Your Questions Answered - Bret and Heather 30th DarkHorse Po...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:08

Hey folks, welcome back to the Dark Horse podcast q&a live stream our 30th sorry for the shenanigans there with the timer in advance of coming back. We have termites I'm told in our computer so anyway that's causing some difficulty, but I think we got it licked. Well, what we did is we got an anteater and it's going to

**Heather** 00:30

Alright, I've always wanted an anteater. Yeah,

**Bret** 00:32

you know, actually could be kind of an interesting patent. Not very smart, but friendly, mostly yet trendy. Is that what you said

**Heather** 00:39

trundling?

**Bret** 00:40

Oh, that too?

**Heather** 00:41

You're not so trendy?

**Bret** 00:42

No, well, not yet.

**Heather** 00:44

We could start it. We should. All right. We're gonna start by answering a few questions that were particularly interesting that we missed last time. And actually there were two from two times ago that we missed one of them about a thread that someone want us to go back and look at, but the tweet in question has been deleted. So we can't do that. Apologies to Matt. The next one, though, is from Ryan sent a Patreon message about gorilla artwork. Says as someone still drenched in the filth of our societal subterfuge, what siren of truth can I sound without simultaneously amplifying my perceived ethical shortcomings?

**Bret** 01:20

Well, to be honest, I'm not entirely sure what that means. I resonate strongly with it, but I don't know what it means yet.

**Heather** 01:28

So I was able to find his grill

**Bret** 01:30

artwork. No, I was not able to find your grill or where can I did look, I looked in several places, including on Patreon, and I couldn't the interface I have to say it's kind of crazy. There's no search that I Patreon. Yeah, yes. So anyway, hey, Patreon. Get your act together. But if you want to send word of what I'm looking for a gorilla artwork wise, I'd be happy to look at it. In terms of advice, I would say, Look, you're the artist, right? That's a really important role. I think what I would do is, maybe try not to second guess yourself so much. If you think there's a thread that we need to be paying attention to, and you know how to make us see it with guerrilla artwork, then, you know, explore, and you'll discover. So anyway, more power to you.

**Heather** 02:14

All right. Next question from last time, my mother is 75. And I've tried to further explain unity 2020. She doesn't understand dual governing. She keeps saying people don't work together tips on what I can say she'll be on board if she gets it. It's a

**Bret** 02:30

classic. Yeah, it is a cool message. Look, I think people do work together, I think we're not used to seeing it, because we're used to seeing them in zero sum or negative sum dynamics, which brings out the worst in people. But if you set up a team, and the idea is the success condition looks like can you figure out how to navigate together, then people don't want to find themselves in failure condition. What's more, I mean, maybe this is the crux of the matter. We are so far away from policy that works in the interests of most people that doing better than we are doing is actually easy, right? If all you did was sweep away the corrupting influences, then figuring out what would be in the interest of the American public is easy. At first, there comes a point at which you've done all the stuff that makes sense, right? And then you can have disagreements about whether you want to prioritize this value or that value. But until you get to all the basic stuff that needs to just work, then there's no point in arguing, right? Good. People who have heard the various inputs to the decision making process will be able to reach agreement, they may not nail it, right? They may pick a second best healthcare solution rather than the absolute best one. Because it's impossible to know enough to get it exactly right. But the point is a second best healthcare solution would be about a billion times better than the current one we have now. So the point is, yeah, let's get to one of the good ones. And then we can argue about whether or not we got it exactly right. And then we can, you know, fight about ideology. But at the moment, the ideology is, hey, let's have some policy that serves us because that's what it's supposed to do.

**Heather** 04:09

Next one, is a comment says unity. 2020 is politically naive. It would elect a wet centrist and change nothing. As a founding member of the first against the wall club, I say Brett should run or we kick him out of the club.

**Bret** 04:22

It's all very kind of you're trying to get me killed. No, it's not. It's not about centrist. Look, I'm gonna say this very clearly, because I think this is important. First of all, I have no patience with centrist and I'm very frequently the person challenging the whole idea of centrism, because I think it's absurd. However, the center is where we meet, right? The patriotic center is where we meet to talk about the immediate interests of the nation, right? We can, you know, if you're on a ship, and it is sinking, because it is taking on water, then the point is, you put aside your differences about ship design, and you deal with the question of how do we get the water to leave the ship faster than just coming in, right? That's what the center looks like, it doesn't mean that the people involved in the build mechanism don't have an idea about how you might construct a ship that would prevent this from happening in the future, they might. But in the meantime, the ship is taking on water, everybody grab a bucket. And let's deal with the immediate problem, right, by putting aside our ideological differences, which frankly, if we talk about them, now they're gonna get us killed.

**Heather** 05:27

With struggle sessions emerging in the workplace, this is a huge opportunity for actual liberals to resurrect liberal organization, labor organization to protect workers. I think even many conservatives could be brought on board. I like this idea. I'm not sure how actionable it is, it seems like the resurrection of anything that is traditionally liberal right now is going to be met with some some pretty fierce offense from anyone who's observing what's going on the farm pseudo left, and conflating that with the left more broadly.

**Bret** 06:02

Yeah, I agree. And I think in some sense, what we're talking about is a 2.0 version of something that labor unions tried to do and failed to do, largely in this country. It's not that they didn't succeed, they accomplished a great deal. But they also became corrupt and sluggish, and an obstacle to positive change in many cases. So what we're looking for is something I mean, look, we offshored the jobs that traditionally go along with labor unions, most of them, right, we've still got, you know, police and teachers and stuff like that. But in general, the manufacturing jobs that were, the bulk of the unionized workers are all gone. So in some sense, we have to figure out what to do to protect the people who were once in unionized jobs, and we're now in crustier jobs, we have to resurrect some sort of useful sector for people to work in if work is even the right model, or to be productive in might be better. But I think in some sense, all of this stuff, I mean, the problem with Bernie, right, the problem with Bernie is that all of his solutions are backward looking. Right? The backward is not where we're going to find the right solution for the 21st century. So

**Heather** 07:16

although I mean, to be fair, this question doesn't actually use the word union. Right? It says resurrect, okay, that appears to be thinking about something that's already been done, but labor organization, and, you know, the idea of protecting the rights of workers against that of the employers is not inherently a backward facing idea?

**Bret** 07:33

Well, I would put it differently, I would say the problem is that we have a system in which corruption advances, the interests of what once might have been called management against the interests of what once might have been called labor. So that artificial advantage in the political sphere to management is a hazard to everybody. What you really want to do is level the playing field so that everybody's interests as citizens are advanced by the system. That is to say, everybody who's in management is also a citizen, right? their interest need to get taken care of, but their interests don't get priority. And so I think the point is, labor is actually the wrong place for this to exist. It was a place that it could exist by virtue of the fact that it organize people in a in a way that allowed them to become politically affiliated. But I think in some sense, it was a partial solution to a problem that needs a complete solution. Yep.

**Heather** 08:32

Okay, so one remaining question from last time before we get to today's questions. How do you mean totally different topic? How do you feel about the legal and ethical hunting of animals in North America? I have a good reason for asking this question, lol. So we aren't told what the good reason for asking the question is. But the question is, how do we feel about the legal and ethical hunting of animals on earth? Well, of course, including the word ethical there is maybe its meal. It's a little bit of a strange addition. But maybe the idea just is hunting that is currently within the bounds of the law, and is done in a way that say most reasonable people would see as ethical. Yep. And we feel bad.

**Bret** 09:12

Well, I think I think a lot hinges on what's meant by ethical here because on the one hand, in principle, I have no objection to people hunting in practice. There are lots of things about the way hunting is done that I think are very objectionable. And the fact that we have destroyed so much habitat for the kinds of creatures that are worth hunting means that this is a very different puzzle, because it's inherently in some sense, a sport for the few. So

**Heather** 09:43

yeah, although it's also to where I thought you were going there is was because we have because we've managed to clear the habitat largely of the carnivores that would be eating the kinds of things that we tend to hunt not us, but you know, deer and elk and such That there is a calling that needs to happen because the calling that would be happening by the predators that we've already eradicated isn't happening. And so to some degree hunters are doing a job that is mandated by our already poor decisions over the last 100 years.

