exist beyond that state.

**Douglas Murray** 58:00

I would add one thing that I agree with is that the I think we never did take enough account of the problem of people who didn't find the state you're describing as actually as optimal as we regarded as being so I don't think was far off.

**Bret** 58:18

But I think I think in some sense, that's like talking about people who've never traveled to a nation and their opinion. In other words, you know, and this goes back to those, those mug shots that you were talking about. I do have the sense that one of the patterns of history that we see is there's something very valuable about a meritocratic system. meritocracy is a magic ingredient. It's not sufficient on its own, but it is a magic ingredient to the achievement of facts. And that that thing, to the extent that feedbacks are bad, that unfairness is badly distributed. Certain people end up poorly placed to function in a meritocracy. Yes, yes. And eventually, if those people are large enough in number, they rebel against the idea of meritocracy.

**Douglas Murray** 59:21

Yes, that's right. And yeah, if you end up putting them on, well, an unwieldy emphasis on that aspect of the society, then yes, a large number of people will be disadvantaged and will will notice it,

**Bret** 59:38

right. So so my sense is if everybody had the tools to function in a meritocracy, then there'd be jockeying for position. Well also

**Douglas Murray** 59:47

if you if you regarded in order to do that, you would need to widen the array of things that we regard as being worth having.

**Bret** 59:55

Sure. And actually, frankly, you would want also to forbid In some way, I don't mean necessarily legally forbid, but maybe disincentivize, the production of all kinds of things that are profitable that are destructive.

**Douglas Murray** 1:00:08

We get into the printer distribution issue, don't we?

**Bret** 1:00:12

Exactly.

**Douglas Murray** 1:00:14

Which I understand I'm not going to try this on you because you got to tell me that it's a brown sand in nature is the most recognized force and in the things in the forest that grow up, grow up tall. And the things that can't grow in their shade don't?

**Bret** 1:00:36

Well, I mean, I'm not sure exactly what you're getting at. The only reason trees are tall is they're in a competition for light. There are obviously lots of things that are built not to need canopy levels of light and compete and play some of those same games down near the ground. you're drawing a connection, I don't yet see.

**Douglas Murray** 1:00:57

I'm trying to understand in a range of certainly some aspects of what your what your area of specialism that the problem of the curve that just, oh, yeah, it goes up.

**Bret** 1:01:11

Well, but so all right, so this is exactly what I think, you know, as a liberal, this is sort of our job is to figure out what actually could be achieved. And one thing I would say is we have a system in which truly bad luck, right? That is to say, misfortune that does not arise from bad decision making can ruin you. That's very bad. From the point of meritocracy, you want to protect people from bad luck,

**Douglas Murray** 1:01:37

you want to push it out, you want to make sure that the bottom part of the curve is softened, I

**Bret** 1:01:47

want to make sure that a you are safe to gamble in ways that are smart. In other words, you're gambling on an idea stands a chance of greatly improving human well being and it doesn't work out. But there was no way to know that ahead of time, I don't want you ruined over it, I want you to protect it doesn't mean I want you to profit from it. But the point is, if bad decision making results in misfortune, and good decision making results in profit, then we evolve very quickly to a state in which we generate more well being. So protecting people from bad luck is essential, right? And making sure that people don't freeze each other out of opportunity. So you know, this is a never ending battle over education in the US, it really comes down to people, preventing other people's children from getting well educated.

**Douglas Murray** 1:02:41

I have to say, with with, with one caveat, which is so few people in this country are well educated. I mean, it's astonishing. Just because they go to school. Yeah, yeah, I mean, it's you know, it's it's, it's another version of the purrito issue, which is you, the well educated here are really terrifically educated, albeit sometimes with appalling ideas at the margins. But the majority seem to me, I mean, the schooling system here, the university system seems to have so woefully let down the public.

**Bret** 1:03:14

So that's, that's the connection I want to draw is, to me, I actually don't have the sense of wanting to see an Tifa or taunting the cops beat. Right? Maybe I just don't allow myself to even have the thought. I actually feel like, you know what, we really did fuck up. And we harmed a huge number of people so that they do not have the tools to function in the system that we leave open. And that that is actually that's a problem that you cannot solve in less than a generation.

**Douglas Murray** 1:03:57

Yeah, there's, there's two things that are across this. Two specifically, there are two things that need opening out there, please. One is what fuck up is. And the second is who we are. Right? And when people say we did this, or we didn't do that, but the question is, is the first person actually the right one here, because a lot of people didn't do that. And were not resolved it happened in spite of them and in often against their wishes. So the we didn't do this. In the case of America, obviously we America, the nation does have to bear some responsibility as any nation does. But in many cases in this country, as in all countries, what has gone wrong has gone wrong because specific actors decided to go the wrong route.

**Bret** 1:04:59

I I agree with this. And you know, I believe in the tension you are describing, but I also know that at some, there's a higher level truth of what we are biologically. And then there is some reality that we have not yet gotten good at integrating with it. Right? So, you know, I'm a Jew, my ancestors came from Europe in the 20th century. Somehow, I am an American, tied back to George Washington, right? Yes, my ancestors were somewhere else when George Washington was doing his thing. And yet, by virtue of the fact that I am a citizen of this country, and a believer in it, right, I actually have picked up, you know, the George Washington, and, you know, the Martin Luther King, and all of these things, they actually become part of what I am, and maybe even the more important part. And so the question is, you know, am I responsible for the MIS education of these people? No, you know, I've actually dedicated a large fraction of my life to educating people. Well, and I did it well, on the other hand, is there a we and did we fuck up? We fucked up. We, we allowed? And, you know, I don't think there's more I could have done? No, but I still feel the responsibility for a society that has allowed I mean, you know, I feel it not just with respect to the, you know, the people who were given creddie tools that now don't arm them for the meritocracy that we insist they should be competing in. But I also, you know, I'm watching the homelessness, population of the homeless population grow. And I know that a lot of these people for a very homeless population to grow at the rate that it is growing, most people weren't homeless, some of them were, but yes, many of these people have gone from having the ability to house themselves to not having it. And what, you know, we have allowed that to happen.

