Mike Nayna \_ Bret Weinstein's DarkHorse Podcast #7 (192kbit\_...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Mike Nayna

**Bret** 00:00

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse Podcast. I am Brett Weinstein, your host, and I am pleased to be sitting here with Mike Naina, documentary filmmaker extraordinaire. Welcome, Mike.

**Mike Nayna** 00:10

Thank you. Yeah, Hey, yo.

**Bret** 00:13

Pretty good, pretty good. Let's start by recognizing that you don't sound like you're from around these parts. No, I'm

**Mike Nayna** 00:20

from Melbourne, Australia, Melbourne, Australia,

**Bret** 00:23

that seems really far away. It is. And yet your language is so intuitive. So, what brings you to the US?

**Mike Nayna** 00:33

Many things, I think that opportunities in the film and television industry at home dried up. And a project in particular took me over here. So I was working on a documentary about the grievant studies affair. It's Peter Bogosian, James Lindsay and Helen pluck rose. We're submitting hoax articles to academic journals to test the political bias of certain academic fields. And I got tangled up in that project with with them before they started writing. So I've been filming the process all the way through. So I've been going back and forth between Australia and here for, I'd say, near on two years now. When's the last time when's the first time we met? It was at the James d'amour event. It was very it

**Bret** 01:19

was at the James d'amour event. Yeah. So I met you through Peter. I also met James and Helen through Peter. And so we met at the demore event. And then I think the next time we met would have been maybe you guys came over to our play? Yeah, yeah. Would have been that. Yeah. Would have been that. And so just to catch people up again, you were working on the grievance studies affair. And you were documenting it as it unfolded. Yeah. And at some level, the Evergreen affair was tangential to that. Yes, it was happening locally, because we knew Peter and so you looked into it to be kind of a I don't know a sidelight or an added dimension. Yeah. The what you were working on? Yeah. And at the point that you started looking into the, the Evergreen situation, it becomes difficult to turn it into a small snapshot very

**Mike Nayna** 02:17

much. So yeah, there's

**Bret** 02:18

so much depth to it.

**Mike Nayna** 02:19

So the gravity of the Evergreen story, you kind of get you get drawn into it. And you're like, holy crap, what is what has actually happened to you? Yeah, it's a modern day witch burning really. It's, it's, it's and

**Bret** 02:31

as you know, not even figuratively? Yeah. People who orchestrated it. Much to my amazement, I did not know this at the time. But the people who orchestrated it viewed it as a justified witch hunt. Yeah. Because I was white and male, straight that I was deserving of being witch hunted. Yeah, in order to give me the same experience that others

**Mike Nayna** 02:52

have had, well, your image became an effigy, which they then but

**Bret** 02:56

repeatedly. Alright, so. So you came to the Evergreen affair at the point that you realized that it was its own story, and you made what I regard as an absolutely beautiful three part documentary, which people can find our link in the description. And that documentary is a number of different things. I mean, I must say, it's personally very meaningful to me a number of different levels, there's a way in which it's solved a problem that was inherent to where Heather and I had land. And the problem was, that our predicament was almost impossible to fathom from any normal position, because it was so odd. And that created a kind of alienation, because interacting with other people, they would say, Oh, can you explain you know what happened at evergreen just briefly, and I was like,

**Mike Nayna** 03:52

No, no, yeah.

**Bret** 03:55

What's more, even if one attempts to describe it at length describing it doesn't quite cut it? No. So Benjamin Boyce had done a lot of work necessary for people to understand what happening on Earth a tremendous amount of stuff and put out a lot of it in very interesting form on Jerseyans who

**Mike Nayna** 04:12

grow to my film as well. Right. And you

**Bret** 04:15

you picked up a lot of what he had on Earth. Yeah. And you put it in this very cinematic form. Yeah. And anyway, the the net outgrowth of that was the things I thought nobody was ever really going to understand. Not what happened at evergreen things that I remember even in real time sitting there the canoe meeting, for example. Yeah. Sitting in the canoe, meaning one of my thoughts was, what is going on here is jaw dropping. There's no way to convey what has happened. Yeah. to outsiders. And your films. they solve that problem. Yes, they did convey Yeah. And so that was a big weight off my shoulders.

**Mike Nayna** 04:57

Well, that particular piece of footage was the reason why I sought you out because so we'd met and not only loosely heard about the Evergreen, the events at evergreen, and then after meeting new, I went and did some homework and read the Washington Examiner piece that you guys had. And it linked to that piece of footage. And it was a moment of, because I was working on the grievant studies stuff and I was quite a few months in reading the scholarly canon, I guess. And the major texts around that and what was looking to me like was some some kind of victimhood theology. So I was calling it because the, the peer review comments that the guys were getting back for the fake papers that were writing were very, it was paying lip service to the scientific method and, and rigor but it really what it was policing was some kind of it was like a set of moral rules. And they were cut and I was slowly figuring out what this was, which because it wasn't, it's not science that we're that we're trying to sort out here, it was some kind of intuitive moral system that we're creating. And so it's it really did start looking like some kind of theology To me, it was it was very, like a prescriptive sociology that was based on moral intuitions. And I was like, Well, how do I convey that? Like, it's it's all paper, and it's all words and comments and things like that. And it took me a long time to figure out that this is potentially what's going on here. And then I saw that footage, and I was like, this is a service. This is this, what I what I'm seeing in their scholarship. And the major texts that they're working is is here, this is this is like the it's the natural progression of what I imagined a theology would would create.

**Bret** 06:46

So you mean when you say this is a service? You mean, this is a religious service, you're not saying they've done us a service by provider? Well, it's funny, because I had the I had the other reaction while I was sitting. Yeah, because, you know, they set this thing up, they in strongly encouraged us to go to this media. And when I got there, they had, you know, they have these very fancy television cameras, they have a studio that they outfitted. And it's always been a complaint amongst faculty that it was underutilized, right. And the bridges administration started using these cameras, they filmed everything.

**Mike Nayna** 07:19

And thank thank God for that.

**Bret** 07:23

But anyway, I walk in there, and these cameras are set up, right? And I begin to realize how how they view what they're doing. Yeah. And then as the thing unfolds, you know, it's been billed as a forum to discuss the plan but yeah, no room to discuss anything other than the goodness of its objectives, right? Yes, utopian view of things. And as I'm sitting there, I'm thinking, Okay, nobody's ever gonna understand this. I can't explain it. It's gonna be hard enough to explain to Heather and she knew that the moon was coming. And in fact, she said, You have to go to this Yeah, right. No, she wasn't going to things but I was going religiously as it were, to everything because there was so much going on. But I I guess maybe I hadn't even realized that there was a meeting He's like, No, no, you got to go but I wasn't gonna be able to explain it to her because it was so far beyond Yeah, the most extreme thing I had yet see I'd seen at that point. And then as I'm sitting there, I'm thinking they're filming this Yeah. And then I thought there's no way that they are dumb enough to allow that footage out. And so I was trying to figure out Can I force them to release it before they delete it? Which any reasonable person who had done what they were doing would have done because that footage is very clear, right? How far around the bend this movement was for us know for them? Exactly. So anyway, that somewhere there's an email in which I emailed them after the event. Yeah, like I do think the entire community, not everybody was present. I do think the entire community needs to see the footage of that meeting. When can we expect it? Yeah, trying to prompt them. Yeah, but they were proud of it and they put it out much to my surprise, and, and you made excellent use of it.

**Mike Nayna** 09:18

It is an interesting thing at the heart of the Evergreen moral panic was that how proud everyone was there was a lot of footage of that it's this huge from my perspective is huge sociological event, like I was really the case study for this, this way of thinking. And the fact that everyone was so proud to put up a do they filmed everything in pride. They filmed it, because they were proud of it. And I'm seeing all these horrific things from my position outside of that moral community going What the hell is going on here? Why would you be proud of that? And so the series was just kind of an accidental series that kind of stumbled into it is more or less just that really, it's you and my perspective. Give of the stuff that they're probably still proud of this still doubling down on this way of thinking

**Bret** 10:05

still Yeah, even like as of this week, they are still doubling love to

**Mike Nayna** 10:10

sit down and watch that series next to us, like Georgia and Amer and ask them questions I really want to hang out with these guys.

**Bret** 10:18

I agree I think this is may or may not be possible because they they did figure out one thing right away, which was that every time they touched media outside of their little bubble, it did not play well.

**Mike Nayna** 10:31

You can't get them you can't get anyone like the amount of people I've tried to reach out to and talk about this stuff. As soon as they get a hint. I mean, it's a hostile media environment. So you can kind of like for everyone. So if someone wants to put a camera on you, you're looking for a friendly, but

**Bret** 10:46

But even so, you know, look, I know you, I know me. Yeah, the fact is, I would give him a fair shot. And I think, you know, as loved as we've talked about repeatedly, there are a lot of these concepts that have something true in Yeah, somewhere. Yeah. Right. And then they've been distorted. So grotesquely that they become, you know, the basis for a witch hunt. There is a lot to talk about. And so anyway, it would be fascinating if they would interact, but they have this litmus test. Either you will sign up for these things. Yeah. So far beyond the pale that no reasonable person will Yeah, or we won't talk to you. And that's just simply where, where it stands. But you're right, their pride. And there, it's not just pride, their certitude that what they are doing is still correct. They've learned the only thing they've learned is not to talk to people will record them. But I would say I see no evidence of any other learning of any kind. And that is maybe the greatest tragedy,

**Mike Nayna** 11:49

what's the it's the blink, his heart says morality binds and blinds. And so from the religious stance, I'm using it as a descriptive tool, this religious way of looking at it. And I think it's the most powerful one to understand what the hell's going on there. But from a durkheimian perspective, you've got a religion is a moral community that's gathered around a group of stories and scriptures. And so I started looking at the stories and scriptures and trying to figure that out, and then to better understand the moral community, but they can't see outside of it. It's why all this crazy stuff is happening. Because inside the bubble, it makes sense. But as soon as you're outside of it, it's clown world.

**Bret** 12:31

It's clown world. And it is also, you know, what Heather and I spent a year saying in the aftermath of this was that evergreen was really set up to serve underserved communities, it was the college for people who were not a good fit for other places. And a lot of the people who were not a good fit for other places were people from, you know, racial backgrounds that were disadvantaged, or had some other unusual feature to their story. And they really needed faculty to deal with them as individuals, which evergreen the structure of it made possible. Yeah. So what is very hard for us to get past is that evergreen was not highly functional. At the point it came apart, but it was still functional, and it could easily have been fixed. What they did instead was they destroyed the functional part, which was well suited to serve people who are usually underserved. and replaced it with a myth that is incapable of serving anybody and in fact, yet, it does the opposite. It leads them to believe that there is some sort of help to be had, from, you know, from wallowing in victim, which, frankly, isn't going to work.

**Mike Nayna** 13:51

It's the saddest part about this. I think it's about empowering communities, couldn't you couldn't disempower community more by getting them to build their identity identity around the victimhood, which is this sacred Totem that they have to

**Bret** 14:06

build their identity around victimhood and to reject the very tools that would empower the most and that are the antidote to bias

**Mike Nayna** 14:13

and everyone's tools. Like I mean, they've got the whole masters tools don't don't touch the Masters tools will never dismantle the Masters, house house band, they're your fucking tools, like they're everyone's tools. And humanity is taking a long time to get to these tools. They like the most beautiful thing that anyone can pick up.

**Bret** 14:30

I gotta tell you, the master has the best tool, shed quality stuff, and if you want to take down his house, that's the place to find the stuff with the power to do it. Yeah. And so, you know, I do want to say, I'm certain that Audrey Lord meant something by that quote, that, you know, I probably would argue with it even in the way that she meant Yeah, the way that it is utilized is absolutely self destruct. Yeah. And, you know, science This is counterintuitive to we view sciences, this very powerful paradigm. It is very powerful. The reason it's powerful is that it corrects for bias that human beings have a confirmation bias problem. And science is the thing that allows us to see past it. So to the extent that one believes civilization is biased against people, the tool you that you want to hone is scientific. And so to attack science to attack enlightenment values to attack the idea of merit and then substitute in this religious view of who is deserving on the basis of what characteristics that they walked through the door with is just it's it's the most ironic self sabotage imaginable.