**Bret** 10:15

I do agree with that, right?

**Heather** 10:17

I mean, it's also true, you know, we, I think you did, too, but I certainly I often had students who were hunters and would sometimes bring, bring meat, you know, gift gift me me to get, you know, gift us meat. And it was wonderful hearing these guy was always guys, you know, they often were hunting with, with their wives or girlfriends or female friends, but, you know, I assume that hunting skews very male. And as it happens, all of my students who were hunters, who, with whom I talked about it, were male, talking to them about their stories, of being out, out in nature of doing regular new annual, or seasonal hunts, either alone or with groups of friends that they always did, they always did the same, they went to the same place they had, they had this tradition built around, it was extraordinary from several perspectives, not just the social aspect, you know, the the the bonding between human beings that they could look forward to all year, I know that it was going to happen again, but also the being out in nature. And you know, it's it's, it's no secret, in most circles, that actually people who hunt and fish are some of the most ardent conservationists because they see what encroaching development on habitat does to habitat and populations and such. So, you know, those those two huge benefits where the action itself is, is hunting was extraordinary. And yes, so long as the hunting is done, ethically, you know, meaning, you know, meaning a lot of things, I guess, well,

**Bret** 12:03

I mean, I think the problem is that it means a lot of things right? bow hunting, in some sense, is more organic, the advantage over the animal is less. On the other hand, I'm guessing that the likelihood of a wounded animal running off with an arrow in it and suffering and I don't know, perhaps, escaping and suffering, I

**Heather** 12:26

think it might be greater with bow hunting done with a gun.

**Bret** 12:29

I don't know. I'd be curious. I guess we're about to find out because I just set it live on the internet to 1000s of people but but I would say, I think actually a frank conversation needs to happen more, much more troubling than bow hunting of various kinds of deer elk included, to me would be things like bear baiting, which was an issue when we lived in Michigan. So people would bait bears, and the bears would come to the bait, and people would shoot them. And I frankly, I find that completely barbaric. And now I'm told by people, no less than Joe Rogan, that bears are actually problematic animals that aren't so cool. I disagree with this. But nonetheless, I get that there is something deeper here than a desire to, you know, to just kill cool stuff. But, but to be honest, personally, and I'm not sure that I can defend this completely. But I'm more troubled with the killing of creatures that are slower to reproduce, and smarter. And, you know, a bear is a highly intelligent animal. And so, I am more troubled by its trauma than I am a deer probably because deer are built to live shorter lives and be more likely to be predated upon,

**Heather** 13:50

it's convenient and maybe no accident that that map's very neatly on to predator versus prey and that the carnivores that are out there that are predators of the more usual things that people hunt deer and elk and rabbits and such duck I guess bears don't talk to them it that it's also the meat of carnivores also isn't nearly as tasty or or nutritious or safe for us to eat and you inside like you don't eat the liver of a carnivore that's actually like really not good for you. And so you know eating carnivores are effectively second order herbivores The closer to herbivore you get closer to first order herbivore you get the better the meat is for you and and tastier. So just like you shouldn't be eating human meat. You shouldn't be eating bear meat, that lion meat or anything. And so if you're not eating it, what are you doing? Like why are you killing it?

**Bret** 14:43

Yeah, my guess would be that we need to have a rethink of hunting that involves a resurrection of our appreciation for wilderness and an extension of it so that it there's more of it. And then a question about what to do. Panthers hunting, what should people be hunting with? You know, should they be firing lead into the wilderness? Probably not. You know, high powered weapons. Is that a good idea? What weapons are most humane? I don't know. But we should be having that conversation. And I'm pretty sure we're not Yeah.

**Heather** 15:17

Okay. First question from the live stream that just ended. This is just a logistical question, really? Is there a way we can document in writing your conversation with a black intellectual Roundtable, I see it as possibly one of those brainstorming charts with each individual's response. Thank you both for what you do, I'll support you in any way I can. So this person is asking for some kind of a basically a transcript, which we don't have the ability to do at this point. But

**Bret** 15:45

it's possible that YouTube is going to do that automatically. They're not perfect, but it does a decent job of subtitling, which could easily become a transcript. So I don't, frankly, I don't know if that setting is on or not. I will say that conversation a lots of people have loved it, which is great. I'm really, really excited that people dug the conversation. And then I went well, I mean, I knew that it would go well with that group of people, how could it not. But I also think that it was like just the tip of the iceberg that there is so much to be said on many of these topics. And I'm looking forward to continuing those conversations. However it happens, could be a second roundtable could be individual conversations with people present on that podcast or people who see it and weren't present, some of whom were invited and didn't get back to me. But anyway, there's lots of there's lots of room for that conversation to be extended, and I hope to do it soon.

**Heather** 16:46

As a psych major, the inculcation of critical theory and post modernism is troublesome. Will it eventually leave an indelible mark on the industry's reputation? Is there hope for social science? How should we comport ourselves to combat wokeness? It's a lot of questions to the first one, will it leave an indelible mark on the on the industry's reputation? Oh, it has, I think that that ship has sailed. Is there hope for social science more broadly? You know, I'd say that some sub disciplines in psych in an anthropology are doing better than others. sociology seems to be largely captured cultural anthropology done. You know, it's it's tough,

**Bret** 17:26

I'd say it this way. We've got lots of disciplines that are in various states of dysfunction. Many of them were founded around the right question. Right? ecology, we found it to be not completely a wasteland, but almost a wasteland of quality thinking and work.

**Heather** 17:44

Right? Not social science, though.

**Bret** 17:46

Oh, I know. But my point is, ecology is still a home for many of the most important questions about how creatures interact with each other. So it's sort of how evolution happens in real time, right? So

**Heather** 18:00

so the metaphor that we would use is evolution is the movie in ecology is the still from the movie that you is is is the way that you have access to infer and what the movie says,

**Bret** 18:09

right? So there is a way to do it, right? And maybe it will resurrect itself. And the same goes for many of these social sciences. Now, some of them are just phony fields that were made up, right. Critical Theory is a phony nonsense field. It doesn't mean there wasn't a kernel of an idea there. But it's not one that needs vast elaboration. On the other hand, social psychology, for example, is a very important set of questions fundamentally important, probably necessary to our long term survival, that we figure out where the pitfalls are, so that we can avoid them. And there is historical work. That's very important. Milgram experiment, for example, and the Asch conformity experiment, these are very important discoveries about basically defects in the human heuristics that we use to make sense of the world. That said, all of these disciplines seem to have lost their way. And so don't throw out the questions right, throughout the mechanism that allowed these fields to go astray and figure out how to bootstrap a revitalized version of them or, you know, a new version of them. But it's very important that we don't toss the questions out because we haven't seen productive work on those questions in decades.

**Heather** 19:25

I don't know how to read this one. Last video, opposition came to your idea calling rent seekers hoarding opportunity cause struggle with people of color and others. What evidence proves this true? Who is hoarding? What is considered rent seeking? Is it dangerous to label a villain class? So I think this is going to be about the black intellectuals Roundtable.