**Douglas Murray** 1:07:07

Well, again, I mean, not to want to play the circuit circuit too much back at you. But one thing that ever test me on everyone's mind is, is there a scenario that you can imagine in which the person does actually deserve to be on the streets? Now? No, this is a problem, isn't it? It's the same thing as the portions of the left. I'm not saying you find it very hard to see what scenario leads anyone to be in prison? Well, and it's something on the same trajectory of thought, which is that I, I don't think that homelessness per se can ever be stopped. Because I think that, for instance, there will be some people who actually I mean, again, it's impossible to tell exactly what 14 there'll be a portion of people who want that. I've noticed that in San Francisco and elsewhere, but there are some people who seem to want to live on the streets. There's there's various is a small proportion, perhaps but a voluntary street dwelling population might might be something you can't eradicate, what you want to eradicate is the people who fell through through through layer after layer after layer of the society and absolutely do not want to be there. But as with, as with prison, as with other things in our society, where an individual ends up in a catastrophic situation, there does have to be some understanding of not not always assuming that it was society that causes the thing to happen. Because I mean, this is, let me give you an example of an example. It's obviously an American site. There's a debate over incarceration there has been going on for a long time and incarceration rates, particularly over in breaking down by racial origin. And one of the answers that people have come to on this, I think, actually, it's a pretty good place to contest is, is over incarceration rates of black, particularly male Americans over relatively low level drug issues, dealing in small amounts of marijuana add in large amounts of marijuana. And all of the comparisons and this is this is what we were getting back to earlier about the distribution of opportunity in most modern society, which is that, that this was it's a good place to confess this. It does seem unfair to people and I think I would share this that that somebody would have the racial origin has their entire life affected, disenfranchised future job opportunities forever taken from for what could be seen as a relatively minor offense. And people leaning on there seem to me to be leaning on something which is, is reasonable. It's a reasonable concern. The problem is That those same people will not allow themselves to say, what is the thing that means yes, you should be banged up, you should have future opportunities taken away from you, because what you've done is deeply harmful to everyone else in society. And the problem is, is these people, they say mainly a leftist problem. cannot do that bit. Yeah. And that's the same thing we do. This is your the right can be heartless at times, but there are times where a form of heartlessness is necessary, if somebody is determined to do a thing, and does it again and again, you cannot then say that we as a society, let them down. No, that person is responsible. They have to pay

**Bret** 1:10:44

Yeah. Oh, I totally agree. question you asked me was whether anybody deserves to be homeless, right? Do people deserve to be in prison? Many do. The so and I thought,

**Douglas Murray** 1:10:55

sure, but I'm not sure that I think anyone deserves to be homeless, right. But I think the situation that emerges, that means that having some people will screw up again, and again and again. And some people, we presented only in terms of they haven't got the help they need. And that is a very reasonable way to present it. But as you know, we all know, there are people who every single opportunity you give them they they fall through,

**Bret** 1:11:21

Well, okay, you've got two categories, I'd say there are three categories, right? You've got a category of people who, given enough functional structure would be productive and decent and have fallen through the cracks, because there's no safety net, right? Then you have people who meet your description, who given every opportunity can't pull it together, but not necessarily because they want it that way. They may be badly damaged. Yeah, capable of, you know, doing the kinds of things that would that would solve the problem. And then you've got a, undoubtedly a category of people, and I don't know how big it is, but category of people who just suck and aren't interested in participating in society. And, you know, I would argue homelessness is not a right answer in any of those three categories. In part, not just because of the people involved, the first two categories, I would argue deserve our compassion, right? The third category, I don't know that they deserve our compassion, but is it good for society to have homeless people, it is not. And so you have to provide some reasonable alternative

**Douglas Murray** 1:12:33

but you also have to make sure that that third category, whatever number they are, do not end up confusing and confounding the rest of society. So 100% this is era you know, it's the parents dilemma again, it's it's that at some point, it cannot be extrapolated out onto everybody else, when one person has behaved in a certain way for which they have to pay total.

**Bret** 1:13:03

And with respect to the prison side of the equation, I would say I think it is insane that we do not distinguish between the very least sociopath and maybe I mean, psychopaths in this case, and other criminals, right and

**Douglas Murray** 1:13:19

and so it's because the criminal one is in some ways easier. by me. Going back to this thing there's there was protests in Portland the other night because of I gather sparked by the fact that a family who happened to be black, stop paying their rent some time ago, the landlord wants to evict them because they haven't been paying their rent, and they say racism. And now, people are campaigning for this family just hidden in the hope the

**Bret** 1:13:49

family itself says that. When you say they, they say sorry,

**Douglas Murray** 1:13:53

yes, as I understand that the the the people who live in the house say it because of racism, I would venture as an outsider I'd venture is highly unlikely that racism is the cause of the landlord wanting to evict them and that it's more likely that the landlord wants to be paid for relief, leasing his house to a to anybody, whatever their skin color. I don't know maybe we found a white supremacist landlord in Portland, it's a strange place for white supremacists to try to earn their keep whatever. But, but in this situation, every mechanism of the site and this isn't just important, every mechanism of the society is in favor of the family who is not paying the rent, right? Very, very little. And I'm not here to say porn is an extreme example. But in general, outside very little of society looks to the landlord who is losing money, right thinks that we should pity them. And that's because our societal ethic again, it starts in a good place. It just doesn't know where the hell to stop favors the person who appears to be the underdog over the person who is perceived to have privilege and when You've become wildly intolerant of an unsympathetic with anybody perceived to have privilege, and wildly over sympathetic with anybody who can be claimed to be in any way an oppressed group, even if they are allegedly oppressed because there's something they haven't been doing, which they should have done. That was the deal.

**Bret** 1:15:22

Right? Well, so in this case, I would just say, a if you extrapolate, and this is the thing I think, in some sense Americans are worst at at the moment is extrapolating. But if you extrapolate from, well, we can't very well evict these people for not paying because it doesn't matter what follows the because once you set that in motion, the point is, what you've done is invalidated a system that houses people without suggesting a replacement for it. So it's insane, right? It just simply unstable. Now, I will say, as a biologist, who has spent a great deal of time working on and thinking about human beings, I actually believe that there is something deep to the idea that the differences in well being that we see distributed in a non random way between races is a consequence of structural features of history. Right, that going into the present Now, again, I don't know this to be true, for sure. I don't, you know, it's something that remains to be demonstrated. But I do think society speaking, we have to leave that possibility open until it has been disproved. Yes, yeah. And so if that, if it is the case, that a well functioning liberal society that protected people from bad luck provided people with tools that allowed them to avail themselves of the opportunities in the meritocracy and incentivize them to do so. Right? If that's sort of the minimal criteria, that we would actually find that many of the problems that are motivating, a lot of this insanity would evaporate. Now, they wouldn't go, you know, you wouldn't get total equality, you'd get a distribution of well, being that based on how hard different people work and various other things, but the unfairness in the system would be randomized. And so in a sense, I think we have, and, you know, let's go back to your example, about, we know, or we at least have excellent reason to think that there is an important racial inequality that has caused a large number of black men to be incarcerated for something that most of us don't think is even worthy of being criminalized. Right, the distribution of pot. Okay. You and I have no disagreement about that. I

