Bret Weinstein and Zuby\_ How the U.S. Looks From Outside (19...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Zuby

**Bret** 00:07

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast, I have the pleasure of talking with zubi, who is a rapper and author and the host of real talk with zubi. Welcome to the Dark Horse podcast.

**Zuby** 00:21

Thank you, Brett. Happy to be here.

**Bret** 00:23

So where on earth are you located at the moment?

**Zuby** 00:27

So I am based in the south coast of England, Southampton to be specific. This is where I live. So yeah, just chilling here.

**Bret** 00:35

You just chilling down there on the south coast of England. Yeah. Now, I think probably before we get into substance, we need to talk a little bit about your trajectory. So your accent does not sound British. I know from Wikipedia that at least they claim you grew up in Saudi Arabia. Is that right?

**Zuby** 00:55

Oh, cool. I have a Wikipedia page. Now. I'll need to make sure it's accurate. Yeah, so I was born in England, I grew up in Saudi Arabia. When I was there, I went to an American School up until fifth grade. And then after that, so at 11 years old, I actually went to boarding school. So I went to the boarding school in the UK from the age of 11. And was in school for seven years over here while still living in Saudi Arabia, going back and forth between the two countries. Then I did really well in school, I got into Oxford University, I studied computer science there. That's also when when I first started making music and put out my first album. And so I've been living in the UK permanently for about 12 years, but I've been here on and off for more than 20 years. So that's why the accent is it confuses everybody, whether I'm talking to British people, or Americans or whatever, everyone always gets confused about where I'm from.

**Bret** 01:49

So how did you end up in Saudi Arabia.

**Zuby** 01:52

So my dad is a medical doctor. And when I was a baby, my family was primarily living in Nigeria at the time. But I don't remember any of this, but I've just been told the story. But he got he got the great job opportunity to go and work out in Saudi Arabia. And he took it. And within a few days, the whole family moved, moved out to Saudi. I'm one of five kids, I've got four, four brothers and sisters. So apparently, this was a little bit of a shock to the system, but I was just a baby at the time. So I have no recollection of it whatsoever. So that's how we ended up there.

**Bret** 02:31

What has certainly given you a perspective that most of us will not have, and I'm definitely going to ask you about that. But you also say south coast of England, is do a lot of computers washed up on the south coast of England that need some computer scientists to navigate them.

**Zuby** 02:50

No, I mean, in terms of my my actual degree, to be honest, I don't really use it very much in my in my day to day life these days. I never really did. I mean, after I graduated, I did my music full time for one year. And then, before I graduated, I had, I had a job opportunity on the table to go and work for a big management consulting company in London. But I defer I accepted the offer, but I deferred it for a year because I wanted to release a second album, and I wanted to travel around and do some stuff with my music. And then eventually I moved to London. I actually worked in the corporate world for three years as a consultant, which is a part of the story that not a lot of people know. And then in 2011, late 2011, I made the big decision after getting a promotion work, I was like, Alright, I want to go and pursue my music full time. So I've been self employed since November 2011. So coming up to nine years now. And since then, I've put out a lot more music. I mean, I've released five albums and three peas in total now. And it stuff has evolved beyond the music in 2018 2019, I just started getting more involved in some aspects of the cultural conversation and social commentary and stuff like that. Of course, early last year I, I started my podcast, and then I had a video this is the deadlift video, which went super hyper viral and led a lot of people to discover me and led to appearances on a lot of the biggest podcasts and stuff in the world. So that was a sort of catalyst moment where a lot of people all over the world suddenly discovered me. And then because of all the work I've been putting in, over the past decade, plus, I think a lot of people stuck around because they saw Okay, this wasn't just one random viral tweet. This guy's actually interesting. He's doing this he's doing that he's got some interesting views. He's a smart guy, etc. So I was able to sort of turn that Flashpoint into something beyond just a little internet moment.

**Bret** 04:46

So do you still hold the women's deadlift record?

**Zuby** 04:50

Yeah, I mean, unless something really changes I think I've probably got that for a while unless another No. Unless someone else works out my hack. Yeah. Yeah,

**Bret** 05:00

I mean, let's just put it this way, how much did you lift? It was 528 pounds, or

**Zuby** 05:06

something like that? Yeah, it was, it was well below my maximum. But that was actually part of the fun, like, my best is 606. So that was that video was actually just from one of my training sessions. It wasn't like, you know, it wasn't a max effort lift or anything, I just had it on my phone. And the way that came about was I just kept seeing these stories popping up on my timeline and seeing things in the news and whatever. And out of curiosity, I just thought, you know, I'm really good at deadlifting I wonder what the British women's deadlift record is. So I just googled it. And I've already had that video on my phone, I'll say, Oh, this video already is more than the record. So I just saw I just posted it up there just thinking okay, this is, um, you know, if anyone who uses Twitter a lot, right, you put things out there, you don't really think about them. A lot of people think I sort of sat down and worked out this whole marketing strategy. And I was like, No, I just put it out there like any of my other tweets, and very quickly, I realized that something that's something was going on, and it was resonating on a whole different level. And it just started spreading like wildfire. I think it hit 10,000 views within a matter of minutes, hit 100,000 views and in a couple of hours, and that I woke up in the morning, it was over half a million. And it just kept going and going and growing and growing and started getting contacted by various media outlets in the UK, in the US, etc. A couple weeks later, I wake up in the morning and my phone is just going crazy. And I've just got people on on in my DMS and in my WhatsApp and everything yo Joe Rogan just mentioned, you want to show Joe Rogan just I was like, Wait, what? And I saw the episode and so it just snowballed. It just grew and grew and grew. And yeah, I'm still here sort of 18 months later, trying to try to catch up on things and and work out what I'm doing in the world.

**Bret** 06:58

Well, I was not aware of you until that and the instant I saw it and I instant I saw it. I thought this is beautiful. Let's just cards on the table here. When I saw what you had done, I thought this is really sweet. But I bet the guy's a dick. I looked at how you did it. And it was so compassionate and decent that I thought, Oh, man, this, this really resonates. And so first off, let me just say I admire the way you made the point without twisting the knife. Right. Thank you. It was really it was really well done. And and I I also appreciate that you. You did it not only with compassion, but with a sense of humor. Yeah, and, you know, not a mean spirited one. So anyway, I think you you really advance the conversation because suddenly we were able to talk about the absurdity of trans women competing in women's athletics.

**Zuby** 08:00

Yeah, I mean, I think it's worth saying as well is that I firstly, I have quite a lot of trans followers, like once once you get once your audience grows to a certain level, you know, you have people across the board in all types of diversity in every sense of it. And the vast majority of them thought it was hilarious, right? Like the messages I got from actually, from people who are actually trans were like, dude, that's because because I think, like with many things, the activists are not representative of the people they claim to be advocating for. And like you said, there was no, there was no malice in it, there was no anger, there was no, alright, I want to, you know, attack people or whatever. It's just like, this is silly. So I'm just gonna take this logic, and instead of arguing against it, I'm just gonna say, Okay, if those are the rules, here, let's go. And I think it's sort of, I think it was a bit of a checkmate maneuver in a lot of ways because people either need to accept that I am the British women's deadlift record holder, or they have to say, okay, that's, maybe we need to think about the whole. Anyone who says they're a woman is a woman thing, and should be allowed to compete in sport, etc. You know, no matter how progressive someone wants to be, or how liberal someone is, there are still things that it's like, okay, that's a bad idea for a lot of reasons. And I think that's really why it resonated.