**Mike Nayna** 15:44

But there is this sense that this is very I think the original post modernists are cool i like them and so they get a lot of flack for what's going on. But deep inside it is the sense that so deep deep inside the accordion view, is that that there is science right? But there's also the branding of science so science gets kind of used it used as weapons for absolute powerful Yep. And so you what's happened with this next iteration is they're going for actually the beautiful thing in the middle instead of the surrounding uses of science. So for kind of lay down the the blueprint of how knowledge works, and how power works through that knowledge. And they have adopted that to create their own version of the worst part of that, does that make sense to you? And so it is working in so far as that blueprint is true. Like I think that they're really they're really these these applied post modernists. These people who came through the 90s are trying to take over our systems of knowledge production and it's hitting up against reality and scientists because it's only true in certain aspects like it's in the promotional kind of this big marketing campaign that they're they're creating

**Bret** 17:09

Well, they also don't appreciate and I think almost nobody appreciates how much stuff is functioning that depends on this other worldview. And so if you're very focused on what doesn't work in your world, because you know, let's say you're black in the US, black in the US is a problem does it mean there are no successful blacks? No, but it is a problem right? It's it's a predicament that has a long history that nobody alive today had anything to do with Belton. But if you're focused on that problem, and your point is well, if we swap out the thing that empowered those who did this, then we'll be good and you don't realize that the electric grid nuclear reactors the thing that keeps us from being attacked by foreign powers all of this is actually built on a scientific framework. Has that framework been misused regularly and you should expect it to continue to be yes us Yeah, right. What we want to do is minimize the level at which it's misused but you you can't prevent it. But when somebody like me scientist says, No, the scientific method is about preventing bias we're talking about the method we're not talking about those who wear a lab coat are speaking the truth Yeah, right. That's preposterous not scientific. Yeah. So anyway, see that

**Mike Nayna** 18:34

that conception of the person in the labs lab coat speaking the truth and him being full of shit, that is inside their their way of thinking and so they put on a lab code, they put the page the PhD badge on, and then they they speak so confidently, like they speak so confidently about things they shouldn't be confident about because in their worldview, everyone else is speaking like that.

**Bret** 18:56

And unfortunately, the scientific establishment has allowed some really low quality stuff to be sanctioned yeah mundane economic reasons that have to do with the way universities are funded and all of that but

**Mike Nayna** 19:11

anyways life right like it's just nothing's perfect you're gonna have some issues

**Bret** 19:15

well if I didn't have those issues, I think it could be a lot better Yeah, we could have we could we could declare a border between the market and science and we could protect science as the important thing that it is we should do that yeah. Having not done that there is a lot of garbage he still gets dressed up in scientific clothing and so it's not as if there's no point to be made. Yeah, but no, I if your point is there is no science it's all about power. Well, no,

**Mike Nayna** 19:44

hang on, guys.

**Bret** 19:46

I want to back off that one.

**Mike Nayna** 19:47

That's the thing like Foucault's like they're, they're Jesus. But he talks about this stuff. Yeah, he says that, that there is such thing as functional power. He just wanted to figure out The blueprint of Prout power he, I mean, he had his own biases that he definitely put in there. Yeah. And he went to fires like this wild man. But what they've done from late 80s into the 90s is mind boggling what they've done with his ideas and the ideas of the other, the post modernists that were kind of kicking around at the time, right? And we're now seeing it, you know, even Yeah, we're living in the sins of Michel, Michel Foucault.

**Bret** 20:26

So, for some of us, I will ask just out of courtesy, but I know for certain that you will be in the same camp, you not have the experience of looking at some of the stuff that we are now apparently fighting about. Yeah. And thinking, if you'd asked me five years ago, whether anybody was going to challenge the truth in that, say the fact that there's a difference between males and females, and it's not perfectly arbitrary. I, I knew that there was like, hints in that direction. Yeah, the idea that we would be fighting about whether or not a trans woman Yeah, and compete against people who are born female in athletic competition. Right, I would have said and it's interesting,

**Mike Nayna** 21:11

right, like it's, it's, it's so it's disorientating, and most people, most people feel like that, like I think the majority of people like what the hell is going on with some strange, strange like, slip universe or something like that. But it's so it has been operating like this very much from the 90s onward. So we've got they got 30 years of scholarship, then tumbler comes along and makes it super accessible. And it's it's spread like we're already kind of living in there. What is it they're kind of moral hedge emoni like, my whole life has been in this in this mill you the kind of victimhood mentality. But it very much collided with the Internet, and all of a sudden, it's absolutely everywhere, and it's in its, I would say purest form, it's it's in the form that they laid down in this inside this coalition.

**Bret** 22:08

Well, you know, it'd be interesting, I'm not convinced that we have a full understanding of why the internet had the effect on it that it did. But it It allows very fringe ideas that are held by isolated pockets to congeal into a hole that they otherwise would not and it also allows a kind of tactical growth where each one of these forays into the absurd learns a bit about what it cannot do. What arguments are feeble and which ones are forceful and so it learns and is spreading in a way that is quite dangerous. Yeah.

**Mike Nayna** 22:54

Yeah, I mean, it's it's Darwinian, but the it's, it's selecting for emotion. And so the these these uh, so this this scholarship, it's, it's navigating around these deep moral emotions. I mean, Jung would call them like an archetypal type thing Jonathan Hite would call them what are the moral foundations? They're kind of revolving around it's very much care harm in the in the Jonathan Hite way of looking at it. So they were revolving around Yeah, I said they weren't policing for anything scientific, it was more moral intuition. Yep. They've they're circling around these moral intuitions and they've created like, it's reams and reams and reams of work are wrapped just circling around these moral intuitions and policing this new worldview. And so you plug the internet into into that and it's something where we're already living in this world where you know, social justice is it's kind of our religion really, like we've it's the most gripping moral system that we have, you know, this Christianity Yeah. And that it's kind of on the outskirts of the media and the payment system. And so it just it feel bad, those plugs, right if it is a moral system that kind of moved across the internet, because the internet selects for emotion. And then you've got things like the shooting videos, and my first film was was, was about a video I talked about a racist incident on a bus in Australia. And they're all exploding becoming very viral, because it's proof its worldview of this thing. But if you actually look at the stories behind these viral videos, it's a lot more complicated than that. It's not it's not this kind of cartoon world that they've created. It's based on this these deep moral intuitions.

**Bret** 24:48

So there are a couple things I want to explore from what you said, Yeah, one of them has to do with the fact that we as human beings are not prepared for the modern environment in a lot of ways, but one of them that's very clear is That our ability to see events that are remote and the bias in favor of seeing remote events that are interesting, rather than ones that are not interesting results in a total distortion of our sampling of the world. And so I remember as a kid, plane crashes were a regular topic of conversation. Why? Because every time a plane crashes, it ends up on the news. It's grisly there are bodies being picked part by part, it's hard to look away. Yeah. And that, because it spends a lot of time on your TV. Yeah, you get the sense that it's a common thing. Whereas statistically speaking, you're never safe for them. When you're on a plane, you know, even in the worst year, you're never safe for them when you're on a plane, most dangerous thing to you on a plane is that you have a heart attack there or a stroke, and you can't get to the ground fast enough. But frankly, anytime that you're in that plane, you're being protected from all the things that could happen to you on the ground. Yeah, right. And so we get a very warped view, based on what's on the screen. It's

**Mike Nayna** 26:00

the same as the milcon. Kids that went missing, it's all of a sudden, there's all this hysteria around child abduction, totally,

**Bret** 26:09

we should change the way we raise children in a completely incoherent way

**Mike Nayna** 26:13

is a huge sociological events based on the I guess its technology. Like we're kind of plotting against this technology. And the amount of time that people spend interacting with the screen like that's their world, yet most people. So it's a lot of people leaving the screen and not really even interacting with, with reality that they live in. They actually understand the world through this this screen.

**Bret** 26:38

I bet that will be reflected neurologically. I know we're not

**Mike Nayna** 26:41

no question. Fan. So it's, it's it's very much I think this is fundamentally technological.

**Bret** 26:48

It's fundamentally technological. But my guess is we will start to see reflected in the neurobiology of people, yeah, this device that because so much of your reward structure is tied in through events that happen over the device, that you actually begin to see through it. Yeah. And what that does mean is that, you know, what you and I would consider normal interaction is, you know, at best a second kind of normal interaction, rather than the real

**Mike Nayna** 27:16

deal. And even I feel this myself, I spend way too much time on YouTube, and I'm trying to spend less, but I'm only just getting used to doing this kind of thing. And then when you invited me, I was like, oh, maybe I can squeeze out. And we can do it via Skype, because I just felt like I would be more comfortable in that situation. And I guess this is happening more and more like, it is, it's where I'm comfortable, I kind of in my room, and then I can I can look at everything through a screen and be a little bit more disconnected from it.

**Bret** 27:46

Well, you know, on the one hand, I have kind of a mixed reaction to video calls. One way in which video calls are just not as productive as they should be. Yeah, there's another way in which they are better. There is some fraction of like facial expressions and things that are conveyed well enough through a video call. Yeah. It's not as good as sitting with somebody, but it's better than just listening to them. But there is something missing. And I don't know what it is, I don't know what channel it travels on. But frankly, my enthusiasm for having a conversation with somebody like you goes way up, if we're going to be sitting in the same room, because much of what makes it you know, the the right analogy is really a corrective lens, right? A corrective lens is for somebody who has an eye that is seeing in a distorted fashion, you take a distortion to correct for the distortion that you've got on board, we all have a distortion that comes from the increasing role that screens are playing in our perception of what's actually taking place and why. And there's another correction that comes from you and I sitting in person, you know, it's not natural, we've got the devices here. We are talking people asynchronously out there who are not talking back, but we imagine what they might think about what we're saying, Yeah, very unnatural. On the other hand, the very fact that some part of this is natural. Yeah, and I are sitting in a physical room hearing the conversation correct for part of it and this

**Mike Nayna** 29:15

but even my feeling of it, there's a lot of inputs here that are making me a little more anxious than if they were through through a screen I've noticed that like, so I spent a lot of time studying this stuff and, and just editing over the past year, and I was going outside less than less than less. And then it's like early onset early onset agoraphobia or something like that. Like I don't know what happened. But when I went outside, everything was louder. And it was it was hard to talk to people like a and I've never been extroverted. I grow like this extroverted guy. And now all of a sudden, it's like, I don't know what's happened and I know it's the screen. It's something to do with too much time on the screen too much time by itself too much time in your thoughts. That's interesting. that make you feel different. And I'm an artist, I'm sensitive to those sorts of things. And I think that this is happening. I'm seeing it in other people. I'm seeing it in a lot of people, they're retreating from the world and they're interacting with the world via screen. And that that is some kind of,

**Bret** 30:15

so am I wrong? So I'm not having this experience. I I'm actually, I tend to be kind of introverted and my life in the last it's not even since evergreen from before that has forced me into I'm sort of a secondary extrovert, where I've had to get used to it and I have now, but true, that was unnatural to me at first. So I'm in motion in the other direction. Yeah. But I'm imagining based on what you're saying that there's a feeling of like nakedness. Yeah. When you're in person. Yeah, that is like, you know, behind the screen is like, properly close. You're not revealing anything. Which is really. I mean, I don't want to overreact to it. But it's a little bit tragic that people human beings are feeling jeopardized by the presence of other human beings in their physical space. Like, Oh, no,

**Mike Nayna** 31:14

particularly millennials. Right? I'm a millennial, and even the generation under it's, it is strange. They were there's this thing as a thing going around like you can memes are really good. The memes that go out there kind of give you an insight into how the generation is feeling. And there's this. There's several, like, kind of classic names about the intrusion of a phone call. Yeah. And the phone call is a massive intrusion. It's like, No, no, text me. Don't call me and it's, it's, it really is. It's an insight into where all our brains are bad brains are at something physiological happening because of the technology we're surrounding ourselves with. So

**Bret** 31:55

I wonder now that you mentioned it, so I am not a millennial. I'm a Gen X. Yeah. That's not a boomer. So, alright, Gen X. Better. Okay, x. Yeah, no, I like that. So, when I grew, I mean, you know, when my earliest memories, a phone was an object that was plugged into the wall, and a cordless phone was kind of a thing. Yeah, you know, it was I remember that being like most phones were actually just physically plugged in. And then I remember cellphones, I didn't get one for the longest time, I didn't occur to me that I needed one. And then suddenly, they became ubiquitous. And it was like, you're just handicap not to have it. But I wonder if the key reason that people who are young, you know, millennial, and younger, might be having some of the experience you're describing, is that asynchronous communication allows a lot of room for posturing. Yeah. Figuring out how something is going to land and delivering it in a way that you feel like Yep, Yeah, that one's ready for the world.

**Mike Nayna** 33:06

We've become an actor, right? act as a cool because their lines are written for them. But if you if you have the time to script, your your communication, and all of a sudden, you're cool, then you would be, you know,

**Bret** 33:16

right. So this actually dovetails with something. I've heard Jordan Peterson say it, I've heard me say, and I've heard, Ben Shapiro said that, at the point that you find yourself in situations like this, where something is going to go into the world, and it will have some impact, and you'll just have to live with the aftermath of it. You, you go into this mode, where you are speaking, and then some part of you is watching what you're about to say and checking everything. And I wonder if that's not a bit lacking if your experience was that a lot of communication is asynchronous? Yeah. If that's how you grew up, then I wonder if that's harder. You know, I can do it in real time. It's taxing? Yeah, but it's possible. But if my experience was that your average communication even interpersonal communication was a synchronous, then maybe that circuit just isn't very strong. Yeah.

**Mike Nayna** 34:16

And it's also you you I mean, part of the being so judgmental about everything everyone says it's because they've had time to think about it, like people used to shoot, shoot off the hip and say whatever they want, and it was okay. It was okay to make mistakes.