**Douglas Murray** 1:18:00

might have said, I'm not for decriminalization, or not. I mean, I don't believe in I mean, it's actually something I haven't studied an enormous amount, but I actually don't think that I think it's another layer of the catastrophe of the society that on top of everything else, you decide this is a great time to legalize pot pot. I don't think that people should be should be punished for its possession. I think this is roughly My view is not not a particular totally evolved view. I certainly don't think people should be punished for the possession of marijuana. Yeah. I'm, I don't think a society should encourage by legalizing its use, because I think that it does a lot of damage once

**Bret** 1:18:42

it gets going. Interesting. So here's, here's what I would say. As somebody who used to smoke a lot of pot. I haven't smoked it in a long time. I gave myself an allergy, actually. But yeah, I damaged my lungs and gave myself an

**Douglas Murray** 1:18:56

allergy. Yeah. Wow. That's a lot. It was a lot. Wow, I really didn't.

**Bret** 1:19:00

But here's the thing. Okay. This was this was quite a long time ago. And part was I took notice. Yeah, it wasn't nearly so strong a drug. It was a prime minor phenomenon. If people

**Douglas Murray** 1:19:13

weren't smoking, the varieties that give them psychosis and much more.

**Bret** 1:19:17

Right, exactly. And so what happened to pot was that it actually the THC got concentrated because the criminal penalties tracked the weight that you were trafficking. And so the stronger that the individual quantity was, the less the penalty for trafficking, certain amount of effect, right? So anyway, we've created a very powerful drug out of something that wasn't very powerful. And, you know, again, I'm questioning what we is that yes, okay. Our collective societal action created a very powerful drug out of marijuana, which wasn't very powerful to begin with. And so, in the case of the ancestral, the pot we used to smoke, ditch weed, whatever was right. It I think actually on balance might be a lot less dangerous from the point of view of societal harms than for example, alcohol. And that in effect, criminalizing it meant people spend a lot more time drunk. I mean,

**Douglas Murray** 1:20:15

yeah, I know the argument that I made just all problems that alcohol can cause and all the pleasures that can bring it's it's sub optimal for society have many things like that in the circulation system, because and I don't find it persuasive when people say that, that legalizing marijuana in California or anywhere else is desirable, because some people drink beer. And I just add one other thing, which is again, the state of somewhere like San Francisco, it's visible to an outsider that marijuana legalization layered on top of everything else has not improved the society.

**Bret** 1:21:00

I don't know how you would know.

**Douglas Murray** 1:21:02

Oh, I mean, things like every time I visited, I mean, the last time I was there, there were huge adverts everywhere. For new company, which which would deliver marijuana to your door. And I remember just thinking, yeah, that's clearly the thing this needs most is easier access. So you don't even have to leave your house to get your stash. Yeah. I actually I do feel sort of strongly instinctively about this one again. Some people smoke pot, I don't have a particular problem with it. I don't want people to go to prison for it. Yeah. But my god on a social level, do I not want them to do it around me? Okay, because they will become boring. And I think it's selfish. I don't think it makes them funnier, or more interesting or more insightful. I think it dulls their brain, there's some process of almost like retardation that it seems to have on a lot of people that goes on when they're not on it. Yep. And, and I'd rather have a society of sort of alert and thinking people who, who weren't, first of all weren't, you know, retarded, from things they could do and think and feel. And that and contribute through? Again, I mean, I come back, if people want to do it, and it's available, then sure. I just wouldn't encourage

**Bret** 1:22:24

it. Alright, so Okay, I take your point. And again, I think we're talking about us to get caught on they're all different beasts than we used to be talking about. So okay, you know, you know, let's leave it aside. If we agree that there's some problem in which society has not only penalised people for the relatively trivial offence of having a pot, but done so in a wildly unequal way.

**Douglas Murray** 1:22:52

That is, then that would be wrong that we needed to be corrected,

**Bret** 1:22:55

right? But here would be my point. Okay, so you take a lot of black men for a relatively trivial offense, and we lock them up. This has an automatic consequence, that creates a much larger problem, right as bad a problem is that is right, removing people's freedom is a very serious thing. And doing some doing it over something trivial is obviously a an illiberal thing to do. But if you take a large number of men out of a population, then you undermine the bargaining position of women in child rearing. which results in women raising children alone.

**Douglas Murray** 1:23:38

Yes, can I cut in there sure. Sorry. But there's another thing we are quite good at going over the the effect that incarceration rates have on causing fatherless children in America Yep. My fear is that this is the conversation I think that conversation should be had i'm not i'm not by any means against it. This is I sometimes worry that some things like that come up because it's the easiest conversation to have.

**Bret** 1:24:12

I never hear it.

**Douglas Murray** 1:24:15

Oh, it's written about pretty widely here isn't it?

**Bret** 1:24:19

It's possible I've just missed it but I keep raising it. And I get

**Douglas Murray** 1:24:24

to among other magazines as well a lot of pieces about this.

**Bret** 1:24:27

Maybe we're not talking about the same thing. Or maybe I'm unaware of what they've written. What do you think the argument is that you see regularly portrayed?

**Douglas Murray** 1:24:36

I mean, I'm not not a big fan of his tan easy coats and others have written the length on the way in which incarceration has affected the American black family.

**Bret** 1:24:45

Oh, no, no. Okay. That is a very common conversation, right? I'm talking about something. Basically, a, a biological argument. Oh, sorry, right about mating systems, and the produce detectable effect of creating an imbalance between the numbers of males and females. And so,

**Douglas Murray** 1:25:06

you know, situation like China into portions of China where

**Bret** 1:25:09

that aren't China has a very interesting paradoxical violation of a biological principle differences, right for very different reasons. But anyway, my point is just simply, we know that black men have been incarcerated at a high rate, we can argue about why that is, but part of it seems to be unfair. And on the basis of marijuana offenses, for example, part of part of it, the consequence of that is to create single parent homes and single parent homes are almost certain to produce offspring who are less well positioned because they just have a lot less rent a parent, but efforts are

**Douglas Murray** 1:25:49

available, they come back to the problem is, again, this is a part of a conversation that's relatively easy to have, whether it's heard often or not, I don't know. It's relatively easy to have the harder conversation again, this comes back to something like the left right tussle is, what about all the people who do that, and it has no relation to incarceration rates, marijuana possession or anything else, ie, people who choose or just happen to father, children with people, they have no intention of staying with leave and leave another family being brought up with a fatherless situation. But my point, there is repeatedly a risk in our societies that we address the allegedly most difficult to address thing, whilst actually leaving the really hard to address things completely unaddressed. And that sound addressed because we come back to this thing is easier to address whatever percentage of whatever percent, I would say that I'd like to have to remind myself the stats on this, that fatherless household are not primarily in America caused because the father is in in jail for marijuana possession. Okay, right.

