Your Questions Answered - Bret and Heather 49th DarkHorse Po...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 05:17

Hey folks, welcome back to Dark Horse podcast live stream a and Q section extravaganza number 49.

**Heather** 05:26

We're starting with the answers this time we are starting with the do it Jeopardy sired by jeopardy. All right. All right. Okay. Obviously we should start with 42. Yes. And you're turning.

**Bret** 05:38

Well played. You got nothing. I got zero. It was a bluff.

**Heather** 05:43

Yeah, my guess. Okay. We will start with a few questions from Episode 48. And then a question from the discord. And then move into your questions from last hour before moving into questions from this our first question from a week ago? Can you think of a reason for the seemingly universal nature of pilgrimages across time and cultures?

**Bret** 06:06

Sure. Yeah, I mean, I can think of a lot of them. There's one in particular, I've spent a good deal of time thinking about you and I both have the pilgrimage of the wheat Chol, people in search of pod, cross Mexico to collect peyote once a year. And in that case, I would argue that there is a the population has likely moved over this distance. And so a pilgrimage that causes you to return to some ancestral landscape regularly, a keeps you in contact with the information about what the intervening space looks like.

**Heather** 06:52

That is to say it provides a regularly updated map that is not just held by a select few,

**Bret** 06:59

right, and so that has a great deal of potential importance just ecologically speaking, maintaining that kind of information. In the case of the wheat roll and the pod, obviously, the pod is playing a tremendous cultural role. And so there's a necessity to move to another part of the world in order to do one, this daily ecological stuff, but to maintain contact with the pod cactus would make sense. But anyway, I guess the point would be, there are a couple of reasons, a couple of styles and reasons. One, it could be that a journey that causes you to return over some landscape informs you about something that is ecologically important to know. It could be that pilgrimages cause you to basically touch base with something cultural, from which too much divergence is a danger. And so that there's a synchronizing aspect that to the extent that you keep returning to some location or return to some location at one point and know that you will, at some point in your life, keeps you from dispensing with all of the architecture that goes along with whatever that cultural tradition has. So I would say it is a kind of spatial conservatism, that has probably preserved populations against too much change.

**Heather** 08:18

Great. Yep. No, I think that's, that's spot on. And, you know, Twitch, I would just add that the, what I already said, the universal value of having an accurate and regularly updating map of the area around you, perhaps just the area that historically your people have lived in, or perhaps it's a area of a watershed, you know, some some area, presumably that will change over time, as all do some more rapidly than others, that would allow you to understand what an escape plan might look like what a new kind of move might look like. And that is not. It is not static, in terms of a map that was drawn 50 years ago, and who knows what's happened. So

**Bret** 09:05

I guess I would add one more thing. This came up in my conversation with Christine Brophy and Scott Barry Kaufman on unity campfire this week, but there's this sense amongst moderns, that you were effectively entitled not to suffer not to struggle. And that therefore suffering and struggle is taken to be some kind of a an indication of a failure of something. And this is utter nonsense, right? struggle and suffering are inherent to accomplishment. And so I have a few rituals that I think of as toughening myself up, you know, things that I know I find unpleasant. And I do them and my senses This is necessary for me to be able to face things that I don't necessarily see coming So you can imagine that a population, choosing a regular struggle would keep people in that frame of mind and actually, also fasting could certainly work this way that you know that a regular like an annual fast would cause you to keep in touch with what it's like to be hungry and to know that it's not the end of the world.

**Heather** 10:25

Absolutely. And no, no coincidence. I think that some form of pilgrimage and some form of fast exists in many religions. Yes, exactly. Adults born preterm have a preterm behavioral phenotype, resulting in tidiness and neuroticism. How does being born preterm impact other animals? So the first answer to that is I don't know what I'm not sure that that we know because I'm not sure that preterm is reliably enough a thing anywhere else. That it's been, it's been looked at.

**Bret** 10:58

Yeah, I would say in nature in general, preterm is going to mean not viable, right.

**Heather** 11:03

And so you just you never get to discovering what the behavioral phenotype might look like,

**Bret** 11:07

right. On the other hand, runts are a feature of litters, and it's not preterm, but it has some of those characteristics. And I say the runt is going to have neuroticism or something like neuroticism and insecurity because basically, it is an evolutionary attempt in it, you know, you can imagine, the pregnancy starts and then the year turns out spectacular than having produced an extra that is that is denied resources in utero, but can be brought to full size is an evolutionary win. And so that individual should expect that to the extent that it's not a good year that they're actually most likely to perish and maybe to be abandoned by by the parent. And so you would imagine that neuroticism and demonstrating strength and all of these things that might increase the chances of surviving to adulthood would be features of that personality type.

**Heather** 12:06

Yeah, I'm not sure demonstrating strength, it seems to me would be a feature and yet it's not. I don't know. I've never heard this pre term behavioral phenotype term before. But timidness and neuroticism strike me as not in in line with demonstrating strength but we do see that in rents of litres and of course, you know, humans humans don't bear litters. humans tend the vast majority of inbred Singleton's with twins being a very small percentage, and really more than that, being almost entirely a manifestation of modern technology. Right? Yeah. Okay. Please discuss voting as a right and responsibility. Vote your conscience. What effects does not voting have? Vote shaming topic? Is this neck sounds? I'm not sure exactly what that means. Love you guys. But I like the general topic here. Is it? Is it both a right and responsibility?

**Bret** 13:02

Well, I want to be a little careful, because I think there is a way in which it is your responsibility. And I wish people took it as one. But I don't necessarily think a uninformed vote is such a great thing. So to the extent that voting is your responsibility, you should figure out what you should actually be voting for, on the other hand,

**Heather** 13:22

so that if I may, it's not that voting is the is the entirety of the responsibility. If you're going to vote, you should, it should be an informed vote. Informed voting should be the responsibility that you understand yourself to have not merely voting.