**Bret** 19:48

Yeah. So rent seeking is self defined. It is the the earning of profit through non productive activity. In other words, the economy is supposed to pay you for producing something useful. But there are mechanisms where you can extract rent, you know, the way a warlord does, for example, right, you can prevent somebody from passing down a road they need to pass down. And so you can effectively extort money from them. And so that's obviously illegal. But there are lots of legal ways to block people's access to things and then charge them for access that you did not add anything to. So the reason that I defined rent seekers as the problem is that it's self defined. I am not saying these people are inherently rent seekers. In fact, what I have said is, in many cases, you have somebody who's contributed something important that has made them powerful, but then having become powerful, they learn to rent seek, they may not even realize they're doing it. In other words, they may have the experience of well, I brought important things into the world, and I've been handsomely rewarded, therefore, I'm productive, right? The answer is now you're 20% productive and 80% rent seeking or vice versa, we don't know it's gonna be different in each case. But the point is, it is the rent seeking behavior, that is the enemy. And to the extent that we leave niches open, where people learn how to do this thing, we have to shut those down. And that's not to say we have to zero the accounts of people who rent seek, in fact, I think the primary thing is to prevent this behavior from continuing into the future. And the better, we can get a match between producing things that are actually useful to the economy, you know, be they services, or goods or innovations, or whatever they are, that we can get those things to match the remuneration, then the system evolves in the right direction, to the extent that rent seeking is where the money is made, it evolves in a bad direction. So I would say that

**Heather** 21:43

we have no guidance. I think that we do have a language problem. And I am so ignorant of economics, I do not know where the term rent seeking emerges from and why the term rent is, is in there. And what it has to do historically, with the common parlance use of the term rent when people pay rent to a landlord, but the fact that defund the police, and cancel rent are two of the really, you know, the primary hashtags right now, that are part of this sort of Maoist revolution in the streets that we're experiencing, cannot be helping, when we certainly try to talk about rent seeking behavior, because people who own property, yeah, who are charging rent, for the privilege of living on that property is, you know, that is not productive in the way that generating ideas and solving societal problems is productive. But we are also when when you know, where we talk about rent seeking, we are not saying cancel rent, we're not saying get rid of landlords, we're not saying get rid of private property. And I don't know, I don't know historically, why those are two why those are the same words, it's probably the actual same word like etymologically. But it's going to be confusing.

**Bret** 22:58

So I think I think I know the answer to this. So when I'm talking about rent seekers, we're talking about what's called economic rent. Now, I believe that rent in the sense of pay your rent is actually Yes, derived from the same concept and ultimately, this conversation goes through the georgeous, the Henry George's of land value taxation fame. So this is a very interesting economic philosophy that basically views everything through a lens of land which is limited and basically proposes a I will say a single fix for all the ills that we see evolve in our, our economic structure. In fact, I think I am correct in quoting Milton Friedman, Friedman as describing land value taxation as the least worst tax, something like that.

**Heather** 23:59

Least worst?

**Bret** 24:00

Yeah, well, he wasn't a fan of taxation. The point is, even Milton Friedman recognized that there was something he tax verse in the way land functioned. And so anyway, I would say I'm not completely compelled by the judges that we have a fix that we can derive from a single shift a massive shift in the way we collect revenue. But I would say, you will, you will be delighted if you are interested in people who have a very interesting perspective to which there is a great deal, and you want to proper argument about a simple solution to a set of complex problems. This is a place to check out, check out to George's, George's also closely related and actually probably closer to my belief system, or the pigovian 's. So pigovian taxes are taxes that take externalities and return them to their proper owners. So to the extent that you are creating pollution that harms people, the point is your tax should return those costs to you. And this is a corrective mechanism that I believe is as close to a single solution to all of our biggest problems as exists now.

**Heather** 25:09

I don't want well not yet being anything close to operational.

**Bret** 25:13

It's very hard to operationalize. Yes. But from my

**Heather** 25:16

point tax is inherently something that you need to be operational.

**Bret** 25:20

right button. Let's just say, do it as a thought experiment. Oh, if you have turned every cost to the person who Jack's attack should be well, but then what is the system evolve into if you if the costs if the benefits and costs of your actions all belong to you, suddenly all kinds of obnoxious behavior disappears? Yeah, right. If the incentive

**Heather** 25:39

to game the system gets decreased to close to zero, yeah, I heard your panel on race talk about families, it's again going to be what went up yesterday, the intellectual black intellectual Roundtable, if income potential was the determining factor, Asian men would not be least likely to be swiped right on black women also, least likely, it's about Western beauty standards. Nope.

**Bret** 26:05

It's about Western beauty standards, which are a heuristic for something else, something devastating, something diabolical, that we are not aware of about ourselves, which is that our genes have a complex set of interests in who we find attractive and for what, right? In other words, there isn't just one thing that people find other people attractive for. And whether you're male or female dictates how many things you are likely to find people attractive for. And the calculus of who you should be attracted to for these different things is distinct. So you know if it were Western beauty standards, then Asian men and Asian women, I mean, eight has big place but let's just say you would expect the same valence on the decision making and in fact what you find out

**Heather** 27:00

No, that's that's a, that's an ungenerous interpretation of the statement. What do I misunderstood Western beauty standards does not presume that the west for any given population call it Asia, which obviously is not a single population has the same beauty standards for men and women has the same expectations of what is beauty and such. Oh, that's

**Bret** 27:18

not what I mean. What I mean is that you do find something like sexual racism, less so now. But sexual racism against let's say, far Asia, you

**Heather** 27:32

just use that phrase. What sexual racism? Okay.

27:35

Well, yep.

**Bret** 27:38

Sexual selectivity by population against men in the same population where women are fetishized. Yeah. Okay. Now, that's an interesting evolutionary phenomenon. And, you know, you want to know how complexes dig there.

**Heather** 27:54

But the fetishization of, for instance, East Asian women. Yep. Is that not mostly by European and European descended men? Or is there a fetishization of I mean, do do. This is crazy conversation. But you know, do do South American men fetishize East Asian women? And if so, is that again, harkening back to something that emerges out of a European ethos that describes something underlying

**Bret** 28:24

or I don't think it's arbitrary at all, is what I'm getting? Right.

**Heather** 28:27

I think this is I see that that's what you're arguing? Yeah. But

**Bret** 28:31

so first of all, we've got a confound, which is it's very hard to sort out, what is the organic state of sexual prejudice? And what is the result of the fact that, you know, if Asian women are fetishized for some organic reason, then advertisers figure this out, and they use it to sell products and the positive feedback, you get positive feedback, or my point is, you know, as you and I have seen repeatedly in Central and South America, our beauty standards get broadcast by companies into Latin America. And so, you know,

**Heather** 29:11

no, it's actually, so you've got a lot of different rabbit holes here. But one of the really interesting things about spending so much time both in Latin America where, you know, by the early 90s, when we started going there, they were already completely immersed and drenched in, in Hollywood and Western standards, right? Whereas compare that to Madagascar, where we both spent a lot of time I spent a bit more time than you did it also in the 90s, which had almost no exposure at all, like in fact, you know, if, if people asked us at all We were from, they assume we're French, because America is just not in their, in their map at all of the world. And it was a very, very different place to be, you know, the the, the standards, the expectations and the beauty standards. Were very much not in in The water in the air there. And and so decisions about who is attractive and not we're very different.

**Bret** 30:06

Yeah, they were very different. But the confound makes it difficult to know what the organic state is in which populations be responding to which prejudices in which populations have picked up a prejudice because their media is broadcasting and even if they wouldn't have arrived there themselves.

**Heather** 30:23

I guess I just don't think that, you know, you I think you respond to the question by saying absolutely not, I don't think that the idea of Western beauty standards is itself wrong, you're just saying, okay, but those standards are based on something that is more fundamental, and I'm not claiming it's moral or door nice, but it is based on something that goes deeper than just, it's not arbitrary. And this, you know, this, again, is, is the point that we make over and over and over again, in this in this book that we're working on that, you know, culture, by cultural anthropology went off the rails in the mid 20th century, in part with Clifford Geertz, who was arguing in what 1960s 70s, that culture is arbitrary. And that, therefore, you can do all of this work and cultural anthropology, with the assumption that what one culture does, could just as easily bend what another culture does, and no, that's wrong. That's wrong. Culture evolves. Just like, just like I call it evolves. And no, it's different mechanisms. Culture is not genetic. But be it genetic or developmental, or, you know, revealing itself in anatomy or Physiology or behavioral or cultural. It's all evolutionary,

**Bret** 31:39

yeah, it's passed by different hereditary mechanisms, but it's an evolutionary landscape, just the same and we argue subservient to the genetic landscape, which is not a good thing. Yeah, well, the cultural landscape is flexible, which is a great thing. It means we can change stuff in one generation if we want to. But the system we've been handed is one in which culture evolves to serve the genes. And if we want to break that linkage, which we should, we've got our work cut out for us.