**Bret** 34:30

You know, I wonder if this is not actually playing a huge role here. I mean, maybe this is exactly what you're saying. But I watched people get canceled for something that I agree they shouldn't have said Yeah, right. But it's like, wait, that was fatal. Yeah. You know, and it's like, Whoa, that you talking about taking somebody's well being and zeroing it out. over something that they said sometimes it's not even what they They were just trying something out. And you know, when I was teaching, we had these things called covenants, students and professors would agree at the beginning of a course what the rules were right. And those could be rules about grading how you, you know, if something isn't to your liking what you do about and all that, but I used to include in that, that everybody has the right to take back what they've said, and restate it, you can say, that wasn't what I meant, or it was what I meant, but I no longer think that everybody has that. Right. And you should speak knowing that you have that right. And you should treat everybody else. And that's a habit being human. Right. It's normal. Yeah. And so maybe, maybe your point is just let's put it this way. I've never heard this anywhere else. But I do it does immediately strike me as an important component here is that people are being held responsible at a new level, because asynchronous communication allows people to pretty stuff up more than is normal. Yeah. And so people aren't used to the noise of people saying something a bit tone deaf, and then, you

**Mike Nayna** 36:02

know, the policing is a different thing as well. Like there's another input here, which is so in our legal justice system, a system you you often punish people as a to show everyone else that that shouldn't be done. Yep. As send a message, I guess, deterrence. Yeah. And so within this, this scripture, let's call, let's call it there, the canon. It's racism is perpetuated through discourses. So the way we think about things, so if someone puts their foot wrong, it's not actually the human that's doing it. It's a strange thing where individual responsibility, they don't really consider it very much. Yeah, it's not the human, it's the discourses working through the human. So if you converge on it, and get rid of it, you're actually you're actually going after the evil that's in the world. You're not going after the human you're going after the evil because the discourses are working through them. It's so when you start actually learning what's going on here, you can see it because it's so intuitive. Yeah. And you can see how something like that would spread as a new method, a metaphysical system, there's spreading over everything. And I mean, the technology is creating the atmosphere in which this can take place really quickly. Yes. And as we were talking about, we could talk all day about the different inputs that are making this huge cultural phenomenon. But underneath that the Scripture, the Scripture, they've laid all this out, it's all there. And they they talk about it. unapologetically, when you when you go behind the closed doors of the Academy,

**Bret** 37:42

yes. Okay, I've got two places I want to go. I wanna make sure we don't lose them. I think they're both important. So if I forget, remind me that I want to talk about Yale. Okay. Okay, and what happened there. But first, let's talk about the question about these moral intuitions. And I like how you phrase it resonates for me. So there's this moral intuition. And some of these moral intuitions? I think they're not right, as they're stated. But you could fix them. Right there. The intuition is correct as just the phrasing is way the hell off. Yeah. But we're

**Mike Nayna** 38:15

not even phrasing like action. So all moral intuitions are intuitions, but they unless you're lining them up with some kind of empirical, you know, method to get what you want based on those intuitions. And that's all they are. They're just discharging feelings.

**Bret** 38:32

Well, let me let let's take an example. So that this is more concrete. Okay. Let's take the idea that the difference in performance, that is to say, economic performance of people from different racial groups, is the result of bias and unfairness. I actually suspect that that's probably almost correct.

**Mike Nayna** 38:56

I think there's a lot of it down to that. But you couldn't put that out as a blanket rule, but you can't

**Bret** 39:01

you can't assume it. Yeah. But my guess would be based on everything I've seen. Yeah. And everything I've seen includes an awful lot of time, tromping around in other people's minds when they were my student. Yeah. You know, I looked into their minds in order to help them learn. Yeah, right, in the process learned an awful lot of mouths to them. Yeah.

**Mike Nayna** 39:20

I'm totally open to that. I actually think it's probably the case. Yeah. So I think

**Bret** 39:25

if you did just thought experiment level, yeah. If you fixed the unfairness, so that all of the little threads that have carried through one generation to the next were actually just neutralized and you started us all, you know, in the same position with the same advantages, the same access to education and all. I believe that almost all of this would disappear. And then what you would find is that in general, people are very similar in their capacity. They're very similar in their built in design. And that basically these massive differences that we find in preference for activities and things is all you know some of it's arbitrary but but it's based on the fact that we've traveled different paths and had different opportunities and so anyway the problem is you cannot project that onto the system and as I say, it's you can't take it as an assumption Yeah, right. There could be differences and they might matter my intuition is that they don't matter very much. Big ones might exist between males and females there's a very good biological reason to expect differences that

**Mike Nayna** 40:35

would make them more fit for other things you know what I mean? Like it's not right it's no it seems like a power imbalance because of the culture but it's like women are going to be on average better at certain things and men are going to be on average better at other things and that's can't be the case exactly that is that is the nature

**Bret** 40:53

between males and females and that's

**Mike Nayna** 40:54

awesome we'd like why not encourage that and and right play to that rather than play against it

**Bret** 40:59

well frankly I'm I'm very up for a world in which we absolutely free people to jump out yeah and decide you know what, I may be female but I like the stuff that men are more typically into and are meant to do that you know, Heather is this way Yeah, Heather's very mass Oh yeah. Orientation world and I think that's great. Yeah, and I you know,

**Mike Nayna** 41:21

but when you're looking at it on like, I mean one to one you should be looking at it in that kind of way. But I mean if you're looking at it from a sociological 200,000 feet off and you have to think in in numbers right you have to think in bell curves Yeah. Because if you don't think in bell curves and you're gonna hurt people unnecessarily you got to play to the bell curves

**Bret** 41:41

well that's that's the whole irony I'm getting at at the difference between the moral intuition Yeah, and the thing that might be rescued if you studied it carefully. The thing that you might find that actually is the reason for the intuition, the intuition is there for organic reasons Yeah. It's about something if I'm right that if you did neutralize advantages that people are basically the same and responding to different opportunities based on you know, their particular place in the world then you could say something that there's an X Factor right the things that make different populations function differently has to do with a lot of arbitrary things that are not inherent the creek

**Mike Nayna** 42:25

I want to clear something up here a little bit so my when I say moral intuition I'm going deeper than so at some point there is so there's the finds very difficult to explain there is the intuition that there's an emotional feeling right it's it's it's I was often thought if they had symbolism, it would be like Mary Mary mother of Christ with the baby and then there's another symbol of the bears protecting it's it's young, right? This is fuckin mode, it's a mode that you can click into if you really feel it, it's in the guts and that's the evolution part of it. So culturally, so that's the hardware that's that's the hardware we're working with as humans is universal and it travels through time. And that's I love looking for trying to find trying to triangulate what these deep emotional feelings are by looking at stories throughout time and you know, religious stories and things like that. Culturally, we put a software on top of that, and that is a home for those moral intuitions, but underneath those moral intuitions, they're just they're kind of driving us in a certain direction getting us to make certain certain decisions it's a movement thing it's like the energy that's moving a culture when you've got a moral system on top of a culture but even just one human he makes his decisions based on his kind of or her moral moral intuitions that the hardware that we're stuck with so when you said that the more tuition is moving is something I do I do think it right it's the it's the software you're more talking about the software on top of it so there there canon is it's it's creating it's it's creating a different software that is that is primarily focused on this care harm one this kind of beer protecting its cup type thinking and you can see it you see it in patents and so I totally I totally agree like it's gone at these intuitions, their intuitions and they're going to pull us in the right and wrong direction and and a lot of people are buying into buying into the stories based on the intuitions and they're being sold into it on quite logical things that the same right, but it actually gets darker and crazier and weighted with the further you go into what they're actually trying to sell to the world. Does that make sense? I'm very I am not articulate about these things. Sometimes. So

**Bret** 44:51

no, I think he was articulate But I have to tell you, this is a place where I think our what we biologists teach Yeah, as to where the border is between Biology and other things is so broken, that we can't help but trip over this at this place. So let me just tell you what I think I'm going to give you a preview of what I think we will understand about humans. 500 years. Yeah, we're still around. The software layer. Software layer is composed of a couple of things. It's composed of what I would call culture, that is things that are passed down. And it is composed of things that are learned in real time, right, they may not be durable. Your software layer is composed of these two things, but they are just as much biological as that which were genes set in motion directly. And so there is something going on where these moral intuitions are being searched for a couple of things. One, they're being searched for content, but they're also being explored in terms of their utility. And utility is relative to something else that I think we teach very, very badly, which is, human beings are, in some ways, just like every other creature, but in some special ways we do this uniquely. We are built for lineage against lineage competition, the moral intuitions are partially an exploration of what might be true. And they are partially a claim. That doesn't matter if it's true. If the question is, is this useful? Does this advance my lineages interest to say it out loud? And so this is very confusing, because it's a factual claim. Right? The fact that there are not equal numbers of men and women in the ranks of programmers at Google, and that that necessarily implies that there is some sort of discrimination taking place. That's a claim. It's a false claim. Is there discrimination? I don't know. But the idea that it has to be there, because there's a difference in the numbers. That's a false claim. We know that. But it doesn't mean it's not an effective claim. And so anyway, we're seeing a mixture of this sort of empirical claim, and the strategic claim that are indistinguishable from each other. Yeah. And it makes it very confusing to confront it because you don't know how to take it apart. Yeah. But one thing, we can just finish out the thread about the moral intuitions and whether or not they actually line up with something that would be real if we studied it. Yeah. The thing that I find so frightening is that the way in which biases of the past or arbitrary differences in starting point have altered the fate of modern people are so complex, that you cannot just come at them painting with a broad brush, write lots of this stuff may be unfair, and have nothing to do with discrimination, right? Guns, Germs, and Steel. Great example. The whole book is about kinds of unfairness that have nothing to do with discrimination. Yeah, they may result in discrimination, but they don't start there. They're basically, you know, did you have goats in your environment? Or didn't you? Yeah. And so anyway, it's a very difficult topic. And the moral intuition might lead you to study it, but what they're doing is sabotaging the means by which we would study it and figure out, you know, is there a basis to the claim yet we can read the degree of unfairness in the difference in outcomes,

**Mike Nayna** 48:20

and that's why I'm calling it a theology. Yeah. Because it's a faith because they're feeling the feeling that that's why they've moved so far away into this into this strange world, kids are calling a clown world now. Because usually, his moral intuitions are grounded by inside the academy should be grounded by some empirical evidence or general rigor, you know, or at least advancing the there could be advancing the western canon, but they've decided to create their own canon shake the Etch A Sketch on everything we've learned beforehand, you'll actually hit reset. And then they've gone started from the late 80s. And started again, and but it's not scientific. Now. They've diverged into this strange area of theology and it's so it's a it's a startup religion. It's 30 year old religion.

**Bret** 49:14

Yeah. It's a 30 year old religion and you know, no, 30 year old religion is wise.

**Mike Nayna** 49:22

We've tried it a few times before. A lot of people die. Yeah, yeah. Alright, so

**Bret** 49:27

now let's pick up the the Yale threat because the thing is convert I'd be interested to hear what you got in here. So there's there's a thing that I've heard routinely. And you know, we've seen it a lot of different places. But you know, Yale with the Christakis This was particularly clear, right? You watch these people chastising Nicholas Christakis in the courtyard there. And you know, this is easy for you and me to interpret because we know that that was an early version of it. But we've now seen enough of these instances that it's it's just, you know, it's that same tragic thing unfolding. But what you As a critique is these people who are chastising Nicolas, are among the most privileged people anywhere, right? How is it that they are not recognizing that they are at Yale? But I actually think this critique is wrong. And here's why. Because we are built for lineage against lineage competition. If you are a member of a lineage that has faced a particular obstacle and unfair obstacle, and then you as a member of that lineage, have found yourself in a privileged position. Yeah, it is actually, I think, quite natural for you to speak on behalf of the lineage that is still lagging. Yeah. And so I think it's very confusing when you see it on a screen because what you see is an individual who clearly has a ton of privilege at acting as an oppressed individually and

**Mike Nayna** 50:58

identity for for it's like they taking on the identity that they think they should have. It's a cartoon version of their identity. Well, but I'm actually making on behalf of their people. We're speaking on their their behalf.