**Bret** 13:36

Yes, but I want to put a giant asterisk on that because that was the asterisk. I want to put an asterisk on the asterisk. Yeah, that does sound like Yeah, Yeah, it does. But the thing that we all face in our voter pamphlets is almost impenetrable. And you can't be informed. And who are these judges? And you know, so the point is, to the extent that there's this temptation to finger wag at people and say, Oh, you know, those uninformed voters, the point is, well, we set them up for failure, we set ourselves up for failure. And so ideally, what you want is a system that gives you the ability to vote on that which you have the ability to be informed about, and delegates where it needs to delegate to people who can handle the responsibility. And of course, what we have is a giant, you know, corrupt entity, that it stands in place of all this and it loves to hand us confusing garbage and manipulate us into feeling emotional about it, and all the things that it does. But ideally, yes, you would want people to take, you know, voting as a privilege and a responsibility and to treat it very seriously. Now, one thing I would say is, there's a longer discussion for another time about the fact that if you take all of the things People who don't vote, and you separate them into two groups, there are people who don't care. They're apathetic, they're not paying attention. They don't see themselves as having a stake. Yep. And then you take you separate them from the people who are frustrated and angry that they never have something they feel good about voting for. Yep. Right. That second group is very large. And if you compile them with all of the people who do vote for one of the major party candidates, there are enough votes in that group to transform civilization. And the fact that we are told, well, first of all, we're fine with you not voting, basically, we're going to give you an awful situation and drive you out. And people are going to feel good about not voting, because they know that voting is stupid, which in some sense, it has become that this causes a collective failure of imagination. That is the difference between us succeeding or continuing to fail in the same way. So at some level, we have to rescue the idea of protest vote from the concept that it is a pointless waste of your power, because in fact, there's a ton of power in voting for things other than the major party candidates, if it registers somewhere in the system, you know, doesn't like to count those votes, because it doesn't want there to be power in it. It fears that those who are angry and disaffected will actually rise up against the system and insist on something better. And so what it does is it falsely convinces us that we have no power, the only thing we can do is choose between evils. And if we choose to do anything else, that's because we're naive children who have decided to waste our vote. It's nonsense. It's not a waste of about it's a very powerful thing. Now, personally, I think of myself at the point, you know, what do I know, I've already lost this election, I know that my candidate won't win because my candidate is not running. It's not on the ballot. Right. So I've already lost this one. Does that mean there's nothing to be done? No, I'm voting in the next election. Right? I'm voting in 2020. In the next election, by registering the fact that I don't accept this lesser evil garbage.

**Heather** 17:21

I don't know what that means. I'm voting in 2020. In the next election, I don't know what that sentence means.

**Bret** 17:26

It means that by voting against the duopoly, one registers that there is a massive political movement waiting to be spoken to. And that that signal is power. It is not power to change things in 2020. But it is power to change things in the future. So if you think about elections, you know, we are basically convinced to think of elections in isolation, right? But it is obviously an iterated game. And if this, you know, if you were to analyze them, if you were an alien coming to earth to analyze our elections, you wouldn't sit down and think of them as one off puzzles, you would think of them as iterated. Yep. That affects the game theory. So think of elections as iterated, and it changes what you ought

**Heather** 18:06

to do. No. And that's actually part of the lesser of two evils argument is it assumes that you're always an end game. It assumes that you're always an end game. If you don't do it now. Everything will end. Yep, absolutely. Actually, the next question, the final question for Episode 48 is related to that last one. Why does being demanded to vote by celebrities and the media feel like propaganda? I've always had a strange feeling about I voted stickers and comments like if you don't vote, you can't complain. So like, we can't we kind of, you've kind of touched on this, but pick up a little bit more?

**Bret** 18:38

Well, I would, I would add one thing, I do think you should vote so that it is not ambiguous as to whether you are apathetic or disaffected. If you are disaffected. You want to register as disaffected and not as a non participant, right? And the way to do that is to vote. So it's clear, you're willing to spend the effort and frankly, it's not a huge effort, right? But you want to register is willing to spend the effort and not up for this bullshit, right? That's the powerful move. And so, you know, I do think if you didn't do that, it makes it ambiguous as to whether or not you have a right to complain, to complain, because you might be apathetic. And if you're apathetic or lazy, then the point is actually it does reduce your right to complain. So I sort of believe it now, celebrities. You know, unfortunately, this is just evolutionary propaganda. It is propaganda. And it's a it's a novelty problem. The fact that because we are exposed to celebrities, and we recognize them, it sort of feels like they're people in our little town. Yeah. And they're not. Yeah, right.

**Heather** 19:42

So my good friend, the person will never meet tells me I need to vote.

**Bret** 19:45

Okay, right. Exactly. Yeah, exactly.

**Heather** 19:49

Okay, next question from the discord server this week. So people on the discord server vote, post questions. I, as I understand it, and then vote on which one they want us to address each week? What would be the best steps towards returning the K 12 program to a functional level of employment readiness and graduates? Is there a way we can reduce the perceived necessity of higher education and have completeness be restored to a high school diploma? Teaching towards higher education seems off the mark. Teach I agree, teaching towards higher ed seems off the mark. And you know, this, there are there's the school that we met at in high school. And as a as like many other elite private schools are called college prep college preparatory. Right. And that's that is clearly what it is that they are doing. And yet actually, the school where we met did Far, far, far more than that. And I would say that it did not. It also did not make the mistake of what I think is intrinsic to this question, which is employment readiness. This is this is the thing that we hear from most people who are saying, look, the liberal arts have gone off the rails, that's not what we need. We need to know what it is we need to train people to be ready to enter the workforce and be employable. And that was more true 2050 and 100 years ago than it is now. And even when it was more true, because the future adven was more predictable, and looked more like the immediate past, it was still not the highest and best goal of education, the highest and best goal of education should be helping people realize their full potential so they can live as maximally productive. however you define that, and creative and content, I guess citizens of the society in which they were born. And so that, that that liberal arts goal, which is explicitly not about training, it's about thinking, can live side by side can exist side by side with the more sort of trades oriented goals of training. The the additional problem with the training goal right now is we don't know what the future looks like. We don't know what employment looks like, we don't know what jobs look like, are going to look like. And so the idea that, especially current educators are going to be able to train kids for tomorrow's jobs is laughable. I would say.