**Heather** 32:10

I'm an economics undergrad trying to figure out the best way to get my PhD, Brett, I too, struggle with school and would love advice on how to succeed in a system that doesn't work well for me. And do you have any recommendations for grad schools that teach in a unique way? To the final question? No, they've all disappeared, unfortunately.

**Bret** 32:27

Yeah, no, we, in some ways, even the grad school that worked for me is largely no more. So I don't know what to say.

**Heather** 32:37

Say before you answer that first one. To the second question what I used to advise our student my students our students, when they were considering going to grad school was at least within the sciences I know less about what goes on in economics that most grad schools now you apply basically to be working under someone in their lab working on their questions so you end up basically with a degree that makes you a glorified lab tech, you know, you've you've answered someone else's questions that they've posed, but their hypotheses, their predictions, their methods, and maybe you get to do a little troubleshooting of the methods along the way. But that's what you get your degree for. That's you get a PhD from a doctor and philosophy for that, that's ridiculous. Whereas at Michigan, at least when we were there, they had Yeah, the the negative version of what they had was it was sink or swim, it had a tremendous attrition rate you know, half half of many of the entering classes of PhD students at Michigan failed out within the first few years including I think our cohort because you didn't just walk into you know, you had to you didn't go in and work with someone else who had done the thinking for you you had to generate your own ideas your own hypothesis figure out your own in our case, you know field work, you know site and I bought this as in you know, everything. And that meant when you got to the end of it, you actually do have to do science because you've done science. And compare that to a model in which it's easier it's more predictable given the graduate students are effectively really cheap labor for these universities and these Pisces principal investigators, it's more reliable to make sure that once you let them in, they're going to be around for 579 years however long it is, but if what you're actually trying to do is generate free thinking independent thinking scientists. You want a school that does not force you to slot into someone else's lab and stay there no matter what it's harder and harder to find.

**Bret** 34:31

Yeah, Michigan's program was evolutionary in more ways than one you know it use selection to find the people who could do the thing and to do it. And you know, I can't fault it entirely. It does work Yeah,

**Heather** 34:44

but it's also less like that now you know, you have to you have to go in under someone and probably you can switch but then it's hard to do so when you sort of have the stigma attached, but to the to the first part of the question, which was, you know, advice on how to succeed. If you don't If school doesn't like you,

**Bret** 35:02

well, I mean, you know, Eric and I had very different experiences, I found an advisor who saw my, my work as valuable and was willing to do what was necessary to, in the end battle all the way through my getting my degree, Eric faced something very different. So it's not like I can say, Oh, do that, because you may not be able to do that. But if you can, I would say finding the people who understand what you're up to, and why you should be there and are willing to go to bat for you is important. And I would say make sure that you you're doing what you need to do if you've got to be there. Because the thing that you really want to do in life requires you to be there, then do so but don't kid yourself these systems. They do not produce people in the expectation that there will be jobs, they produce people knowing that there will not be jobs, except for a very few and they decide who's going to get the jobs. And if you're not their designated person, then you're liable to find that your degree was in large measure a waste. So think carefully about what you're doing.

**Heather** 36:14

Next question, Are you concerned about reports of bubonic plague in Colorado, and a new virus or illness in the Central Asian states? I think we mentioned the plague. In the last one or two of these, I actually have not seen anything in the last week or so about either of these. But you know, the idea of highly transmissible potentially deadly disease is obviously not a a small one. But with regard to plague, we actually have treatment for plague. And you have doxycycline is treatment for plague. And it's been the treatment for plague for a long time plague was in Madagascar when. So when I was there, I think one of the times you were there with me, and just having you know, a lot of doxy on hand, in case you got infected was the treatment, you know, we never ran into it. But we see no evidence that the the that is evolving away from that drug in terms of the drugs efficacy. So it sounds terrifying, because we all have some enough history to know what Europe looked like in the in the second millennium. But but it's that particular thing is probably not a major deal. And I don't remember exactly what the new thing emerging in Central Asia is.

**Bret** 37:31

I think it was a new flu strain of a troubling kind. I haven't seen

37:36

anything each one and one.

**Bret** 37:40

That's more frightening. Yep. Because, you know, the thing about viruses is they reduce their machinery to almost nothing. And in so doing, they make it hard to fight them because you can't attack their machinery, because it's your machinery. They're borrowing it. So yeah, I'm more concerned about about the virus. On the other hand, on the positive side, we have now across the entire planet had a proper or at least the beginning of a proper conversation about epidemiology, and how to prevent viruses from being spread. And so my guess is, even if h one n one takes a takes hold, that we will have an easier time fending it off.

**Heather** 38:25

I don't think I understand this question. What do you think about right to repair in regard to smartphones and their electronic devices? If you think it's important, would you consider talking to Jessica Johnson on your podcasts? Lots of love from Poland?

**Bret** 38:39

I think, I don't know it means Mike. like five victims or the leader in repair. It's the right to fix your phone rather than have to get a new one.

**Heather** 38:52

Oh, okay. Okay, so that was Zach off camera.

**Bret** 38:56

Yep. So obviously, in a general sense, we would be in favor of this. I I like the ethos that if you can't open it, you don't own it. And in lots of ways, we don't really own our phones, you know, we rent our phones, and they parasitize us and it's not a fair relationship, and it's not symmetrical and we see this in lots of things that aren't inherently phone based. You know, we we obviously are broadcasting this on YouTube, and YouTube makes decisions about whether the content we are putting out is suitable for its advertisers. You know, what they didn't like, the

**Heather** 39:35

black intellectual roundtable lack intellectual, advertise them because Ooh, offensive?

**Bret** 39:39

I don't think danger dangerous, I would think yes, yeah. No. So anyway, the algorithm delivers a

**Heather** 39:47

but they have on SOC demonetize. That since you,

**Bret** 39:51

I think so although I've seen I've seen them wobble in the past. My guess is what goes on is an algorithm looks at the language or something and if You're in territory that it finds it all sensitive, it did punishes you for making the content which is insane, right? Because this is exactly the content you want in order to make the world less dangerous. So anyway, I am going to policy proposals is not affiliated with Unity 2020 I think no matter what happens there, we have to do this other thing, which is artificial intelligence. That's the category we're shooting for what we've got is artificial stupidity. So Google, that's what you've achieved. And thank you for it, I guess. But could you cut it out? Could you just leave us alone? Could you trust us? We put out good stuff go through the channel. Look at it, or is it even really bad? No. So trust us?

**Heather** 40:41

artificial stupidity, the acronym for which is ass?

**Bret** 40:46

Yes, we need another s somehow, somehow, somehow. Yeah.

**Heather** 40:50

Officials timidity somehow. Okay, hi, both. If you're not already familiar, check out Jackson browns. I am a patriot and lives in the balance. Both illustrate these times. powerfully. I'm certain that he would lend them to unity 20 2011 in the UK. Interesting.

**Bret** 41:04

Nice. Can you talk to Billy Bragg for us? Because he's gone nuts.

**Heather** 41:11

Okay, I will do four more of these. I was trying to get through all the the orange ones the $20 questions. I probably won't quite get through all of them though. Sorry, guys. My child's on educated, barely literate mother. Just start again. Okay. My child on educated, barely literate mother is getting dragged out. No. I haven't read this one yet. I just, I just rank them. I didn't read them. My child's uneducated, barely literate mother is anti school, anti vaxxer conspiracy theorist too.

41:42

By the way,

**Heather** 41:45

I want her educated because education was robbed from me and I will never get my head above water as a result. You seem pro anti school, please advise.