**Bret** 09:29

Yeah, it's a terrible idea at the level of sport, and it's a tragic idea. At the point we get to things like prisons, right? Yeah. And you can't very well have a man declare himself a woman in order to go to a women's prison, you know, so we have to draw a line somewhere and for me, and when I was teaching at evergreen, Heather and I had many trans students, it was actually not uncommon and we got along with them very well and we treated them compassionately, and then encountering trans activism and After we were driven out of evergreen, it's like you say there's a dichotomy between the activists and the people who are in the community for other reasons. So it's something people need to be aware of, because there is this there's such a focus on the trans activists that it seems like they speak for the whole community. But that's not the case. Yeah, I

**Zuby** 10:20

think they're doing a massive disservice to be to be totally honest, because let's be real, I mean, evergreen is a unique place, but most people don't know anybody who's trans must be I've never actually met a transgender person I only have because I'm in the public with my music and I'm connected to so many people so even if it's very small percent of the population, okay, cool, like I've stolen you know, maybe a dozen or so. And, and out of those people, you know, people have generally been cool and nice and friendly and you know, they're not trying to impose anything on on anybody. So I think it's a it's actually quite a big problem because, like you said, What most people will see and how most people will judge things is based off of the people who are who have the loudest voice, and who are making all of these demands and trying to force people to use certain words and trying to bully people and harass people and come into sports and do this and do that. And it makes a lot of people think like you know, for it's for someone who doesn't think with a lot of nuance, it's easy to forgive someone for thinking oh my gosh, like all of these people are crazy because every time I hear something about this whole issue it's it's something totally, totally bonkers. And I know that's not the case. But yeah, I think oftentimes with these activists they just end up doing more harm than good just like I think is happening and a lot of other things when you're seeing what's going on. Now with you know, this whole inverted commas anti racism movement, which has become very racist in many in many aspects. And it just to me, to me, it's just it's actually regressive right people like to say that someone like myself who's more you know conservative leaning on many things people like to say that I'm the one being regressive but I'm like, look what you're doing here and here, right? Um, the last week I spent two days just getting attacked for the fact that I said that it's bad to be racist to white people. Right? Like I was I was getting emails DMS met like all kinds of horrible stuff for me saying no, this is bad right? Like right This isn't good I don't think we should judge people based on the color of their skin or call people inferior or do any of this and then I start getting attacked I'm like, what kind of what what is this world that we're that we're living in that that is considered I just I don't know it's it's um, it's a strange thing. It's a strange thing.

**Bret** 12:49

I mean, it's beyond strange. I think those of us who without any ability to defend it, I will just say those of us who get it I think are having this constant experience of it I can't believe we're having this conversation.

**Zuby** 13:05

Yeah, it's weird. But you know, I have a theory about this and this is something I've sort of observed over the years and this is that I think any sort of social justice movement let's call it that that doesn't have a clearly defined finish line ends up becoming what it sets a fight against. And I think that we were seeing this I think we're living in an age of overcorrection where it's like okay, we were things were kind of at a happy balance and a medium and that war we're just sort of swung that way and it went from it went from you know, if you go back decades it went from Okay, it's acceptable to judge people based on the color of their skin to know that's not acceptable and we shouldn't do that to know now we must judge people based on the color of their skin in the name of anti racism and it's and with that you've got all this load of anti white rhetoric and sometimes anti Jewish rhetoric and people trying to rollback and discrimination laws so that you can hire based on right and you're just like Wait, what is going on? Or if I look at certain aspects of what people call modern day feminism, which you know I have I have my own my own issues with but again it went from a movement that was like okay, women should have equal rights to men and be allowed to vote you know inherit property etc Yeah, I'm on board and then it went to okay cool we've kind of got a happy balance you know, at least in the West not not everywhere in the world but cool we've we've kind of got this The rules are fair, the laws are equal. And then it's sort of evolved into men are evil and kill all kill all men and and you're just like, and then you've got like, the trans thing that comes into it as well, which actually affects women more than it affects men. Whether you're talking like changing rooms or prisons or the sports thing or whatever. And it just becomes confusing. You're just like, wait, what's, what's what's going on here, and it's Because it's all called progress, but I'm not. I'm not convinced that it is.

**Bret** 15:05

Oh, I agree it is the. So the way I've been saying it is that there, there is this idea in progressive circles, about correcting the wrongs, but it's actually divided into two camps, there are those of us who want to end oppression permanently. And there are those who want to turn the tables of oppression. And that turn the tables thing results in the on invention of so many achievements. And I'm not claiming, at least in the US, I'm not claiming that we ever got to the goal, right? We knew what it was, right? We knew what what we were trying to achieve. And now we have begun attacking that very set of objectives in order to justify this, this vindictive movement. And I mean, that you can say a lot of things about it. But one thing I think we can say, with certainty is that from a systems perspective, this doesn't lead anywhere. There's no there's no stable system you could define that would match the objectives of the movement we see tearing apart the US at the moment. If you were to institute their their proposals, you would end up with Warlordism, and basically a permanent state of lineages fighting against each other. Which, if there's one great achievement of the West, it's that we, we spotted that we needed to escape that and we were indeed headed there. So yeah, what a tragedy.

**Zuby** 16:34

Yeah, it's weird. It's like, in many ways, things are better than they've ever been. But people insist that they're worse than they've ever been, or that they haven't gotten better. You'll hear people saying things like, racism is just as bad as it was 50 years ago, but it's just different. And I'm like, Don't say that, you know? It's like, no, that's not that's not a helpful statement. And like you said, this sort of people wanting revenge rather than equality is, is a big problem. And from from a sort of psychological perspective, I can understand how someone gets into that mind state, but it's, it's not constructive. It's not helpful and it does move things. It does move things backwards, because I think most decent people across it like you know, whether someone is left leaning right leaning centrist, you know, apolitical, whatever. I think when it comes to the sort of core ideas of you know, around, ie quality and fairness in the sort of true sense, as much as that is achievable. I think most people are pretty much on board. Most people I'm not seeing a lot of people who are pro racism or pro sexism or Pro, you know, pro transphobia, or, or any kind of phobia or ism. And I think that we also fail to recognize just how much progress has been made very quickly. And it's odd that people don't want to, people don't want to recognize that we live in a very pessimistic it's a very pessimistic mindset. And a lot of people are just very, very pessimistic. And it's weird to me. And I think a lot of this also, perhaps my perspective on it also stems from my background, right? So my family background is originally from Nigeria, I've been to Nigeria many times. Like I said, I lived in Saudi Arabia for 19 years. So I've seen different cultures and places and nations and so my sort of viewpoint for example, if someone is calling England a patriarchy right as someone who grew up in Saudi Arabia I'm like, wait, what do you what are you even What are you talking about? Like what are you comparing this? What are you comparing this to? Right? If someone is saying america is the most racist country in the world, I'm like, Where have you Where else have you been? You know, like there are if you go to certain countries in Africa including Nigeria, or you go to certain Asian countries or South American countries etc, you there is greater conflict between ethnic groups and tribes within that same country than there is across like, you know, black and white Americans or black and white British people are whatever like it by miles I mean, look at if you wanna look at an extreme cases, you know, look at things like the Rwandan genocide which happened in my own in my own lifetime look at some of the stuff that's going on in Nigeria right if you're a Christian from the south, it's not particularly safe to go up north into the Muslim territories etc. Because you've got you've got Boko Haram you have like, you know, terrorist groups, you've got the and also just in terms of, I don't know, say you wanted to marry someone wanted to marry someone from a different tribe, or one and this is all within the same country. This is people who to an outsider, all look the same. So when people here in the West are sort of creating this picture that you know, I just step outside as a black man and oh my gosh, like I'm just being oppressed and attacked and whatever. I'm kind of like, this reality that people are conjuring up is just not doesn't reflect real life. And this is not to say that everything is perfect. It's not to say that none of these isms or phobias exist to some degree. But generally, as a society in 2020, I'm like, Man, it's pretty darn good, right? It's so good that we're looking for stuff that, you know, we're almost people almost inventing things to be outraged by in the past few weeks, we've seen so many things that are being done, whether this is changing who voices the does the voices of cartoon characters, or changing, changing the labels on food, or going back and trying to revise comedy or TV shows, etc. And I'm like, No one, no one demanded this. No One No One was really, I'm not aware of any black person who was offended by angioma. And Uncle Ben, I don't know who made this decision. Everyone. Everyone was good with it. So yeah, it's a it's a it's a strange phenomenon. I think we're living in a bit of a moral panic. And like I said before an overcorrection.

