DarkHorse Podcast with Greg Ellis and Bret Weinstein (192kbi...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Greg Ellis

**Bret** 00:07

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast I have the distinct honor of sitting remotely with Greg Ellis, who is an actor, director, author. He is also I believe newly a video podcaster has a new series coming out called the respondent and he has another podcast called,

**Greg Ellis** 00:27

what is it? The voices in my head?

**Bret** 00:30

The voices in my head? I like that title quite a bit. Actually. It's a good one. I thank you. So welcome, Greg.

**Greg Ellis** 00:37

Thank you. It's lovely to be here.

**Bret** 00:40

So I'm not sure exactly where to start, you and I think are newly acquainted with each other, at least in personal contact, we've not met in person, but we have now had discussions and I find you fascinating, and a very pleasant surprise that that is such a person exists. So you obviously are not from around these parts.

**Greg Ellis** 01:06

No, Originally I'm from Northwest England, a little village called ainsdale by the sea, close to a town called Southport about 30 minutes north and 30 minutes west of Manchester, and currently reside in Los Angeles.

**Bret** 01:19

You reside in Los Angeles. And how long have you been in LA?

**Greg Ellis** 01:23

I've been here about 25 years now. Good grief that long,

**Bret** 01:27

25 years. And are you a citizen?

**Greg Ellis** 01:30

I am I became an American citizen around the time. President Obama was running because I wanted to be able to give back and I remember calling my my first phone call, on behalf of his campaign was to some older lady in Wichita, and she must have been very surprised when she had to do Excuse me, I do have a few moments of your time. I'd like to talk to you about the rock obama. I always remember that cool, are very proud to become a US citizen.

**Bret** 01:59

Yes. Well, congratulations. Thanks. Good. Good to have you on board. Just in time for this next round of electoral politics. I guess. The Trump era is treating you well, I trust.

**Greg Ellis** 02:14

It's interesting times, isn't it? I remember looking at the the debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in 2016. And I was one of the few who really believed that he was going to win. I actually turned the sound off for the debate and studied their body language and facial expressions. And since then, I think there's been this perhaps many people haven't accepted the fact that he's one we have to be happy about it. We can be outraged and disgusted and etc, etc. But accepting that he's won and how we can focus on the positives on the left to get someone to challenge to take the presidency back i think is more important than orange man bad Trump derangement syndrome.

**Bret** 03:07

Yeah, I agree. Once somebody tells me that they have a clear understanding of what's supposed to happen in this election. I know that it's about to become a very awkward conversation. I have the sense we have two candidates who both have an iron clad argument for why they must be elected and each of them is right each of their arguments being that the other person is not fit for the job.

**Greg Ellis** 03:33

whatsoever. Yes, I agree in is what you talk about the lesser lesser evil or the zero sum game you know this it's like an idea, illogical Cold War, if you will. I remember during the Cold War, James Baker said it's important that we talk to our enemies and our friends. And this these limits of absolutism, morphic and complex. We sense how we feel and experience these limits is the epitome I think of learning on the edge of volatile events. And it does feel like volatile times. Often the tyranny of the urgent consumes us and we degenerate to to somewhat immature behavior and acting out. And how we approach those limits and meet them is asking new questions and leaving new ones and doubt firmly in the forefront. I think.

**Bret** 04:31

I agree with that. I am. I'm not sure quite how to ask the question, but

**Bret** 04:38

I've done a lot of traveling as I know you have and that has given me a different perspective on on the US than I would have if I had simply been here and not venture very far. I'm certain you have a different perspective though. Having join and become a citizen of the US having been born abroad. What do you think? Americans miss about the US.

**Greg Ellis** 05:03

When you say what did they miss about the US? Do you mean what do they miss? Because they're Americans?

**Bret** 05:10

Yeah, what's what is in our blind spot, given that, you know, we all are, are shaped by our Natal experiences and not being able to see the US from the outside I have a sense is a distortion. But it's a little hard for me to say what the distortion is. Because of course I have it too.

**Greg Ellis** 05:31

Yeah, I think I'm I may, I may be having lived here for 25 years, I might not be the perfect person to ask that question. Although I am reminded of being on the tube station platform, the underground or it's the subway in America, many years ago before I came to America, and it was packed full of the Brits, the stiff upper lip Brits on the way to work. And this American fellow, this tourist entered the platform walked in, and he had very bright shorts and very loud t shirt. And he stood there and after about 10 seconds he said, God Yeah, what's wrong with you bread's you're all you're so quiet. And while you're making, and it made me chuckle and I looked around, and I could see these straight laced Brits, I'm probably one of them, too. And you can see they were cracking smiles, and they wanted to kind of, you know, let their personality out. And I think there is a beautiful part of America's by talking a lot about America's personality and how it's perceived by perhaps by different nations around the world. And I think it's in pain right now. And it's somewhat disordered, in terms of the lens of how we view it, that the one thing I find really perplexing is the notion that we can't celebrate the best aspects of being American. It seems to be I was talking with an agent at a big agency the other day CIA here in Hollywood. And it sounded like he just detested America. In fact, he said that China was their human rights in China and North Korea were better than America the right oh, my God, and and to have these extreme conversations and hold space and listen with curiosity and not wait, where does that come from? You know, where does this hatred of the place that's given us all we're all immigrants is given us an amazing opportunity to grand experiment, I think.

**Bret** 07:37

Yeah, there's something very troubling about that. I wonder, I would like to think that that particular myopia is born of a positive instinct, that maybe the desire to understand what we are falling short on has caused us to over focus and to maybe imagine things about the rest of the world that aren't true. But for anyone to say, with a straight face, that our human rights record is, you know, fall short of China or North Korea is to just evidence a complete failure of awareness of what is taking place elsewhere in the world. I mean, for all of our faults, we are well ahead of those two.

**Greg Ellis** 08:24

Oh, very much. So I, you know, I, I'm reminded of images from decades ago in the middle east of the burning of the American flag, and the outrage in America at how that event was perceived when viewed, and recently seeing Americans burning the American flag outside the White House. And I think there is reason to be upset and angry and to protest and to come together. That level, I just can't, I can't get my head around that.

**Bret** 09:00

No, it's it's crazy. And, you know, unfortunately, the sensibilities of the moment actually are placing the American experiment in danger. So it's possible that these people who have this warped view of the US are going to get to test their hypothesis and see what life is like without it. But my fear is that they're not even honest enough with themselves to remember what they thought that and the point that it becomes clear what they've lost. They will imagine that they were always on the right side of that, rather than even just honestly tracking their changing viewpoint.

**Greg Ellis** 09:40

Yeah, I think there comes a point, there does come a point where you have to given given this canceled culture we've talked about you and I before Brett, you have to kind of plant your flag in the sand firmly and say, You know what, I'm going to go down on record whether it be this tweet this moment in time and speak My mind because I think we've reached this breaking point where there's a segment of the population on both sides, I think who believe that the other side's political, wrong headedness equates to essentially morality? And how do we solve society's problems? If we don't talk to each other break virtual bread? You know, it's like you What? Are you willing to accept that there are people on the other side of the political aisle who disagree with you? But nonetheless, people of honor? Or is it the opposition that anybody who disagrees with your political prescription ipso facto is dishonorable? And what are we afraid of? What are we afraid of? Is it? Is it courage, having the courage to speak up fear of being canceled losing our livelihood? You know, it's like, it's like we have this circular choir preaching to each other, to a degree? Well, I

**Bret** 10:55

think actually, you ask, what is it that we're afraid of, and I'm concerned that it's actually a different process that causes people to have that, that caricature view, that this is actually something human beings are wired to do, and they do so in advance of war or genocide, they portray that which they are about to attack as less than human as diseased, or as vermin or something like this. And so I just have the sense that it is a, an unfortunate, but natural human tendency that has been dragged into exactly the wrong realm. And that we are, we are missing the obvious question, which is, are we closer to a decent answer by completing the American experiment by fixing what isn't right and making, you know, continuing in the same direction, or uninvented it and trying over? And I think if you compare those two things, and honest analysis will tell you, there is no comparison. Yes, there are serious flaws, and there is serious unfairness, but we, you know, are far closer to having gotten it right, then having gotten it's so wrong, there's no hope for repair. So I just can't believe we're about to reverse course, rather than, you know, to redouble our efforts in making this the fair and wonderful place that it has always aspired to be.