**Bret** 41:56

Oh, yeah. Here's the thing. There's that cruddy thing that we call school, and then there's what school should be. And here's, here's the key thing, right? civilization is squandering human potential which is despicable. Right? A human is capable of the most marvelous feats of compassion and insight, and innovation. And yet, we take this spectacular creature, and we set it to the most mundane garbage, right, we just waste everybody's time, like not just most of it, all of it, we waste entire lives, we we cripple people, by exposing them to karate lessons that don't cause them to be able to be more capable as adults, that causes them to be only capable of cog like behavior. So that's what school is, school should be the thing that figures out what the limits of human capacity are, we should be moving in that direction, we should be discovering what school looks like. And so if you hear us ranting and railing against school, it's not because we don't value what should be in that category. It's that we resent the amount of squandering of human potential that actually happens, which is immense. Yeah.

**Heather** 43:07

It's true that school is not universal in humans, but learning is. And so one of the things that we speak to is the idea that we have been handed a false equivalency in which we are basically told, don't you want your children to learn? Well, then they have to do it in school, because where else could they possibly learn? And that's school learning aren't the same thing that said, school done well, is frankly, what we were doing. We were professional educators for 15 years, never having expected to go into that, right. And to this, this book that I read from the last hour, this weapons of mass instruction, the subtitle is his school teachers journey through the dark world of compulsory schooling. So again, this this author, who, again, rants and raves about the failures of school, himself, also dedicated himself for at least twice as long maybe more than that than we did, to educating minds younger than his while still recognizing exactly where the failings in the system were. So it's tough because compulsory schooling is pretty broken. But there it's it's also it's extremely difficult to do anything else. You know, some of our most remarkable and unexpected and brilliant students had been homeschooled or unschooled at evergreen, but that takes something that takes a lot actually on the part of the family and the parents and the kid. And most families just can't manage that. Either of those things.

**Bret** 44:41

So every time we say this is what we were doing. I think it is important to say there were two things necessary for us to do what we were doing. One was complete freedom to do whatever we needed to do that freedom was a disaster in other parts of the college because it let people do nothing, right. So the jobs were too easy to get They weren't easy to get, but they were too easy to get. So we brought in lots of people who were lackluster, and then we couldn't get rid of them, there was no, there was no standard by which they could be judged. And so evergreen accumulated credit teachers. However, if you were there, and for your own reasons, you were motivated to try to figure out how best to educate people. Nobody could stop you, right, there was no compulsory education inside of the structure, you could design your own courses, and you could teach them and you had your students attention full time. So you had an incredible palette on which to paint. And so for those of us, like you and me, the small number, who were just absolutely driven to figure out what you could teach given complete freedom, it was great. And these two things gonna be separated. But

**Heather** 45:45

I mean, it worked much more effectively for old so not only were we teach in college, not k 12. But also many of our students were older than traditional age, you know, at evergreen across the board, I think the average age of the students was 25 or so and we often had students our age or older. And so we had a palette that we could share with our students and and paint onto a canvas that was open. As opposed to the kind of paint by numbers top down authoritarian approach that most modern compulsory schooling engages in and part of that, a little bit of that probably has to happen, because you do need to know how to write. And you're not going to know you're not gonna learn how to write by just hanging out in the forest. That's not where you're going to learn how to write. But the the sort of No Child Left Behind, and all of its bastard children, and the standardized testing and the amount of time taken up in the curriculum to teaching to and then the follow on, after all the standardized tests that are now taking up so much time of children, is rendering teachers on able to do the kind of work that even the best of them, the best of them wouldn't be able to do had they a bit more freedom to actually do their jobs.

47:00

Yeah.

**Bret** 47:03

Also, as great as it is to do that job, at the level of college, it is really important that we start doing the job for the youngest kids. The longer you wait, the harder it is to resurrect an awake mind. Yeah.

**Heather** 47:19

Okay, this question is about biology. Hashtag biology is invasive species, quote, the religion of biology in that to question the idea is heresy and results in excommunication, it appears to the right to the question asker that an invasive species or opportunistic species, and a point in time is preferred? Yeah, so that there's something to this

**Bret** 47:42

sort of, kinda, yeah, sort of kinda, let's put it this way, you've got to take people out of the equation, you've got some sort of mechanism that produces an equilibrium of species in each habitat, right? So you've got a certain amount of species migration, or a species that wasn't in a habitat finds its way into a habitat, you've got a certain amount of emergence of new species through speciation. And these things tend to equilibrate. Every so often, something will disperse over a very long distance. I've talked about the fact that the only mammal that is natively on land in Hawaii is a bat. Okay, some point about that wasn't in Hawaii got blown off course, maybe a pregnant bat, or maybe it was a couple bats that were flying together that got blown there. And it happened to be a male and a female who knows, but somehow about that wasn't in Hawaii ended up there. Is that natural? Of course, is it invasive? I wouldn't call it that it's a natural process. So when we say invasive, what we really mean are human transported creatures where we have solved the biological problem by transporting a creature over a gap that would not have crossed and that has resulted in it not having to solve that problem and therefore sometimes being competitively superior, and driving out species that are native. So if what you oppose is the human transportation of creatures and therefore solving a problem that they were evolutionarily unable to solve on their own, then this all makes sense. So invasive, doesn't mean migrant. It means human driven, invasive and human driven invasives are often competitively superior because they are not hamstrung by the need to disperse into the habitat.

**Heather** 49:24

And they often don't have competitors or predators or parasites within their new habitat that have millions of years of coevolution with them, so they are freed from any of the constraints of their native organisms, which they are more closely most closely aligned with niche wise, so they can move into someone else's niche and not suffer the same kind of parasites, pathogens, competitors, predators, as the native organisms do, and thus have a better chance of taking over.

**Bret** 49:54

So the ultimate thing here is if you take human transportation creatures out of the equation, you will get high diversity. If humans are allowed to transport things willy nilly because we decide invasion is just another natural process you will drive diversity through the floor. And the reason is because you will find the same superior competitors everywhere. And if you don't believe us look at Eucalyptus wrecking southamerica in Portland, English Ivy, anguish Ivy here, Eucalyptus, everyone is

**Heather** 50:26

now laughing because he knows this is one of the bane of my existence. Yes, I go out every week and tear out as much of the English ivy as I can. Not because when I'm in England, I hate Ivy, but it has no business here and it destroys the huckleberries and the salon and the sword ferns and the vine maples and everything else that would make a beautiful and productive forest, which when you take out the Ivy, you get back the creepers and the Rennes and the woodpeckers and everything else as well. And that's just the birds. But English ivy comes in and you end up with a monocrop as opposed to an actual rich, diverse ecosystem. Okay, next, so questions now from this live stream? Have you read the critiques of friars and empirical analysis of racial differences cited by Harris? They are weak, but it might be useful to discuss for those who are unable to parse that weakness? I'm not aware of this.

**Bret** 51:18

I don't know. I don't know by that.

51:20

I'm by Harris, cited by Harris cited by I don't know justice Harris.

**Bret** 51:25

Okay. Not sure.

**Heather** 51:28

Brett, your first against the wall club needs a better name. I suggest the 300 referring to the 300 Spartans at Thermopylae.

**Bret** 51:36

Okay, we will take that under advisement, we will perhaps put it to a vote at the next meeting of the first against the wall club. So you have not been you got the wall

**Heather** 51:45

pushback from both me and your brother, which, you know, it's it's somewhat rare that it's the two of us opposing an idea in very much the same words independently.

**Bret** 51:57

You're always dealing with opposing you don't agree with each other very frequently about the direction of opposition, but in this case you do seem to be aligned to that is an appalling designation, which makes me pretty sure it's right. Okay, fair enough. I'm determined to win both over

**Heather** 52:12

300,000 Thermopylae it's a good word.

**Bret** 52:15

The ropley is a great word. Yeah.