**Bret** 1:27:01

So I want to clear this up a I totally agree with what you're saying. And you may or may not realize that this is something Heather and I have talked about extensively, we are nominalism. Yes. So there is something very troubling going on. And I think it comes out of frankly, sexual liberalism, right, which resulted in Yes, a crisis of people producing offspring that they didn't intend to care for. So that is a part of the discussion, but

**Douglas Murray** 1:27:28

not which is answered by sexual illiberalism may what may we add?

**Bret** 1:27:32

Right? Yes, exactly. Exactly. So there's some new conversation that has to happen that basically, the fact of birth control set something in motion, the consequences of which were not well anticipated,

**Douglas Murray** 1:27:43

that was so such a short way into it that right,

**Bret** 1:27:47

so it's about time we had a good conversation about that. But I want to make the point, I am not arguing that somebody is father needs to be in jail in order for a single parent household to be created. What I'm arguing is the following thing. Men are programmed for two reproductive strategies, okay. One of them involves investment in offspring. And in that mode, men are very much like women in the sense that they are very choosy, and very careful with whom they reproduce, because anyway, it's a lifetime of investment. The other reproductive mode involves no investment, the children are still needy, and the mothers raised them. So my point is, given men program for both of these possibilities, men find the idea of sex without commitment, nearly irresistible. And so what that means is if you have a community in which there are not enough men, men are in demand. There are lots of women willing, the point is it's very hard to nail any of them. Right. And so the point is how much fatherlessness in the black community is the result of a simple demographic. Lack of men available for marriage?

**Douglas Murray** 1:29:06

Do you see any? This means obviously must be replicated in other communities as well?

**Bret** 1:29:11

Well, you would see it in various places, anything that eliminates men would be likely to produce this unless you had cultural provisions that prevented it. Yes, right. Shame mechanisms, exactly shame mechanisms that could be you know, religious in nature, for example. But all this is to say, we have consequences. We have a complex system, we have inequalities of various kinds, we have an uncertain assertion that maybe actually people given the same tools are roughly equally capable and that what we are seeing is the echo of the fact that there was never a moment when everybody was at the starting line at the same time, right? People start from different places. With different baggage based on how they arrive in the population. And that in effect, we are, I would argue, I believe we are dealing with the downstream consequences of the fact that we never equalized things, nor could we have. But that in some sense, that's the puzzle to be solved. Now, if you did that, and you found that there was residual inequality left over, that would tell you, you had a different problem. But until you've done that, imagining that the inequality and I don't mean inequality in wealth, I mean, inequality have capacity to compete, right? until you've equalize things enough that we run that experiment, then we're in this very cruel predicament of society, blaming people for their failures, when we actually don't know to what extent they are responding to the tools they've been given.

**Douglas Murray** 1:30:55

Yeah, we don't know. And it's very hard to see a scenario in which we could No, that's one of the problems. I have this. I mean, one of the reasons why the right is not so keen on the whole equality argument is the and measurability of the factors we're talking about. Totally. I mean, by the way, I think there's lots of things in our society at the moment, which fall in with where we have the same unknowability problem. One that is very much in my mind at the moment is mental illness, which is on everybody's minds. And which seems to me suffers from some problem in this area where we have compassion for anybody with mental illness, quite rightly, it exists. We know. But we also don't know where the boundaries are, for instance, of people who simply claim an element of it in order to gain something else. There is no knowing mechanism in society, there are doctors I speak to who say, we can tell when there are people who are after a diagnosis of something that will help them. I mean, this, of course, in a cynical, right, helping doctors tell me, you know, there are certain things people would quite like to be diagnosed with that are actually if you did have them, you you would not want to have them. For example, bipolar, bipolar, I mean, a number of people who who appear to be almost proud of or seeking of a diagnosis of being bipolar, because they see there as being certain gains were made from it. Nobody with bipolar, probably would want it. Yeah. But you can tell something is up. And again, Doctor friends I speak to says, because there are things that clearly people don't want. Nobody wants to go out on a date with somebody and boasts that they're schizophrenic.

**Bret** 1:32:53

Right? I, I actually, I've noticed the same thing that there are certain conditions that people that apparently carrying a stigma.

**Douglas Murray** 1:33:02

And in fact, the opposite in a way, right, I can't always but in certain situations, and by the way, I was just stressed. Again, none of this is by any means to condemn or criticize people who actually do have, you know, serious conditions which seriously affect their lives. But we all know that there are people who, who do want to we see them, and we experience it, particularly when people are growing up. Yeah, that they want to have certain things in order to single them out and make them special and give them better treatment, or better, to be given certain leeway by society. We don't have mechanisms in place to deal with this we and for something which for instance, when the British government a couple years ago said they wanted to treat physical mental illness in with the same dedication as physical illness. If you haven't worked out what the boundaries are of mental illness in your society, you've just allowed a massive problem to erupt. Because there's no delineation of

**Bret** 1:33:59

all right, you create a certain amount of

**Douglas Murray** 1:34:03

ambiguity between people who are genuinely suffering and people who would like to suffer because they'd like the things that they believe accrue to people who have suffered.

**Bret** 1:34:09

Yeah, it's psychological Munchausen or something, right?

**Douglas Murray** 1:34:13

And I mean, this is this the all of these things do come together. I think I joked to you when we were having dinner with Heather last night that we I had wondered On arriving important whether or not the water was safe to drink. That does appear to be something in it. That causes the growing of pink hair, the the masculinization of women and the feminine feminization of men. Yes.

**Bret** 1:34:41

causing me to go gray.