**Bret** 51:10

I think, personally, I hate to impose this on them. Yeah. I think they're a little bit confused about what is. First of all, I think there's some bad actors, and I just want to dismiss them. Yeah. What they're doing is streaming that word on an interesting yeah, we certainly know that from but for many of these people, they're not bad actors. They're giving voice to something that feels very real. I have a feeling that what they are saying is has some truth in it. But because it's phrased in the individual, it is a paradox. Why is somebody who is experiencing the kind of privilege that somebody obviously is, I don't care. If you're at Yale on scholarship, you're still there, right? You've got a launchpad into the world that most people just simply don't have. But if you are, internally in some way that you cannot understand or explain a representative of a lineage that is actually lagging for reasons that do have a lot to do with history and unfairness. Then giving voice to that at the moment that you arrive in a place of privilege is not false, but it would need to be explained so that you don't find yourself chastising Nicholas Christakis who is not involved in oppression as if you were yeah and speaking from a position of being oppressed which you aren't so

**Mike Nayna** 52:27

why why is it so confused you think because the thing is is that there are intuitions that are legitimate there and we can both agree that we agree that they're acting on some intuition where there is a low level of legitimacy to it but it looks absurd right because there's this identity for going on so I still blame the cannon and I know that I'm gonna draw all roads lead lead there because Okay, so a giant a huge text within their cannon was Paolo friary pedagogy of the press. Have you read this I've

**Bret** 53:00

encountered I don't think I've read it. Alright, so

**Mike Nayna** 53:03

maybe maybe Paolo I would probably disagree with some of your stuff but underneath that he's so his his Frankfurt School style Marxist. And he was living in I think the 60s in Brazil. And his whole thing was alright we got to teach these he was teaching people who couldn't read the real the genuine downtrodden class. I was teaching to read and he was figuring out Oh, let's let's teach them that they're oppressed. Let's these people don't know that they're oppressed by the Frankfurt School, right? Let's teach them. Let's teach them that they're oppressed so they can liberate themselves. Maybe Maybe in Brazil in in the 60s, maybe I'm a little I'm still Fuck off. Let these people make best of this their own situations. But fast forward to the applied postmodernists. And you've got you've got bell hooks, who is name alows. Guru, guru and all these so she's written teaching to transgress. Named segmentation to prevent transgress. So I mean, you read it, you're like, Oh, I kind of get it. It's like a bit of a you have you seen that in film Dangerous Minds. It's like Dangerous Minds fantasy, like creating a little lovey culty kind of thing with you class. Really getting in with them. It's a one on one to create a cult really. And so she's sprinkled all this postmodern bullshit on it. And then it's all of a sudden, she's bringing the same energy that Paolo did to Brazil in the 60s, to Ivy League and so all of a sudden the people these people have been taught that they're oppressed. And that being taught in such a such like these people are pretending that they are their heroes who lived in different times different geographies, right and they've been taught in the same passionate with the same kind of zeal. The truth

**Bret** 54:59

is Simple. Yeah. And if you follow this path, it results in this amazingly better result. Yeah, it's just it's unfair.

**Mike Nayna** 55:06

But think about how much how many things you actually have to tweak. You need post modernism, to be able to feel like that right in our current situation. So think about how many things these students need they need to tweak in these students to get buy in. And then all of a sudden you get them discharging this emotion that feels like from us there is something true there there is something true. But it looks absurd because they've they've they've been they bought into this this this. It's very selfish as well. I think as these people are living out there their favorite civil rights heroes and a time where it's not you don't do it. It's not warranted to that degree,

**Bret** 55:44

right? Oh, I think it is selfish in more than one way that in effect, basically, people who don't know how to question, these positive sounding syllogisms, you find themselves as pawns of a movement that not only does it not really care about their well being in the end, yeah, it has no plan for how to take care of them. And so, you know, you get a bunch of college students to revolt against their institution and to reject science. And then what are they going to do?

**Mike Nayna** 56:17

I call it king of the rubble thinking, they're going to be kings of the rubble kings. It's hard, it's hard to be to advance within the system. Let's turn it into Rubble, and we'll be the kings. I know, they're very sensitive. So I'm going to be okay. If it turns to the streets.

**Bret** 56:33

No, I think this is you know, exactly what's gonna happen. And actually, I think there's a trajectory that inside of the university system, yeah. You either have the ability to do science, or you do not Yeah, if you do not have the ability to do science inside of the university system, it will move out of the university system, and it will become something else. Yeah, at which point you will have universities that don't have that thing. I don't think they're viable. I think they will collapse. And so the point is to turn your university upside down and reject the science is to cause the thing that maybe does offer you the possibility of pulling yourself up by your bootstraps, or the equivalent and wrecking it. And yeah, King of the rebel is about it's

**Mike Nayna** 57:15

also Yeah, it's a goal of the university. I mean, Jonathan Hite talks about this, he figured this stuff out quite well on on it from a slightly different angle to what I'm looking at it. But the Taylor's thing, have you heard he's Taylor's thing. So he the tailors of the university, it used to be about truth. Oh, and now it's about so now it's about change. And that's what it is. It's like it's the, the function of the university has been hijacked. It has been hijacked. We need something, we need something, we need that scientific rigor. And it doesn't necessarily have to be prescriptive, because the culture has to look after the prescription of that, and politics and whatnot, not the not the Academy, when the academy pulls in. Change, like how to use the science. Yeah, it's a church. That's why I put a prescriptive sociology, based on moral intuition. That's what this side of the Academy is doing. And through the administrative class is taking over the entire trying to, you know, it's, it's hitting up against a lot of a lot of trouble. But that's the goal. They're in the church business. So they're trying to, I mean, the academies were were scholastic monasteries, before they became they devoted themselves to science. But they could head back there,

**Bret** 58:33

they could head back there and what they are doing wrong at the moment, is that they are allowing that basically, administrators are pandering to the church of moral intuition. Yeah. And they are not leaving a firewall between those folks. And the science. And, I mean, this is why you're sitting here talking to me, yes. That they came after me. It's not an accident that they it's not an

**Mike Nayna** 59:00

accident, is it? Right? No, this is the weird thing is do you think it's because you have confidence in your science that you kind of stood as you stood against them? And then they came after you? Because it's the it's the hardest thing? Because in so much of this so much of this movement? It seems so it seems so natural, yeah. But someone has to know is like is is is? Is this some kind of the ideology working through humans? And then it will naturally go to that, that that place? Or is it explicit? I think on you in your case, it would be that I mean, your personality, right? Like you, well, if someone's got, if you know something, and someone comes after you're going to go against them, and that's oil and water, I guess.

**Bret** 59:41

Yeah. Although, I mean, I think your question has a precise answer. I don't know it precisely. I do have a sense of what it is. There is a very rare characteristic in humans. The characteristic involves Not being persuaded by the degree to which other people believe something. In general, a human being who is faced with a roomful of people who disagrees with them will change their opinion. And the reason this is not entirely nuts. The reason is because if you think about an ancestor, an ancestor who was alone, in their opinion, on something that mattered, was in danger. Right, they were in danger of being outcast, because even if they were right, being alone in that belief is rolling in the wrong direction. And so we are wired to be very frightened by the prospect of being out of phase with other people. On the other hand, I believe that a certain number of people have to be capable of that thing that probably comes at a substantial cost

**Mike Nayna** 1:00:55

is why I'm sitting here in this room and not working on high scale productions back home in Australia, it right that thing, right, it's a high cost, it's

**Bret** 1:01:05

a high cost,

**Mike Nayna** 1:01:06

I often think of it as a disability, like not being able to naturally go into the room and then just become one of the other people, I guess it's you find yourself on the outskirts of a lot of projects, a lot of, you know, institutions and things like that, like sometimes I look at the people who can just be Yeah, that's like, magic. I wish I got this weird disability that makes me

**Bret** 1:01:28

It's funny. I have no desire to be on the other side, I thought I was going to hypothesize that you have exactly the same thing. I think the place where we differ is there's some part of you that feels like that would be easier. And my feeling is, I can't imagine what

**Mike Nayna** 1:01:43

you had a few more years under your belt, and maybe you've got your brother and stuff. I find my little tribes. I got my truck. Yeah,

**Bret** 1:01:49

yeah. Well, I mean, this is true. Having Eric and Heather as a reality check. You know, at worst a phone call away, changed every a, I would be this way anyway. But the degree to which I might imagine I was crazy, yeah, would be much greater.

**Mike Nayna** 1:02:07

That's the hard part as well, when everyone around you, it makes you feel crave, mate, and they call you crazy. They did hate you like as well. And it's like, because he was showing something something that I want to see. I don't know, well, I want

**Bret** 1:02:18

to, you know, maybe I'm just chronically crippled in this direction. But I do want to steal man, the thing that they are applying, I think it's a real thing. And it actually makes sense. It just doesn't make sense here at all. Okay, so the point I used to make to my students, I used to talk about, there was this great film called The hunters about the kung saan, the Bushmen. And basically, an anthropologist followed a kung saan hunting party on a hunt. And they hunted a giraffe and kill it, and he documents it. And anyway, so I would talk to my students about what about somebody who was on such a hunting party, who looked at the leaves of a tree, you know, imagine some tree like a birch, in which the bottom side and the top side of the leaf are very different colors and they shake in the wind, that person might look at the leaf and think, you know, that implies something about a binary, you might be able to encode all kinds of things in a binary and D, there might be all sorts of things about us that are encoded in some sort of binary from that person might have had the first thought that ultimately 1000s of years later leads to a computer. Yeah, right. The answer to the guy who won't shut up about the shimmering of the leaves is shut up. We're hunting. Yeah, starvation is what happens if we don't do it. Well. Yeah. I don't know what you're on about with respect to those leaves, but stop being on about it, or you're out. Yeah. Right. So my point would be, there are times when pulling in the same direction is vastly more important than seeing some precise truth. And then there are other times where exactly the opposite thing is that Yeah, and my feeling is we are in exactly the opposite case, right? We need people who see with clarity because the people who know where they're going are confused, every single one of them, right where

**Mike Nayna** 1:04:18

people are looking. There must be another people looking for the people with clarity as well. And there's a lot of people standing on soapboxes that don't have that clarity they're potentially the guys looking at the branch and going whoo and what if that's some kind of absolutely backward binary with an upside down like yeah, I think a lot of people have the sense right have the sense that we got to look for these people. Well, I want them it's times times like these these strange times where Messiah is pop up and cults bubble up out of nowhere. Yeah, both

**Bret** 1:04:49

things happen is that you get some people who actually have insight and do see Yeah, through the bottleneck, and then you have other people who sound similar, but either are delusional Or are disingenuous?

**Mike Nayna** 1:05:03

Well, I think, um, did you have a point you wanted to go on? Well, I

**Bret** 1:05:06

mean, I do have a significant one. No, no go on, I

**Mike Nayna** 1:05:09

want you to keep going. So this, this all

**Bret** 1:05:11

leads to somewhere else that I wanted to bring up with you, which has to do with something that your film revealed to me about the event that I lived through the one that I am now, so identified with that I just didn't know. Yeah. And it, you'll see, this all comes back to an earlier part of this conversation in a way that I think is useful. I looked at the video of the moments where those students, for people who haven't seen it or don't remember, these are students I've never met, who came charging through the door chanting for me to be fired, or to resign. They, you know, they're surrounding me, I'm trying to film them, which they want to block, but they very much want to film it so that they can put it into the world as you say, they're proud of it. And I react in a way so many of them are not a single one of them. To me, I don't think I'd had a conversation with any of them. But some of them didn't even really have any familiarity with who I was, or why I was being protested. I learned much later that they had been sent to protest, they've been given a piece of paper. And at the point that I stopped reading that I reacted in a way that confounded their story of the racist monster that they had to protest. They were like, not sure what to do. Yeah, cuz

**Mike Nayna** 1:06:30

these are emotion, right? What is,

**Bret** 1:06:34

right? So they there's a point in the video where very tragically, from my perspective, they go from actually interacting with me to just chanting the paper. And if you listen to what they chant on that paper, they're talking about who they're there to represent. They're actually making an appeal to my students. They wanted my students to flee from me and to join that a morphus. Moral intuition church on the spot. Imagine what that scene would have looked like if my students had done that. Right now, it didn't even occur to me, even for months afterwards, until I saw your film, it did not occur to me that what they were hoping and expecting was that I would be abandoned by my students. My students weren't going to do that. And the reason my students aren't going to do that was because of the dynamic that existed in my classroom, which none of those students knew because they hadn't been my student. Yeah, right. Heather, and I

**Mike Nayna** 1:07:33

Well, not only that, Can Can I yeah, I did hear a story of one of your students that said that you were at the time teaching them about witch hunts. Oh, yeah. It was on the board like, day before? And kind of, I mean, science is kind of a little bit of an inoculation against this kind of stuff, if you can, if you there with it. Right. Like,

**Bret** 1:07:52

well, let's be clear about why the witch hunt stuff was on the board. Yeah. Okay. There are two reasons. One of them, you could say was almost prophetic. In this case, yeah. Which was the subject matter of the course. The final course that I probably will ever teach as a college professor, the subject matter of the course, was, if you imagine that civilization is headed off a cliff, there are two questions. What should we be doing instead of what we are doing? And how might you shift civilization to start doing that thing? I don't know anybody who knows the answer to the second thing, there's no good answer to how you would get power and apply it properly to make things work. So let's abandon that question. Let's focus on the second question. If we had a mechanism to set something in motion that wouldn't have the defects of our system and wouldn't run us off a similar cliff, what would those rules rules be? Right? Just free ourselves from the question of how and focus entirely on the question of what? Well, that is the answer to the question that the church you're talking about? Does not right. The church that you're talking about is stuck in how do we fix this object and get our share from it? Yeah, rather than maybe the object is just run its course and maybe it's time to think of a new object in which case

**Mike Nayna** 1:09:14

nothing in the place yeah, yeah. No proactive solutions ever. It's the whole thing is comprised