**Heather** 52:17

Okay. Next question. We are white. eight year old girl six year old boy. Oh my god. I don't know what this question means. We are white eight year old girl six year old boy anti racism. Parentheses full doctrine greater than dei meaning Diversity, Equity and Inclusion greater than their k 12. School. Is this legal? This discriminates at its core and calls us racists. I suspect I suspect there's something going on at the school with regard to the diversity Equity and Inclusion movement. But I can't I can't translate. I know you're limited by letters here. So I'm not not faulting the person who wrote the question, but I can't translate it enough to

53:06

to say I don't get it. Yeah, sorry.

**Heather** 53:10

Certain evils involve a most of us aren't consensus. Yes. As an intellectual trade off making zero day arguments, abundant dry fuels, zero day exploits. I'm concerned that a paedophile fragility illustration could escape the rhetorical lab at this point.

53:27

Hold on, what?

**Bret** 53:32

We've tried to put more and more any question.

**Heather** 53:37

So certain evils, excuse me, certain evils involve a most of us aren't consensus as an intellectual trade off. Okay. So like, hashtag not all Ben. White people never true enough, making zero day arguments, abundant dry fuel. So what's the zero day?

**Bret** 53:55

Well, zero day exploit would be something that works because nobody sees it coming. But once they've encountered it, they learned to fend it

**Heather** 54:04

off. Okay. And then I'm concerned that a PDF file for agility illustration, which is something we read last time, there was a question that came in as a

**Bret** 54:13

Oh, it was an analogy. Yeah. prove the falsity of the white fragility. Yeah, right. Yeah.

**Heather** 54:20

I'm concerned that the paedophile fragility illustration could escape the rhetorical lab at this point.

**Bret** 54:25

Oh, yeah. But I think the point is that there is no bar to this argument. The reductio ad absurdum is going to be just a reductio.

54:37

Ad.

**Bret** 54:39

Why Latin is about to fail. But it's the argument that was at one time useful to point out the absurdity of a position is going to become a position which we've seen that doesn't mean that, you know, sex is not a binary. Yeah, you know,

**Heather** 54:58

no one actually. I mean, there. There are some Really horrifying and creepy pedophilia justifying claims already beginning to move around the well

**Bret** 55:07

i mean what we see in the you know the drag kids stuff like what the heck is this? Yeah so yeah reading

**Heather** 55:17

to you know pre k kids and library reading hours sexualized. Yeah Oh god yeah. Okay. Next up, do you think that apprenticeship or rites of passage should become more common in the West as a lot of men specifically seemed to lack guidance? Well, I would say a lot of men and women seem to lack guidance that rites of passage have been not totally ubiquitous in every human culture that has been looked at, but nearly so that it is some I mean, I think, actually, so this is terrific book. I kind of think it's David, last name brown called human universals, human universals in which he basically tries to assess what are in fact, some of the many traits that show up in every single culture that has been looked at. And while he says, he's not quite sure that rites of passage or universal, I think when I look carefully at the data he's using, I would say, actually, while say, you know, death ritual isn't totally universal marriage, which wasn't totally, you know, birth ritual, if you if you go across all the kinds of rituals coming of age being the one that is being loaded to here. I think every culture does have some kind of some kind of ritual, for sure. But then rites of passage, almost all of them do. Yeah, we lost something real and graduation from high school. And for many people going to college and graduating from college used to be for, you know, a couple of decades anyway, I kind of write a passage. But it's, it's not that anymore, because it doesn't have very much more thing

**Bret** 56:57

is it's not it slots in Yeah, but it has none of the useful characteristics. So in any case, we do make exactly this argument in our book, that rites of passage are fundamental that their loss breaks an important phenomenon. And something needs to take its place. And it's a perfect Chesterton's fence situation where you may not be able to peg exactly what the rite of passage does. And you may say it's archaic. But if you eliminate it, then you discover that Oh, hey, why are there no adults? Yeah, I wonder, I wonder why. I wonder why there are no adults

**Heather** 57:31

and apprenticeship? Absolutely. I mean, there there are some kinds of work that really just mandate apprenticeship and we're losing it nearly across the board. And then you might argue that even that kind of work that doesn't necessarily require apprenticeship might benefit from it both. From the perspective of the master and the apprentice. Yeah,

**Bret** 57:50

it's great for some things carpentry, for example, not so good for sorcerer's, you can cause a lot of trouble.

**Heather** 57:57

Yeah, yeah. brooms get out of hand. Exactly.

**Bret** 57:59

All too easily,

**Heather** 58:01

all too easily. Hey, Zack, I'm hearing a lot of cat bell. You want to you want to let the cat in. So he stops going operatic on us. Okay. Where were we? Here we go. Want to hear your ideas on California. I just scrolled away too far. There we go. Want to hear your ideas on California prop 16, in which civil rights will be on the ballot in November and can be struck down to commit positive discrimination to increase black and Latino college admissions? Yeah, we were we meant we talked about this a little bit a few episodes back. I don't think we identified it by the by the name yet, but prop 16 on the California ballot.

**Bret** 58:37

So I mean, it should be pretty clear to people who follow us what we're likely to think about this, which is that this is, you know, it's the very leading edge of something that is about to overwhelm us, which is that these positive discrimination, which is of course, not positive in any useful sense of that term, is going to be installed into every system, both formally and informally. And civilization will come apart as a result. So yeah, bad, really as bad as could be. And, you know, will that one initiative be the thing that heralds the end of Western civilization? Probably not, but it does tell you what's coming down the pike.

**Heather** 59:27

Okay, I'm reading someone else's assessment here. Epstein and Maxwell ran a Mossad backed blackmail rang on global elites. The leaders of both parties are implicated in credible sexual assault allegations with contemporaneous evidence. Please take time to review Whitney Webb's investigative journalism. Her okay. I don't know anything about Messiah involvement.

**Bret** 59:51

Yeah, I don't either. But, you know, Eric has talked extensively about what might account for the Epstein phenomenon and yeah, possibility.

**Heather** 1:00:03

This is Fairfax everyone to consumer grade uv blacklights kill COVID? And if so, should we make cosmic bowling the new national pastime?

**Bret** 1:00:15

Yes. And definitely yes, yes, for sure. Yes, I believe they do. There is a fair amount of work now on different types of UV and how effective they are. But I think even the ones that are least effective are still effective enough to be useful. So yes, yes to the bowling and, you know, orderly

**Heather** 1:00:34

dress. Oh, what do we dress?

**Bret** 1:00:36

Alright, what do you wear as much weight as possible? Because then it speeds up the black line,

**Heather** 1:00:42

you don't end up with a bowling ball through you know, it's

**Bret** 1:00:44

not a safety thing. It's a cool thing.

**Heather** 1:00:46

I see. Yeah, safety. Third, as I once said to students, for nothing bad happened, actually.

**Bret** 1:00:56

Things you could regret saying in court.

**Heather** 1:00:58

Yes, yes. Yes, it was a day in which no one almost died. So it was a good day it worked out. Yeah. You guys don't think consciousness? You know? You guys don't think conscious awareness is fundamental. But without it, nothing would matter. Do you really think universe in which nothing matters could sustain could spontaneously produce the capacity to matter? Anything? You've quickly misunderstood our position? conscious? Oh, well, it's, it's fundamental. Okay. So it depends on what you mean by fundamental. So there's a couple of different meanings in the word fundamental here.

**Bret** 1:01:31

Yeah. matter. Um,

**Heather** 1:01:35

humans wouldn't be humans without consciousness. But the idea that consciousness is fundamental in that it that it came before it matter, its primary is, is the thing that we say no, that's pen psychism. And no, that doesn't work. That doesn't make sense or

**Bret** 1:01:53

even, even just before creatures would be absurd. So I think you have a couple of what Daniel Dennett calls deportees

**Heather** 1:02:02

in here, where this actually may be tongue in cheek this

**Bret** 1:02:06

question, somebody is messing with us? Yeah. All right. Well, it's good to

**Heather** 1:02:10

be the green who's who's asked questions for Do you really think universe in which nothing aside? Yeah, I think he's exactly playing with fundamental and matter here.