**Douglas Murray** 1:34:44

You've got the best. Yeah, fake. But I mean, you do wonder when the society has as many deranged people in it, and as many people who believe they're involved in some way, agenda bound mellifluous, transgression and much more. I mean, again, to an outsider, this stuff is obvious here, you have an awful lot of people who I mean, again, roaming the streets who clearly should be in in places where they're being looked after for mental problems. Clearly, you've got a problem with that. And you have a lot of people who are clearly operating in society, who have a range of less severe, but really low level, mental disorders. Yep, who believe that they are. And again, this isn't to say that trans doesn't exist. As I say, in madness of crowds. clearly something is going on here. We just know almost nothing about it. But we also have people who are pretending that they're trans in order to gain attention and when the hierarchy game of the year because weirdly, they think that in the intersectional Olympics, to be gender fluid, is this something that will make you win or give you the megaphone that evening. And all of these things are going on cell tension. And, and again, a conservative critique of that would be because you didn't set up any boundaries. Oh, you didn't, you didn't chart any of this, it was not in your interests, we regularly were not in your interests to pinpoint to people when they had personally screwed up. Nobody in the in the social system was willing to say, shut up, Go and do your work. Nobody was willing to say you failed, because you deserve to fail. Because you're a reprehensible and selfish figure. Nobody was willing to do any of these things. And so you just have this, like, literally a girl the other night in a pink jumpsuit, screaming at the police and hurling things, hoping to be arrested. She's like, we're there.

**Bret** 1:36:47

So I think we are we are in a position to converge here. Because first of all, let's just say I don't think it's in the water in any literal sense. I know you're speaking metaphorically

**Douglas Murray** 1:37:01

speaking metaphorically, we use it as a good thing to clear up just in case.

**Bret** 1:37:05

Well, let's put it this way. From my perspective, I think we've got the same puzzle across all of civilization, which is, you have a huge number of people who are sick, yeah. Psychologically, physically, socially, right. And you don't know why. And you're busy telling me that all of these things are safe, you don't know if they're safe, you know that they don't kill you outright if you ingest them, but you don't know that they're not long term harmful. And so the point is, we've got a lot of things causing pathology, and we don't know what they are. And that's a very dangerous situation. And it should start a very serious adult conversation about how you deal with things that cause pathology, that you can't identify in a complex society where we keep inventing new stuff and replacing it assuming it's fine. Yeah. But what I want to get at is this, the situation you're describing, I don't agree, I don't disagree with you, right, we didn't set limits, we are, we got exactly what we ordered, in effect, right, we set up a system that was guaranteed to cause this kind of dysfunction. And then we got this kind of dysfunction, we scratch our heads over it. And that's absurd. What we should have, the way you do deal with the problems that we've been talking about without being able to run the test about What Causes What Is, you set up a mechanism that protects people, we don't want people falling off the bottom of the ladder. We don't want people rewarded for hanging out at the bottom of the ladder, right? We want people incentivized to solve their own problems, we want them to seek competence rather than incompetence. But we want to protect everyone I would assume, from falling off the bottom and becoming a burden to society on the street, right. And then you want to arm people with high quality tools for making the most of life. If you had a system in which you protect people from falling off the bottom, you arm everybody with high quality tools for making something of your life. And then you allow inequality to drive people to strive, right, that I believe solves the problem by virtue of the fact that people have a very good reason then to achieve right? And that good reason to achieve is what drives people away from the kind of incompetence that you're describing.

**Douglas Murray** 1:39:39

Yes, do you think is achievable?

**Bret** 1:39:44

Again, I think the big problem is that we are talking about a problem we have an immediate problem like a It's October of 2020. And the clock is ticking and we're talking about what to do next week. We have that timescale of problem. And the solution we are talking about is, if we started tomorrow, it's still going to be a generation. Yeah. So

**Douglas Murray** 1:40:13

let me add, we offer alternative, which is that thing of people falling off the bottom when I said earlier? Should any? Does anyone deserve to be homeless? What I'm trying to get at is the society cannot rack itself endlessly over the tiny number of people who actually fall through their own volition, right? Okay, we cannot be endlessly empathetic with those who have been given every opportunity and still fall. And one of the reasons is enemies, this is a very again, it's a very ugly, very unpleasant thing to say, perhaps is that knowing that that is possible is one of the things that keeps everyone else running. Well, so citing that, I mean, I have this instinct, always with the homeless, I'm My name is heartless on this issue. But, you know, I, you know, depends what your state in life is. But I've certainly had times in my life where I see somebody who's begging and I think could be me, could be me. And that's a good instinct to have for lots of reasons. One is it gives you sympathy with the person in question. And the other thing is, it reminds you to work and run, yes. Now, the reason I say this is because you're not going to like on your local visitors not going like this. But Portland may be that example that the rest of the world needs to run and work and do a lot of other things to stop this being replicated. And to that extent, those who would like to play the left, right, and indeed, media reporting cards on this are doing it, I think, for that reason, to give them a most plausible steel man analysis of it. I suspect that some left wing is including the far leftists in this region, don't like accurate reporting of the extremes to which their people are going, because they Intuit that what is happening is the rest of the country is saying, we would like that lesson to become even clearer. They might not be wrong on that. I don't doubt at all that there are a lot of people on the American right, who would like to see Portland burned to the ground, in order for it to be a lesson for everybody else. I don't doubt that. I don't, I don't know how common place that is, I don't think one can measure it. But equally, there are people of the left who don't want any of what's going on here to get out precisely because they realize that the lesson that people will take from here might be the opposite lesson to the one that they hope this place would, would be speaking to the nation at this point in its history. And that is that that is a very reasonable explanation for why this place has become such an epicenter of a much bigger debate, because one group of people thought this was going to be Nirvana and Nirvana stinks. And they Intuit that perhaps, and another side, once Portland to fail, because it wants the rest of us to see how and why it's failed and make sure we don't replay the lessons.

**Bret** 1:43:28

So I agree that this is part of the dynamic and I think, you know, it's this is unavoidably for my family a personal tragedy, because, you know, we moved to Portland, because in many ways, it is an amazing city with great promise and to watch it fail in this

**Douglas Murray** 1:43:47

way, beautiful city and beautiful nature around you. And it has the potential to be marvelous, if

**Bret** 1:43:52

only it had, you know, I like it's idealism, right? I don't mean the an Tifa insanity in the streets. I mean, the idealism of your average Portland homeowner, business owner, right? I like what they're striving for. I like what they want. But I want the restraining force that causes it to be, you know, deployed in some reasonable way. And that is not happening here. I do want to accept the pushback that you've just delivered about Portland as cautionary tale for liberals. And I think it is that I want to deliver the other side of that argument, though. There is part of what is taking place nationally, and, in fact, internationally, that is the result of too much stinginess on the part of the right. In other words, I think that we had a kind of post Cold War dividend that we spent very, very stupidly and that we allowed rent seeking To, to hoard opportunity that if it had been broadly distributed, would have resulted in a much better, much fairer, much nicer society. And that in effect, I it's not that I want either side to be held responsible for what happened because I think it is actually, you know, it's a, it's a Shakespearean failure here that what we've got is each side had its blind spot, and the two engaged in a kind of dance of death that brought us to this place. And the, you know, so there's a question about what we can do about it immediately? And the answer is, I don't know that anybody knows the answer to that.