**Bret** 22:25

Yeah, it's laughable. On the other hand, I don't think today's educators are well positioned to do either job. No, they're not. And that's, that's a tragedy. So I do think that there's something that haunts this discussion, which is that the choice we've got a dichotomy, which is false, because there's another thing that we could teach for. So in other words, there's this well, you know, maybe overly simplistic or idealistic idea of, you know, empowering you to see the full glory of the human experience, right, the liberal arts thing, which, you know, if you're in a position to take advantage of it is a great thing. If it's done well, which it generally isn't.

**Heather** 23:14

And, and it won't be everyone's cup of tea, or, nor will everyone be in a position to feel like they can afford to spend time there. Well,

**Bret** 23:22

I think if it was done, well, it would be everybody's cup of tea, because what it would really be doing is giving you the higher order tools in order to figure out what the

**Heather** 23:32

puzzles we're gonna play games we're gonna engage in, in sport with an academic bent. Yeah, right.

**Bret** 23:38

If what it did was make you really smart and aware and motivated, self motivated, such that you could do what you set your mind to. Right, then the point is, yeah, that's everybody's cup of tea, if you can do it. Now in general, we don't think we can do it. Because by the time students get to a place where it might be done, they're too damaged, in general for it to be done. And the teachers just aren't in a position to deliver it less and less. So in some sense.

**Heather** 24:08

Yeah, less and less so in part because teaching now like policing has become less and less of a vaunted profession. And so people going into it are less likely to be sort of the best at what they do. That said, there are many many many awesome teachers out there who are just hamstrung, yes, by and you know that this is the bigger problem, I think, then that let you know that there are no teachers who can do the job like no, there are plenty of teachers who can do the job, but they're being prevented from doing the job, precisely because well, in part, the teaching towards the test the number of days and number of hours in any given school year that are devoted to prep, Test Prep or test taking, and what's the test for the test is about college prep. So you know that's, that doesn't serve actually I think, anyone like if those teachers were allowed to actually teach And if the good teachers were allowed some freedom to actually do what they could do, then then we might have a better educational system.

**Bret** 25:08

I know I'm not really disagreeing with you. But I do disagree that there are lots of good teachers. And in part, there aren't lots of good teachers, because the system doesn't provide enough freedom. If you're a good teacher, that means that you're, you have effectively been armed with this mindset. And then you are going to absolutely bridle against the requirements that are put in your way. And so the point is, by massively underpaying so that we don't, you know, reward those who might have a passion for it. And then hamstringing teachers, basically what we've done is we've driven the talent out. And that's not to say that there are no good teachers left there are but it is the exception, not the rule, because it's people who have to have all of these immunities and ability to see past these stupid structures in order to do anything that feels reasonable. And I think frankly, it's getting harder and harder. So yeah,

**Heather** 26:11

no, it is it is getting harder and harder, I would say, it's, it's not just the money, it's really it's easy to say, and I believe it to be true. And in fact, I said the same thing as well, that we don't, you know, we don't pay teachers, enough, that makes it hard to attract the best and the brightest. That said, back when back when we were at evergreen, and I was I was the faculty represented granted, faculty representative for the Council of faculty representatives in Washington state for one year, which is to say, evergreen and the other boy, five, four year public schools in the state of Washington, all met once a month on one of the campuses, and then during the ledge session, we would go and, you know, speak the needs of higher ed to the, to the state, at least that was the idea didn't really work out that way. But at one point, early on, we ended up with basically pay sheets. And there were representatives from University of Washington and Washington State University, the you know, the two PhD granting institutions in the state of Washington that are public, as opposed to Western, central, eastern, and evergreen, which are masters level institutions, I think still, and the pay for faculty at U dub and at Washington State. And indeed at the other three was all sort of as you expect for faculty. And they somehow were complaining, you know, there was legitimate complaint about how low high school teachers pay was because the idea was that if we get the pipeline better, we'd be getting better college students in. And what I looked at these numbers of what high school teachers were being paid in most parts of the state, they were higher than what evergreen faculty were being paid. So evergreen was famously terrible at paying its faculty, right. And this was actually, this was after our pay had climbed a little bit, it was still just quite low. And yet, what we used to say, and I think you innovated This was we got paid in freedom. So yeah, we we made plenty to earn Yeah, it was cheap to live in Olympia. So you know, we've made plenty to live to live nicely, but you couldn't really move anywhere else on that pay on on either the coasts and buy a house with the kind of money that we were making for most of the time that we were there. What we had making less than most high school teachers in the state, that they didn't have almost any of was the freedom to make the decision decisions to think about what we wanted to teach what we wanted to take students where we wanted to all of these things. And increasingly, the public k 12 system has a gives basically no freedom at all towards teachers. So I don't know, I don't know how you can even tell if there are how many good teachers that are left in the system at this point. And like I can, I can say, we can speak for hours about what we actually think about the faculty of evergreen. And you know, we've made snide comments in the past. And that's not what we're going to do here now. Because we really know because there was so much freedom that people revealed themselves with what they did, and mostly did not do. But how would you even tell with regard to the teachers given how constrained they are, by all of the by all of the especially testing protocols that are being handed them?