**Greg Ellis** 12:23

Well, maybe we're in that deep valley that that you and I talked about with regards to the the adaptive landscape model, and we're jumping the discourse gap. And we're finding ways I mean, look, I, the problem I have, being a classical liberal is that I think liberalism, at its core, is the willingness to hear other voices, I might not agree with them. But a true liberal welcomes the provocation, and does not retreat from it. We want to come together and have critical and be more critical thinking people, you know, how can we? How can we find solutions? rather than focus on the problems and attend to the problems and find better solutions and get to the peaks? How do we how do we get to that peak? Whatever that peak is?

**Bret** 13:18

Well, I also think something is missing, because even as you describe it there, I mean, I know you and I are of like mind about this, and that we have a parallel experience. But I think people have the sense that talking to people who have a very different perspective is like taking your medicine, and the experience of actually doing it is totally the opposite. Right? I actually quite enjoy the conversations that I have with people who can explain to me how the political landscape looks very different to them, or how the the scientific landscape looks different. Those conversations are very rewarding. And conversation with somebody who shares your viewpoint can be reassuring, but it doesn't broaden your understanding nearly so much. And so, I really wish I could just let people in on not only the the analytical experience, but the feeling that accompanies being able to cross some big gap that is famously supposed to be unbridgeable and discovering a human being that you actually like on the other side.

**Greg Ellis** 14:28

Yeah, and learning something and taking something away from the conversation and growing and modifying your belief system and reminds me of a poem I wrote called grave matters all judgments passed on others, belonging the court of self opinion take not a part of the blame, except not projections of shame. Blame pastor others, his judgment passed on self to begin a sentence of revenge, dig two graves. Eventually we all end up in there happy ever afterwards via emotional hospital. So, you know, how can we look to self and in, you know the evolution of self, and to evolve that better sense of, I don't know it all, I'm so five cities to before, like the more I learned, the more I realized, I don't know, and that stupefying it's like going into the finding the clearing and the lungs of the forest, and then realizing that there's this vast, massive expanse of new forests ahead, and new journeys and trails to go on, that's opening up to possibilities. And what an adventure. I mean, just glorious

**Bret** 15:39

night, I totally agree with this, that people in general, they just seem to have, at least what I feel is the inverse reaction of the discovery that there's a great deal you do not know is, it's an invitation, it's, it means that there is profit to be made that you were unaware of. And so you should be happy at this discovery. Because who knows what you'll find out rather than just constantly reassuring yourself that you've got it nailed. And it's all very simple. And the trick is just to force other people to see it. That can't be very fun.

**Greg Ellis** 16:16

No, when we have to have a bit of serious play, I mean, it can be serious, but we have to have a good play. We know a lot of my work in my career has been improvised and in the moment and off the cuff and living on that phenomenological edge, the razor's edge, not just the bleeding edge or there's too many edges in there. But how we how we can add a little artistry and flavor and fun and maybe take a bit of Dr. Carl young and mix it up with Dr. Zeus and present it in a way that that isn't too serious and and studious when we do need the the series in studios and the legislative, you know, legal ease, etc, etc. But I think we were you and I have talked about how we came together and how how much respect they have for you and the work you do and the podcast that you did with your brother being one of the the best podcast episodes I've ever heard on the portal. It was just so genuinely real and authentic. And, you know, the Brotherhood of Weinstein was on audio Tory display.

**Bret** 17:30

Yeah, yeah, we? It's funny. I don't know, when we first became aware of each other. I guess it's been a year, maybe two. But But in any case, yes, there's an awful lot of parallelism, I think in our perspectives. But because of that I want to unpack a little bit here, I have the sense that in describing who you are, and what you do, that the real category, that would be most descriptive just is not one. It's a category that doesn't exist, or at least, if it does exist, we don't name it because it would be uncomfortable. But I have the sense that you you are restless, that you are of a certain age, you've accomplished many of the things that you set out to accomplish. And you're now eager to fix the world or something like that. Am I anywhere in the ballpark?

**Greg Ellis** 18:28

Yeah, you're in the ballpark, I think eager to help the people who truly can fix I believe truly can fix the world. And, you know, people that have the courage and fortitude and the decency to, to go out there and try and to galvanize support. No decency finds no refuge in a juror is pure prudence of fear. We need courageous people from all different walks of life, to help tend to the fabric of the American personality and the Constitution and that beautiful document. I remember when I first read it, it was just I was just cheap ified that these human beings came up with that document at that time, and how astonishing it still is to this day. It lives on

**Bret** 19:36

them. Yeah, it's it's a living testament to their ideals even where they didn't meet them. It's it's evidence of their, their blind spots. I mean, it's really a marvelous lesson in what the finest minds of a particular era could see and couldn't see and Yeah, I hear it described in such bleak terms, especially on the left. I mean, it's maybe spoken about overly reverent reverently on the right, where it's treated as almost a religious document without flaw because it's divinely inspired. And on the left, it's treated like just a, you know, a series of errors. And the fact is, it's a prototype. It's a prototype of something absolutely marvelous. And, you know, what I was thinking about when I asked you about, what it's like to have joined the US is I'm just recognizing how many people saw brilliance in our model, and adopted it, sometimes formally, and sometimes less so. But you know, the UK, among the places that took up the mantle of American democracy, and have done it differently, but How marvelous is it that the colonists spelled out a vision so beautiful, that it was contagious and that it actually spread freedom in its wake?

**Greg Ellis** 21:08

Yeah, and I actually think right now in England, Britain, we could do with some of the the tenants of the Constitution and the amendments because hearing that the there are now hate crimes and thought crimes are now part of the law in England and the understanding of the fundamental understanding of what free speech is and how we must protect and fight to protect our our freedom to speak our mind however challenging in his with certain people to hear them you know, where the where is the line you know, that line is always it's always a difficult conversation to have you know about abortion and the line of freedom of speech incitement to violence. Well, what is violence? Is our words violence I'm reminded, reminded of Ricky device who said offense isn't given it's only taken, you know, if you choose to take offense, then take it.

**Bret** 22:11

All right, and it's not tragic if you're offended the idea that we're supposed to remake civilization to avoid you being offended. that's a that's a dire prescription right there.

**Greg Ellis** 22:24

Yeah, and I think what, what I've been doing with the respondent and why I started the respondent is to try and just begin a conversation a multimedia conversation. And part of it came came about through this we talked about the fact the founding fathers the Constitution in America and where we are today, part of it came out of this toxic masculinity smash the patriarchy all men bad and there was so many men being cancelled. Some of them were you know, justifiably tried in the court of public opinion and then tried in the in the legal system. With some I think we're caught up particularly in my business in the entertainment industry, without due process. And, you know, trying to return a place where chivalry I feel like chivalry is dead or it's, it's been lost I'm reminded of I forget who wrote the quote, but, but it goes, but the mind of man is not like Fourier is heated body, continually settling down into an ultimate quiet uniformity, the character of which we can already predict, it is rather like a tree, shooting out branches, which adapt themselves to the new aspects of the sky towards which they climb, and roots which contort themselves among the strange strata of the earth, into which they Delve. And when I think of that, and I think of congeniality, and how to be a more gentle man, and the origins of chivalry, which I think they go back to, it was a code of conduct, I think developed in the 13th century, and the ideas of chivalry and how to be more shall Varick. How can we even begin to have that conversation? If we are canceling meant the very idea of man is extinct? smash the patriarchy as I understand it. The matriarch and patriarch is a mother figure and the father figure and what are we going to do? We're going to suggest smashing the matriarch and toxic femme No, that's just the shame rage and the point CounterPoint. And, you know, most of us I think, most of his manner would like to are not looking to smash ourselves and tell ourselves that we are all toxic.