**Douglas Murray** 1:45:45

No, an individual level, you know, for you and your family. As for many other reasonable people in this place, the calculus that has to happen by now is, is it worth hitting my head against the wall? Or is it worth getting out? And this is the conversation I had with lots of people in California, again, from across the political spectrum was, is this able to be improved? Or is it not worth, you know, I quoted mantle crowd, somebody, the wonderful American writer Wendell Berry, who, at one point in an essay from the 80s, or so said, something, he said, you know, we all have to spend ourselves on something. And it's, that's an interesting tipping point in any society is, I will spend my time I will spend myself on the attempt to turn around the city I am in and from and that I love, and that has great potential. And then the moment when it's perfectly clear that this is not a useful way to spend limited energies we all do have in our life. And that time to go. Well, that's the calibration.

**Bret** 1:46:55

It is it is unavoidable. And, you know, I must say, having seen this in microcosm, at evergreen, and now seeing it in Portland, yes, it's the same damn calculation, which was, you know, Heather and I tried everything we could think of, you know, we were two of the most popular professors evergreen had ever had, there was actually number one, right? And you would have thought that we could have brought reason to that system and prevented it from going over the edge, there came a point at which it became utterly clear that spend everything we had on the puzzle wouldn't be nearly enough to prevent the place from imploding. And that the only thing to do was to get out. Yeah, right. That became clear. That same, I mean, it's almost the identical calculation is now unfolding important. And we didn't you know, sometimes our friends give us a hard time. Why did you move to Portland? And the answer was, actually, the quality of life here was spectacular, and much more affordable than it was in many places. So you know, we actually looked at 10 different cities that we might have moved to when we moved here, because it was the best, but watching what it's doing now, I have to tell you, my my upbringing, I was born in 1969, which felt like, as I was growing up, it felt like it was a long time after the Holocaust and World War Two, I now as an adult realize it was much closer to those events than I had realized. And I cannot escape the question. You know, we always when I was growing up, I talked about people who had been living in Eastern Europe, Jews who didn't react fast enough and told themselves that it would be okay. And you know, that it would pass and then it didn't. And, you know, I can't, I don't know how to convey to people who are busy attacking the foundations of logic of mathematics, science, the Enlightenment, the idea of equality amongst the races. I don't know how to say to these people, you are scaring the shit out of those of us who know anything about history, because you sound an awful lot like things that we have seen. And this doesn't end well. Right. But I also you know, the question I asked you earlier, where are the examples where people who were headed this direction turned around because they realized what they were up to or some properly moderate restraining force

**Douglas Murray** 1:49:40

will cause them to the only thing that happens at this stage in a society is a war, right? Very large numbers of people die, and people were reminded of one of them forces of nature. The saying that sounds catastrophic, but there's no way around it. That that's what In late empires and societies which have this number of things, this is this, that's what happened. And it requires that as. And the problem about that as of course, is that it's both the mechanism that sets things back on some other trajectory and also the thing that kills vast numbers of people you can't ever wish for it. nobody's saying would occasionally meet in the same people who would. This is this is why the, the misunderstanding the what I described, the beginning the wrong projection on the wall of things which you then war war against, is so important to correct and by, and it has to be done at that micro level. And maybe a lot of people didn't realize when you realized Heather realize, but if you allow people to get away with the subtle, tiny misrepresentations around the margins of the thing that is being created, if you allow that to happen, when it's projected on the national wall, you'll know that you should have got it right earlier.

**Bret** 1:51:12

That's brilliant. By the way. Your This is exactly how it works. There are those of us who are sticklers for getting the fine detail, right? And I think we often look absurd to others, because their point is just general. Yeah, why did not let it go? Right? And the answer is, because sooner or later, you're going to hit an amplifier. And when you amplify the little incorrect aspects of this, you're going to cause the whole fight. I thought I've

**Douglas Murray** 1:51:39

had this throughout my life and noticed it among many friends and colleagues and that in different sectors, this is this is perhaps unknowingly often the reason why we are sticklers for detail. Because like that we will not I mean the most obvious one in America today is like, why would you argue about the details I was in New York, the other week, and now we are talking about the Brianna Taylor case and thinking, and I can't wait for that thinking. Everyone had different views and different claims. I came away from that just thinking, you know, why are we stickers This is because that matters. Because one narrative of it like the George Floyd case, it's one narrative of it, if you don't get all the facts, right, will allow the projection on the wall to be the American police are allowed to kill black people with impunity. And some of the people doing that will have done it for short term political gain, some will perfectly reasonably know that will be their estimation of events, including people whose estimation of events is thus because they have themselves suffered at the hands of the law unfairly themselves. The problem is you will create this next generation which is clearly one of the things you had to have agreement clearly one of the things that's going on important that actually believes the picture that has been played on to the wall in front of them, and at this stage cannot be shifted from that unless it is through some monumental re boot of the whole system, which is only imaginable through a catastrophic event.

**Bret** 1:53:18

Yes, although so a I will say I was as a younger man, I was a believer in the idea that a catastrophic destruction of an American city could wake the population to what it wasn't paying attention to. I no longer believe this. I mean, you know, Katrina, among other things, you revealed that, no, that just wasn't the case anymore. I also think that there's something about the spectacular pneus of what we see on our screens, that has caused us not to be able to detect when something is so spectacular in the outside world, that it should immediately grab our attention. And we should think very soberly about it. So we're, we're sort of caught where people are dealing as if their beliefs and what they say don't have consequences, because because of the narrative environment we're in. But I did want to add one thing to your portrayal. I agree. One possible interpretation is, this is what people do. War is the thing that puts the brakes on it. You can descend into

**Douglas Murray** 1:54:23

madness, disaster catastrophe. That's right. It

**Bret** 1:54:26

doesn't have to be. It could be genocide, could be lots of things. But the point is societies go crazy. They hit bottom, and then they come back, but I don't think that happens here. And the reason I don't think that happens here is because the US isn't just any country. Yes, yes. Yes. This is 2020. Yes, the US plays a special role in the west

**Douglas Murray** 1:54:48

where I know I mean, I live in one of the outposts of the Empire.