**Bret** 29:29

Well, I mean, a there's a sort of stands to reason criteria. Job pays like crap, and you have a passion for it, but you're unable to deploy that passion because of all of the rules. You go do something else. Yeah. I also think that sort of matches the you know, experience and you know, we do meet occasionally, these subversive teachers who are figuring out how to teach in spite of the rules, right? biopic schools. Yeah. In the past. Schools, but it's I think the answer is just evidence. So one last thing I want to say is, the problem is as soon as you get away from a pure liberal arts bent, the idea is, oh, you're teaching for employers, right? You're teaching to what the employers want. There is another category, right? We could arm you to be good at stuff to be good at thinking to be problem solving, which means Hey, you might become an employer. We're not trying to please employers, we're trying to make employers so

**Heather** 30:34

well. I mean, this is what you and I used to talk about and and teach about, actually and present to evergreen people when they would listen, when we were still there was we need, you know, we need a reframing of the liberal arts that does not simply inherent, inherit the readings and philosophies of 100 years ago, yeah, but actually imagines what it would be like to be an informed and self sufficient citizen of the 21st century.

**Bret** 30:58

Yeah. And I would add, self motivated, yes, the worst possible job on this front, and it means that everybody is waiting for somebody to tell them what to do. And it's a disaster predictably. Absolutely. We have to figure out how to build self motivated problem solving people, which frankly, will be happier, more effective, more economically productive people to say, hey, let's do that.

**Heather** 31:24

Let's do that. Let's do it. Alright, let's move on to questions from the last hour. I tried to get my msnbc addled parents to watch Darkhorse. It was too big a shock to the system. Do you have any suggestions for introducing folks to life outside the cable news paradigm and and non threatening way?

**Bret** 31:41

Well, have you tried restraints of some kind? so that they don't really have a choice? I don't know. That's a terrible answer. I'm terrible answer. Yeah, it's a terrible answer. No, I, you, you know, the people you're trying to persuade. And the problem is no, but

**Heather** 31:56

are there are can we think of any texts movies? You know, if this is too much

**Bret** 32:03

for them? Yeah.

**Heather** 32:06

No, it It might be that a clip or two from us. But uh, you know, I think if this is too much for them, certainly, you know, Tim Poole is and you know, Sam Harris might not be right, like, you know, he's,

**Bret** 32:22

well, I mean, I'm gonna I'm gonna go hardline on this. I think the answer is, you're talking about your people, and figuring out how to get your people to wake up to the fact that certain stuff that they have become convinced of his nonsense and that it is serving to keep them imprisoned in a extractive paradigm that is parasitizing them. I don't know how you do. I don't even know if your people can be saved, but but if they can, then the point is, there's a game which is how do you reach somebody who's difficult to reach? What's the thing that will cause them to think twice about something they thought they had, they had nailed. And you know, I'm always interested to hear what works but yeah, it's very individual.

**Heather** 33:21

Yeah, I mean, it is i wish i feel like i don't think you're trying to evade the question but I think you are. And I'm trying not to evade the question and I can't think of what there might be so I you know, I'm thinking you know, some of the readings that I have, I have read from here Soltani ittsan Joseph Heller, Vaclav Havel, obviously Orwell and Aldous Huxley are so prescient and so relevant and yet I don't know that they will seem so to someone who is not yet framing what MSNBC and CNN and wapo in New York Times are feeding us as as prescient as as relevant right now. So anyway, boy,

**Bret** 34:14

I alright I take back my answer

**Heather** 34:17

take it back No I take I'm looking for some additional tax I'm gonna get one one thing is not all of them but Megan Dom as a new podcast blocked and reported and it's across it's across the board. Oh, no, that's no I'm sorry. It's called the unspeakable the unspeakable podcast black report. It is is key and Jesse which I wouldn't recommend in this case. I don't think that's that's the right thing. But making Dom's podcast is is new and not all of them would be relevant here but she's got an interview for instance with a psychologist who specifically works on, on with with and on police. And she's got one I'm on with a psychologist actually, again, who's thought a lot about the the rising rates of trends in teenagers. And, boy, just a number of them and she is so thoughtful and careful. And and I say this with, you know, tremendous respect, like easy to listen to. She's She's, she's, I think she has a good chance of maybe not be threatened not being threatening to people who, I guess are threatened by us or just can't hear what we're doing maybe.

**Bret** 35:33

Yeah, I'm going to argue. JOHN McWhorter. Yeah. Jonathan height?

**Heather** 35:43

Yeah, but he doesn't tell me he's not what I'm Jonathan heights?

**Bret** 35:48

Well, I don't know. I mean, he's certainly done plenty of stuff that you can find on YouTube.

**Heather** 35:56

Let's see, but in the coddling of the American mind, frightened lukianoff book from two years ago.

**Bret** 36:03

And the righteous mind, I think that would be, you know, anything

**Heather** 36:08

again, that's that, that though the righteous mind is sort of modern context free, just like such a neat son. And, you know, and Heller and harvell. So it's not about this particular moment. And I suspect that many people need some particular like some of the context of the particular moment to begin to crack the facade that presumably msnbc is providing,

**Bret** 36:32

yeah, but if you let's say, you read righteous mind, and then you look at what height is doing in the context of this modern stuff. Right, it's very hard to dismiss him. Right? He's very, very careful, very well grounded, and I think quite horrible. And so, you know, unfortunately, maybe too much homework.

**Heather** 36:57

Yeah. It's it's a lot of work. But, but

**Bret** 37:01

anyway, I think I think it's at least two potentially away in

**Heather** 37:06

what's next? Do you guys think that it is possible that the preexisting medical conditions hit hardest by COVID? Are because the tissue that was used in the gain of functional research was tissue from humans with these conditions?