**Bret** 25:10

Yeah, well, first of all, I very much liked that recitation. I've never heard it before. But it's it's brilliant. The issue of what is happening to masculinity is so dire and you know, you say that some people were tried in the court of public opinion and then tried in an actual court, and others were just tried in the court of public opinion. But even more distressing than that, is the fact that some people were tried in the court of public opinion for things that aren't even wrong.

**Greg Ellis** 25:42

Yeah. And guilty till proven more guilty, not even guilty till proven innocent or innocent till proven guilty. And that is what really concerns me, particularly in the area of family law is one place. You know, the respondent deals with, with the familial bond, the familial tapestry of how we collectively as a community and interpersonally within our marriages, relationships, Father, Son, mother, daughter, etc, etc. How do we tend to that into communication skill? interpersonal communication, I think most of us are vaguely familiar with stories of family breakdown or familial breakdown. We have a friend or, or a family member who enjoyed a bad breakup. It's a common trope in our dramatic and comedic entertainment, and real life, obviously reliable photophobia places, media outlets like TMZ and supermarket tabloids when it comes to celebrity relationship implosions in particular. I think that there's, there's this notion this, this thought that men, and particularly celebrity men, and I don't classify myself in that bucket are superhuman, and they're not, we're not, we're just human beings, and every individual is struggling with something. And as we are trying to remain physically, physically healthy within the organism, we have to remind ourselves to exercise from the neck up, I think mental health is a huge, huge issue right now. It was, particularly with men we don't, because we don't talk about it. You know, particularly with COVID. And this, this messaging of social distancing, which I've mentioned to you before, is so inherently flawed, it should be physical distancing, and social connectedness. We are human beings, we're sentient creatures, we we, we should be encouraged to come together as small groups and large groups and, and in and be communal. And there's a lot of currently I've seen a lot of commentary on this topic of men being bad. And we're bombarded by messages about the deeply corrosive effects of toxic masculinity, and confronted with institutions. Psychologically conditioned now to think masculinity is toxic, that men are bad. Man's kindness is extinct, chivalry is a bygone notion. And particularly in the family law system, it's rife with outdated gender ideas every bit as sexist as those faced by women in other arenas past and present. And we need to spirit level the sexes somewhat.

**Bret** 28:53

So I very much like this topic. I have a lot of thoughts on it myself. And I believe that the sexes are up for a renegotiation, but that that renegotiation would be insane, to implement some kind of sameness, to enforce it in any way. In other words, I believe strongly that there are features of masculinity that are honorable, and that we must preserve. There are parallel features in the feminine world that we need to honor and preserve. We should leave people the freedom to avail themselves of these things, irrespective of what sex they are, are born in. But we should not expect men to be like women or vice versa. We should find out what people want when they're truly liberated. You know, in my case, my wife is lovely, but she does have a kind of male bent feet. He plays like a boy

**Greg Ellis** 30:01

and animals has risen within Heather. Yes.

**Bret** 30:05

And you know, it's a great thing I, I'm very pleased to have a partner to go adventuring with and somebody who doesn't shy away from danger or pain or all of these things. So it's, you know, it's not like, it's not like I want to go back to the 50s. Right. And sometimes that's how it's portrayed. At the same time, I think we are doing a tragic disservice, especially to our boys in telling them that masculinity is a hazard or is inherently bad or something like this. Because among other things, I may have said this to you already, I I can't remember. But the fact is, straight women do not like weak men. And so if you induce your boys to become weak, you're setting them up for a tragic, romantic failure. And yeah,

**Greg Ellis** 31:00

and I agree with you, and you have said that to me before, and I couldn't agree more that how the the mother and father, if we're talking in simple terms, or the matriarch or the patriarch negotiate these differences of opinion, of parenting, I think is so that the child gets the most opportunities to take risks, but not risks that will kill or severely injure him. In the case of boys, because I'm a man and I have boys. It's not sexist, I'm not, you know, not talking about girls and women for that reason. I think that's vital. I remember the first time my son's squared off to fight physically. And I reassured my wife at the time that it was a necessary rite of passage. And as our youngest, I think he was six maybe at the time, and my eldest was eight, there's a two year age gap. They needed that experience that prideful moment, he needed the younger brother because I'd been the younger brother of taking his elder brother on and maybe even teaching him a lesson in the process, which he did a couple of times. And she was still somewhat distressed as I lead the boys into the back garden or backyard and created this imaginary boxing ring. Although she did tree she trusted well, trust is important, it's vital, she trusted me enough to to calm her understandable, mother bear concerns to believe that I might know maybe better how to handle this rush of testosterone situation and this sort of balanced parenting cannot take place. If men and fathers aren't present, there must be a balanced or renegotiation, as I say, the spirit level of the sexes. In order for boys to become more fully formed self actualized. Young men take those rites of passage with a deeper, more imagined sense of healthy boundaries, so that they can eventually alone. take those steps to start to think like man, responsibility equals reward and feel like boys risk taking equals ambition. And I think more we can advocate fatherhood, you know, advocating fatherhood is not about admonishing or diminishing motherhood, believer. The primary role of a father or one of the primary roles is to maintain an aura of presence, if you will, which says look, and listen, son, life has problems. We're going to solve that problem together. One day, you'll have you will have your you'll leave home and, and be playing more seriously on your own with your own little children. Boys of your own maybe, or friend's sons and daughters to play with tend to be responsible for less prepare for that day to learn how to confidently and sensitively risk take together and I think it's vital for boys to learn through the eyes and the experience and the behavior reflected from a father and to learn boundary setting self discipline and how to instill a sense of empathy for themselves, their partners, peers and friends. And eventually, you know, their ultimate partner, hopefully, and when the testosterone in boys is not channeled well, boys become disruptive when father is not present in the family home to instruct boys destruct, and when tossed testosterone is channeled well, boys become constructive. So why aren't we advocating? Why aren't we talking about positive masculinity and positive father figures father's role models more so that we can leave a legacy for the for the younger generations that we leave behind?

**Bret** 34:56

So I want to connect a couple threads if I can manage to do it. Your your theme about the constructive aspect of masculinity is very important and near and dear to my heart. And I have the sense that we are very complex creatures. I mean, that's a fact. And that what that means is that the way things are hooked together is often not obvious. And so there is this tendency, this Chesterton's fence problem where something, the purpose of which is not totally obvious, gets removed, because a strong argument can be made, that it's somehow antiquated, and that very frequently we are living the harm that arises from having eliminated something vital without realizing we were doing it. And what I see on this topic is that we have renegotiated the rules of sex, and that those rules of sex, basically, we are told that any resistance to just getting laid and not thinking about the consequences, is somehow oppressive, and that the discovery that sex is just the biological drive, and that you should follow up where it leads you. And there's no reason to make it more than it is, and all of that there's no reason even really to give a damn about the person that you're having sex with. That the consequences of this are many, and one of them is that it puts males in one of two modes, and it's not the one that we should want to flourish, right men have always had the opportunity to spread their seed without taking responsibility for the consequences. And that is not men at their best, that's men at their worst. And the problem, the reason that we are now hearing about toxic masculinity, is that in a world where men have been told that that part of them is just fine, and they should, you know, activate it is a world that is dangerous to women, because the men are viewing them as targets rather than as partners. And in that world, there's this temptation to then write the rules that make women safe to be around men, rather than writing rules in which men are prone to behave more honorably, because frankly, it's the only path to a life worth living. And I guess the final thing I would say on this is that in a world where sex had not been demystified, and where it was therefore difficult to come by, and required real investment by men in order to persuade women to go to bed with them, men moved mountains in order to impress the women that they were most interested in. And that was a process that was tremendously powerful. And the fact that these things are now frequently satisfied satisfiable with a kind of junk level of sex is resulting I think, in a great deal of potential just being absolutely squandered because there's no motivation to follow it.