**Bret** 21:03

I think people who have not had the opportunity to travel, really, it's very hard to talk across that boundary, because if you have seen it elsewhere, then the preposterousness of the claims is transparent. And it feels like it should be easy to convey. But, but it's really, it's really not. Now, I agree with you, wholeheartedly. Even here in the US, there is vast agreement on the idea that racism is bad, and that we don't want a society that has those biases built in, where conservatives and progressives tend to disagree is how close to that objective we are. Sure. So but but that's, that's a very different disagreement than a question of whether or not there's real racism lurking in the minds of most whites or even every white as as the mythology would have it. And it's such an incorrect diagnosis that it's almost hard to imagine how we get back from it. Right? Yeah.

**Zuby** 22:07

Yeah, no, yeah, sorry. Go ahead. No, you go. Yeah, no, I was gonna say, I think, um, like I said, it's just, um, so much of this stems in pessimism, it really is really, really just such a pessimistic, and I know, it's called critical theory. It's just such a pessimistic negative view of humanity and individuals and people, right, the idea that, you know, I've met so many, I've literally met hundreds of 1000s of people at this point. And in different countries, you know, in 30, something different countries and you learn, like, you know, most people are decent. Most people want to get on with life, they want to have a career, be happy, find romance, have a family, you know, that's generally what people are about, they're not trying to run around, you know, harming or hurting each other. If that were the case, then cities, cities, in general would just be a nightmare, right? You wouldn't, you wouldn't be able to have cities like London and New York, where you've just got so much diversity across the whole board, you know, people would just be maiming each other constantly. And it's like, that's not, that's not the case. And so, and I think, also the the hysteria, it turns away, it turns away people who otherwise could be allied, in many ways, I don't really like the term ally, because it's been, it's been sort of ruined, but it turns away people who could be allies, so when people say, all white people are racist, right? Or when someone says, you know, all you know, and this is something I have to be careful with, sometimes myself because, you know, I'm not I'm no fan of, sort of, you know, woke ism and a lot of the social justice stuff, but I myself have to be careful sometimes to try not to paint with too broad, a brush on that side, just like I don't want someone to say like, oh, all conservatives are x, or all libertarians, or y or all these people or whatever. But, um, I think one of the, I think one of the issues there is I think that on the on the left side of the spectrum, I don't think people I think you do this very well, and this is something I really admire you for is that, I think on that side of the spectrum, people are less willing to rate to acknowledge and rein in the crazies, right? Like I think most most, it's very hard to find like a conservative who is defensive of the real alt right, or who is defensive of actual, you know, neo nazis or white supremacists or, you know, legitimate far right people, right? It's like, no, this is the line. And we're nobody was nobody was making excuses for Charlottesville, right? People pretend that wasn't, but nobody, everyone everyone was like, No, this is not bad. But if you look at what's going on with with an Tifa, for example, even people in positions of power, even mayors, governors that said nobody wants to eat people on the news, No one wants to just come out and say, This is bad. No, this is wrong. Like we don't, we don't want these people like we don't associate with them, like people don't want to draw that line. And so I think until that happens, I kind of feel like in this whole, I don't know, this culture wars, people call it, I actually feel like, what's sort of needed in a way is more like good and courageous and principled liberals to sort of speak up and be willing to draw that line and say, Okay, look, this, this is going, this is going too far here, rather than just sort of staying quiet or sort of tacitly approving of it, just like I would think, you know, if on the right side of the spectrum, if stuff really did start going far, I think, you know, I know I myself, but a lot of people would be happy to be like, Okay, look like, no, this is not, this is not the way forward, right? This type of rhetoric, this type of action, etc. You know, I mean, I don't know, imagine if a group of, you know, right wing, Trump supporters created their own autonomous zone in a city and start and started, you know, running it, the reaction would be really different, right? Nobody would, the mayor wouldn't come out and say, Oh, yeah, it's like, it's like a block party. And everyone's just having fun people would be like, Oh, my gosh, this is, this is a fascist takeover, like this is, you know, it would be the media response would be different, everything would be totally different. But somehow that can happen. Or people can be looting buildings and setting places on fire running around in masks, beating people up. And no one wants to just say this is wrong. And until people can do that, I think we might just this issue might just keep getting worse.

**Bret** 26:44

The cowardice on the part of people on the left to call out what is wrong is staggering. Yeah, I cannot believe it. And you're exactly right. I love your example. Yes, if, if far right wingers declared an autonomous. I mean, that would just be it'd be the end of history would come to a halt, and we would all be confronting the autonomous zone together, but somehow coming from the left, it can't be. And did you say that? See, they were doing racial segregation there, too. Did he say, Oh, of course they were doing racist. I mean, this is the thing when this came to evergreen, I had my way What, what do you suggest? moment, and then, you know, to the extent that people stopped rationalizing that it wasn't happening happening. They thought, okay, it's just evergreen. And then, you know, three years later, it has now spilled out into, you know, the whole of the US. And it's also spilled into Europe, weirdly, which has a very different racial dynamic, at least in my opinion. I'm actually it's one of the things I want to ask you about. But my sense is, having done a fair amount of traveling in Europe, the even the black white dynamic is different than we have here in the US. Have you spent much time in the US

**Zuby** 28:06

a decent amount of time I was there for three months. Last year, I went to 10 different cities, and I've been there a few about six times in total.

**Bret** 28:13

Okay, so you've got recent experience, do you also have the sense when you cross the pond that you are engaging a very different, interracial dynamic.

**Zuby** 28:23

For me, personally, in my own sort of personal experience? In the UK, in the US, I had a, I had a great time there. And there was no, no issues in that regard. One thing I do certainly observe, though, based on people I've known over the years, and this goes to, you know, when I lived in Saudi Arabia, even, you know, there were lots of American families living there, you know, white American families, black American families, Asian American, etc. And so, though, I always noticed, even from a relatively young age, that there was a difference in the mindset and the way that people would talk about, you know, any type of racial issue and how people would sort of view things. And I see it, I see it online, right, I spent a lot of time on social media, I talked to a lot of people and the mentality is certain difference is certainly different. And even the terminology is different. I think it's very interesting that in the in the USA, you know, you guys say, black American, African American, Latino, American, white, American, etc. Here, we just say British right there. So it's not common to hear that this person is white British, or this person is a black Brit. You know, like, sometimes sometimes you'll hear it but it's quite uncommon, regardless of someone's ethnic origin. People just say British. And I think that in America, you know, this might seem like a small thing, but I think that it's quite a good example of just the the different type of thinking, or even when it comes to politics, you hear terms like the black vote, right, the white vote, the it's sort of People are more grouped into blocks in the UK. Yeah, sure, there are certain trends and patterns in the voting, but you wouldn't hear politicians or people in the media or etc talk about like, the black vote in the UK, or, and I understand there are historical reasons for that. There are demographic reasons for that, you know, black people are much smaller pop percentage of the population here in the UK, etc. But I think from a, from a unity perspective, and from the idea of moving away from various forms of identitarian ism, I feel like as long as people speak in these terms, then it's likely to sort of keep people thinking that way, because it does make people think like, okay, you know, there's black Americans, and there's white Americans. And you know, it's by using those labels, I think it sort of keeps people locked in that way of thinking. And I think there are, I think there are a lot of people who want to be who wants to be locked in that way of thinking. But I think that there are also a lot of people who don't, and just feel like, you know, we're over this, you know, we have eyes, we can see what people look like, that's cool. That's interesting. But it's not the ultimate defining characteristic of a person.

**Bret** 31:14

So I think some of it goes back to what you were saying about pessimism. And I must say the tenor of the conversation has changed radically in the last decade. And one of the things that I suspect is behind the change is that there's almost a loss of confidence that true equality can be achieved, which I think is absolutely tragic, because I, I effectively know that it can be right, having traveled, having spent a lot of time with students of different backgrounds, I don't believe there's any barrier to it. But people seem to have responded to a kind of evidence that I don't think they know how to interpret because, frankly, it, it requires an understanding of human biology that almost nobody has. And so I was just talking to Coleman Hughes about this, actually, that I think people are drawing a false conclusion from what they see in sport, right? We have very different capacity to engage in different sports based on race, or what we would call race, based on population of origin. And it's hard coded, right, there's a reason that Ethiopians and Kenyans dominate marathon running, for example, right. And so I think there's an expectation that that has an implication for cognitive stuff that it doesn't have, because human cognition functions on a whole different basis, it's basically software. And I wonder if the move to effectively hard code, some kind of positive racism into the, into the very fabric of society is a response to a private belief that nothing else will work? And, you know, I feel like one of the lone voices shouting, don't do that. Because actually, you can achieve real equality. And it does look like a country in which you don't refer to somebody as a black Brit, you refer to them as a Brit, right? Yeah, we can get there. But it requires that we address the software layer. Carefully and properly, which we haven't done.