**Bret** 37:21

That's an interesting question, I think it is, well, within the realm of possibility that we have to think carefully about what the features are of the disease that would have come from these serial passage experiments and what tissues they may have been run in or what creatures they may have been running, and it may have been both. So whether these pre existing conditions, you know, we've talked a little bit about, you know, if you had tumor tissue, for example, that tumors are on are very poorly epigenetically regulated, and that could be causing the very eclectic nature of this disease, you know, that it invades lots of different kinds of tissue. So something like that as possible whether the individuals had the very particular pre existing conditions, I would say it is more likely that you've got an unregulated tissue or a poorly regulated tissue that therefore simulates some of those conditions, rather than that the patient that the tissue came from had them. Yeah,

**Heather** 38:20

I would. I would tend to agree, and I don't I just don't have a good enough sense of how the kind of functional research is run. To know, to have a lot of insight here. But my sense, like if this if the lab origin hypothesis is true, and it was ganna, function research that was happening in Chinese labs, then To my mind, one of the one of the places I go to when I see this question as well, one of the main pre existing medical conditions that seems to be correlated with bad outcomes and COVID is obesity. And my sense is that there is far less obesity in the Chinese population than for instance, and in western populations in the West. And what, yeah,

**Bret** 39:05

well, I'm struggling to think whether there's any reason to think that they would have used tissue from Chinese people.

**Heather** 39:12

Well, this so that's why as well, so I mean, it's in Chinese labs. So where are they getting? They're just this is just some one major national source I

**Bret** 39:20

guess, would be that because, you know, for valid reasons, because you want work to be comparable between labs that probably there's some

**Heather** 39:28

there's some equivalent of the Jack's lab for human tissue, right, which

**Bret** 39:31

could be a vulnerability justice to Jack's lab is a vulnerability but I don't know. Yeah, it could also okay, you know, that, you know, yes, it is possibly the way and I'm deeply, deeply ensconced in this kind of work know the answer off the top of their head, but I don't.

**Heather** 39:50

Bret claims a great amount of liberal pushback to critical race theory. He then names nine liberal public intellectuals out of 3000 I can think of 30 total in the real world and I am a socialist. Is this in group bias clouding?

**Bret** 40:06

I don't get. I mean, I know what the question means, right? I don't get it, it feels to me like, you know, another version of, you know, mostly peaceful protest. Right? So if you have nine, I mean, you know, it's not like the list stopped at nine nine was the ones that I found that had a direct connection to the Wall Street Journal opinion page.

**Heather** 40:30

Well, I guess I, to steel man, both this question and actually that wall street journal article by was Jason Riley, I thought we decided wrote it. The public intellectuals I think are far quieter, and therefore basically misrepresent what the rest of the people on you know, among the liberals who aren't given voice because they don't have pieces in you know, in on op eds pages of papers are actually thinking so, you know, you and me being certain that there is a tremendous number of people that is the that it is the silent majority of people on the left who actually are looking askance at this and you know, maybe going along because it doesn't feel that dangerous, or actually beginning to get really antsy about it, that it's really large number of people is not the same thing as arguing that it is a large number of public voices on the left, and I don't, it's not a large number of public voices on the left. And it's certainly not a large enough number of public voices on the left, who are criticizing this, on the other hand, so what we did say when we were talking about this last hour was in part, when you do start talking about it, you could talk to her on the left, and I get told to shut up and you lose your platform. And you know, you're all of these things that people say about canceled culture and such are true. And so that is exactly pushing people into silence when they might not otherwise be silent.

**Bret** 42:05

Yeah. So I want to be a little bit careful. The I don't think that it's a majority that are just keeping their mouth shut. I think people start out knowing better. And then they take a step on a slippery slope, and then they convince themselves of this welke nonsense. Out of self out of an instinct to suppress. I

**Heather** 42:24

don't know what those numbers look like, I hope I still majority,

**Bret** 42:26

but I want to be really sure that the push back here is clean, because there was something very bizarre about that opinion piece. Okay. It literally said you and I found the same quote, and we didn't talk about it. Okay. Yeah, right. Where are the liberal voices pushing back? We find conservatives pushing back, where are the liberals? Right? This was written by somebody in the Wall Street Journal, where somebody at the Wall Street Journal editorial page could have said, Well, there are some, in fact, here are several articles that we've published

**Heather** 43:04

on our page, exactly the same thing. So that was your group? That was your list of nine was right.

**Bret** 43:10

They weren't all published there. But they were all published or mentioned, or clearly would be the page would be aware of them. So I would have expected, you know, if the author had been just somehow unaware, then I would have expected the page in the editorial process to say, actually, it's not really it's not that bleak, right, which would have then resulted in a change in that sentence, which didn't happen somehow. But even weirder, Jason Riley, the author, follows all of us, I believe it was every single person I mentioned is in his list of people that he follows on Twitter, and not newly so it's not like he just became aware of us, right? This goes back what must be yours, following us. So how can somebody who is aware of all of us and knows full well, you know that we keep saying we're liberals, this doesn't track for us? How could such a person write that sentence? And then how could the page sign off on it? It's just Well, it

**Heather** 44:11

made me or maybe it's, maybe we're reading it wrong. Maybe the intention is to push people to speak up and say, no, here we are, for God's sake. This we understand that this is a problem. You know, there there are a lot of ways to get people to act that are legitimate, but not straightforward.

**Bret** 44:32

Yeah. But this is this is a newspaper, and it's the Wall Street Journal, and it's the Wall Street, The Wall Street Journal, which was farsighted enough to actually let us write for them and not to, you know, sanitize what we wrote. So it looked like it came from conservatives. So anyway, something odd happened. I don't think we're ever going to know what it is. But something odd happened and it shouldn't have happened because at the very least, if you're going to make the claim there aren't enough liberal standing up against this which is a Find claim. And the answer is there are some, but why aren't there more like these folks? And then it raises the question. Well, what is your experience been? Yeah, experiences? I keep getting portrayed as a conservative, right? Yeah, like so. You know, anyway, something else should have happened.

**Heather** 45:15

Yep. Next question. I think the mostly peaceful argument surrounding riots, riots has been debunked. Why does this not work as an argument for the anti racists replacing it with society being mostly non racist?