**Greg Ellis** 38:14

Well put very well put more well, better better well put than I could have talked about. I you know, I I interviewed for the respondent later in the season. It reminds me of when I interview a family law, family law attorney, and she has an all female practice and only represents men and she'd been she'd been practicing law for many years in family law, and saw the the bias within family law courts and decided that she would try harder to help men. And when I found out that it's a felony for a father to kidnap his his child, and it's not a felony for a mother to kidnap the child and my felony, I mean, the birth certificate, a mother can place on a birth certificate, any name she wants, not tell the biological father and the biological father who may not have any idea that he is a father at all. Then has 30 days to appeal and if, if, if the father doesn't appeal, then that Father will never know his son or daughter. And more importantly, or just as importantly, that son or daughter will never know, or grow up as a child through to maturation through childhood not knowing their biological father or mother. Now of course, there are cases where there are men who we can say don't deserve that and probably women who don't deserve That and you know, I've talked in length about Nikki Crick's study on the differences between character traits and between women and men, and the female and the male. And whereas men move faster to physical violence women, they get past it men, men get past it quicker. And move on women moved to what she called reputation savaging and how we can find a place where, where more fathers and sons are connected, less families are raised, less children are growing up with in single parent families. And we can understand that not all dads are dead broke dads, many of them are deadbeat dads, many of them are dead broke dads because of the system. And I think this is a major. For me, it's a it's a huge, huge area in our legal system that needs reformation. I'm I'm talking later today with Molly Olson, who was she led the drive for equal shared parenting or default shared parenting in Minnesota, I believe there's three states that have that. And that has fundamentally changed not only the face of Family Law, it reduces obviously, the attorneys money, there's less incentive for them to be able to churn. But it also brings half of that family, when a child is raised, or a father or a mother is raised. Half of their extended family is gone and are raised to this can't be good for our communal collective. It cannot be good. And understandably, we focus on, you know, the immigration issues at the border and the separation of families. I wonder why we don't place more focus, or as much focus, I should say, on our legal system, and our families who are being torn apart because of that, and our children, particularly our boys, you and I have talked about education, and you know, in the in the prison system, and in education, there were just so many areas that we could really improve on, I think,

**Bret** 42:22

yes, we have lost sight of the essential features of a functional society, and we now treat them as aesthetic, which is most unfortunate. So, you know, I think one has to look at all of the tropes, the narrative tropes surrounding marriage, you know, children out of wedlock, right? So there's something very antiquated about the idea that children should only occur within a marriage. And, you know, I think that we think this is antiquated because the notion was prior to the invention of reliable birth control. And so of course, reliable birth control, made it possible to have sex and not produce children, and therefore it meant sex could proceed marriage more frequently than it would have in the past. Because women, of course, are wired to fear producing children without a partner, because of course, children are so expensive. I don't mean expensive financially, but so intensive to raise that a partner is a necessary feature, right, it is a much harder job to raise a child alone. But at some level, in the renegotiation that occurred, we lost sight of the fact that actually society has an overriding interest in making sure that children are well raised, and that well raised children are much more likely in a household that has two parents. And part of the reason for that is because that household has more than two parents that has two extended families. And we don't frankly, even know the extent to which having two parents is a necessary way to learn how the navigation of being human even occurs, right to have to parents is to guarantee that there will be two people in your lives in your life who have distinct opinions on things. And then you as a child growing up in that environment will learn of the two perspectives. And you will have to figure out how to weigh them in a single parent household that is much less likely. And so I'm not telling you, I know the answer to this at all. But I am telling you that at least we ought to be able to identify the value and say, two parent household is not really an optional thing. It's not aesthetic, it's functional. And just in the same way the state sees it as it within its interest to make sure that a child is well nourished is meant Until the well nourished, less important.

**Greg Ellis** 45:05

No, and I'm dismayed at the tenor of much of the discussion that's taking place about the nuclear family. Marriage appears to my eyes to be the to be on life support. And I see and read many, many people who appear to be happy about that even while a backbone narrative of this pandemic, or panic. demick as I call it we're living through involves families hunkered down in quarantine, the statistics revealed a decay of marriage as a foundational institution, as I write this, the Wall Street. The Wall Street Journal, I think, reported that us marriage, the US marriage rate plunged, I think it was 6.6 point five new unions per 1000 people. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the lowest level since the government started keeping scores since 1867. Now, of course, you know, plunging quantity of marriages says nothing of quality, quality is important. You and I have talked about, you know, equity and equity of outcome and equity of opportunity. And one might argue that fewer good marriages is better than a greater number of bad ones. But the the trend speaks to, I believe, the belief that we as a collective think that marriage is a social institution that leads to a better outcome for children is, is not the case. And when I when I read that, I think it was David Brooks celebrated New York Times writer who recently wrote an article or an essay in the Atlantic theorizing the nuclear family is obsolete. In fact, it should, it was a bad idea. And a mistake, I think, is what he called it to begin with. Really, I mean, you mentioned the 1950s. You know, though, he I think he pointed to the image of the 1950s the halcyon days of the dinner table families, and we mythologize. You know, it's actually a fantasy that in reality was nothing more, and then an anomalous blip? Indeed, I'm sure the, the 50s were wonderful, and I'm not taking anything away from the 50s. But reimaginings of the stories from the 50s, there were some hard times it was a guard grind in the 50s. How can we better tend to our younger generations, I mean, I've talked about Gen Z's and millennials before. And, you know, I hear people that sound like my grandparents, or, you know, remember, I was a kid, I wouldn't have done that. And you don't want to do this. And we, as the older generation have to accept responsibility that it's on us. It's not, it's not fully on them. They weren't around when we were their age. So we are responsible for what they're coping with today.

**Bret** 48:11

Oh, absolutely. The dysfunction just propagates through the ages. And, you know, this question about the nuclear family, and is it an invention and all of these things, I find the conversation, just shockingly confused. There. I mean, there is a way in which the nuclear family is a recent invention. But it's not by virtue of it having come about from whole cloth, it's a matter of the economic realities having caused people to move away from their Natal homes, and therefore, families being reduced to nuclear from a larger phenomenon. It's not that they were established from a lesser phenomenon, and that this, you know, requirement that you bond with somebody was imposed from above. Now, there are cultures where it doesn't exist, but in general, it doesn't exist by virtue of a failure of certainty of paternity. So in places where a man is unlikely to be certain that the offspring produced by a woman are actually his, there's a phenomenon called the mother's brother phenomenon, where men are better off investing in their sister's children, who they know are related to them than they are investing in the children that are attributed to them who may or may not be related to them. But that's actually we know just evolutionarily the result of a failure of information, a lack of certainty, rather than it being some kind of enlightened state. And so to the extent that the rules informal or formal, can result in males being certain of who their offspring are, when males are certain if who their offspring are, they invest because it's the right thing to do. Males have an interest in producing offspring that are viable and, you know, well adjusted and two parent household is is the easiest way to get there.