**Zuby** 33:28

I think it's also tricky because people have different definitions of many words, including equality, of course, including racism, including fairness, including all of these terms that we use the word diversity. When someone says diversity, to me, that doesn't just mean having a bunch of people who have different skin colors, and perhaps different sexualities, and genders, but who are all in lockstep on thinking, when I think of diversity, I think of in across the board, I think of etiologically the way people think people's ideas, you know, people's character, et cetera, that's, you know, it's a whole picture. When I think of equality, I think very much of equality of opportunity. And I even recognize that equality of opportunity is also not totally achievable. Right? I think you can have equality under the law, equality and policy, equality in the system as much as you can. But as we've as you've already alluded to, you're still going to get very disparate outcomes, because not everything can be controlled, and there are millions and millions of factors that make us all different. You can see this even just within a family, right, you've got the same parents, you've raised in the same household in the same place, etc. And all of the children go off and do totally different things. They have different interests, different personalities, their earnings might be massively different from each other. All of these things are just totally different. So to expect that any kind of equality of outcome across like a group or a whole population, to me is just sort of crazy. And I think that equality of outcome who hasn't we sort of know this already through history, it's a very dangerous idea. And it's also an idea that it's, it's unachievable. And the only way you could achieve it is just by like raising everybody down, right? Because you're right, there's, there's no, you know, you people have different intellectual capability, people have different interests, etc. So, and people do this in lots of weird places. Um, I mean, even if you look at something like the push for gender equity, gender parity, you know, 5050, across the board, and lots of different things. That Firstly, it's funny, because they only ever push for that in certain types of jobs. And in other ones, they're totally happy for men to do 100% of it. But also, it's just it, it totally denies, as you said, biological reality, it denies people's freedom of choice, it denies the fact that men and women are different than people have different interests, etc. I mean, I see this myself, because I'm in the world of music. And over here in the UK, for example, there are there are certain schemes in place in the UK music industry, to try to make the majority of UK festivals, music festivals, to have 5050 gender split on the lineup. Okay? I'm a rapper, right? My genre of music, there are 20 there are 30 male rappers for every female rapper. And that's not because women are not allowed to rap. Right? It's just that, that's, that's how it is, it turns out that males are more interested in rapping, and that's okay. To me. I'm like, okay, as long as women are allowed to rap, and they're not being discriminated against and treated unfairly, etc, then to me, I'm like, okay, that's the best you can do. Right? That's the best you can do. We can't start forcing, you don't want to start discriminating against the men. And this does happen. I mean, there was a music festival I wanted to apply to. And essentially on the forum, it basically said that, if you're a male, you're probably not going to get it because they're trying to get gender parity. So it's like, Oh, interesting. So, you know, I now can't get this opportunity. Because I'm male. Isn't that sexism? And yeah, I don't know. It just seems like a lot of people don't, don't think these things through very well. So it's sort of it sounds good on the tin just to say we want 5050 gender equality on the lineup, right? And people cheer and everyone's like, Yeah, but very few people are going, Wait, hang on this first. Firstly, why do you want that? Like, why is that super important? And then secondly, how can you even achieve this? If you if you've got 9010? On the inputs? How are you going to get 5050 on the outputs without some serious discrimination going on in the middle. And that's the only way that it can even be done.

**Bret** 37:58

It is the only way. So I don't know if I've talked about this anywhere. During the Evergreen meltdown, like the week in which things went completely haywire. My students were watching this happen. And you know, the students who protested were not people I even knew not only were they not my students, I'd never met them. Okay. My own students remained loyal throughout. And this one young woman in my class kept approaching me and saying, you have to read this thing. And I'm like, Look, there's a lot going on. I don't have time to read. She's like, No, you have to read as a young black woman. And at some point, she had been so adamant that it was really important that I read this right now that I actually carved out the time and I sat down, it was a story Harrison Bergeron, by Kurt Vonnegut, have you read it? I haven't read it. I've heard of it. But I haven't read it. You got to read it. She was absolutely right. And it makes your exact point, which is there is a way to achieve true equality of outcome. And it's by hobbling everybody who is above the minimum, right? And so it's this dystopian vision of a world in which every capacity you have is interfered with to make it equal with everybody else. And it is a it's a very, it makes your point. And it is correct. So yes, equality of outcome is not desirable. If you attempt to create it, you will create a dystopian nightmare. And equality of opportunity isn't exactly achievable either, as you point out, but what you can do, the thing that I would advocate is that we would we should want to get as close to a situation where bad luck is randomly distributed with respect to things like race and sex. Right? So the other point is, we can't guarantee that you're going to be equally capable, or have equal access. But what we don't want to be able to do is say, look, if you're black in the US, we know you're not gonna be able to access the market nearly as effectively Is this other population? Because that's not luck, right? Yeah, bad luck. That's not randomly distributed isn't luck, it's something else. And we have a lot of that. Mostly it doesn't have anything to do with modern racism. It has to do with the echoes of past racism and a system that simply perpetuates current patterns of distribution into the future and amplifies them. So in some sense, I think this is the explanation for what we're seeing is there's a, there is a correct sense that things are not functional, and that they are in, they are rigged, and that the way they are rigged is not evenly some populations suffer more from the way the system is rigged than others. But the diagnosis of how the rigging works and what it's based in and what the remedies are, is pure nonsense. Yeah.

**Zuby** 40:49

What do you think are are some of the remedies to that point that could be done without making things worse, or without sort of heavy discrimination against other people? Because at the moment in terms of the proposed solutions, that seems to be primarily what I see, like I can understand, especially especially in the USA, right? I don't think anyone again, I don't think anyone disagrees that, you know, the there's, there are some aftershock effects from the legacy of things like slavery, Jim Crow, you know, redlining, certain welfare policies, etc. I think that that is, you know, how much of that what percentage of that is the problem I think a lot of people would disagree on, but I think most people recognize no will will recognize that. But I guess the question is, what can be done now, to rectify that without just, you know, stamping on everybody else? Or actually instituting prejudiced or discriminatory policies? What do you think?

**Bret** 41:56

Well, unfortunately, the answer is upstream of all of the consequences that people can see. So I do think we more or less know where the problem is and what to do about it. But the answer doesn't, it sounds like a Dodge. Okay. So what I would argue is that you've got a cascade of consequences that come from what I would call opportunity hoarding, that in the US, in particular, but really, throughout the West, there is a process that allows people who have gained wealth, and therefore political power, those two things shouldn't be synonymous, but they turn out to be once you have that kind of power, it is inevitable that you will get the evolution of strategies to prevent competitors from rising up and displacing you. So this is the bad side of conservatism. And I believe now I recognize that there's a very positive side to conservatism. In fact, I say, I want to live in a world so good that I get to be a conservative. But what happens is, mechanisms to block competitors evolve. They're not even necessarily conscious, but they serve to, to preserve the distribution of well being. And the result of that is that there is artificial scarcity at the levels below. So the disparity in wealth that we see which people find so shocking, isn't really a problem. It's a symptom of a problem. Okay, it's a symptom of the fact that opportunity has been concentrated in one stratum. And although you can defend a disparity in wealth, I've never heard a good defense of a disparity in opportunity. It's simply not desirable from the point of view of any of the things we claim to be trying to maximize. So if opportunity is not broadly distributed, there's a question of who will have access to it. And there's effectively a ladder, and those of us in the middle of the ladder, find we do okay. But we're actually in a kind of Jeopardy because there's so many hungry people on the rung just below, right. So in other words, if you have a job and it, you know, pays your mortgage, and gives you a retirement plan, and medical care, and all those things, while you may be doing just fine. On the other hand, if something turns around and your relationship with your employer goes south, you can lose all of those things very quickly. So the hunger at the bottom, as a result of extreme scarcity, results in a depression of everybody's wages, for example, because you're not in a position to to negotiate for more if there are many people who could take your job and would willingly do so. And at the very bottom of the ladder, what you have is no opportunity whatsoever. Now, that's no guarantee of who will be there. But to the extent that opportunity is let's say racially not evenly distributed. You get a population, that experience is extremely high unemployment, which of course, is going to have a direct relationship with the tendency toward criminality, because nobody wants to go to prison. But if you don't have legitimate opportunities, you will consider things that put you at higher risk. And then you get into the really interesting downstream effects. So let's say in the black community, you have a very high rate of incarceration of men, as a result of criminality that I would claim has some relationship to a lack of opportunity. Once you take men off the table, you create a problem for women in mating and dating, because they their bargaining position is eroded. Because men are in such high demand. And men who were in high sexual demand are hard to pin down for a monogamous relationship. So that results in a lot of single mothers, which results in a lot of kids who don't have dads, and therefore don't have a Roma, a male role model, which results in a breakdown in culture. So that's a vicious cycle. But it's rooted in essentially, political corruption of various kinds that concentrates opportunity. So I would say, if you're dealing with anything downstream of that, first, you're dealing with a symptom, which doesn't mean you don't have a remedy, but probably it's not going to be a very good remedy if you don't deal with the top level problem. And so that's one thing. Second thing is you may have had a very different experience in school that I did, but