**Bret** 1:09:19

to complete, the whole thing is broken. Yeah, it's gonna kill us all if we don't fix it. And so let's think about, you know, maybe this is just easier to solve in terms of solving each of the issues. And you know, I don't mean No, I'm not talking about utopian solutions. I'm talking about Pareto optimal solutions where you're not 100% free but you're at percent free. And you know what, so is everybody else because it's a quite fair system. Yeah, etc. But the the the second reason that we transfer on the board in my class was that I was having this experience where as the college descended into madness, I took got myself to go to every meeting, which nobody does. There are just too many meetings. And so people go to some percentage. Every year, I started going to everyone, because bombshells were dropped at everyone. And nobody was in a position to track everything that happened. Yeah. Right. And so it sort of felt like it was a necessary thing. And so I started to do it. And what that meant was that part of my mind was beginning to see the entire picture of what was happening to this institution. And I was becoming a target, because I was the person who, anytime they left an opportunity to raise your hand and say, Hey, this is not such a good idea. Yeah, you know, my hand went up. And so anyway, as I was being accused of more and more preposterous stuff by colleagues, you know, who shouldn't be accusing me of anything, I'm just simply I'm doing my job. I'm raising my hand and asking questions about what we're doing, you know, as that was unfolding, it began to become clear that I was going to become the scapegoat. And so anyway, imagine that that's all true. And imagine a college in which the good professors have very close relationships with their class. Yeah. Where I am not just some abstraction to them. But I come in and to the extent that I'm preoccupied by the fact that my colleagues are going insane around me, yeah, there's no honest way not to have some sort of interaction with them and say, Look, here's what's throwing me I'm watching crazy stuff unfold. In the college. I don't know what to do about. And so you know, they had some sense of something that they couldn't see over in faculty space. Yeah. Going. bonkers. Yeah. And then it emerges through the door. However, here's the tough part. There was a nasty accusation that was periodically leveled at Heather and me while we were teaching, it was that the community of very committed students who circulated between our classes and who became very energized about evolutionary biology that that was a cult. No. Yeah. And it wasn't and you know, sometimes students would bring this up like, they're people who chat would challenge them yell, you're part of the call of Breton. How

**Mike Nayna** 1:12:25

can I can I interject there for a second because I think evergreen was is. I mean, it had a beautiful structure, but it also had the most dangerous structure you can have finger because universities, when you when you're introducing people to knowledge, it's like one step out from a cold really like it's, it's it's just depends on what you want to do with that. And then to be put with students for that long period of time. You guys going away with them? name I was doing projects with them outside of the class. And there's this bond. Yeah, it gets created. So you could see I'd be evergreen is probably a series of cults, right? Like, well, knowledge, knowledge cult, some some, some are good, some are bad.

**Bret** 1:13:09

I would I would totally phrase this a different way. I don't I don't think you're wrong. I just think the labels are convey. What it is, is that cult is the pathological version of something that I'm not exactly sure what the name is. Yeah, right.

**Mike Nayna** 1:13:23

Yeah. So Oh, do you know what it is? Well, so I have been thinking about this. So you would have brought people in in not not too dissimilar, very dissimilar fashion, but it's, it's, here's some knowledge, it does excellent things for us, you can learn it too, and then go out in the world and do what you want with it now. Whereas in a nine by teaching to grant transgress, or you know, this kind of mill you is we have the solutions, we know what we want you to think. And we will instruct you, and then you go out in the world and be just like us. So it's this.

**Bret** 1:13:53

So you're absolutely right, that a university a functional one? Yeah, is a series of things that have some of the components of a cult. Yeah, the real deep question is, do the people at the head of the room? Are they honorable? And do they know something? In which case using that, that power that's there can be liberating for students? Or are they self interested or confused in a way that they will mislead these people into self? Yes. And so, you know, I used to I'm always cautious about saying this because seduction has a sexual connotation. Yeah, that isn't part of what I'm talking about. Yeah. But seduction is a question of making somebody wants something to motivate them. Yeah. Right. That can be used for ill or it can be used for good but I always thought that pedagogy teaching was best thought of as a kind of intellectual seduction. If you're trying to get people to do so. by threatening them with a loss of credit or a bad grade, if they don't do it, you know? But if you say, Look, I'm not gonna make you do this, I'm not even necessarily gonna give you a bad evaluation if you don't do it well, but you should want what I'm trying to deliver, because you'll be more powerful if you have it. Yeah. And you know, in on my first day of class, typically, I gave a hell of a speech every time and it was basically you might not want to be in this class. Here are the reasons you don't want to be here. Here are the things I'm not good app as a professor. And then if none of that scares you off, here are the reasons you might want to stick around. Yeah, and I would say, you know, I used to speak in what I would call riddles. And the idea of speaking in riddles is that it causes the conscious mind to become active because you can't parse them straightforwardly. Yeah, they weren't really riddles. Yeah, they were just little paradoxes. And I would say, look, I actually want you to leave my class, knowing less than you did when you came in, but the stuff that you know, I want it to be much more powerful. And I would say you could graduate college with the, with the equivalent of a giant trailer full of knowledge, right? Or you could have a little backpack full of stuff that's so powerful, that it actually outweighs what's in that trailer. And that's the stuff that you should pursue.

**Mike Nayna** 1:16:23

So the interesting thing here is that I'm trying to get in the head of the people that I'm studying and so if you're operating from a completely different worldview, science is a cult to them. Like the the the norms, the bell curves are a cult and they're trying to I call them the second culture because they're designing a second culture based on being other from the main culture Yeah, and if you do seduction you talk about it is it's everywhere if you can get if you get a camera in any one of these rooms there's it's this big emotional

**Bret** 1:16:59

it's the seduction but the content is the content

**Mike Nayna** 1:17:02

now it is some way it's a it's a it's a cohesive worldview is based on offense based rules. But it has a different metaphysics it's it's like if you have to in order to buy in, you have to shake the edges get some Western civilization so there's this queering thing, there's all these strange things they do that replicate what you would go through, you're reborn into it, right? Like you leave your family you leave the world of norms, and then you're reborn into this new I guess it's a group of outsiders and they they teach you that the world is designed in a completely different way than you you had imagined. And it's a completely destructive thing but I can imagine that they were building their own little code and then they're like this I can see how they could see what was going on in the other classes as a call that they had to like it's it's warring factions really hits, it's warring factions, you can see it using the students. Oh, the students are the soldiers in this battle is a tacit conspiracy between the the students is an ideological conspiracy, but the students and the faculty and that's one thing that I want,

**Bret** 1:18:14

the student leaders and the faculty have this tacit

**Mike Nayna** 1:18:17

Yeah, yeah, they're not even even the others. It's hard to explain, like the the way that institutional mechanisms are weaponized against certain teachers like yourself and Peter Bogosian and things like that. Yeah, it's through a complaint, that the complaints usually come from a student or someone who is sure, but then all of a sudden, the institutional mechanism kicks into place, and it uses that complaint to then asked out the problematic person, but it's problematic, usually from an ideological perspective, not. Not like these are minor complaints. These are very, very minor complaints that a lot of people are getting kicked out of their university for

**Bret** 1:18:54

totally. And, you know, the irony of ironies was that one of the things that Heather and I were delivering was, you know, a guns, germs and steel plus mechanism for understanding how we did end up where we are. So it's sort of like the scientific version, that to the extent that there are tools to be had to liberate us from the legacy of oppression. They are scientific. Yeah. And so yes, the phony version had to come after the real version. Yeah, the real version was very inconvenient. Just as any place where a person of color at evergreen said they didn't feel oppressed resulted in the allergic reaction. These

**Mike Nayna** 1:19:36

are the last ones.

**Bret** 1:19:39

Exactly.

**Mike Nayna** 1:19:42

So you were you were on a path there. So they, so the students that came to you were told that you you were having a cold, you said you were halfway through that story. Oh, well.

**Bret** 1:19:53

So I think the question is, what is the what is the The version where the dynamics I mean, it wasn't a cult, this thing that Heather and I were doing wasn't remotely what we would say to our own students when they would report to us that somebody had accused them of this, you know, bunch of people said I was in the call for Breton. Heather, it was very simple response, which was, you know, that in class, you are expected to question us at the front. Yeah, yeah,

**Mike Nayna** 1:20:25

that's the difference, right?

**Bret** 1:20:26

Absolutely expect and that if you don't do it, I mean, personally, I used to engage in this thing, which I have a feeling would look a little off if you didn't see enough of it to get what it was about. But if I got the sense that a student was telling me what they thought I wanted to hear, rather than what they would believe, yeah, I would use that. And I would lead them out onto a branch. Yeah, you know, by signaling what I wanted them to say. And then I would cut the branch off behind like

**Mike Nayna** 1:20:52

what we're talking about here, the responsibility that you have as a teacher, yeah, then it's actually very delicate, and could potentially to be taken, like think about how that responsibility can be taken. Oh, my God, look at and then look at the edge in schools.

**Bret** 1:21:06

This is this is exactly it is it's frankly, it's a fucking sacred responsibility. It really it is a sacred responsibility. And anybody who either doesn't know what they're talking about, yeah, or isn't well intentioned enough to wield that thing carefully is a huge hazard to the people yeah, in their classes. And,

**Mike Nayna** 1:21:27

and not only that, you can scale that human up, there is a lot of them. And they're all they're attached to these disciplines. So I mean, I look at this stuff. And it's, it's horrifying to me because you're describing quite a beautiful process, right? giving someone the tools for that from which they can leave the school and then create something of their life well, but it's giving someone the weapons they can use to ruin their life for themselves is what's happening on the other end.

**Bret** 1:21:52

That's it. It's like the educational equivalent of cutting Yeah, you know, right. Like they're being given sharp tools and taught how to injure themselves. The other thing is, it's not just beautiful when the students leave, right? armed with these really powerful analytical tools. It's beautiful once the students understand what it is that they're doing. Right. So this was the thing, the reason that, that Heather and my students got accused of being in a cult was that they came back from class very energized by what we were talking about. They didn't necessarily agree. Yeah, they wanted to talk about it outside of class. It had a life. I

**Mike Nayna** 1:22:31

felt that I felt that around you. we've hung out a couple times. And I felt that around you and Heather, you see some magic. I haven't said that to have you guys see some magic. I want to see what you see. It just comes when someone loves something, it comes out of them. Right? Well, and

**Bret** 1:22:43

it's such a joy. Yeah. Here's the thing once I got good, I mean, I was there for 14 years. Yeah, yeah. At first I was I was like being thrown into the deep end. Yeah. And literally what happened to me was, they needed a teacher. And they called up Heather, and they're like, Can your husband teach? Does he know anything? Yeah, definitely. Yeah. And then she looked at me, and we're like, well, we'll find out, you know, but they look away. Right? So they, they literally said, write a course description. For us to put in the course catalog, wrote the craziest thing I could come up with. I wrote it. I wrote what I wanted to do. Yeah. And it was it was the it was a course called adaptation, evolution of organisms, mechanisms and ideas. Yeah. And the idea was that these three things evolve in a parallel, but not identical way. Yeah. Let's explore that. And I wrote, you know, an abstract to this thing. And it was just like, I know, they're gonna reject this, but maybe they'll let it as a starting point. They were like, good, do it. Yeah. Right. And then I had a bunch of students walk through the door. And they were ready to play, like, good class, right? Something about that description. Cause the right people yeah. And then it was just, like, so much fun to walk in and see how far we could move. Yeah, in a, you know, a three hour period or whatever. But anyway, after 14 years of this, this became quite efficient. Yeah. Right. It was a question of there was a landscape we had to explore it is actually not an order that we have to explore it. And it's not a linear presentation, the way you might do chemistry, chemistry or something. It was like it was more like walking into a forest with students and saying, Let's go look at this over here. You know, here's what these guys are doing. So anyway, that thing once you get a community of people who a, there's always somebody in the room who's ready to play, you know, back and forth with the professor, you say something paradoxical. They say, but what about this? And you say, oh, but what about that? And then once you know, once the others in the room begin to get the idea of a that they are safe, yeah, that they can explore that it doesn't fall apart that if they're wrong publicly, it's not a disaster, that they end up looking smart in the end because they do come up with stuff that's novel. Sometimes they come up with stuff that Professor doesn't even know. Right? It's sort of a addictive and anyway, that thing unfolding inside the classroom was very threatening to the things unfolding in other classes.

**Mike Nayna** 1:25:10

It's so it's so complex what happened there I it's the gravity of the Evergreen story because it speaks about so many different things. Yeah, there's so many different threads in this I can see on Benjamin Boyce he just he is what is it two years down the track now. He's still talking about it and untangling it. And yeah, it's some there's something about what happened there. This is the layers, the layers that are in there. Well, I'm going right and because there's so there's that coming together series that I looked into and thought this is like, clearly an insight into what the hell's going on here. They've doubled down on that they're doing another I don't know if you saw the footage recently, but yeah, no, I had another coming together, tearing apart series like it's I don't

**Bret** 1:25:54

understand how their convictions grow stronger as the evidence that they're on the wrong track. also grow stronger. Who

**Mike Nayna** 1:26:02

knows? That's that's the hard part is at what point do you get shaken out of that moral community? You

**Bret** 1:26:08

know, yeah. It. It's stunning. I mean, I

**Mike Nayna** 1:26:12

it's also worrying like it's I think there's something particularly strange about the Washington area because I think that Puget Sound, there's a lot of a lot of roads lead back there to within the scholarship and other strange things that I see. So I think that there's something particularly skewed within this this Washington area that that evergreen is Do you have any insights into into that accident? This is pure observation. And I'm wondering if they're if he's connected if these dots connect in some in some strange way? Well,

**Bret** 1:26:47

it'd be very interesting if they were you raise the issue of the schools of Ed, which Lyle Asher, who's here? Yes. A shortlands. has been talking about some we should explore that. I don't know if that's connected to what you're saying. What is it that you see in the Puget Sound area?