**Greg Ellis** 50:11

Yeah, very much. So all of this statistics show that a child, a boy raised in a two parent family household is going to have a far greater chances of success in life and be able to see further into the future, and the possibilities and the probabilities in every metric, less likely to end up in prison, less likely to end up on drugs, less likely to take their own life, and all of these things, I think, where do we get to a place? Where did we get to a place in our society, that the value of life has become so extinct? People just so many people just don't care? You hear about someone taking their life, and he deserved it, she deserved it? Well, good riddance, really. And, you know, going back to men and fathers, those, those men and fathers haven't had mothers, and sisters, and daughters, we are all in this together. It just, I've read the notes, I've read the suicide notes from the fathers, the good man, you know, not the bad man, the ones who just wanted to, you know, run along and be the Casanova and procreate and then move along. And that they're heartbreaking. You know, I've talked to the men who have been at the edge of life, living on the edge of existential terror, and Nxd. You know, trauma resides in the body, and the body keeps the score to quote Bessel Vander kolk, beautiful book, and how that inescapability not just not just have a father, removed from his children, or son, or a son from father, but for a veteran who returns from war, and has PTSD, and how we can start to extend our presence further. I think that's really what one of my goals is to meet and innovate these through these limits, and find a way to learn and lean into learning and the portal of learning to quote your your brother's podcast, the portal, and find ways to say, How can I give not what can I get from this?

**Bret** 52:59

Yeah, you know, I was, Heather and I were watching with our oldest son, The Big Short last night. And there's a very eloquent speech in the end of it, where the, the main character, the Michael Baum character is describing the effect he saw of Wall Street on the people who inhabit it. And that basically, it turned them inhuman by virtue of putting them so closely in contact with the functioning of markets, that it became all of the stuff that's harder to defend and harder to describe. falls away, because the stuff, you know, the, the balance sheet is so clear. And I think that there is something to the idea that what has happened is that markets, which initially facilitated the production of value, became suddenly empowered to commodify everything, even the things that should never have been allowed to have been commodified. And that this expendability that you described is really the consequence of that, that we view everything, you know, the fact that somebody in order to figure out what to charge you for insurance, or what to pay your relatives if you're killed, you know, assesses your value. On the one hand, there's nothing wrong with that calculation. On the other hand, there's everything wrong with that calculation. Right. I agree.

**Greg Ellis** 54:36

Yeah. It I remember reading Joseph Campbell's book, The hero with 1000 faces. And soon after I read that book, I wrote a poem and the poem was a very short poem. And it was about the year that were buggy. I thought my gravestones and that year that were born And the year that we die, you know, I think in perhaps it's the Mexican in the Mexican culture that said, we have three deaths. And the one the first death is, the moment that we realize that we are mortal, we fully face our mortality. And then second death is the last breath, we exhale if and when we realize we're on our way out. And the third death is the last time our name is mentioned on earth. And I heard that, and I thought about the gravestone and that dash in between, and how we dash sometimes through life, and how we are so focused on the next moment, the next week, the next year, that we forget to remind ourselves that the Now moment is all we have. And that dash of our life. The poem was called a princess prayer. And it went, it goes a princess prayer. So I'm gonna read it through my my eyes, a princess prayer 1968 dash, question mark. A princess prayer 1000 faces one, the dash between the dead and bulan. I forget her to remember myself, forever and ever. Amen. And how we can remember to that life is lived forwards and remembered backwards. When I first started looking at emotions, and feelings, and emotional intelligence, and behavioral science, and all of that, which I came to in my 40s, and then started reading books at 45, when all I'd read was scripts and wasn't encouraged to read when I was a kid, my my wonder last for literature, and how I say to anyone who listens, surround yourself with books, even if you do not read them and ever pick them up. It's so important that we honor and remember the great corpus of literary works, many of which I'll never have the time to read, unfortunately. And how, how we can better tend to self capital less. Because the better. I asked myself a question once, I think I mentioned it to you the other day, while I didn't know anything about philosophy, and I sat down, and I wrote, who am I to my iPhone, and I ended up with 11 3011 164 notes. A few hours later, it was astonishing, just kept going deeper into the dialectical dive. And then I started asking the meaningful, answer the meaningful questions. So the first one I went to with that was, if love is the answer, what is the question? And my simple first place that I arrived at the answer that I found to the meaningful question as to the meaningful answer was back to Socrates, Know thyself, first aid thyself. For if thy knows thyself better, then one can love oneself more deeply, in becoming more known. And then love another more deeply capital Oh, and I think that space is where I like to live, reside, remind myself to be in the now moments. The now in zen, I remind myself, but then, I'm back again, in a now moment, and feelings and emotions. When I when I started exploring that, you know, what's the simple way of, of explaining what an emotion and a feeling is? Well, for me, an emotion is a feeling with a memory attached.

**Greg Ellis** 59:30

And how, say, we go to work and our boss comes over and is what are you doing, you're late on that report, and we might get, you know, to use one of the woke current phrases triggered. And it's not that in that in that moment, and emotions coming up and based on the feeling with the memory attached of maybe when we were six or seven years old, and we were yelled at or admonished by a parent for not tying our shoe laces quickly or we were going to let to get him to we were going to be late to get on the bus to go to school or to an outing or whatever. And just understanding how the organism, that's where I'd love to dive into, I've been studying a little effect theory and what the organism of the body is trying to tell me. And I pay attention to that, you know, and that allows me to be less reactive and well responsible, which is one of the things that the respondent is all about.

**Bret** 1:00:23

Well, that's fascinating, I should say, I have long had this little puzzle in my mind, I'm often more comfortable with people who are unflinching in their willingness to engage the question of their own death, that somehow I feel like we are moving in the wrong direction on this and we treat death as a failure. You know, it is an inevitability, it is not a failure. Now, it can be a failure if it happens too soon. But there's something you know, in fact, I was thinking about this as I was biking through a cemetery the other day. And I encountered one of these situations where there was a husband and wife's grave, and one of the partners was gone, and the other was not yet gone. But that means that the partner who isn't gone, knows exactly where they're headed. Right? That they have a relationship with their own grave that most don't. And, you know, it's not that I think there's such marvelous value in pondering death itself, because there's nothing to it. But there is something to recognizing the implications of the finiteness of life. And, in some ways, the arbitrariness of death. You know, just the fact that, I don't know I must say, of all the philosophical puzzles, I am most troubled by the fact that in many cases, you don't get to know the end of your own story. You know, john F. Kennedy does not know the end of his story, we all synonymous him with the end of his story, but presumably, he knew nothing about it. And there's something about that, that is a little hard for me to accept. But

**Greg Ellis** 1:02:20

I don't know. It's, it makes me think of you know, sometimes I get into Word plays. So I'll take words like depressed and like that deep rest, sometimes the psychological needs a deep rest, I think about together to get her. What other words do I have, I'm reminded of a caymus, quote, I think it was caymus, the philosopher who said, We value our own lives in spite of our mortality. And in spite of the universe's silence, while we can live with a dualism, I can accept periods of unhappiness, because I know while also experience happiness to come, we cannot live with the paradox, which is, I think my life is of great importance. But I also think it's meaningless. And I think that crisis we do and I have talked before about sense making, and meaning making, meaning seeking. And I think, I do think we have a crisis of perhaps a crisis of meaning but crisis of faith, one of the I mentioned to you the other day, my definition of meaning is, everything happens for a reason, we make up afterwards.

**Bret** 1:03:34

I love this because I use everything happens for a reason as an example of a literally false metaphorically true statement, because of course, it's nonsense that everything happens for a reason. But a person who is convinced that everything happens for a reason will very frequently find opportunity in tragedy, for example, that somebody who wasn't convinced of this would miss. So by adding that last piece that we make up the reason afterward, you complete the circle perfectly, you imply the same thing, much more poetically.

**Greg Ellis** 1:04:10

Which looks like that comic menu. Karma has no menu, you get served what you deserve.

**Bret** 1:04:16

I've never heard that. But I also am intrigued by your obvious relationship with poetry, which I must say I have a relationship with poetry. I rarely meet anyone else who does. My PhD advisor did. And we always got along quite well, in part because I think we had the same appreciation for it as a tool. I think too many people for one thing I would say, I have no patience for free verse, that it seems to take the value of poetry and to me at least seems to throw it out the window.