1:02:17

All right. Well, he feels Me and Me, too. Okay. Yeah. Fair enough,

**Heather** 1:02:21

erupted, though, why don't you answer it in good

**Bret** 1:02:23

faith, I was going to argue that I think there are two DVDs in that statement, a DVD being a term that shifts meaning inside of a claim that results in a false paradox. So what is the famous example I

**Heather** 1:02:46

can't remember?

**Bret** 1:02:48

I don't know it has to do with has to do with love being just a word. And the idea is that love is actually a phenomenon, but it's also a word. So if you slide between those two meanings, you can create logical problems. So anyway, I think matter and matter, is playing that role. Yeah,

**Heather** 1:03:05

I agree. And fundamental to, it's just not sliding actively within this framing. Does the fact that there are less Y chromosomes than men explain behaviors like group rape? Or why has the probability to be passed, even if without the rest of the genome is group rape more probable, if the Y is shared within the group? This is asked by a woman Incidentally, which at least changes my way to

**Bret** 1:03:34

last part of the question is possible.

1:03:39

Yeah, but never thought of it before. But

**Bret** 1:03:41

it would have to be triggered by the Y chromosome carrying sequences that would function in their own interest, which is unlikely given the nature of Y chromosomes that we actually find. In other words, that may be why the Y chromosomes have been genetically largely shut down. But anyway, it's not it's not impossible that such a thing could evolve. Although I guess the question is why? Why is the Why cry if the Y chromosome is shared, then it doesn't really have an interest in more than one male participating in the meeting. Unless By the way, in order for this to be an acceptable thing for us to be discussing, I think we have to be discussing insects or something like that.

**Heather** 1:04:30

Which of course don't have. Yeah, determination. Yeah. Do voles. All right.

**Bret** 1:04:36

vole, voles, it is sorry, voles. If there are any voles watching, we apologize.

**Heather** 1:04:42

I'm not apologize if

**Bret** 1:04:45

it must be late in the podcast, we've gotten to whether or not we're apologizing to voles. So the question is, what's the advantage to the chromosome of getting more than one male involved? It's not obvious to me that there is one yeah. But could such a thing emerge evolutionarily Yes, if there was a sequence carried on the Y chromosome that could advance its own interest in this way, there are, of course, lots of other systems that have the same nature, but not the same mechanism of action, like driving genetic elements that cause themselves to be in a larger fraction of gametes than they would be. And normally, sometimes by killing off some fraction of gametes, so that the fertilizing gamete always carries the element. This comes at a fitness cost to the individual, but it advances the interest of the element in question. So those things exist. And I think that's kind of the model for what you're looking for here. Yep. All right. Interesting question.

**Heather** 1:05:48

Next. Okay, let's do a few more. Someone is saying, again, as we talked about the end of the last live stream, Barry Weiss resigned for the New York Times because it was a hostile work environment owing to political orthodoxy. Yeah, that's that's pretty much it. Next question. Well,

**Bret** 1:06:08

actually, as long as they were on that topic, here's the hostile work environment, that's illegal, the employer has an obligation to correct that. Now, here's the question. Would a court be able to hear that argument at court is certainly supposed to hear that argument. But at the moment, it might be impossible to get a court to get for a judgment, there was a hostile work environment. And you know, we found the rudiments of this as we were fixing to, to sue the state for allowing evergreen to be a hostile work environment. And the problem was, in the courts, there was already this woke ideology that, you know, made them more interested in painting us as, as racist, then in engaging the fact that they actually had people roving a campus with baseball bats hunting professors. I mean, come on. Yep. So it's a question.

**Heather** 1:06:58

Next question. In the same vein, why do human beings enjoy the sound of birdsong? I love this question. Yeah.

**Bret** 1:07:06

I mean, I think this one is, it's let's put it this way, the first order answer is easy. We look for proxies for productivity. Why do you find a particular Valley beautiful, and another one, in hospitable, that's going to tend to correlate to how likely you are to be able to find things that your ancestors might have eaten there or to grow things that your ancestors might have grown there. So you can imagine that we could have all kinds of creatures function as like an omen that says, Yes, this is the spot. And the Yes, this is the spot creature is just one that tends to be seen in places that are good and doesn't tend to be seen in places that are bad.

**Heather** 1:07:45

So this is probably wrong. But one thing that occurs to me is that one of the leading hypotheses for why primates experienced an adaptive radiation when they did, which is the earliest primates existed before the KT boundary before chicks love hit, what's now the Yucatan about 65 million years ago, 6 million years ago, but that we really expanded quite a bit afterwards. And that this was, the expansion was Yes, about the opening of niches, as all the non avian dinosaurs were now out of the way. But one of the hypotheses also has to do with the coevolution, of angiosperms of flowering plants. And if and because primates are largely like songbirds, frugivores, or many songbirds are pollinators as well. But frugivores or insectivores, the insects themselves being affected. Yeah, so if all if all of these, basically if primates were in part co evolving along with angiosperms, flowering plants, I suspect, although I know much less about how we've mapped songbyrd evolutions of songbirds is a is a real group passerines. It's a real evolutionary group. I suspect that they also experienced an adaptive radiation with angiosperms flowering plants, because how could they not they're mostly eating the same stuff, as possibly the primates and songbirds are both sort of mapped on to the same moment in plant evolution. And that, if we were all adaptively reading at the same time, we would come to basically have our aesthetic at a most fundamental level, be that with whom we were evolving at the same time, although not exactly coevolving because we aren't dependent on songbirds for the most part, they aren't big enough to for us to be eating them. And they're mostly birds and mammals are eating different seeds of different toxins, different preferences, but it could have been a sort of emerging life at the same time, and such as such a shared vision of a beauty.

**Bret** 1:09:51

Yep. I mean, there was a lot in that explanation. I like

**Heather** 1:09:56

it. It seems like I said, it's probably wrong because there's two hinges on too much at some level, but

**Bret** 1:10:02

I'm cautiously betting in favor of it right. And I would say that the, you know, we really at the end, it's just basically then songbirds are a proxy for a productive angiosperm ecosystem in which plants are paying to have their seeds distributed. Yeah. And that's likely to be a good place for people.

1:10:22

Yeah. Yeah. I love that question. More questions like that? Yeah,

**Bret** 1:10:27

that's a good one.

**Heather** 1:10:28

What role has postmodernist thinking played in the recent protests and riots is the school of thought plus social media? What drives behavior to engage with only the periphery of info part of the root cause? That went a little off the rails at the end? But yeah, I mean, this, many of our most recent live streams have been to this question and most of the people on the street wouldn't be able to name a postmodernist thinker. Probably, some of them could, because they've been schooled in it. I schooled, I use the word schooled intentionally. But the fact that many people couldn't tell you about Foucault or Derrida or Marcos or whoever doesn't mean that that's it's not emerging from this, this critical theories, which is a direct outgrowth of post modernism.

**Bret** 1:11:18

Yeah. I think our friends,

**Heather** 1:11:21

Helen pluck rose and Jim Lindsay and Jim Lindsay and Helen pluck rose. Well, Helen pluck rose and Jim Lindsey specifically have a book out in August of this year that's already available for preorder. We've got a copy on the way to us right now. So I'm not ready yet, but I'm just, I'm certain it's excellent. called cynical theories, in which they won't they deconstruct the deconstructionists and I believe go after specifically, you know, the the claims of racism and sexism and transphobia, and ableism, and, you know, fat phobia and all of these things, by going back to the so called primary literature, and pointing out the origins of these things, yes,

**Bret** 1:12:04

I was gonna say was that they have a term they use, which is, I think it's functional postmoderns. And the idea of give her the idea being that you don't need to know, you don't need to know that you're operating a postmodern philosophy in order to operate one. And so the fact that they don't know Derrida is immaterial?