**Mike Nayna** 1:27:02

Um, I mean, the tenants that they were talking about, at the start of several meetings that are because I'm monitoring this through anything I can via YouTube videos, scholarship, now some, some writings. And what is that recent pedagogy? They have conferences there, the Angelo's big play there and a lot It seems as though what is another Milton answer for person that was teaching there? There's been three or four other things where I've just seen the logo on something like, insane that I've read, like, I've gone Whoa, this is to insane because usually they have to, that to sell it, right. Like to sell it. Like there's this insane version of it. Yeah. But they still have to sell it within to make it work within the the academic University structure. And so it's hidden. And usually you can tell when you're reading something hidden, but then occasionally you'll see this thing, it's like, it's there to help. Right? Yeah. And a few of them lead back to that that place.

**Bret** 1:28:06

So then I think what it is, so I was thrown a little bit by your question, because it's like, well, what is it? Is it the level of rainfall? Yeah.

**Mike Nayna** 1:28:17

But I think the evolutionary factors that are involved.

**Bret** 1:28:23

But I think what you're describing, is that there's a critical mass, yeah, necessary to do the idea longer. Yeah. And so the idea laundering doesn't show up in full force unless you have enough, you know, mirrors to bounce the laser off yet. At which point,

**Mike Nayna** 1:28:43

the coast is clear. Let's get weird,

**Bret** 1:28:44

right, exactly. So it may be that there happens to be a concentration of particular things that allow a ill formed conception to make it into daylight. Here. Yeah. Just maybe for accidental reasons. arbitrary ones.

**Mike Nayna** 1:29:06

Well, and I mean, I get the sense here in Portland, it's very, it's very left already. So if something was going to bubble up, like it wouldn't, you wouldn't get a bunch of I mean, these areas are they predominantly left wing and these kind of these are definitely not swing states, right? Like, Oh, no, no. Something about here. This is a weird experience I've had with I mean, I'll call them friends. It was it was an odd situation. So I grew up in Australia and I did a lot of work a lot of different works, factory jobs and things like that. And I remember moving to wi and there was these conversations with some people that I was working with landscaping there without talking about the Aboriginal community. And it was this is strange experience of them being quite racist, but like, openly racist, and I was like I didn't I still wanted to be that friend. So I had to work with them. Yeah. But I did want to call them out. And then it was it was odd experience of like, do I let that go? Or do I become the outcast, right? And I wasn't going to work with this for long. So whatever how whatever, I'll just leave, I'll leave that guy just to keep the peace and move on. I'm not going to change the way of thinking. And so that experience I mean, that's, it's kind of stuck with me. And then coming over here to Portland, I had the same experience, but that we'll talk about what men It was so weird. I was sitting there I was sitting there and they're going out speaking about white men like with hate. And I was like, are these these white guys on dating they're, they're terrible are gonna hate them. They all they do is play video games are so useless. And then they Oh, you're this, like this cartoon figure of what a white man is. And there was no really there could have been talking about specific people, but they're talking generally. And I'm sitting there going, I want to be friends of these guys. But this is a conversation like this is it's the same thing. It's the same thing different? Well,

**Bret** 1:31:08

I think what you're getting at is super important. And the parallel is a really interesting one. In some sense, human beings have a mode. Yeah. When we are competing lineage against lineage, we have a mode, there are certain ways we sound when we are, for example, about to make war on some other group. Right? When you're about to make war and some of the group you dehumanize them,

**Mike Nayna** 1:31:30

right. 30s. In Hutus, they said cockroach a lot of the times that according cockroaches, Evergreen State College, the police officer they're calling a cockroach totally

**Bret** 1:31:36

question of making somebody out to be subhuman. Yeah, vermin pathogen comes up. And we are watching this unfold in western civilization, we're certain it's clearer how it happens in the university, because some part of the university culture is about saying things publicly about bringing ideas into the light. And so we see it there more clearly. We were talking a little bit about Lyle Asher, who has unearthed another thread that is much harder to see. And in fact, when I first read his work, my thought was, this is really important. And I would have missed it. Had he not done this work.

**Mike Nayna** 1:32:20

I've only just kovin he just collided with his work. So

**Bret** 1:32:24

you want to say what what he's told.

**Mike Nayna** 1:32:27

I just want to kind of map out what I'm what I'm doing now because so I've been lucky enough to watch a book come together that's coming out with within the next few months by Helen pluck rose and James Lindsay Helens. 910 years deep into looking at this, this canon, I guess, specifically the kind of scholarship, this social justice scholarship. And so her and Jim and a little bit of contribution from me over the course of the past two years as they've mapped out the idea space. And it was clear to me we kept running into it schools of education and pedagogy. pedagogy is a big thing. So theory of teaching. And that kept popping up. And so they've they've created this map in cynical theories, it's mapped that out, and I think it could potentially be a big event in figuring out where this problem is actually stemming from. But there's this big black hole, because we keep running into this thing that we haven't looked into properly. And then all of a sudden, this week, I shot with lilash as part of the film, and we got to talking and then I went to look at his work. And so he has mapped out that the schools of education and how this kind of spread through these low standards within the School of Education. And they have moved from these. I guess there were weak bodies, right? They were kind of a weak body that that some kind of disease started operating. Yeah, they were immune compromised. Yes, mean compromised, they were quite weak, right? for a lot of reasons, got taken over ideologically and then they've moved an administrator class that have become educators. So they're going back from administrative in back into the education thing. So it's mapping. So there's this this is Canon and ideas and then how it's actually operating in the real world and I think while might be well, I'm definitely gonna keep in touch with him because that

**Bret** 1:34:31

way, oh, yeah. Now his stuff is is mind blowing. So the studying of the schools of Ed, it's, you know, most of us don't even think about schools about how often does it come up in your you're thinking about how civilization works, but it has it's because it's a weak node and because so much comes from it. It's a very dangerous vulnerability. But the thing I'm grappling with is there's a distinction between what the movement says that it thinks What how it works. And the thing that concerns me most is that the only way that this movement delivers something positive to those who have signed up for it in the end is through some sort of very frightening, Maoist takeover in which it actually has the power to reallocate resources on a massive scale. I don't see that as very likely,

**Mike Nayna** 1:35:31

it does organizationally. So within a certain organization, if you get enough people to buy in, you can advance using your oppression variables quite beyond what you deserve to advance or it's an easy path. I mean, there's a lot of competition around in all these places now. And it's like this extra element of competition that you can kind of ride

**Bret** 1:35:53

so this is this is where I was heading. Maybe I shouldn't say the only way it delivers right? You were heading the only way it delivers in a fashion that matches what it advertised. Yeah. is some sort of a Maoist takeover. Yes, yes. Yeah. What it actually amounts to is a kind of affirmative action at every scale, which I have to tell you game theoretically, is a non starter. I'm not saying affirmative action can't work. Although I think what we've learned through the affirmative action experiment, is that the devils in the details, yeah. But the idea that every classroom is an opportunity to adjust well being by silencing certain people and elevating the voices of others, that every courtroom might be a place. I mean, just the simple fact that what is a crime may be shifted so that some people have more leeway to commit crimes, and other people have less leeway to commit crimes. Now, on the one hand, that's how it's been a racist court system, make a justification

**Mike Nayna** 1:37:05

for the new caste system, which is a reverse of Yeah, and in some senses, it has been you know, I mean, that's, it's more it hasn't it hasn't right. When it's when it's working? Well, it doesn't. Well, it was harder for me as in Australia, things are operating. Right? Well, I want to actually about that from

**Bret** 1:37:24

because I mean, as you must be aware, Australia is something of which Americans are well aware and simultaneously not aware of at all. But the fact does just take an ugly example. Up until very recently, it would have been almost impossible in an American court for a black woman to successfully charge a white man with sexual assault. Right? So in effect, white men have had the ability to rape black women in the US and not have the courts step in.

**Mike Nayna** 1:38:06

Is that Is that a thing? Like, how is that a thing? That's

**Bret** 1:38:10

I have no idea. But it is so inconceivable as an American is so inconceivable that, you know, prior to 1950? That's such a court case that if a white man had raped a black Yeah, that she would end up getting her day in court, and the court would hear this as a legitimate accusation. It's horrifying. Yeah.

**Mike Nayna** 1:38:32

Like it that viscerally hurt me. And that's, I think, you know what I mean, there's a lot of energy there to play with. But yeah,

**Bret** 1:38:39

it's but you know, I mean, I don't know, I'll be curious, when this podcast emerges, if anybody thinks I'm wrong about this, but know that courts have been slanted, and they've been slanted in a way that's fallen on certain people's shoulders in a way that it hasn't fallen on others? What happens if you say, well, it was like that for so and so many years, we're now flipping it, and it's gonna be the opposite way. Right? A, that is not going to be stable. Right. And that is not to say that what happened was in any way acceptable it wasn't, but you're talking about destroying civilization, by naively turning the tables on a historical fact. And, anyway, it's good as a lethal approach to solving this problem. Taking a classroom and allowing certain people to speak and other people not being able to speak is also it's the same thing but yeah,

**Mike Nayna** 1:39:44

but the weird thing is, it's a difference between something happening subconsciously or, you know, as a result of these forces that are underneath us. And also, the If the system was aspiring not to be there. So if something was happening it was happening implicitly through that and then they do that explicit explicitly so that they're not just they're explicitly changing the system to be racist, explicit expertly as opposed to as opposed to just something that the probably the problems would occur, right. But they're not explicitly occurring.

**Bret** 1:40:24

they've embraced racism as a solution. Yes. And they've defined it out

**Mike Nayna** 1:40:28

of existence on critical race theory right? The whole the whole game that's what it is.

**Bret** 1:40:32

And so for some of us this is absolutely jarring because as much as I agree that there is more unfairness than the system acknowledges more remaining unfairness the idea of abandoning the pursuit of fairness in favor of some compensatory kind of racism is it's obscene it's obscene and it it robs us of any legitimacy So anyway, I don't know where where we end up with it but just the simple recognition that if you stop listening to what it says yeah, and you look at what it actually pursues yeah that's what it's doing is it's taking

**Mike Nayna** 1:41:19

it's saying that when you look at the field look carefully at the cannon you look carefully you can see it and it's really really hard like I've had even problems talking to my sisters about this stuff because from the outside it looks like I'm getting drawn into the override or something like that. And it's like and like I don't remember you being that gun like I'm not that guy. You have to see what I tried it's so ugly underneath the surface have to look past it, it sags in education to bring someone up to speed Luckily, I've family, right, so I've got that ability to sit with them for a long time and tell them why I'm not a monster, but most people are. A few doors have closed back home in Australia as a result of me looking into this stuff.

**Bret** 1:42:01

Well, that's that's the other thing is that I think when people can't hear you, or when I try to convey why it is that we are not where people expect us to be based on the values that we hold, we can't take their answers too seriously. Because the thing that the movement that we are talking about does so effectively, is change the incentives of individuals so that it is easier to go along than it is to resist. You just drive the costs up to people who resist in any form so high that it takes very unusual people to choose to pay Yeah. And what happens then is people will rationalize what they're doing. So if you're a coward, right? If you're a coward then you don't want to find yourself having to explain to your family why you're not actually in the alt right, right yeah. So maybe it's easier to just embrace the platitudes and to do it enough virtue signaling that you are no longer suspect Yeah, and then I'm imagining I don't know how other people's minds work but were I to find myself in that position which I would not allow myself to but if I were to find myself in that position, the pain of having said what I didn't believe in order to get myself out of trouble would be so great that it would be easier to rationalize it actually I do believe that Yeah. And so I think this is unfolding throughout the entire thing is that people are convincing themselves in positions that they would not ordinarily be compelled by because it is the only solution to the problem that they've been given

**Mike Nayna** 1:43:49

you do that long enough and you actually believe that you didn't it's no there's no kind of process there is a lot of people don't know what they believe as well. So they're on they're in this they're kind of using their intuitions to go through you know, I'm liberal unlike the left and all that sort of thing but if you actually bring it down you actually explore what what what it is you believe it's hard to shake or something like that. Like there's some people who aren't getting swept up in this thing. It's because I'm, I know what I believe, you know,

**Bret** 1:44:20

Oh, I know exactly. I have to

**Mike Nayna** 1:44:23

change a lot like for some people for to buy into something they have to change a few little things. Yeah. But it's like actually, you if you want me to join this enterprise, which is a fort and everyone's back home wants me to join it means I would have to change my understanding of human nature. I would have to change my understanding of what being a liberal is I would have to change and the damage I would do to myself for changing those things would be far worse than anything I can do to them. So yeah, so it I don't know it's the Bulwark around it or something.

**Bret** 1:44:58

Well, I get Completely and in fact, the canoe meeting is the perfect example of this. Because, you know, as I'm, so I walked into that room and sat down in what socially felt like the seat to sit down in, and then suddenly realized I was in front of these cameras, right? It's great for

**Mike Nayna** 1:45:19

me like, Yeah, I

**Bret** 1:45:19

was really happy.