**Greg Ellis** 1:04:50

It's not right. I was gonna invite you to do an improvised poem with me live on air right now.

**Bret** 1:04:54

Oh, well, I'm going to politely decline but, but my sense says that a proper constraint forces you to explore language in the neighborhood of the concept you're trying to convey. But in order to get the meter, right, and to get the rhyme, right, you have to search further afield. And so you very frequently discover things that are true about some concept that's important to you that you wouldn't have gotten to if you could just use pros. So to me free verse has the same kind of it let's put it this way. There is good free verse, but a lot of it isn't good. It's too much license and not enough constraint as far as I'm concerned.

**Greg Ellis** 1:05:37

Well, I have I have having not been schooled in poetry and come to poetry Gosh, I think I wrote my first what I would consider poem before I published my poetry book the new ledge K and EW le DGADG. Last year, I you know, I am big pentameter, I heard about at school, but it was a distant memory to me. So I guess I break all the rules in terms of poetry. And we'll I don't know that palms org or quote, I wrote one called the calamity of conscience. And it goes the cerebral paradox, the elusive obvious, the letting go of holding on finding by not looking on earthing without disturbing the ground, going to pieces without falling apart. Accepting answers, without question. unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence. unconscious competence. A little bit of math, I think was Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Yeah, at the end. So I'm always I'm always, you know, testing the boundaries? And

**Bret** 1:06:55

well, let me let me be very clear. First of all, the thing about the rules is knowing how to break. I'm all for breaking the rules. But I'm not for breaking the rules just to break.

**Greg Ellis** 1:07:05

How can break the rules. If you don't know them, though.

**Bret** 1:07:08

That's Well, for one thing, I wouldn't call what you have just recited here, free verse. Now, maybe technically it is. But the thing is, there's some. And in fact, maybe we should get to the code at some point. But you clearly have some kind of a highly regimented linguistic code, and maybe it surrounds more meaning than it does meter and rhyme. So maybe your free verse with respect to meter and rhyme, but what you're saying is, it's constructed, in my opinion, to be spoken, and to have meaning and emotion imbued into it the way a pianist can imbue a piece with emotion by the way they play and I actually can see it in sort of the physical interaction with the piano. So anyway, I miss possible that my category is too narrow, but my sense is you are engaging a kind of regimented requirement for your poetry, at least according to what you said here. That is not troubling to me in the slightest. I quite like it.

**Greg Ellis** 1:08:20

We thank you. I yeah. The expression I think it's it's emotional expression, and how we can vocalize the poetry and the performance and who is performing it? What's the stage? Perhaps you we, I don't know on the Dark Horse podcast if, if we've, if you've talked with talked about poetry before, who knows. I don't profess to be an expert. I think that sometimes when you read it on the page, you can create and craft meaning making in the moment. And the interpretation of what it means to you what a quote or what a line means to someone. Sometimes I play with words, you know, I remember doing a whole equation, set of quotes that were literally written like mathematical formulas, like site secrets plus silence plus judgment equals shame, love equals empathy minus shame divided by the group. privacy, yes. Versus secrets now and the pain equation and so I think there is value in in both in in being able to speak them aloud even just yourself. I mean, really, it's the it's the inner it's the inner dialogue, isn't it? At the end of the day, Brad that we're all in a conversation with no one can really know was fully because that inner critic or that no champion, that's who we really need to get to know. And for me, you know, it's, I did it through Why not? I did it. I started to break through beyond my pre existing belief system. That night when I sat down and asked that question, Who am I? And and then I think after that I wrote the poem, the memory shelf, which will you indulge me for one more moment? Okay, so the memory shelf goes like this. I have recently become acquainted with myself, placed all my thoughts and memories upon a memory shelf, deep sea diving into the recesses of Rhys peace by painful peace, seeking peace, to unpack what's underneath, to see what's submerged and what comes up to the surface. delving deep into the oceans of my mind riding waves of length, discovering a mental health, a treasured wealth, a salvage mission for myself, to get connected with my own authentic self, to tune into the memories upon my memory shelf. This changeful self reflection was a choice though painful, it has helped me find my true authentic voice. I came to realize through real eyes the real lies of my past, and though the sea was vast, I worked them out longest last. All my life I presented and what I represented, I resented put the kettle on and make a brew of discontented, awakened new to stew on how to get through, when there's no way around, you got to get into it to get over it to get through it. When you can't bear it, share it, if you can't control it, let it go. When you can't feel it, have faith that exists when you can't hold on release into the abyss. And when you find yourself fighting for your life, surrender for you have already found yourself inside the thoughts and memories upon your memory shelf.

**Bret** 1:12:01

Wow, that's fantastic. I love that joy. Yeah, and it there's something I wonder I it's a little hard to run the experiment now. But I would love to know what it looks like on the page without you delivering it because there's an awful lot encoded in the cadences in that

**Greg Ellis** 1:12:22

yeah, I think well it's a I'm happy I will send you a copy of the new ledge. And you know you can you can get to know me a little more through through the poetry I think the poetry led me to the philosophical and the pocket oracle of kind of self help, philosophical quote book that was interesting to write to come up with simple lines and quotes that had meaning to me at least, you know, I think the first quote is everything eventually connects. We've got the book here. Ignorance is bliss until your life falls apart. Belief can be a most Doggett pallbearer. Tomorrow I vow to make better mistakes now in Zen wish upon and then realize I'm no longer Zen You know, there's a ton in there, but I I've just I've just immersed myself in this learning space. And I think as an artist, I'm constantly trying to find new ways to to, to express you know, emotion, and that's energy in motion. That's what I think emotion is really?

**Bret** 1:13:39

Yeah, you do this thing. I've now heard you do it several times here where you find I assume that these are false etymologies, but they're full of meaning. Am I right about that, that you are

**Greg Ellis** 1:13:54

false the false etymology when you What do you mean by the false homology,

**Bret** 1:14:00

I assume that the word together is not born of the concept of to get her

**Greg Ellis** 1:14:08

right. And that and then sometimes I do the the counter to that, which is when I studied, studied when I started learning about philosophy bylo, Sophia and phylo being the devotion and Sophia being wisdom or love. So it's that devotion to wisdom, devotion to love you and I talk very briefly about Andrew Yang. And when he mentioned, he tweeted during his run that he thought that philosophers should be returned to the White House. I cheered, I fell off my chair like we need the great intellectual minds of our time. The heterodox thinkers, the people who will question the commonly held beliefs that used to back in the day be in the market square and the elders and the Youngs young youngsters used to go and seek out and the politicians seek out their wisdom and opinion and Becoming older is inevitable, but becoming an elder is a skill.

**Bret** 1:15:04

Yeah, it is a skill. And in general, we are failing to produce adults that people are trapped in a kind of permanent adolescence. And the only people that we can trust to govern in such complex and perplexing times are the few who have figured out how to navigate these difficult things. We need philosophers. We don't need exclusively philosophers, but we need at least a commitment to philosophical rigor to be part of that conversation.

**Greg Ellis** 1:15:38

Well, how do we I know we, we there's the articles of unity, and we can all of his help help move that movement forward. You and I had talked about Andrew Yang and the the potential free Andrew Yang hashtag, because I just think he's a tremendous individual with a ton of political potential. That's unrealized. And I don't think it's going to be realized with the current DNC and how it's played out and their choice, which seemed to me to be preordained beforehand. And the VP peg seems to be, at least to my mind preordained beforehand. And there is, I have a fear that that eventually, at some point during that first term, if indeed, that happens to be the case, and and Joe Biden wins, that he will step down. And, again, these are projections, and I have no know for a fact. It's just based on everything that I've seen and witnessed that there is there is a really disturbing dystopia at play where the power mongers at the top purporting to be the ones who are the champions of the people at the bottom, in fact, they're doing quite the opposite in enclosed rooms and in private. I agree.