**Bret** 1:54:52

Exactly. And so the

**Douglas Murray** 1:54:56

things go wrong in Rome, right? They affect us in Galicia.

**Bret** 1:55:04

They do and the thing so that may be an ancient pattern. But the new pattern is the technological context that we live in. And the fact that, you know, this will be the first time you've had a major reorientation like that on a planet armed with nuclear weapons, for example, yes,

**Douglas Murray** 1:55:23

and all able to see everything in real time and not agree on what we've seen and much more,

**Bret** 1:55:27

right? And yes, then you layer on to it the industrial strength, scientifically tuned propaganda, generators, and we're talking, we have to stop ourselves and without a precedent for how that happens without hitting rock bottom.

**Douglas Murray** 1:55:45

Well, that's that's why the details are going to continue to matter. And the individuals, however, smaller number they are, who care about the details must continue to be seen to do well. You know, this is why people admire you and Heather, is why people admire the figures who are willing to get the details, right. And I think if I have any hope in all this, and I always do have some hope. It's that people really learn why some people were compelled to be sticklers in this era, and that they were not. They were not being boringly pedantic. They were not narrow in their vision, but saw that when the madness of the era trod on their areas, and they said, No, you don't get to do that. They were making the most important fight that they could in the areas they knew about. And that in case of the case in recent years, that's what's gone on.

**Bret** 1:56:58

Yes, I must say at the moment. It's possible that it's at the wrong scale to even know whether that's possible. But the overwhelming sense for Heather and me was that we were surprised that people actually correctly registered that what happened at evergreen was this thing we are seeing more widely, and that we did say we got it exactly right. We were told at the time, we were overreacting, or maybe it was an extreme case or something. There's been wide acknowledgement that we were seeing accurately and that the warning was if anything tamer than it might have been, rather than an overreaction. However, it seems to amount to nothing with respect to its we're just going to repeat the disaster. And it's like, you get some kind of a prize for having spotted the last one and correctly diagnosed it. But there's no like, Okay, well, then what do you think is happening now? And what do we do about it? It's like, it's treated as a completely separate phenomenon. At the level of what's going to happen here, when I think the answer is what's going to happen here is what happened there, except that when it happens at the scale of major American cities, it's going to result in the loss of life and limb and well being and it is going to place the nation in terrible Jeopardy relative to its big, bad antagonists in the world.

**Douglas Murray** 1:58:35

Yes, I think that's right. One way in which all of this corrects itself is by Merica, failing, being seen to have failed, and those who believed in other systems to be able to portray themselves as having been vindicated. My own belief is that that's the worst case scenario imaginable. Because people who didn't like the American Empire, or the American era of hedge money, and dominance are going to love the Chinese.

**Bret** 1:59:11

This, this is exactly it. And here's the thing. People don't understand that they are that humans are themselves, the latest iteration in an ancient evolutionary battle, right? That until humans, nobody can name or understand is even taking place. Right? And the point is, the Chinese might even be more fit, their system might be more fit, but it is pointless. Yes, pointless because it does not liberate the individuals to do the things that humans are uniquely capable of doing. And so the point is, we have to win even if their system is more robust and fitter because it's it has no purpose and absolutely, you know,

**Douglas Murray** 1:59:57

yes, that no life Dedicated to growth in China.

**Bret** 2:00:04

Right? It's not alive, right? You know, Amina yeast is a very successful entity, but we don't want to become you know, right, we don't want to do it. And you know, frankly, if you know, the West, I think catch on in such a way that the Chinese were liberated to be freer and less efficient, you know, it would be good for them, it might not be good for them in the sense of their, you know, long term growth as you put it, but, but it would be good for them from the point of the human part, the part that makes us different, that part is really the part struggling to survive in this era. And I think it's on the ropes.

**Douglas Murray** 2:00:49

It is on the ropes, but it always is. It's always is it it's not been on the ropes to this extent, in this place for a long, long time. And that's why it matters. That's why the city we're sitting in name is known. It's why it matters. Why evergreen methods. It's, it's why America matters. And what can't be too adamant about this, that, that screwing this up. Or claiming that if you bring it down better things will emerge, are things that have to be stopped. Not just willed, but stopped by people who know what the stakes are. And that's why whatever way through there is it involves people of left and right. centrists boring though they may be and much else agreeing that the optimal conditions may not be these. But all of the rest are infinitely worse, including the ones that are being propagated by people in the name, especially of social justice, and equality and much more. And we have to not be derailed by these people. We have to stand up to them, the American public has to stand up to them, the American authorities have to stand up to them. And they know the world only walks in one direction in relation to America, which is towards it. There is no mass movement to Sudan. There is no mass movement to Saudi Arabia. China does not have a massive immigration problem of people wishing to flee to it. The footfall speaks for itself. It's a very good point it speaks for itself. And the American public and politicians should realize whatever direction they come from, this is too big a thing to screw up. And it's too big a thing to get the details wrong for the short term. Because America short term is the world's long term.

**Bret** 2:03:30

It's very, very well said. And I must say if I can just simply paraphrase the implication here. This is something I have felt very strongly for a very long time. It is not our right to screw this up. We Americans, there is an irony in the belief in democracy, which is that democracy is about the consent of the governed. And because the US plays a role in governing the world, many of those who are governed by it, whether they like it or not, have no vote here. And so in a sense, we have to vote with the responsibility to the rest of the world in mind, and we are doing a terrible job of it. Well, you voted in what two weeks. So we'll say well, let me ask you one thing before we go. You have traveled in the US now you came west from the east coast, and then you traveled up the West Coast, landing here in Portland. I don't know how to ask you this exactly. I'm tuned into a bunch of conversations amongst some powerful and influential people. I know what I hear. You've now physically passed through places where you will have participated in many of these conversations in person. The Elite how Do they understand what's going on? How coherent Do you think their response to it is?

**Douglas Murray** 2:05:08

I can't really say I mean, I can only a few tiny parts of it. I mean, America is such a complex country, as you know. So why it's so hard to, it's so hard, so infinitely interesting, because it's so hard to gauge it because of the difference from state to state place to play city to city and much more. So if somebody says, you know, do you have your ear to the ground and America you have civil where there's an awful lot of places to put your ear to? It's, it's it, I can't really answer that I I'm struck by the number of people who are now thinking catastrophic thoughts. And coming to emergency scenario planning, very struck on in all the places I've been to so far, with the fact that, that people, for instance, are planning to vote, and then get out of the area they live in.