**Mike Nayna** 1:45:20

It's great. This is the perfect end to my little series first, first episode.

**Bret** 1:45:27

But what it meant was that I was standing there as we were all back into enter the canoe, and yeah, sure, after the magical land of equity. Everybody filed past Yeah. And some of them look ashamed. They do. The fact that there are ones every time I see that are good. There are ones who I know were embarrassed at what they

**Mike Nayna** 1:45:47

that I found that excuse there were some people who you like, look out of the corner of the eye like,

**Bret** 1:45:52

Oh, they looked right at me, because they were my friends. And they knew that this was wrong. Yeah. And then yeah, and then they had to look me in the eyes. It looked exactly.

**Mike Nayna** 1:46:02

Like I mean, I almost okay, right. And I couldn't write that. Like if I wrote that I'd be really proud of myself that that shot that one.

**Bret** 1:46:10

All right, no, it sounds like it captured it, it actually happened. But the other thing, what it sort of captures, is that one option for me in that room, technically, was to board their canoe. Yeah. And the simple basis that equity is desirable. And that Yeah, you know, yada yada, yada. There wasn't a chance in the world that I was getting on there that that

**Mike Nayna** 1:46:33

says something about you like that's a B It was a big move not to get on that canoe canoe, I would have thought Oh, it was isolated with a bunch of I would have lashes anyway.

**Bret** 1:46:44

I would have walked on the tops of the seats to get out. Not to board their goddamn canoe. Yeah. And so you know, I mean, it's all in that room. You got people who don't really know what's going on. You've got people like the ones you describe who walked by me with shame in their eyes, because they knew that we both knew what was going on. Yeah, you got me who's like, you know, if I've got a bureau out the wall? Yeah, not getting on your

**Mike Nayna** 1:47:09

Can you go Benjamin Vaughn and camera? Thank God, I'm going to be seen not getting on this. This magic Canada, that land of equity.

**Bret** 1:47:19

But the real question at some level is, if we accept, and I think you do that, the movement says a bunch of things that don't add up. It's internally consistent, but they don't add up if you evaluate them from a grounded external perspective, but that it's highly effective, because it puts people in a bind, and gives them one option to solve their problem. And that one option involves embracing these wrong ideas. Yeah. What we who are not easily persuaded to join them are doing wrong is we are not understanding that it is our obligation to figure out how to honorably counteract that strategy. And I mean, maybe maybe you aren't, maybe I'm speaking for myself. And yeah, maybe you are figuring it out. Maybe that's what you're

**Mike Nayna** 1:48:11

looking at it like this is we're drawn into it. And I'm spending a long time. But there's I mean, Douglas Murray said this as well, he he's written his book that's taking the battle to the gates of the university. And I think that the cynical theories will take it right into the center now, but he said himself, like after you start looking at this stuff, and you can't stop it, like you kind of get drawn into it, cuz you're like, holy crap, it is. It is completely different than the like iceberg tip right away that we get, we get shown and it's, I just think that it's I just go there and then be productive, create art. And I think that that's probably the only solution. I know. Well gets me out of trouble.

**Bret** 1:48:52

So I don't know how to operationalize what I think I know about this. What I think I know is that there are always I don't know if I'm even tapped here in this probably. Yeah. But in terms of resisting this kind of thinking, yeah. You know, I mean, maybe start somewhere else. My scientific work, my scientific approach absolutely requires me not to be persuaded by the fact that absolutely everybody disagrees. That's how you find new scientific stuff that matters. If you're persuaded by the fact that everybody disagrees with you. You cannot traverse new ground and science because everybody will disagree with you at the beginning, right? So my professional mode is born of that same instinct, which is well it's interesting that everybody disagrees with me, but maybe that's even a sign that what I'm onto is important,

**Mike Nayna** 1:49:44

right? I think I've had similar training in that world. I think that everyone to like I don't know how to explain why ideas. And every time I have everyone goes a stupid idea. Like the industry doesn't want to look after or whatever, and then all of a sudden I went You know what, screw you guys. I'm gonna learn how to use a camera. I'm gonna edit it. And I do it and then all this also in the audience gets it and they go, this is amazing. And it's like so it's a similar thing. It's like, I've kicked in the deck constantly with with the middlemen between what I want and so yeah, it's a similar training, right? Like it's you're not going to produce that thing. If you listen to everyone, as you just

**Bret** 1:50:20

have heard Casey Neistat say something very similar about why he chose the path that he did his thing. Yeah, right. And his point is like, the barriers to bringing out your own vision have never been lower. Yeah, right. Exactly. Yeah. The industry is not saying yeah, you know, anyway,

**Mike Nayna** 1:50:36

the internet is is both the reason why this thing spread, but it's also going to be the thing that kills it. Yeah. Because it's, it's it's too easy to talk. So I so I mean, you're talking about solutions, right? Yeah, my solution is very much just I think it will do its own work if people if you can show people what it actually is. I have is a faith in that maybe maybe I could be No, no, I think part of it. Yeah. Right. I

**Bret** 1:51:00

think there's another part of what I was talking about going with this. They need to see what it is you have to have the ability to see what it Yeah, everybody.

**Mike Nayna** 1:51:08

You need to draw lines around it so they can differentiate it from the civil rights movements, and the intuitions that they have that are correct.

**Bret** 1:51:16

I think maybe three things Yes. Necessary here. Believe it or not, one is okay, the screen, which we were decrying at the beginning of this conversation is the key to something else. Yeah. You need to see the canoe meeting on a screen without somebody sitting there with you judging you. Yeah. Right. You need to be able to just just see it and understand it. Wow. That's a little. That's a little weird, right, too. You need examples of people who show you that you can resist this, right? I resisted. People swore I was a conservative I swore I wasn't you know what, a couple years later, people have stopped telling me I'm a conservative, they've gotten it. So the point is, do you have to join the conservatives in order to reject this stuff? No. And in fact, there's a way of just saying sorry, that's not where I'm friendly with conservatives, but I haven't joined them because I still think we've problems that need to be addressed. yada yada yada. But anyway.

**Mike Nayna** 1:52:18

By the way, Helen, pluck rose. Yeah, if anyone's interested in Rosetta Stone to be left wing in this current climate. Totally. She she's,

**Bret** 1:52:26

she's marvelous in so many different ways. But the so you need examples of what it would look like to stand your, your philosophical ground in the face of this. You need the ability to see what it looks like, if you don't Yeah, right. Who are you going to be in that room? Are you going to be the people cheering the canoe? Are you going to be the embarrassed people? You know, participating? Because they don't know what else to do. And mind you, I should say in the defense of the people who walked by me in that room? It's not a fair comparison, because I was a tenured professor. Yeah, they were staff.

**Mike Nayna** 1:53:02

I totally understand why you would jump on. Yeah, I don't even know if I wouldn't just jump on the canoe just to just to not gentlemen. And well, otherwise, or something like that. I'm not I am like you in that. I want to stand against these things. But I mean, it makes sense to just jump on the back of a stupid canoe, like as well.

**Bret** 1:53:23

It's certainly better than losing your job. Yeah.

**Mike Nayna** 1:53:26

And they hadn't had the information that you had as well, right. Like No,

**Bret** 1:53:29

they they had, but I mean, again, they were staff, they were vulnerable in a way that I actually turned out to be vulnerable, but, but I was a lot less vulnerable as a as a tenured faculty. But in any case, yeah, I don't so a in 2019. I don't think Mike Naina jumps on that canoe because he has to meet a lot. Yeah, right. But okay, so let's say that there are three things going on here. There's the ability to with nobody pressuring you in the room, evaluate what this stuff actually just subjectively looks like. On your screen. That's one thing. There are examples of what you can do other than hop on the canoe. And then there's the sort of ITW discussion layer, which is, you know, as you pointed out earlier, in this conversation, there is a, a large population that are sort of interested in this discussion, justice, there's a large population looking for a movement to solve the difficult problems of existence. Yeah, there's also a large number of people looking for a discussion that doesn't have this mind numbing characteristic, which is why the RTW layer did so well is that lots of people were feeling backed against the wall and then suddenly they were talking heads who didn't frankly agree with each other on you know, Paul, But did agree with each other on the fact that a this movement was a problem and that B, we needed to be generous with each other and talk

**Mike Nayna** 1:55:09

as a whole in the market as well. It's like quillette exploded because there's all this stuff that the mainstream media and arts and entertainment weren't touching. And people want they want those things. So it's like it's a big market force behind it as well as why it exploded. They do. I mean, it Yeah, it's it's seems so obvious now. After it's happened.

**Bret** 1:55:29

Yeah. Obvious in retrospect. Yeah. Yes. Everything and evolution is, yeah. So I guess the interesting question as an American, and maybe, maybe there's no such thing anymore. Yeah, sense that the entire world has a powerful has a great deal at stake in an American election. Yeah. And so anyway, some of us are privileged enough to have a vote in those elections. Yeah. But the question now is, given our electoral situation, does that layer that has bucked the trend actually survive to the finals? And so, you know, Tulsi Gabbard and Andrew Yang looked very different to me than the rest of the field. Yeah, even look different than Bernie Sanders, who is the guy I supported all the way to the end, last election. last presidential election. But okay, so let's, let's figure out how to bring in a couple of threads here. Okay, we wrap this up, young one, I want to talk to you about how things look different to an Australian. Two, I want to talk to you about race and your own background and how you see race. Generally, how you see race unfolding in, in America. Yeah. Let's, let's start there.

**Mike Nayna** 1:56:55

I'm scared to talk about race in America, because it's a different, it's a different thing. But well tell me that. What do you want me to start doing? I

**Bret** 1:57:02

want you to start right there. What? So Americans in general, don't know that much about how the American context is different? Because the American context is so dominant. Yeah. So many spheres. It's sort of leaving

**Mike Nayna** 1:57:15

the Waterloo. We thing is Australians are looking at it through your lens inside our scholarship. So this is weird crossover, we had a black lives matter. parade at home. And it's like, there's issues between the police and Aboriginal communities. Yeah, yeah, there is that but it's not. It's not the same thing. Like we have videos go viral, because police don't shoot. It's like, there's a guy with a knife, and then all the Americans are sharing going, why the hell hasn't this guy shot, it's just that we don't have the same problems as you guys. So my personal experience with race, I'm mixed race. So my dad's Mershon, African Island, my mom's Dutch, blond hair, blue eyes. So very, very different. So race was nothing to inside my household. Yeah. And like absolutely nothing, I can't even say it. This is like, different power dynamics, and nothing, nothing has anything to do with the rise. And then it for race to become something I did leave the home. And so it was this weird experience of rice being something very sensitive and touchy. And I don't I don't actually have the inputs to give a shit about that kind of stuff. I remember in primary school, someone said something racist to me. And the room went, Oh, and in my mind, I was like, Ah, you know, this means I can do whatever I want with this guy. And when I when I can punch him in the teeth, you won't even get angry at me. And so it did. But yeah, so it's always been like a bit of a tool, it seems to me because I've never actually felt it. And I've experienced I think Australia is really good. I think it's excellent for first generations, like, there's no issues, there's been some weird joking about race with because I grew up in the suburbs, like blue collar people. And there's a lot of jokes around race, but I always thought it was a kind of inclusive racism. You know, why? Because the jokes weren't dissimilar to the fat kid or the kid with red hair, or, you know, just the feeling it out.

**Bret** 1:59:22

There's a taking the piss out of each other dynamic. Yeah, that is a little uncomfortable to describe. It really is actually kind of a normal part of being human. It includes all kinds of stuff. Yeah.

**Mike Nayna** 1:59:31

And the racial element of it was just, you have to get someone where you think might be an Australian thing. Yeah. But get someone where you think they'll be sensitive, right? And then if you let them play with that, then that's intimacy. Yeah. And so to block that off, I don't know how I would have fit in, I wouldn't think I would have fit in very well, totally. So it was a very multicultural place I grew up in. It always seemed like a tool. Like I think the first time I actually felt racism was when I started hanging out with in the arts and at the time. With with the progressive yeah because it's very much insert brown man here or or you right yeah we've got this thing and you're you're different so we can use you because of that and it was and that they were all very there were too sensitive around it like oh what is this magical creature from another land and and that felt like it was an othering it was like an othering of inclusion and mothering

**Bret** 2:00:25

of oh man so what it is

**Mike Nayna** 2:00:29

and so I was like I want to hang out with the guys just hope call me a black prick like they're they're they're less racist than you guys in some sense and so yeah it's been a It's a strange strange journey around the race stuff for me because I don't feel it but also put my foot in things like and I know that the history here is a lot more sensitive than I think it is back home I don't want to I definitely don't want to step on the the problems within the Aboriginal communities and what the for my country did to the first people but I do think where it matters Australia is really really really good so we had a white Australia policy in the 70s and that got abolished where was just like only people who were allowed to come in white so that's an explicit racism right? Yeah, they abolish that and then they wanted so that was considered symbolic we don't want to be racist anymore. And so and so they did that my dad who came from a country who would imploded because of the English moved out and then there was racial tensions and so it was actually like hardcore racism that was going on there. Yeah, like legitimate and he couldn't advance because he was Creole you know, like African blood they weren't being treated very well. And so Mixed Blood he comes to Australia and he said Australia was still kind of racist when he was there like he was still had that cultural stuff he had to work through. But he did a lot of work to work through that and gain advancement to where we are now. And to speak as though the people who were black now are going through the same struggles that he went through in the 70s after doing all that work it's actually disgusting to me. Yes, belittling all the hard work he did. Australia said we don't want to be racist, guys, like my dad came and work that into the culture with with with grit and sweat and and we're in such a good place like mine. And he's he's advanced like this the social mobility now in he was living in a bed with his disabled brother when he moved here. Fast forward, you know, quite a few 5060 years. And he's he's managed through the course of my life even we were poor when we when we started. And now he's, he's a wealthy man. And it's so

**Bret** 2:02:53

great to zero that out in order to, to reinvigorate trying

**Mike Nayna** 2:02:57

to convince me that this is a horrible place, and racism is everywhere. Yeah, it is. But not, it's not like not in any room. We

**Bret** 2:03:05

have made progress. Yes. A lot. Yeah. And you you're talking about Australia, I think in general, in the West, you've made a great deal of progress.