**Bret** 1:17:13

And I think there is already an agreement for Biden to step down, and that the DNC is hoping we won't notice what they're up to, which, of course, is an absolutely frightening transition in the way governance works. Even as dysfunctional as it's been, this is a new level of dysfunction. So how is a question? And on one level? The answer is so obvious. And I think those of us if you see, as I alluded to, before, each candidate has an iron clad argument for their election, and that is the unacceptability of the other and they are both right. And for anybody, if you see only one of their arguments, and the other one is in your blind spot, then you will say, Oh, well, the answer to what we have to do is simply clear, right? You will say either, we can't allow Biden to drag this woke insanity into the White House, because that will destroy America. And that's true. On the other hand, we cannot allow Donald Trump to politicize us into oblivion. Both of these things are unAmerican, and not decent and too dangerous to even contemplate. So at the point, that you see both sides, and not just the one, you understand that each one is unacceptable. And the answer is well, what would we have to do in order to not elect either of them? And the answer is all you have to do is believe that it's possible. And what makes it possible is a lot of people believing that it's possible. So how about we have that conversation of belief? Now, we learn that as we've been taught by 2020, so many times already, and we're only halfway through the impossible is just around the corner. So if we can just simply talk ourselves into saying, well, the two major parties forced us into this, they gave us non viable options, which requires us to ask, what else can we do? We have to do something else. And it is simply it is ours to take back the White House and from there to restore the republic to functionality. We've run off the end of the tape, and it is time.

**Greg Ellis** 1:19:32

I agree. And there is there is an urgency if we're talking about the tyranny of the urgent You know, I think about the articles of Unity we lack we currently lack consensus, even about matters of basic fact. scientific facts. Scientists are being If cancelled, and losing their jobs, livelihoods, I mean, I don't need to tell you of all people about that. And the current tools of our collective sense making are seemingly unable to close this gap. Yes, this brink of economic catastrophe that we have seemingly been teetering on for quite some time now. You know, with the, the, how our manufacturing base and our reliance on we could talk about even corporate America has gone woke Hollywood, it's gone well, and it's like a whirlpool go broke. Michael, what did we get? We get every every every app, every screen I turn on, it's just everywhere. So how can we? How can we galvanize this? How can we how can more people because the big the two big voices on either side, have control of the mainstream media and the newspapers, the broadcasting media? And it seems to be about the ratings and the money and the commoditization of our values?

**Bret** 1:21:27

Well, I mean, I think you're, you're asking the right question. And in some sense, I don't believe that corporate America has gone woke, I believe it is doing what is expedient, which is to say it will broadcast the woke message in order not to be canceled and to get back to business as quickly as possible. And so I think people have not understood what a large fraction of those who claim to believe this stuff is actually accounted for by the same mechanism, people solving their own personal fears, addressing them, by espousing beliefs that they don't hold, and then they will convince themselves that they do hold them. So they don't have to explain to themselves why they lied. But once you realize that this is a fringe, and really a very tiny fringe that's bossing around giant corporations, individuals that are shaping society, according to something that we have no idea how many people actually believe it, then the answer is, well, people are solving their own problems. And that looks like them, saying what they don't believe out of cowardice. What does the opposite look like? Well, it looks like taking a risk to say what you do believe in spite of the fact that you may come out behind rather than ahead for doing so. And I think, you know, this is a small example. But you and I both believe that the two major parties have delivered outcomes that are so unacceptable that we have to consider things like the Unity 2020 proposal. And we actually take a risk in so saying, by saying that, we are actually risking looking foolish, we are risking being blamed for some outcome, either of which will be terrible. And I think the point is, well, people who have preceded us have given up far more to protect the nation. This is a small price to pay. And it can be distributed, if more people join the clear, it will be that actually we do have an opportunity to do something outside of the script. And really, at some level, if you get it, you don't have much of a choice. We have been delivered unacceptable options. The cost will fall heaviest on the young, who have longer to live in it shadow, it will fall heaviest on those who are oppressed and therefore not in a position to protect themselves financially from what's coming. So everything that we hold dear, and just the simple fact of compassion for those who are vulnerable seems to require us to demand something different, and it's time for people to stand up.

**Greg Ellis** 1:24:15

I agree. And I hope more more and more people find their voice and their clarity and join together and know and aren't too afraid of being told. No. Well, if you if you if you go down this path, then you're going to elected this person again. Get behind this person because that's the only world that one of the beautiful things about America is everyone gets everyone above a certain age and meets the requirements gets to vote. So vote for whoever you would want to vote for. And if you silenced but I think this happened in England with Brexit and I think we saw a large portion of that in in two As the 16 with with President Trump is when you tell a half of the population, or nearly half of the population that they are wrong and their voice doesn't matter, that they are all to use the the terminology recently, which I don't like using neo nazis or white supremacists, or they're all just they're all bad people or they're crazy because they believe in God or that their opinion doesn't matter. They're gonna, they're gonna speak their mind in the ballot box when they when they pull that little curtain, which in England is usually when you go and pull a little curtain, you tick the box. And so it's it's no surprise that Jeremy Corbyn lost in England and Brexit was I know, there are many more factors to it. It's obviously not that simple. But you know, we're, we're a huge nation of very diverse people. And we have great strengths. And I seriously believe that, you know, someone said to me when I think I'd retweeted you one day, recently about the lesser evil in the animation. And someone wrote, oh, yeah, they've been tried before being trumped. And I remember one of I remember sitting in school, my history teacher telling me about one of the kings in England was about to fight a battle, and he saw a spider. And the spider kept trying to spin a web and it kept true. And this king had fought 13, sieges and, or something like that, and he couldn't find a way to win the battle. And finally, as he was just mentally exhausted with trying to find a way to rally his troops, and strategize how we would win this particular siege and battle, the spider spawn the web. And that's where the phrase if at first you don't succeed, try, try try again. And just because it may have in a different formula been tried before, that is, the reason why we must try again, and try in a different way. And like you talk about the ticket rather than the third party, you know, the ticket right now is free. There is, in fact, the rewards to purchasing or buying a ticket, which you don't have to because it's free, is you get, you get to have a seat at a new table, and a new conversation that doesn't exclude either side, that's inclusive, and where I'm at, having just, you know, done a live stream, inviting and tea for in the proud boys on is I want those extremes, I think we should be bringing those extremes of society or the perceived extremes together, to have the difficult, challenging conversation. So hold that space to listen with curiosity, and mediate through our differences, and bring those experts in who who know way better than I on how to moderate and mediate through those conversations. And if only if only for the fact of one side feels like they've been heard for a few seconds, then that's that behavioral barometer, if you will, may have been just tended and tempered a little. And I think that it's all starts with the self. And we can keep, you know, the waveform, if you will, the movement of the patterns, the frequency, the harmonious nature of how we can share a little goodness, a little positivity and move from hateful to grateful. And from striving to thriving.

**Bret** 1:28:38

Now, it makes perfect sense. And the fact is, there's no guarantee. But in a moment where it is obvious, it should be obvious to everyone that the country is on the verge of tearing itself apart, it seems to me that our patriotic obligation is unity. And that the only position that will feel good in the aftermath, no matter what comes succeed or fail is to have tried anybody who didn't try in this moment who couldn't muster enough imagination to see a different possibility, despite the fact that the major parties announced that they were unwilling to lead anybody who can't figure it out now. Wow. I mean, I just I have a hopeless feeling about what that must be like and I would say everyone else it's time to wake up and get to work.