**Heather** 1:12:26

Do you need a software engineer with 15 plus years of experience to build cloud infrastructure, Docker streaming, etc? I want to contribute.

**Bret** 1:12:34

We might well, maybe, yeah.

**Heather** 1:12:37

So Zack, you want to? It's 51? How does unity 2020 have to deal with Congress that you think they will Stonewall, you especially since both sides will hit you? Do you have any plans to put up candidates for Congress? That last question is one we haven't heard before. So you have said we're not going to go into details, because we don't want them to see us coming?

**Bret** 1:13:00

Well, at some level, let's put it this way we can talk about the Congress issue. First of all, there are a lot of in every place in the system, you have people who are going to operate according to the corrupt modality of the system, because frankly, it's the smart thing to do, right? You can starve yourself by not participating. You can be a jerk, and you can be corrupt no matter what. Or you can function according to the rules of the system as you find them and hope for better rules. And so some fraction of the Congress is going to be people who would love to be freed. But here's the thing for unity 2020 to work, we need a groundswell sufficient to draft these candidates. That groundswell is a credible threat against people who Stonewall in the Congress. In other words, the reason that this can succeed is that people are livid at how they're being treated by their government. To the extent that you have people in Congress who find themselves faced with a presidential team that has been elected specifically to drain the swamp, there is an incentive to declare yourself not of the swamp to take a pledge, perhaps that would prevent you from participating in swamp like behavior. And I believe there are many ways that this could function. So it's not it's not a small issue, but let's just say, the groundswell that tells the apparatus that we are completely sick of being treated this way and being parasitized is the key, not only to changing the people in the White House, but to change it in the Congress.

**Heather** 1:14:39

Okay, we're going to make quickly go through these six. Knowing that we're going well beyond our our john mentioned a change in black communities between 1960 and 1980. I don't know if this is probably McWhorter, rather than with Jr.

**Bret** 1:14:55

I believe so but I need to hear more. Okay.

**Heather** 1:14:58

So john, this is referenced To the black intellectuals Roundtable, which you moderated that was posted on this channel yesterday, john mentioned and had two of the men named john john McWhorter and john wood Jr. JOHN mentioned a change in black communities between 1960 and 80. Could this be linked to the change in black music? For the love and peace values of Motown to violence, money and objectifying women and rap, especially for young black men?

**Bret** 1:15:27

Yes or No,

**Heather** 1:15:28

that is very interesting. My

**Bret** 1:15:29

guess is the music is a symptom. And that in effect, what you have is a

1:15:38

a

**Bret** 1:15:40

pattern in which it is clear that the hope for trajectory has been abandoned, right, that something is now in the way, right. So you had the hopeful progress of the civil rights movement, and then you have something get derailed. And I guess the point is, people who find that a system is no longer responsive to their needs, become cynical about it and rebellious against it, and they generate their own culture that no longer participate. So, you know, I don't want to claim to know more about it than I do. But I do think you have to ask yourself the question, just the shift in music over the same period of time doesn't tell you whether that is a symptom of the same phenomenon, or whether it is causal. And my guess is, it isn't causal, that the nature of music and human beings is that it's going to track our mindsets, rather than drive them.

**Heather** 1:16:37

Just to get back to the question. They do say linked, so that doesn't, although I read it, as you did, as Could it be causal. The idea of linkage i think is actually almost certain now that you say at I mean, it does, it does match, the greater cultural change. And so, you know, probably there's interplay back and forth. But more likely, the music

**Bret** 1:17:02

is effect, there is another factor that we have to cover, which is that the Motown era was accompanied by some predatory business practices against black artists, in the extreme, so lots of black artists who produced really important music and had a powerful influence, were just shut out of the benefits of what they had created. And so and the music itself was also altered by the fact that in some sense, part of what it did was appeal to black audiences. But part of what it did was appeal to white audiences too. And so there's a lot of stuff that might not have been organically produced in the black community that was nonetheless saleable. And so there's kind of a presentation of black culture that was more palatable to white culture. And to the extent that black artists rightly got more powerful, got more credit, got more of the money from the music they produced, they also became independent of that structure. And so I don't know how those things fit together. But my guess is that what we are seeing partly is constraint in the Motown era, and that the removal of some of that constraint resulted in a very different presentation.

**Heather** 1:18:24

Okay, five more, do your Heather and Brett, I would love to see a list of books you recommend you two are great. I do have on my Patreon at the $17 tier, various lists of recommended books, I've got a list of science books I recommend, I just put up some science fiction. And every time I walk by our bookshelves that you installed in our house when we moved here, having lost our office space and our sort of extensive libraries when we left evergreen, I think I just I love being able to have the books that we have and wish we had even more space for more of them. Not a thought you necessarily often experience but but Yeah, I do. I do have some up. Some such lists up. Next question. What are your thoughts on the letter on justice and open debate published July 7 in Harper's, Have either of you thought about signing it?

**Bret** 1:19:21

We were not asked to sign it. I would not have signed it. Would you have signed it?

**Heather** 1:19:26

I don't think so. But it's hard to know. It's easy to say? Probably not. But

**Bret** 1:19:30

I think we should cover this. I thought we might get to it today. And we didn't but I must say I'm very troubled by that letter. Not so much for what it does say but how it divides people who naturally are not to be divided must not be divided. And anyway, so I found the letter very troubling. That said, we have a tremendous number of friends on that list. You signed that letter. And so they in some sense had been dragged into something, I think, my guess is they would have the same complaints about it that we would. So let's cover it more in detail next time.

**Heather** 1:20:18

Oh, this is a this is from someone who I think we ended with last time with regard to the white fragility book club. And we had said, we're not sure what kind of what your person of color status is, and therefore, what you might be able to do if you are walking into a white fragility book club with mostly middle class white woman. It's just I think, what I remember you saying, the rest of the people where you say hello, again, I'm mixed Latino, and Persian, with Marxist immigrant parents. I'm a male, cultural, Christian and libertarian, and the first person with my last name to be a citizen and get a degree. Love.

1:20:56

Thank you. Wow, that's

**Heather** 1:20:57

awesome. And I would be curious to know how that went to that book club went if you did it. penultimate question here just a comment. Reach out to biologists in Alaska. It's really complicated. Barrow and Wolf seasons are managed around moose, etc.

**Bret** 1:21:13

Okay. I'm prepared to be wrong about bears, but I just have a soft spot in my heart for that.

**Heather** 1:21:19

Yeah, you do. Okay, final question for today. Hi, Heather, and Brad, have you considered having Michael Shellenberger on the podcast he shares your concerns about the climate crises but comes to different conclusions about nuclear power?

**Bret** 1:21:31

He comes to different conclusions about a lot of things and I must say I have occasionally seen Michael Shellenberger say things that I agree with, but I am very frequently alarmed by the perspective that he arrives at. So it's not that I wouldn't consider talking to him. I would but I would say to those of you who are watching Michael, proceed with caution, where where he talks about nuclear power, I feel he is clearly dead wrong, and dangerously so. And I suspect a hidden agenda that has something to do with perverse incentives.

**Heather** 1:22:10

You want me to you want to end there like I said, or do you want to end not on Shellenberger that's fine? We can end on filmer. Okay. That's it that that's it. Well, that's our ending until you have

**Bret** 1:22:23

survived another Dark Horse live stream Q and A with Breton. Heather

**Heather** 1:22:30

will be back on what is today. Today is Tuesday. Today is Tuesday. We will be back on Saturday.

**Bret** 1:22:35

We're gonna we're gonna be back on Saturday. I'm gonna get out away. Yes, of course.

**Heather** 1:22:40

But you're not going to be sitting there the whole time. I'm

**Bret** 1:22:42

trying to get out of this chair really soon. I might even get on a bicycle. Nice. Yeah. All right. Well, thanks for joining us. We will see you next time.