**Bret** 45:31

Yeah, so first,

**Heather** 45:32

Oh, go ahead. Well, no, I'm in part because the mostly peaceful stuff was sort of it started to be on the water like it was all of these media platforms who were making this claim. And, you know, it depends on what you mean by mostly depends what you mean by peaceful and they all had these different definitions, all of which are bullshit. But they were all defending it through these sort of, you know, anything ranging from dim witted to nefarious means, I would say, and compare that to anti racism is a very specific ideology created by a very specific person ibram x Kendi. And as a very precise definition, which is bullshit. But it's not this amorphous thing. So you know, people who are someone that anti race, well, then you're racist. Kennedy says so. And people don't respond to that by saying, you know, Kennedy says, so they may not even know that. But the fact is, it does have this thing at base, which is crazy. It's crackpot. It's nasty, it's divisive, it's racist, all of those things. But it is it is a is a real thing at base that it is yes, the creation of the, you know, fever dream of ibram x Kendi. But by his winning with it, and it does mean that there's something you can go back to and point to.

**Bret** 46:47

Yeah, I think in part, there's enough complexity surrounding racism and enough a Morphosis that it doesn't track as cleanly. And we're not going to know what role we played in, breaking free of that. You know, mostly peaceful nonsense. But before the mostly peaceful argument, broke into 1000 pieces. We did a little riff where we were talking about my back of the envelope calculations in which the presidential motorcade in Dallas in 1963 was, you know, above 99%. peaceful. So anyway, it was the peaceful so the point is, there is a way to say there's a way to use this mostly peaceful stuff to reveal that it means nothing. Right? What isn't mostly peace? Yeah.

**Heather** 47:40

Well, and I guess, also, it also doesn't, if you yourself, have not engaged in the protests at all, it's easy. And if you've only engaged in the actual peaceful protests, you know, like during daylight, I don't really know what it looks like in the other cities. But in Portland, if it's during during daytime, they've been, they've been actually peaceful. And they're real, legitimate protesters out there. You can just say, without any worry that anyone is going to accuse you of having been not peaceful accuse you of having been violent, like No, that wasn't me. I'm not like, I know that I participated in a peaceful protest, right? Whereas this added, the threat of being accused of being racist, has become, you know, I'm not the first person to say this, but it's like being accused of being a child abuser. Like, you know, it's, it's this thing, like, No, no, I'm not, oh, my God, I'll do anything at all to avoid being called that. And so it is much more easily weaponized, in part because of the fear of being called it. And that works, in part because it is a personal accusation, rather than a society level accusation. Yeah.

**Bret** 48:43

That's a good point.

**Heather** 48:46

We know next question. We know that two parents are better than one parent. But does the sex of the parents matter? Just having both a mother and father matter? Is there data on kids with same sex versus hetero parents? Is this an uncomfortable truth? It's really good questions, really good set of questions. I don't know if I'm sure there are data on kids with same sex versus different sex parents. And I don't know what those data are. But we have said, and we haven't we've, in fact, written into into the book that we're writing, that if you don't have both sexes of parents in your household, that you should work harder to make sure that your children are exposed to trusted adults of the sex that is not represented in your household. It doesn't need to be a parent, but it needs to be someone who's close enough that they can actually do some of the jobs of parenting and modeled behavior of yours to a representative of that sex for your children, so they have trustworthy models growing up.

**Bret** 49:49

Yep, I would say there's reason to wonder about this. That there are kinds of wisdom and skill sets to have traveled the female Line, there are a corresponding set or an inverse set that have traveled the male line. They need to get there somehow, right? You want the full set of skills? There's a question about, you know,

**Heather** 50:12

it's not just the skills either, it's just like it's role modeling, right. And no matter how, no matter how awesome a role model, I am, for our two children, they're boys. And I don't want them looking up to me and saying, I want to be mom, when I grow up, I want them to, you know, to learn from me and to develop things and habits that I have, and to also learn from me and not do things and develop habits that I have. But in terms of how it is that they will engage with the world as much as you and I have shed more of the gender stereotypes than almost anyone else. I know. You're their father, and their boys, and they're becoming men comforting to hear it is my claim that has been from the beginning. I'm sticking with it. All right, putative father, those two children. You are their father. And and you are you are the model to which they are they, they should aspire more closely, even though even though there's very little about what we do, that is at all, sex. Typical, no sex mandated.

**Bret** 51:25

Yeah, yeah. So that's true. And it's not just the, you know, you're gonna grow up to be men, you need to have a model for that. There's also, you know, a model of a relationship. And, you know, assuming you're straight, there's a model of, you know, what is a woman? What is it likely to be like to interact with one? So there's a lot of stuff that needs to be modeled, that said, Yeah, you know, I think the conversation would be missing something, if it didn't recognize the possibility, I mean, within, you know, gay culture, there is a lot of variation around these gender norms. Right. And so, anyway, I think I think what I would say is my personal suspicion is that there is not that having two parents who love you, and a world of examples from which to draw is probably way better than

**Heather** 52:22

a huge swath of hetero families,

**Bret** 52:24

right, you know, or one parent who loves you, but is so stretched so thin by virtue of the economic realities of the situation. So, you know, I guess what I would say is, yeah, there's probably some things being equal, all else being equal, there's liable to be something but I, you know, but the ways we damage kids are so many that, you know, I don't see it as a big factor relative to all, you know, to allowing advertisers to access your children and you know, reschedule how often they're hungry, right? Like, that's a

**Heather** 52:55

no, and you could even argue that since, you know, since gay couples inherit, inherently have family by choice. They net, they never fell into being in a relationship with their parents with their child's other parent and therefore ended up with a family before they wanted to, that they, their greater intentionality may result in greater preparedness and skill. Yeah, I'm not I don't know that that's true. But I can see an argument in that regard as well. Yes.

**Bret** 53:25

If you're gay, and in a committed relationship, it's not likely you will accidentally end up with children. Yeah, that's what I just said. That is Yeah.