**Greg Ellis** 1:29:26

I agree and I think that answers the why question and he who has a why can bear anyhow. So the how gets answered after the the why I think there was Rumi so you know answer the Why do not question the Why just answer the why. For Why is the answer. And if we can find a way to come together and really galvanize what you're doing just even the word unity. I mean, come on. Let's Don't we all want a little more unity and unification? It just

**Bret** 1:30:05

feels good to even think in that framework at this moment, it's liberating to do it. And I must say, I like your formulation about that you should answer the why and the how will follow. That's really how things work. The why motivates the how, if you start with the how you may well spin your wheels.

**Greg Ellis** 1:30:29

Yeah, reminds me, I think it was Simon Sinek. I think his name is he did a great Ted presentation on business, and how the why needs to be answered, I think it was before the how and the rest of it. And many companies start from the out there concentric circles out there to the middle, rather than the other way round. And Apple is a great example of that, you know, making making a difference, we believe we can make a difference. We believe we can create products that will change lives. And I think unity 2020 has already started to shift perspectives and perceptions in the court. And family homes of public opinion. And as it settles in more, and people see more spoken word written text animation, the signaling, the virtue was signaling not not a virtue signaling of what people are really coming together to do, because it takes a tremendous amount of people a tremendous amount of effort. I don't know how you're doing it. I don't know, how many people are involved. If you need my help in any way, I'm happy to help. I think more people should come together to help this to try to try to find the how, once we've answered the why,

**Bret** 1:31:57

and your conviction is clear, and we will call on you sooner than you know. So before we close this out, is there anything that we should have talked about that we've missed? I take this to be the first of a number of conversations, but is there anything that belongs here that we haven't gotten to?

**Greg Ellis** 1:32:17

I think I should probably mentioned would be remiss of me not to mention my my book, the respondent? You know, it's it sounds it sounds trite, but because maybe it's time for rather than men to maybe we need men to point out after all these messages of all men bad toxic masculinity and smash the patriarchy. You know, so so my book the respondent, which is out on Thanksgiving, I chose thanks. I launched the respondent video and podcast series on Father's Day, because that day is important to honor. And my publishers and management company agencies said that I was insane to pick Thanksgiving because it wouldn't be done in time. But that day of all days in America is a day where we come together as families and give thanks and gratitude. So that that that the first season have a respond. The last episode will air on Sunday, 22nd of November, and then the book will will will be out on the 23rd. And yeah, it's every two weeks at one o'clock every other Sunday, bi weekly. And also the voices in my head event. I should mention that and that's coming up on this this Saturday, actually. There are two actually two events one at 12 o'clock. And that is the gamers gateway. Clancy Brown and I will be Clancy Brown, who's done multiple video games and is the voice of Mr. Krabs from SpongeBob SquarePants. And Hank, I think it's Hank Anderson from this big video game called Detroit. Being Human I think it is and I do this character called Colin from Dragon Age. We got caught up in a little bit of a Twitter mobbing because we supported iron hirscher Lee and JK Rowling and because of their views and what they had said and so the first event is is to discuss that some Manta respondent special event really a social impact, coming together with the fans and fandom. And then the one o'clock event is the voices in my head which is my other podcast long form conversation for voices and character voices in show writers and showrunners behind some of your favorite characters on television, cartoons and animation and video games in voiceover and that's called the voices in my head jam berry fundraiser. I have people like we have Clancy Brown and I are hosting that we have Tom Kenny who's the voice of SpongeBob SquarePants Rob Paulson, who's the voice of pinky from pinking the Rain. We are the voice of Batman Spider Man. So many great wonderful animation and cartoon character voices coming together to to have a January event live simulcast 1pm pacific time after the game is gateway have entered 12 o'clock. And the i think it's it's it's a few dollars and all of the money raised is going to be donated to iron Hershey leaves our Heart Foundation. She's a wonderful woman, and her journey and her story is truly inspiring and profound. And yeah, we're gonna have some fun, we're gonna have a few special guests of Andrea Romano, a time award winner and lifetime any award achievement winner, casting director and voice director. And it's kind of a big kickoff event to a series of the voices in my head events, I think COVID and locked down. And having to physically physically distance Brett has been very challenging for so many people. And the fans of video games and cartoons would come together once a year for what an event called Comic Con. So I think what we're going to do with the voices in my head is have a regular event where we can focus on a particular area of the entertainment business in cartoons, video games and animation. And have you know, owners of big video game companies and talk about how to create a video game and how to run a video game company and have casting directors and voice directors and then maybe branch out from there. So long winded answer that that's the short term on on the events for Saturday. And the big big event is the respondent on August 16, where I speak to and have on as my special guest and evolutionary biologist by the name of Brett Weinstein.

**Bret** 1:37:00

Well, excellent. I'm certainly looking forward to that. So okay, we've got the respondent, the book will be out on Thanksgiving. I have to say I also hold Thanksgiving in special regard because it's the one holiday that hasn't been successfully commodified yet so it's a great choice. I must say I'm a little disturbed, buried in what you said is the implication that the character of SpongeBob SquarePants is not voiced by an actual sponge, which I assume is cat some kind of species appropriation I won't

**Greg Ellis** 1:37:35

let you down. I remember taking my son My oldest boy Charlie to the Nickelodeon studios when they were recording and he was six at the time and all of the cast were in the booth and and he looked at the video that was fine. He looked up at I looked in the studio at Tom Kenny and Clancy Brown and all of the other actors he just couldn't and then Tom Kenny came out and did the voice. And he couldn't quite make the connection but it is one of the joys of being in in the entertainment business and the gift of being able to do these cartoons is I remember going on field trips there was some of my greatest moments with my with both my boys when they were in preschool in kindergarten and first second third grade was going on those school field trips sitting at the back of the bus and then saying okay, who do you want to speak to today? And they got Ben tan or Spider Man or then it was SpongeBob and just picking up the phone and passing it around and them having conversation with so yes, simple answer. Brett SpongeBob is not a sponge he's not a Spanish the crabs is not an actual crustacean.

**Bret** 1:38:44

Wow, that is a voice. It's an invitation to cancellation if if anything is

**Greg Ellis** 1:38:52

well, you're welcome to come up, come and join the event. And we will be doing an improv live flow with bringing all the all of those characters together in one kind of virtual improvised cartoon performance in place and get to see the people behind the faces. And that truly, I can't tell you the community of voiceover cartoon animation. Voiceover is very special. There is something very connective about our community and how brilliantly genius these these voice actors are. And we don't know most people don't know their names, they know their voices and the their cartoon faces or animated faces, so I'm excited about that.

**Bret** 1:39:40

Well, that's an undeniably cool setup. I bet it's great. And anyways, is it recorded?

**Greg Ellis** 1:39:49

I think it's going to be recorded. Yeah, I think it will go out live stream on its hosted I think by thinksport and Facebook will will livestream on Facebook and Twitter and YouTube. And as this new platform I I don't really know I'm a little old, long in the tooth called Twitch, which is a video game platform. So apparently the voices in my head being an animated cartoon video game show when we have 13 episodes, hd 17 I've done three video episodes. That's good, a good platform to have it on there. So it's going to be on there as well.

**Bret** 1:40:29

Cool, available and multiple venues access. All right, well, Greg Ellis, it's been a real pleasure. So people can find you on the respondent on YouTube. They can find you your real Greg Ellis on Twitter.

**Greg Ellis** 1:40:48

Yeah, they can find me real Greg Ellis on Twitter. We'll Greg ellis.com is my official website where much of my special content lives and thinks bot.com slash Greg Ellis as well. And yeah, Instagram, the usual platforms, social media, and I'll try and not say anti social media.

**Bret** 1:41:12

Yeah, that would be appropriate for sure. All right. Well, thanks so much, and for all of you listening at home or in your cars or jogging around. Thanks for joining us, and we will see you next time.

**Greg Ellis** 1:41:23

Thank you very much, Brad. It's been an absolute pleasure.