**Mike Nayna** 2:03:15

With so against racism, in fact, that if someone is filmed saying a racist comment, their life is ruined. Yeah. And, like, What? That's

**Bret** 2:03:25

what progress

**Mike Nayna** 2:03:28

is actually ruined? Yeah. huge progress. Yeah, to pretend we're living in the 50s. And there's all this kind of poor me and my blackness and the fuck off. Like, it's not it's not the state of the world.

**Bret** 2:03:39

So there are two points I want to pick up from that. One of them has to do with something that you and I have talked about, which is that, you know, I can't say, for sure, most of our minds are not accessible to the conscious part. But I don't feel like I wake up a white guy. Yeah, I know that I'm a white guy. It has impacts. But it's not the way I approach my own life. It's not the way I approach other people. And there's a kind of camaraderie every time I meet somebody who can say the same thing about their origin. There's a kind of meeting and I want it defined so that people can join it voluntarily. Right? It's sort of like human first Yeah, right. I am

**Mike Nayna** 2:04:27

redefining universalism which is something that we had to write years

**Bret** 2:04:31

ago we had it well and I think the thing is, it's always it has since the Civil Rights Movement in this country, it has been the proper aspiration.

**Mike Nayna** 2:04:39

That's it That's the one win if we can find a way to to tell people that this critical race theorists operating in the same sphere as the white nationalists, yeah, they're the same people. They just think that the rewards should go on into different teams. Yeah, exactly. If we can let people understand that then they they currently occupy some moral high ground, right? They don't and they have not earned they it's horrific when you look at it. And so this this is something and this is why you Martin Luther King gets brought up a lot because it's

**Bret** 2:05:09

right, because it's contentious because we all like the Martin Luther King story. And so it has to be attacked for being somehow, you know, Ill conceived or failed or something like that, which it isn't. So the the thing that, you know, you sometimes hear religious people talking about their faith. Yeah. And for those of us I don't know where you stand, but for me, I'm not a person of faith. And I can't quite relate to the the emotional power that they report. Yeah, for having embraced this. Yeah. But I feel something like what they describe in the space of people who, and I'm going to be very careful about this. Don't give a shit about race. Okay. Don't give a shit about race does not mean that you don't see it. Yeah, colorblind is something the civilization has to be Yes, it has to be at doesn't mean that it can't see that you have a racial background and doesn't care about it. To the extent it's important. It means that when you come into a court, your race can't matter. When you walk into a classroom, your race cannot matter. Can it come up at some point? If it's relevant to a discussion? Yes. But your teacher can't see you that way. Yeah. So the thing that I want to convey about it is that I think I think it is true that people who have made this step to human first experience a huge leap in the quality of their life. That this is like a raise, you can give yourself that at the point that you abandoned suspicions of people based on their race. Yeah, it is a huge weight off your shoulders. And walking down the street is a better experience is

**Mike Nayna** 2:06:57

a scary thing. Like I've been talking to a lot of a lot of white men, those evil white men. And a lot of them are reporting these strange things like I see a an experience with a black person and having to think talent calculate too much. Too much. Yeah. And that's so horrible to me. Because that's that's like racism that's kind of reforming. Out of this thing. It's like this re emergence of radio, it's like this. Don't think about it. All right.

**Bret** 2:07:28

I totally agree with this. It's the breakdown of something that wasn't perfect. Yes, definitely. Yeah, it

**Mike Nayna** 2:07:34

wasn't perfect. But it was.

**Bret** 2:07:36

Well, let's take the here's my favorite example of this. the N word? Yeah. For decades, in this country, we had an agreement, largely unspoken, but an agreement why people didn't use the N word, black people were free to I think that was the right arrangement. It is not the right arrangement at the point that it can be prosecuted, especially if it is prosecuted by the simple fact of having

**Mike Nayna** 2:08:08

uttered the some Yeah, not even know intent behind it.

**Bret** 2:08:11

Right. There are lots of reasons to use the N word if you're a white person. Yeah, let's suppose you're, you know, in a production of Huck Finn. Yeah, right. Yeah, you might have to say, Yeah, right. Suppose you're referring to, you know, support. I mean, we're now in a problem where hip hop invokes analogues of the N word. Yeah, sometimes the N word itself, and white people aren't apparently allowed to sing it.

**Mike Nayna** 2:08:37

And then this, what is the the other one, someone recently was doing, using this AI thing they built to do a discourse analysis, and they were actually trying to map who was actually racist in the alt right. area, and by mapping a lot of the, the output. And so obviously, the N word is going to be a big indicator there, but they weren't allowed to present their present their findings. Yeah, it's good to know what the hell you're actually doing some

**Bret** 2:09:06

serious scholarly work, you might have to say it. So anyway, we had a gentleman's agreement to compromise a term but we had a gentleman's agreement. That worked. Yeah, I don't remember people in my circle ever violating it in earnest. Yeah. Right. But it had to be predicated on the discretion that actually Yes, this white person did use the N word, but they did not do it with intent. Therefore,

**Mike Nayna** 2:09:31

can I bring that back to the, the, the theology? Sure, so what they're doing there? So durkheimian view of religion is religions have something sacred. And that's that's not to be touched, right. So the way that the way that I see that this is has started in this in this strange thing is that you had the postmodernist shake the Etch A Sketch of Western civilization. So it's like everything could be False and who knows what is true. All it is about is about power and so on and so forth. But it's very destructive. Like they're just they're just playing and ripping things apart and making people question why they believe these these these giant narratives, then all of a sudden, you get Kimberly Crenshaw, who has really she she said, what we need to do is we need to map postmodern techniques on to political action. And in that, she talks about, well, what do you keep? How do you do that? Because it's this, it's this kind of abstract thing. It's, it's, we're currently living in the void, the edges get straight is a blank page. And she said, We do that by keeping oppression based on race. So she actually did the Descartes thing, I'm oppressed, therefore I am, that's all that there is. That's all there is. Yeah, she said that oppression is the thing we can keep. And we can build everything else around oppression. So that's, that's the sacred thing. And that's that, so it's oppression, it's victimhood, and that's where victimhood culture comes from. This is this is 30 years of scholarship on top of this, this one thing where oppression based on identity is the only thing that's real. And if you speak to these people, you'll you'll you'll find that that's the only thing that they hold sacred, they keep steady.

**Bret** 2:11:26

That's fascinating. Yeah. So I will just say to my audience, that I think what you have just unleashed here is a absolutely key insight. And it has to do with the meaning of what sacred is. And that if you miss apply the normal stuff that goes along with the sacred, and you apply it to oppression, then you create a situation where, as you approach the asymptote of a world in which people are judged on the content of their character, rather than the color of their skin, you have to work backwards. Yeah. Because you can't bear for the thing at the core to evaporate. Yeah. And that explains what Douglas Murray has pointed out about the tendency of these movements that fight oppression to keep going even after they've gotten to the stage. Yeah. So anyway, yeah, that's a that's a key piece of info a whole nother podcast. It's a whole nother film. Yeah. Hopefully, we'll

**Mike Nayna** 2:12:38

be series of films. Um, yeah, I think

**Bret** 2:12:41

so. Let me go back and clean up one thing. The civilization has to aim towards colorblindness. individuals have to, I won't say have to, but I think they would be wise, every single individual would be wise to check in with the idea of being human first, and shedding all of the costs that they pay out of whatever bigotries and suspicions they might harbor. But this does not mean that anybody's ethnicity or background can be or should be erased. And I wanted to tell a little story in light of what you were saying about people joking about race? Oh, yeah. No fat kid and all that. I'm going to shield the identities here Because? Because I think I have to and what? Yeah, that's not really why and in fact, I think everybody involved in the story would be cool with it, but I just am not so sure that I'm ready to take the risk on their behalf. Interesting. I guess somebody well known.

**Mike Nayna** 2:13:44

Very well known. Oh, that's the reason a guy

**Bret** 2:13:46

in the ITW sphere, invited Heather and me to a dinner party, intimate dinner party at this person's house. And there were guests there that she clearly had carefully chosen who would be a good person to to be at the dinner. And a woman at the party told the joke at the dinner table. And the joke was Do you know what the definition of anti semitism is? And I said, No, I don't and she says it's hating Jews more than is necessary. Right? And I must say, that joke could be taken very negatively. Yeah. But the context of that choke it was delivered in full knowledge of what table she was at. Yeah. who she was talking to. Yeah. And it felt very welcoming that this joke actually it's but point there's some natural tension around

**Mike Nayna** 2:14:54

Jews. Yeah, right. Yeah. And that's released, right. It's your

**Bret** 2:14:58

point is Yeah. Yeah, it was an embrace. And it was complex. Yeah. It's hard to even report it. So it doesn't cause people to say, Oh,

**Mike Nayna** 2:15:08

I did it. I did it. Right. But the point is that the feelings in the room and she knew what Joe circumstellar

**Bret** 2:15:15

Yes, she knew her back and I'm here with that. Yeah, exactly. And so anyway, you can't write the rule. No, I challenge you to write the rule that explains why that joke is okay. Yeah, write that joke is okay. Because of something really deep inside that understands how it will be heard on the other side, right. As is the nature of jokes. Yeah, it is both the key to their being biting. Yeah. And the key to their being generous. And so you can't write the rule. It's unraidable. Yeah. Right. So in a world where things as important as jokes, yes. have to abide by rules that cannot possibly be written. Yeah, we have to be generous, right? I saw Trevor Noah, on a podcast discussing this n word question about and you know, his position was very clear. White people do not get to sing the N word. When it's in a song, you know, a hip hop song. Yeah. Everybody has the ability to edit. You don't have an excuse. Now my feeling is we had an agreement. Yeah. agreements now broken down, because you're now entering things into our common culture that require you can't enter things into our common culture that we don't all have the right to equally participate in. I don't have any need to say the N word. Yeah, I don't have any need for it. But you know, what, if I'm gonna sing hurricane, yeah, the Bob Dylan song. It's in there. I'm singing it. Right. Now. In that case, Bob Dylan is Why yes, that gives me Yeah, you can't write the god

**Mike Nayna** 2:16:54

complex calculations that are going on here around something that we're all adults, like, I can even tell, you know, when it's when it's happening out of nowhere. It's being said in earnest. Yes. Unless you're looking for people unless you're looking for discourses. Right. Right. Unless you're looking for

**Bret** 2:17:09

power. Yes. case you can use Yeah, gray area case. And

**Mike Nayna** 2:17:13

yeah, but discourses, not humans that matter. Yeah, they call them bodies that don't matter.

**Bret** 2:17:18

Well, and and, you know, they, in some sense, what I'm talking about with respect to lineage reflects this truth, which is that we are simultaneously individuals and participants in something very real biological and larger, because the same way your cells are actual cells that actually have to function, but they're also part of something larger. So yeah, these discourses as it were, have a functional implication. And the hazard of them is spectacular. Well, you have any final thoughts you want to

**Mike Nayna** 2:17:52

know is Yeah, I think we covered a lot. We didn't cover

**Bret** 2:17:55

a lot. Yeah. All right. Well, this was excellent, Mike, really appreciate your noise. Where should people look for you?

**Mike Nayna** 2:18:04

But Mike Naina, Twitter, YouTube, preferably YouTube, YouTube has got a lot of, it's got the series we were talking about, and some other work that I'm just uploading as I work on a feature length film, so I'm just putting off cuts and so other bits and pieces on YouTube

**Bret** 2:18:21

Mike Nina's YouTube channel. Yep. Among other things, you can find pieces of the grievant studies. Yeah, work. You haven't completed the larger thing yet, but they're very interesting pieces. There. You can find the Evergreen three part evergreen documentary of canoe meeting is a head scratcher for you.

**Mike Nayna** 2:18:39

You might check into that splice some of it in?

**Bret** 2:18:43

Yeah, you're on Twitter. Yep. Your handle is Mike Nana, my na na na, na y na. Alright, and, for my part, you can sign up for my YouTube channel. If you haven't subscribed yet. That's always helpful if you do it. You can find me on Twitter at Brett Weinstein. You can find me on Patreon and I certainly appreciate you all tuning in.