**Heather** 53:36

Oh, geez, dude, you didn't tell us we got to switch to the next one. Okay, let's do one more question here. And then we'll go over into the questions from this next this hour. Oh, this is just a comment, do point folks to the interview azubi. The concepts discussed in an open manner will help many and their understanding of recent events in my humble opinion. Okay, so I think that may, I don't know if that's responsive. I don't These aren't in order anymore. So I don't know if that's responsive to the earlier question about what the guy whose parents found darcars too much. But maybe I don't remember enough about what was in the zubi interview. To to know if that might work, but maybe maybe parents who are msnbc addled is the phrase of the person asking the question. I don't know still here the zubi interview.

**Bret** 54:23

I don't know if this is a reference to the darker zubi interview or the one on zubi podcast,

**Heather** 54:29

your interview with zubi or a BS interview with you? Yeah, yeah, I don't know.

**Bret** 54:34

I don't know. Okay.

**Heather** 54:36

Okay, well try this now. Okay. Oh, really, really militant moderate, some love pimple pop videos. Some can't stand them more adaptive to enjoy your dislike might they balance out so we pick just the right amount of zits? I didn't know this existed

**Bret** 54:54

may either. Now, you really need a video. You can't figure this one out. Yeah, gross. I think he I think he got a point. If you're watching a lot of zip poppin videos Yeah, I think you need to take a good look at yourself in the mirror and popular sets that way.

**Heather** 55:16

Okay. Thank you for discussing Solzhenitsyn and his live not by lies essay. Have either of you heard about or read rodri Raja draggers book named for the essay and released last month? Thank you for everything. No, I know I know of him. I did not know that he had written a book based named for that essay. Look into it. Zach, could you just highlight that so I can go back to it since it's Yeah. Help professors to promote more respectful discussion within our society. Should we bring back dueling if they're consenting adults full of hate? Should we allow them to engage? defend honor pros and cons, please?

**Bret** 55:57

Totally. That's it. I mean, I don't know. Officially now, unofficially, sure

**Heather** 56:06

consenting adults full of hate. We allow them to engage to defend honor.

**Bret** 56:17

I really can't say Yeah, probably not. I take your point. And I find it funny. Yeah. But But yeah, probably we should not revive dueling. On the other hand, it's not like there aren't some people I wouldn't mind seeing. doodled Yeah.

**Heather** 56:33

tool. Duly dueled. Do you believe in hypnosis? Or are you transphobic?

**Bret** 56:44

Yes, directed at me.

**Heather** 56:45

No, I think that's directed both of us. I think it's it is I think it is both a plan words. transphobic. And it's a real question.

**Bret** 56:54

Oh, transphobic? Sorry. It's blurry at that distance. Got it.

**Heather** 57:01

Yeah, so hypnotherapy is real. And it the the versions of it that are in movies and such are characters of of what it is. I don't think we have a full understanding of what all it can do. But, but it is a real and powerful tool among many in the human Arsenal that can be used to help modify behavior and, and change motivational states and and alleviate pain as well.

**Bret** 57:40

Yes. That said, I am completely immune to it, apparently.

**Heather** 57:45

Well, based on that one. Yeah, one attempt, but so I could

**Bret** 57:50

try 100 times the prime one probably. Yep. I would also say beware Darren Brown. I know it's very tempting. But my sense is the Darren brown illusion works. But you are the mark, using the audience? Or the mark? Well, he certainly does hypnosis. So anyway, yes. I'm not a believer. In in Darren Brown. Yeah,

**Heather** 58:18

you just did change the question.

**Bret** 58:20

I did. Yeah. But I mean, it's bound to be on people's mind, because it's very compelling. Yeah,

**Heather** 58:24

I actually hadn't occurred to what the question was about him, and I barely know who he is. Whereas as you know, you know, I have I have a extremely good friend, who is both a clinical psychologist and a hypnotherapist and has has had remarkable success. Working with people whose whose problems were otherwise seemed intractable.

**Bret** 58:48

Yep. No, I do. I do think it is a what it is, we don't know. But yeah, that it is a route into some intermediate state in which there's plasticity and I mean, she's clearly very good at what she does.

**Heather** 58:59

Well, I mean, that's exactly I didn't in it. But, you know, if she was extremely good at what she was, and it was a farce, she still couldn't accomplish what she does

**Bret** 59:09

know by by by saying she's extremely good at it. I'm saying it's clearly a real space if you wouldn't be wasting your time on if it wasn't right. That said, I don't think you can reach everybody that way. It's like, Yeah,

**Heather** 59:23

no, I don't think I don't think you can either. And I will, I guess you know, this, this is pure anecdote. But after, after the boat accident for now, four and a half years ago in Galapagos. She made me She made me a tape to listen to and just said, just just lie on the floor and listen to this. It's like, I don't know 1012 minutes every day, really for Allah until you don't anymore. And you know, it's it's not what people have in mind. I didn't. I wasn't being sent into trance or anything, but the The power to use cadence and words and nonlinguistic sound that appears to be linguistic to change perception. And I think to change the healing rate and trajectory is remarkable. That was my sense. Next up is a donation to test the hypothesis by releasing helium from a tank from a balloon star in the garage. Not too much. Boom. Side note. Oh, that's helium.

**Bret** 1:00:32

Yeah. Not hydrogen. Helium. No, but no, boom.

**Heather** 1:00:37

I've got that. Yes. There, there wouldn't be a boom. Because it's helium. I didn't say that. That's the question. siren, the question. Side note lots of mask wearing hair greater than 95%. But cases are rising fast parentheses schools. So without knowing where you are, or what's going on, under No. My suspicion is that as people begin spending more time inside with windows closed, we're going to get cases rising, even if masks are supposedly being worn because masks are imperfect. And even people who are wearing masks sometimes art.

**Bret** 1:01:14

Yes. And in fact, the upgraded model that we have we talked about a couple livestreams ago about aerosolized transmission, the masks don't work if you're an environment that saturates with these aerosolized particles, because a lot of stuff is going around them and basically breathe long enough, you'll get it. So yeah, paying attention to airflow, airflow and saturated environments. You know, masks are good for transient exposures. If you walk into a room that's full of COVID, you will reduce the likelihood of contracting it. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:01:45

And big volume spaces are better than small volume spaces. So here's a place where like vaulted ceilings like you find in grocery stores is actually going to make those spaces probably safer. If the H fac is doing anything useful at all. Yep.