**Bret** 46:34

I did not do well in school ever. And when I ended up teaching, I ended up having to teach in a way that was very different from what normal teaching would look like. Because even just morally speaking, I couldn't live with myself holding students to standards that I couldn't have met. Right, so I had to teach in a different way. This has resulted in my understanding that the whole school system is not really conducive to generating high quality thinkers, it has a different purpose. So the reason I mentioned it is one of the things that we have to remedy is the way we deliver school, the way we deliver the stuff that enhances the minds ability to think, but if you say, well, let's just equalize the schools in the bad neighborhoods to the ones in the good neighborhoods, you've already failed, because the ones in the good neighborhoods aren't great either, right? They're, they're better at getting you to succeed in society, but they're not really great, great at creating high quality thinking. Yeah. So that's a very long winded answer. But basically, I would say the problems are actually upstream. And addressing them is a paramount concern. And really, what we should seek to do is generate the kinds of developmental environments that tend to neutralize the bad luck that is so unevenly distributed.

**Zuby** 48:02

Yeah, yeah, I know, I you know, there's why I just like talking to intelligent smart people across the board, because this is what is, I think this is what's necessary because, you know, conversations like this are important because I feel like seems like the diagnosis is wrong, right? Or it's, or people are, because of people's political biases, and perhaps political aspirations even and maybe even just a degree of wanting to sort of wanting to win and wanting to sort of stick it to the other side is you get a lot of people who think they just go all the way on one thing, right so if you're looking at this kind of issue, there are going to be hundreds of different factors that play into something I mean, if you if you're going to look at too big sort of spheres you can put these in of course you have you have sort of issues in the system, or the environment and then you have the individual responsibility and individual behavior and perhaps cultural elements and I think that conservatives tend to very much focus on the latter including myself, right tend to focus a lot more on the individual responsibility angle and you know, what's what's going on in the society and the culture and people's personal choices and behavior, etc. People more on the left side of the spectrum tend to focus more on issues in the system and you know, the, the system and policies and things like that. And the reality is, there's always going to be aspects of both, right, like how much weight you put on one is going to vary from from person to person. But the truth is, and it's like people don't want to admit this truth, which is that there are things on both sides which can be improved. So I've spoken to some people who they almost They it's like they don't even believe that human beings have the capacity to make choices and to like, you know, choose their own behavior, etc, which is like I don't, I don't buy that. And sometimes I can find it quite offensive if I've got someone who's telling me that sometimes it can almost like suggest that I've heard I've heard people talking, I think I know, I know, they don't mean it this way. But the way they talk almost suggests that like, almost like black people don't have like, they make an excuse for all bad behavior. To the degree I'm like, What do you not think that people have agency and can make choices? And, you know, it's not like, it's not clearly most people aren't behaving in this way. So you can't just like we have to have standards for people, you've got to have behavioral standards, you can't just make an excuse for every, every bad behavior that someone is engaging in. And yes, I understand that, depending on someone's environment, and their family, etc, that that's going to have an impact on their likelihood to engage in certain behaviors. So I'm not here like, Oh, yeah, I want to keep people stuck in a crap situation. Like, no, that's absolutely not. But at the same time, I think you raise people up by actually holding people to those equal standards, and not saying, oh, okay, yeah, sure. You murdered somebody, but, you know, your dad wasn't there. So we're gonna kind of make and it's like, No, no, no, like, we need to raise everybody up to this standard. And then, you know, you can do both at the same time, right? You can you can try to improve all of these things simultaneously, right? If there are, and again, even when it comes to, you know, people being more conservative, I don't think there are, there aren't a lot of people who, if you can identify clearly, right? Like, it's not, it's not handy when people sort of scream systemic racism and scream institutional racism without telling you, what institution or what structure or what system specifically, and what should be done. Like a lot of people sort of use these phrases and think it just sort of ends the argument. And I'm kind of like, Okay, well, let's, let's go deep on that, like, tell me what, what are you talking about? Because we can't change history? Right? We know, history is immutable. So like, what can we do now? Like, what are you proposing? And a lot of people don't really think past that, because they just want to say systemic racism, and boom, they think that's it, it's over. And I'm kind of like, no, like, you got to tell me, tell me what you're talking about. Because if you can, and if you can point something out, I will, I will agree with you. Like, if it's factual, I'll be like, Oh, okay. That's interesting. Okay, I wasn't, I wasn't aware of that. Okay, what can we do there? to even it out? Or to make that more fair, right? Some people point out, for example,

**Zuby** 52:42

an example a lot of people use is that I think this has been maybe done in here in the UK. And in the US, I don't know the numbers and stuff. But there are for example, I know there have been studies. So in showing that people with certain types of names on applications might you know, all other things being equal, that might not, you know, they might be less likely to get a call back after an interview or to get an interview in person. And if that's the case, there's a really simple solution to that. That's not a that's not super complicated. I'm not that I have no issue. Like, if you want to do take people's names off, I'm like, cool, do it. Like if that if that makes it more fair, do it. But it's also weird, because now you're seeing I saw just the other day, for example, with Um, I don't know, some orchestra. They were saying that they want to end the blind auditions. And yeah, so this is where I get confused, because I'm like, wait, I thought that that was being done to prevent that. So this is where it just kind of gets confused and confusing to me. Because I'm like, gosh, like, what are people? I thought we were all aiming towards the same thing. But maybe we're not. So I kind of I don't know.

**Bret** 53:46

Yeah, we were aiming toward the same thing. Yeah. Now we're not. But look, I think the the deal is relatively simple to state, how we get there is more complicated, but I think this is the deal. A, if there's surplus, then there must be enough to go around. In other words, if we're really in surplus, and we are, then it should not be the case that there's a bottom of the ladder that you have to fall off of that somebody has to fall off of. So we have to make sure that there is enough. And if there is enough, then we have to make sure that access to it is not biased. And if there is enough and access to it is not biased, you have an absolute obligation as an individual to try. Right, you have to do your part. So this personal responsibility thing that is so heavily infused into the conservative ethos, I think is right, but it's not right, alone. Right, in a situation in which there's artificial scarcity. Personal Responsibility will decrease the chances that you fall off the bottom. It's your it's your best bet, but it doesn't mean somebody won't fall off the bottom. So society has to take care of that part. And then you You have to take care of your part. Yeah. And if those two things happen, actually, we can return to where we were headed, which was, yes, a colorblind society in which it's not going to ever be perfectly even. But nonetheless, we can get to a highly desirable state where the degree to which we fall short of our objectives is minor.