**Douglas Murray** 2:06:16

It's it's, it's just, it's a terrible fate for a country, the one you're in. It's just a terrible, horrible fate. Because nobody, nobody is wild about anyone. Other than people who you wouldn't trust to be wild. I mean, I feel embarrassed for this country in some ways. I'm embarrassed by those who are going to vote for Joe Biden, as if in his fifth decade in politics, he's going to do something he didn't do in the first four.

**Bret** 2:06:58

Well, set of

**Douglas Murray** 2:07:01

proposals, all these things you say you're going to do, why didn't you do them in 47 years of this, I'm embarrassed for them, because I know their heart isn't in it. And, and that they're, they're doing something which is, is transparent to everybody. And I'm embarrassed for republicans and others who have to pretend that Donald Trump is lots of things he isn't including somebody you can totally trust. I'm embarrassed for them. Because it seems to me I've avoided writing about Trump pretty much for the last four years, partly because everybody's got a view. Partly because you can't change anyone's mind and partly because it's so damn obvious. I mean, I, I can riff on him like everybody else, I'm gonna you want me to list his flaws, I can do it lying down. But we all can. And, and the the embarrassment to my mind for republicans is over Trump voters is that their man has been in for four years. And although he is, to some extent capable of pulling big levers, he has no capacity to effectively do things. He can do big things quite well, on occasion. a trade war with China doesn't seem to me to be something anyone else would be able to do. And I think it's necessary. I think that oh, I mean, things like the critical race theory stuff is something probably almost Well, actually, probably no other leader would do. It's just that repeatedly with him, you have this thing, but why don't you follow through with things? Why didn't you do things? Why aren't you interested in detail? Why can't you get anyone to work with you? And much more, and I'm embarrassed for my, you know, friends and contacts and others who, who have to pretend that Trump is something he isn't just so embarrassed for those with the same problem on the other side. I'm personally rather relieved, I don't have a vote in this election. I'm pleased to be one of the disenfranchised and the remnants of the Empire. So

**Bret** 2:09:13

all right, do you have a sense of what's going to happen?

**Douglas Murray** 2:09:15

I don't I mean, like everyone, I've got different scenarios, and the polls seem to show that Biden's gonna win. And yes, they seem to and they ended and of course, everyone says Aha, but they seem to show that Hillary was gonna win last time. And I've just got all the thoughts in my head simultaneously. I have no special way of seeing through the fog and I see odd things I speak. I've spoken to surprising people who are going to vote Trump, who I would never expect it to do so I've, I've seen rallies and gatherings in which there seem to be support for Trump on a level that is not replicated in the polls. But I also think that America was Peggy noon and brilliantly wrote the other weekend that they will see journal might want to return to normality and they think Voting, rightly or wrongly, they think the voting Biden would be some return to normality from a reality TV show that they've been forced to watch for four years and they can't change the channel on my own views always sort of beyond the individual, the ballot and onto the sort of the fate of the nation and I, what, what, what, what I find difficult to comprehend as well what is the best and worst long case scenario in each outcome? Only knowing that the worst case scenario is contestation in multiple jurisdictions and just L is highly likely highly likely. And that I mean, I spoke to somebody the other day, and I said that right. The absolute worst case scenario, as I'm sure you know, is the is the reverse of the moonlight Oscars scenario, you know, the, the, the other year or the Oscars. I mean, obviously, nobody watches it anymore. But at the Oscars, they gave the best picture to lala land. Oh, yeah. And then it turned out that they'd got it wrong. And it actually went to moonlight. This black gay movie wasn't seen by anyone other than the cast, and moonlight. Fortunately, whatever was given the Oscar, and I remember at the time watching it thinking, Oh, God, it happened that way. If they'd have taken the Oscar from the black gay movie, and handed it over to the boring way, de la la singing, dancing, devious movie, they would have been writing in downtown within a few hours. So he reviewed his news and brief the next day in the English papers would have been shots were heard overnight. And obviously the worst case scenario for America in terms of security is that the democrats are thought to have one and then it turns out that Trump won. Right? Would you agree that is the absolute worst case scenario?

**Bret** 2:11:57

Well, let's put it this way that the worst case scenario starts there. Yes. Yeah. All of this is only the day off. Yes. Only this is the day I'm sorry

**Douglas Murray** 2:12:05

if I say any of this with glee laughter because it goes this is this country and your life,

**Bret** 2:12:11

I think, well, first of all, I think in some sense. Anybody who's paying attention to you knows that you have an extraordinary capacity for gallows humor. They know where your heart is, and they know you're not rooting against us or delighting in our yard torment. So anyway, yes, I think there's no danger. no danger of you being misinterpreted that way. All right. Well, I will make a prediction about the election. We're going to lose. Oh, yeah. And by we I mean the American PVS. Yes, yeah. Yeah. All right. This has been a great discussion. It has been a real pleasure to see you in person, you were the first guest of the podcast remotely. And now, in this era, where everything is remote here, you are alleged to

**Douglas Murray** 2:13:08

stress in a chilly and windy dive and

**Bret** 2:13:11

right we have increased the volume of this room to fight COVID to an incredible degree by plugging this room into the outside world and turning on the fan. So I don't think either wrestle sick with COVID. But we've taken precautions, and in any case, very stimulating discussion, I really appreciate it. Where should people look for you? They should look for your most recent book, updated the

**Douglas Murray** 2:13:36

madness of crowds. They have an updated edition at the moment, just that this month, and they can find that if you can find any bookshops. In the madness of crowds, gender, race and identity is available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble all of these things and I'm also on Twitter at Douglas k Murray. I actually do post and otherwise on various places in YouTube, various maniacs upload interviews with me that they've conducted against all the better.

**Bret** 2:14:05

Better judgment. Yes, exactly. And I will say as I think I said in the first podcast I did with you that I found the audio version of your book particularly delightful because you yourself read it and you read it like no one else could. So

**Douglas Murray** 2:14:20

it's great. Fine, much recommend the audible version. Yeah, it's um, I had a whale of a time laughing almost every page and I had to say to sound technicians, not because of my own jokes, because of what I'm talking about, and the crazy crap that I have to recite from a range of Mad Men

**Bret** 2:14:38

and women. And now you've been to the epicenter

**Douglas Murray** 2:14:41

and now I've been the epicenter and I can't wait to leave.

**Bret** 2:14:46

Well, that's a terrible thing to say that let's say, yeah, we don't call it leaving anymore. We call it fleeing. Alright, well thanks everyone for tuning in, and hope We will see you again soon. You bet.