**Zuby** 55:21

Yeah. And I cannot were there. Yeah, no, I think another tricky thing as well is, you know, what, what mechanism is the best thing to do that with I mean, I'll tell you like, when I when I did go to the states last year, especially when I was in a, when I was in Los Angeles, in San Francisco, I'd never been to those cities before. And I was stunned by some of the stuff I saw, right. So the level the homelessness, the drug use public drug use, like I had, I've been all over the UK. And there is nothing in the UK, even close to that. And I was like, Whoa, this is right, I'd heard I'd heard things. And I know this is an issue in place, like, you know, Portland, Seattle, etc. But like, I was just seeing things that were I was just like, oh, my goodness, what on earth is going on. And it's even more bizarre, because I realize I'm in one of the, I'm in one of the most expensive cities in the UK, in the sorry, in the USA, and the whole world. And I also know that this is, you know, from the California This is most highly taxed state. So, in terms of what the, I guess, with me, part of the reason why I lean more libertarian in many ways is because I'm like, man, the government is clearly not interested in solving some of it in solving some of these problems, right? Like, because people have been throwing money at it. And there's clearly like, you know, I don't know all of the ins and outs. But, you know, there, there's the money, and they're supposedly, I'm just like, man, like, there's a, I don't know, I think I almost start to look at it on a on a deeper level. And just think, like, as human beings, maybe, you know, like, I don't know, if I don't know if the, maybe the government can solve this, but if they can, they've had many, many decades. And, you know, progress has been made in some areas. But in some things, you know, it looks like, I look at the numbers and stats, it's like, Ooh, that seems to be getting worse, or you're out there. And you're sort of seeing it with your own eyes. And yeah, I don't know. It's, it's, it's complicated. It's very, very complicated. But I think a lot of it also, I think, what's necessary, and I feel this, I feel this for all countries, but I think especially for the USA, I think there needs to be a How would I put it, I think people need to sort of really recognize their, their commonality, I think there's, there's so much focus and all these angles, there's so much focus on differences, right? Whether that's racial, or gender, or flipping sexuality, or, you know, red and blue, and this and that, and there's not a lot of like, okay, like, we're all, we're all Americans. And look, there's going to be differences, there's going to be this and that, but we all need to look out for each other in certain ways. And this is something that, oddly enough, you know, a lot. A lot of people have plenty of criticisms about somewhere like Saudi Arabia, and lots of them are valid, but you don't see homeless people. Right? Nobody's in the note, no, nobody's homeless, right? Because there's that sort of community, spirit, and even based on the fact that, you know, everyone is religious, everyone is, pretty much everybody, you know, 99.9% of people are Muslim. So they can't let their fellow Saudi or their fellow Muslim or whatever, like, be out there on the street. So the level of sort of charity ability, not just in terms of like financial giving directly, but that sort of community cohesion is actually a lot lot lot better over there. So I think a lot of what makes America awesome is the rugged individualism and is the entrepreneurship and is all of that, but I think when people get so atomized that they can kind of be walking around and see all of this. You know, I don't know, like people, people just in total squalor or addicted to opioids are strung out on this or on that and just kind of get used to it. And almost, you know, kinda just get to the point where it's like, oh, yeah, it's just Welcome to LA, you know, that's just how it is. And I'm kind of like, wow, that's, that's weird. And I don't know, I'm just I've only got one brain like, I don't know what this. I don't know what this solution is there. But I think it's something that people sort of really need to sort of think about and look at really deeply and look beyond the government because it's easy to just say, Okay, well, I paid my taxes. I've done my thing.

**Zuby** 59:48

I think I don't know what the answer is, but I think that people really need to. Yeah, I don't know think about that more and think about what's, I don't know what's, what's going on here, and why are we kind of letting the happen because these people are on Skid Row or in the tenderloin. You know, these are these are fellow Americans. Some of them might even be military veterans, and stuff like that. And yeah, it's it's something that really did strike me when I was out there because it was very visceral. And I'm not super emotional person. But I was just like, Whoa, this is, this is weird, right? I've, I've seen homelessness in every city I've been to in the world, but not like this, like this is another. This is a whole different dimension. I was seeing people smoking, crack shooting heroin, I had never seen that before, just in public. And I was like, This is not, this is not normal. This is not acceptable. And yeah, and I was even more alarmed by the fact that people were sort of seeing it happen. And I felt like I was the only one who was there kind of like, Oh my gosh, like, look at what's going on here. And everyone else is just kind of going around their business. And I've got it out, like staring at the person smoking crack, like, Whoa, what's, what's going on here? And the police are sort of parked up the street just sort of chilling. It's, it's very strange.

**Bret** 1:01:00

Yeah, it's, first of all, it has changed radically. Hmm. And I also cannot look away. And I feel like it is a measure of something that has gone off the rails, I mean, there was always a problem. But it has gotten so much worse. And I feel like it is almost a direct measure of a kind of failure of compassion that has spread that our system, you're right, some of the strengths of our system set us up for this, you know, the rugged individualism and the belief in competition, which have very positive outgrows, but there are certain ways in which they just set us up for failure. And I think, you know, the homeless problem, in some weird way mirrors our failure on COVID-19. That rugged individualism caused us to demonize each other over, you know, what protests you were allowed to attend, and whether you thought masks were tyranny, or you thought, you know, you should wear them to bed or I don't know. So that whole thing resulted in us just simply not managing COVID-19 at all right? He did a terrible job. And I think your diagnosis is exactly right. There was a feeling of camaraderie. It was never complete. There was always suspicions and a bit of prejudice. But we're we're losing the thread.

**Zuby** 1:02:23

Yeah, right. Yeah. Yeah. commonality commonalities of really important, because, you know, and I did hope, I mean, I did, I'll be honest, when this when this sort of pandemic started, you know, sort of nationally and internationally, I did kind of, because I've been joking for a long time. And it's one of my half jokes that we need to war. I've been sort of saying that for many years, because it's like, a lot of the problems almost seem to be problems of excess, and people just kind of being bored and being too comfortable. So they find all this other nonsense to get obsessed with. So I did kind of think like, oh, wow, okay, this could be the thing that makes people you know, like a common enemy. And then people are just like, okay, you know, let's, let's drop the nonsense. And, you know, let's put the arms down and stop the mudslinging. And let's just deal with this thing. But the opposite happened. And it became very politicized. And I'd imagine that a lot of people, a lot of extra people died, who didn't need to die, because of the politicization of this issue, whether that's within the media, or amongst certain leaders, or, you know, this person doesn't want to work with that person, because they don't let them just like, Look, stop being children like this is just get on with what needs to be done. And, of course, there's an election year, so everybody's going to be thinking, you know, for example, Trump could want to do something that would actually like, you know, very legitimately help. But his opposition, both in the media, and you know, his Democratic Party opponents might want to block it, not because despite the fact it's going to actually help Americans, but they think, oh, that might help him get reelected, right. And vice versa. This runs in sort of both directions. And I'm just like, as long as long as people are thinking that way, then you've got like a big problem, because that's not I'm very much one of those people who's like, I don't know when it comes to, you know, people can have their feelings about Trump or, you know, Boris Johnson or whatever world leaders, I'm one of those people who's like, Look, I'm, I want whoever is, I'm an inverted commas supporter of whoever is leading. Right? Like if you're, if you're in the cockpit of the plane, I want I want the plane to fly smoothly. I want you to land the plane. Well, it doesn't matter if I personally like the way you tweet or the way you speak or not. Right, like, cool, you're in charge. You've been democratically elected. Let's, you know share, you know, maybe maybe the vote go my way this time, but here we are. So let's just kind of let let's go let's kind of get on with things. And that seems like less and less People are willing to do that nobody wants to cede any ground or compromise at all, or anything. And it's um, yeah, I don't know, I do. I do hope it improves, and I'm generally an optimist. So I think it will. But um, yeah, I just think, you know, I think people just need to be more, be more mature about stuff, you know, like, have this conversation we're having now more people need to have this conversation, right? If you if your, I don't know, your your mother, or your brother, or your sister or your friend voted for Trump, and you voted for Hillary, like instead of blocking them on Facebook and deleting their phone number, like sit down and have a conversation and build some empathy, and see where you agree, see where you disagree, understand people's mindsets, etc. And so, you know, again, looking over looking over the pond, it does. I mean, we've had this in the UK, because, you know, there were lots of parallels between the 2016 Brexit election and the Trump thing and here in the UK, you had people saying things like everybody who voted for Brexit is racist. In the US, you've still got people saying that everybody who voted for Trump is racist. And and people like to do that, because it gets a lot of likes on social media, you know, it gets a lot of retweets, but I'm just like, this is not helpful. Calling millions and millions and millions of people racist, which is a really bad thing to

**Zuby** 1:06:25

racism is is is bad racism is evil. It's not calling someone a racist shouldn't just be like a flippant comment. Like that's, that's a heavy charge. So if you're going to call like, I don't know, 60 million Americans, you're going to call, you know, dozens of millions of British people racist because of what box they ticked, then you can't do that, and then complain about division, right? Yes, you get that that's not coherent, you have to be able to agree to disagree, you have to be able to empathize and say, Okay, look, I don't, you know, someone can be totally opposed to, I know, people who you know, are really, really, really not fans of trumpet oil. Very, very, you know, they do not like him at all. But they can understand that not everybody who voted for him is a racist or white supremacist or whatever, right? Some people, some people care more about this issue, some people care more at that, that about that, whatever. And, you know, the same way the other way around, not everyone who voted for, you know, the democrats is wanting to, you know, have Institute communism in the US or, and this is obvious, and I think fundamentally, I think most people know this, I think most people know it, but it just gets so it's get so jacked up, I think social media makes it worse. I think traditional media makes it worse. All of this makes it worse. But when you actually just sit down and talk to people like human beings, then you realize, oh, okay, you know, maybe we maybe we thought we were that far apart. But actually, it's, you know, we actually overlap on a lot of things. And I've learned some things from this person, and maybe they'll, you know, I've shared some views with them. And then you actually get the, you get the whole picture, because everyone has their blind spots, and you can't see your own blind spots. So unless you talk, then you won't have the whole picture.

**Bret** 1:08:11

I agree. You say it's, it's probably obvious, I think it should be, but it really is. And, you know, I like your your point about the pilot. I absolutely feel this way. And I remember, you know, I would never have voted for Trump. But the night he was elected, I said to Heather, you know, a, he has the opportunity to be the greatest president in history, if he decides now he's done the thing that's hardest, which is to break through the duopoly and be elected in spite of their desire that you're not be right, if he took the capital that he had at that point, and directed it at, you know, pure leadership, he could have been an absolute hero, but yeah, what you say? How could anybody not be rooting for the leader to do well, and I do feel like those who voted against Trump were rooting for him to fail in spite of the fact that what he would be failing at is governing their nation. Like it just doesn't, it doesn't add up that you would root against him, you could expect that he would fail, but to root against him. Oh, it's the height of insanity and yet that is what the experience of being an American in that period was there were just a lot of people rooting for his failure.

**Zuby** 1:09:30

Yeah, it's and it's and it's a shame you know, it's a it's a shame because I don't know maybe people are too I think Firstly, I think a lot of people are just too politically jacked up right now. I think politics has become it's it's got its tentacles in everything now is what I'm not a fan of, you know, seeing it seeping into sports and into music and into video games. And it's all kind of like Look, I don't I know Ben and Jerry's has always been a little bit political, but like,

**Zuby** 1:09:57

I don't need my I just want my ice cream. You know, I don't I don't I don't need all of the all of this stuff with it. You know, I

**Zuby** 1:10:06

just want to get on with things and yeah, I don't know, I think um, yeah, it just it constantly. And people are very reactionary, right. So it puts people, it puts people on the defensive, and people start playing the game against each other. And I, there's something I say, which is that I don't, I'm not a fan of bringing weapons to the fight that I wouldn't want being used against me. So when people start, there are certain weapons I just don't think people should bring to the party. It's why it's a big reason why I'm not a fan of identity politics. Because as soon as you start shouting, Black Power, Black Lives Matter, only buy from black businesses, black, this black that whatever. Eventually, you will get a reactionary movement, saying white power, white Lives Matter only buy from white. And now you don't you know, you've What do you say against that? If it's perfectly fine, and even good this one way, then what is now your argument against, you know, people who are now saying this on the other side of things? is this? Is this the weapon you want to bring to the party? And I think not and not everyone seems to understand that I just think it's very myopic. I think it's a very short sighted view of the way to do things or even, you know, higher up level, higher up levels in politics. And, you know, I think something that, you know, I'm more sympathetic towards Trump than a lot of people are, but I think that there's no question that he has, you know, he's jacked up the temperature, many times, where actually it would have been good to bring down the temperature. A great example would be, you know, during some aspects of this pandemic, during some of the, you know, the, when the demonstrations are going on, and the riots in this that, I thought, actually, he's had a great potential opportunity to sort of step up and take the wind out of the sails of his opponents and the media and the people who want to constantly berate him, you know, stop giving them ammo, right? Don't Don't go on and say, you know, when the looting starts, the shooting starts like, that's not, right. It just Jacks up the temperature, it makes people more, more divisive, more hostile, etc. I think, Okay, look, this is the time. And that's probably one of his strengths, right? One of his strengths is that he fights fire with fire, and people love that. So if the media is talking crap, he'll come and he'll talk crap about the media and people like that, and people cheer. But sometimes you need to know when to be like, Okay, let me swallow a bit of pride, and just calm things down a little bit. And I think by him doing that, as a leader, I do think to some degree, it's probably encouraged other politicians and other people to sort of play that same game. I mean, if you spend time on Twitter, I mean, when you see certain tweets you I mean, you're like, this, isn't it, I'm looking at certain tweets. And I'm like, this is an elected official. This is a governor, this is a mayor, this is a president, this is your reading. And there's a there's a degree of it, which can be funny, but at the same time, you're kind of like, good grief, this is something like, you know, fourth graders would be sending back and forth to each other, especially when they get in arguments with each other, and they start, you know, calling each other all kinds of names and insults, and it's, yeah, it's, it's weird. It's, I don't really know what to say about it.

**Bret** 1:13:31

Well, I mean, you know, you keep hitting the nail on the head. The thing about Trump that I absolutely cannot stand is that he cannot view any issue in non political terms. And I consider him absolutely unpatriotic. Which is a weird thing to say. But But nonetheless, it it's a tragic failure on his part. Unfortunately, it's the downside to the thing that did allow him to break through the duopoly right? Yeah, he is a brilliant political strategist. And that political strategist just can't, can't be silent so that he can lead so he doesn't lead he politicizes. And it's very dangerous. And then to your other point, the emerging black identity arianism is inevitably going to create white identitarian ism, it actually legitimizes it, because if you're going to divide us into those teams, then you can't very well expect people not to play on a team. Yeah. So yeah. If we're to avoid that, we have to, we have to shift out of this mode of imagining that that's a solution because it's going to result. I mean, I really think it's going to tear the us apart. And as likely if Biden is elected, as if Trump remains in office.

**Zuby** 1:14:50

Yeah, yeah, I think people just, there are certain games I think you win by just not playing. Alright, just don't play. Just don't play that game. Don't get dragged into this thing, and it's something I experienced, right? I feel like I've often got people, especially nowadays, you know, trying to drag, trying to drag me into things that I'm just not like, I'm just like, No, I don't want I don't want to get into I don't want to get involved with this thing. I don't think it's a good. I don't think it's a good idea. I don't think it I don't think it helps like, my, my worldview is really, really simple when it comes to stuff like this. And it is, you know, it is the Martin Luther King Jr. Vision. And, you know, the way I was raised from, from when I was a child, you know, growing up in Saudi Arabia, from from the beginning, have been surrounded by all types of different people, different religions, different colors, different ethnicities, different nationalities, what and that's just been the norm for me forever. So the whole idea of viewing people through this very narrow lens, from a child, I've always thought it's silly, and it's asinine, and it makes me somewhat upset when I sort of just see that now like, you know, day in and day out and is white this and black that and I'm just like, I just can we can we stop, right? Like, so much of this is just, it's just unnecessary, and it's antagonizing and, and it just forces people to keep viewing the world through that way when they're just so many other. Like, that's the least interesting thing. It's it's such an uninteresting thing about someone is I think the fact that I'm a black male is one of the least interesting things about me. It certainly doesn't say anything about my personality, or my character, or my beliefs or my abilities or anything. It's Yeah, it's sure it's observable and cool. Okay, that's it, right? But if you're, if someone is talking to me, I don't want that to be the thing that's in their head, and that they're obsessing over I'd like No, just talk to me, I'm zoobi. Like, just just talk to me, like, we'll be cool. We can be friends, like, I don't, all that stuff is details. And yeah, but it's hard. I think that but I think Well, I think what is good, I think something that's good is that there is this sort of, I think there is a growing tent of people who are I guess, you know, politically, sort of in the center, left and center, right? Who are sort of uniting, and recognizing, okay, what what these people all have in common is that they're tired of the extremism, and they don't like canceled culture, and they don't like, you know, the super identity politics thing on any side. And they don't want to destroy the whole system. And they don't think the country is terrible. And, you know, like, I think there's that there's that growing group of people who I think are slowly gaining a bit more and more courage. And I think that they're sort of seeing, you know, podcasts like this, and what I'm doing with my podcast, and you know, whether it's Joe Rogan, or Dave Rubin, etc, like all these guys, they're sort of seeing Okay, cool, people are talking about this. And there's a range of people here who are sensible, and don't want to scream at each other, and call each other racist every three seconds. And just, you know, there's that growing group. So I do hope that, that swells and gains enough sort of courage and momentum for people to eventually just be like, Okay, look like we're going to just, we're gonna stop entertaining the crazies, and we're gonna stop letting them sort of determine everything, and set all the rules and control everybody, and cancel everybody. And I think once enough, once there's enough critical mass there, then I think you can get back to a sort of stage of normal normalcy, where people are just sort of being like reasonable again, and we can actually solve some of the problems because we can talk.

**Bret** 1:18:44

Totally agree. And I have a weird sense about this, which is, I hate to put it in monetary terms, but it's almost like everybody is hemorrhaging money, and that there's an easy way to stop, but they just don't realize it. And so I've been trying to advise people get rid of your prejudice and your bigotry, because it's like giving yourself a huge raise. Right? If you have prejudice and bigotry and you're walking down the street, suspicious of people, you're paying a cost for this thing. If you get rid of that, right? What happens is actually, the world becomes much more like the big barbecue full of people that you don't know, but you can sit down next to any one of them, and suddenly a conversation can happens. And maybe you're not going to agree, maybe that's the best thing that can happen. Because if you don't agree, you actually might discover something. Whereas if you agree perfectly, there's nothing to learn. So, for those of us who do this, I think there's a kind of a very positive sense of camaraderie, even when people are across an ideological line, that it's not personal, and that the conversation will be interesting when we have it and the hard part is just getting people to realize that they will feel better if they just try it out, right? If they just give people the benefit of the doubt, and they don't leap, you know, even if somebody admits a prejudice, and it's a bad one, if you can figure out how to cross the boundary and correct them, help them see what they don't see, that actually feels good to. So you know, give yourself a raise is kind of the way I think it needs to be packaged in order for people to understand what we're saying.

**Zuby** 1:20:30

I like that. And the way I look at it as well is that I'm, you know, I've long been a believer that I can learn something from everybody. Right, and that also, every stranger is a potential friend. So that's really something it's been really helpful, actually, throughout my music as well, especially as an independent artist, that sort of approach. But part of the reason why that makes sense is even from even from a selfish perspective, it's stupid to be prejudiced and discriminatory, because you're cutting off so many potential people who could help you, or who might be friends or who might be you know, and it's like, why would you want to limit yourself? So you're No, you're handicapping yourself, if you only, you know, if I only spoke to other Christians, right, and I only associated with, like, I'm cutting off the majority of the world, right? If I only associated with other black people, and I only bought from black businesses, and I only saw, it's like, what am I doing, right? There's, there's all of these people here, there's all of these opportunities, and I'm so stuck in my thing with my prejudices that I don't want that I can't engage in all of this other stuff. And it doesn't, it doesn't make sense. And then of course, from you know, from the moral perspective, you know, we're all, we're all humans, you know, we're all we're all, you know, related in many ways. And so, yeah, just treat people decently but you know, be kind to each other. It's not, it's not that

**Bret** 1:21:57

hard. Not only is it not that hard. Once you get used to it, you'll love it. Yeah. Yeah. Alright, two more things before I let you go. So I should say like most of my listeners, I have certainly had the occasional simultaneous fight with a bear and a chimpanzee, right? But your Wikipedia page says that you have fought a bear a chimpanzee and a kangaroo simultaneously. What's that about?

**Zuby** 1:22:28

Is that actually on my Wikipedia page, it is on your Wikipedia I didn't even know I had a Wikipedia page until this podcast so you

**Bret** 1:22:38

should check it out. So it's all kinds of interesting thing. Oh, wow.

**Zuby** 1:22:42

All right. I wasn't I wasn't aware of that. But so that it's never happened. Um, I man now I now I wish I kind of wish it had, but no, not yet. My guess

**Bret** 1:22:51

is you're probably just forgetting that. Five minutes after we're done, it's going to occur to you that that's a reference to Alright, last thing, and it's a two part question. You said you've released five albums,

**Zuby** 1:23:05

five albums in three APS, so it rises in total.

**Bret** 1:23:08

Okay, so I want to ask you two questions. For the person who is a rap is it fair to say a rap hip hop aficionado? Or should I really be separating those?

**Zuby** 1:23:20

No, that's that's fine. But as far as the culture wrap is the music

**Bret** 1:23:23

Okay, good. So for a rap aficionado, which of your albums or EP is would you direct people to the one you're proud of stuff or you think they should encounter first?

**Zuby** 1:23:36

I would recommend they listen to perseverance. Perseverance.

**Bret** 1:23:39

Okay, yeah, perseverance. Now, a different question. for somebody like me, who is aware that if I had grown up with rap or had found myself deeply involved in it, I would know how to wade into those waters, but having not grown up with it. It always seems a little unmusical to me. Which of your which of your albums or EP is should I start with?

**Zuby** 1:24:06

I would actually say the same one same one perseverance. I would say the same one. Yeah, my latest single is okay, dude, which is not on perseverance. But prior to that, perseverance is my latest release and it's got brand new songs on there, but it also has a it's a bit of a best of album. So it also has my best songs from my previous albums. So if someone wants to listen to my best songs to date, essentially, until the new ones come along, then I'd recommend perseverance.

**Bret** 1:24:36

Cool, and other artists that you think might be appropriate for somebody with no background in rap.

**Zuby** 1:24:43

Oh, boy. Oh, wow, that's that's actually tricky. That's actually tricky because it um, I can I can name some of my favorite artists, okay, but um, you know, mmm NAS Jay Z Tec nine, Tupac, biggie. Those would The certainly a very strong start, but it depends on what someone depends on some what someone likes in terms of content and lyricism.

**Bret** 1:25:09

For me, it's clever, insightful lyrics.

**Zuby** 1:25:15

hmm yeah, I would say nas m&m Tec nine Jay Z not so much his singles but his like album tracks. Yeah, there's a lot of there's a lot of deep stuff there I think when it comes to hip hop and rap a lot of the best songs in my opinion and hip hop are not the singles. I think a lot of people you know, they hear certain songs on the radio or in the nightclubs because they've got a certain the deeper more lyrical tracks tend to be the ones that are sort of this but to be honest, it probably goes from genre of music. Right That's the sort of the album tracks tend to be the ones that I I like more because they tend to be deeper and more introspective and you know, really saying something rather than trying to get that catchy radio single and the catchy hook. And you know, the beat that people can dance to in the nightclub I'm I like with the more cerebral stuff as well, so.

**Bret** 1:26:13

Okay, cool. All right. Well, this has been absolutely fascinating. And I feel like you and I have seen the same movie maybe from slightly different seats in the theater. But I'm really encouraged by the conversation, and I hope we can pick it up again soon.

**Zuby** 1:26:30

Absolutely. Brady's been an honor. Thank you very much.

**Bret** 1:26:32

All right. Thank you.