**Bret** 1:01:58

As to the first part with the helium? Yeah. This is the test of the hypothesis, I probably should have mentioned it would be to get some balloon helium at a party store and bag, a camera and put some helium in there and see if we reproduce the same regular drop in signal. Yeah, I haven't done it for a couple of reasons. One is can't find a party store. I probably could find a party store, I have one of these phones from the future that tells you where stuff like that is amazing. I know. But the other thing is, it takes time for the helium to diffuse out of the memes, Chip. And so you lose access to your device until the device wakes back up a few days later. And I'm just sort of reluctant to do it. But yes, I'd probably do it.

**Heather** 1:02:50

I probably should we should do it. Yeah, we should do this test and not, you know, doing it in the garage. You know might be if that works on a camera, it might make sense to do in the garage is a next step just to follow through. But I'm not even sure it's necessary.

**Bret** 1:03:03

I mean, the let's put it this way, the prediction is that we will see the same pattern of failure of the cameras with the regular drop signal. And I would say if that happens, then the answer is it's helium that did it. Where did it come from? Did it come from the smoke? Where did it come from the geology in the house being buttoned up? That's the next question. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:03:25

Where can evolutionary principles be applied outside of biology? And where are they commonly applied when they shouldn't be?

**Bret** 1:03:33

Well, I would say, you've got a problem that comes from the fact that we group the sciences together as if they're the same thing. Right? So we group biology with chemistry and physics, that isn't a correct grouping in the sense that they are amenable to scientific investigation. But it is not a correct grouping in the sense that biology has purpose, right? Ultimately, maybe it doesn't, but a biological creature behaves as if it has purpose to increase fitness, right? And the point is, those realms in which there is identifiable purpose and complexity are properly analogized to biology. So that is to say, psychology, engineering, economics, those are the places where evolutionary dynamics are mirrored, and

**Heather** 1:04:22

anthropology, everything Do

**Bret** 1:04:25

you think trade of anything made of living critters? Exactly. All

**Heather** 1:04:29

anything that might be studied in the humanities and social sciences?

**Bret** 1:04:32

Right? On the other hand, something like a hurricane has complexity, but not purpose, right? It's an inappropriate application there.

**Heather** 1:04:40

But there's also the question of so evolutionary principles. So you know, selection might be understood as an evolutionary principle and adaptation might be understood as an evolutionary principle and selection as you have very frequently laid out selection can exist with title action on a beach, arranging rocks and in action. Take either order by size and there's no there's there's nothing biotic there. It's certainly not biology, but that is selection in action. There's no adaptation. Yep. So adaptation is the thing that is going to exist only at the biotic realm.

**Bret** 1:05:13

So that's exactly the right distinction and the fact that we subsume selection into biology space is wrong. So exactly hence, where we Smolan is in terms of using principles for the universe. Basically, these are principles that are upstream of biology. Okay, so

**Heather** 1:05:34

where are they commonly applied when they shouldn't be? I don't I don't think that category exists but they are often commonly applied badly or non evolutionary thinking which is cloaked in I'm evolutionary now is applied in places where it shouldn't be enhanced. We get things like social Darwinism and eugenics and all sorts of other really batshit crazy thinking that rides around looking like evolution, but it's not Yeah.

**Bret** 1:06:01

Now where it is it absolutely necessary. It Where's absolutely necessary. Medicine, psychology, dentistry, ophthalmology, these are places where it is largely absent. And the cost to us is absolutely immense. Yep. Economics. Economics. It's,

**Heather** 1:06:17

it's already there. So evolution and economics sort of CO invented game theory. Yeah, I mean, Axelrod and Hamilton is right there. And like at the sort of origin.

**Bret** 1:06:26

So in fact, in that case, I would say a lot has to go the other way. Right? So diminishing returns is invoked is invented inside of an economics. Yeah. And it's not an economic principle. It's an evolutionary principle that works in economics. And so you have to actually pull it out to the higher level. Very important that you do. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:06:48

Hi, please respond to social media forces people. Social media forces, people who never leave the house to encounter reality in a way they never have. And that scares them. It also allows the same people to exercise power in a way they never have before. True on both fronts, I would say, and I think I assume that the person writing the question is using the phrase who never leave the house with some hyperbole. You know, everyone, almost everyone leaves the house a little bit. But people really do have narrower and narrower scopes of experience, especially this year, especially since March of this year. But increasingly, people who cut the number of people I see evidence of on social media, who's your who are fighting the good fight and being woke and saying, you know, I'm a, I'm a dad, I'm a parent of two and you must be racist. Like, I don't think you've ever been anywhere Have you? Like you actually are afraid of the rest of the world and you lecturing me about a Eurocentric vision of the world? I don't think you actually know what that would even mean, like, why don't you actually go somewhere and talk to some people who don't look like you. Maybe even a different language, even if you don't really speak that language, have a beer with them sit down, you'll be able to communicate a lot, even without much shared language, see what that's like. And then get back to me about our all racist, like, seriously, let's let's talk after you've got out and experience something that's not like everything else you've ever experienced? I think most people haven't done that increasingly, more, I don't know, most more and more people increasingly haven't managed to be able to do that get outside of their own sphere.

**Bret** 1:08:28

Yep. Which is less and less incentivized to the extent that you can source little bits of excitement and what feels like exposure

**Heather** 1:08:36

feels like exposure, but it's not because it's totally safe. Yep. Because nothing can reach out and shock you or hurt you or surprise you or make like, it's totally safe. And therefore it's totally sanitized.

**Bret** 1:08:48

So I think also, though, implicit in the question is, and I must say, I'm involved in a private conversation, an ongoing one, I'm not going to out anybody, but there is a conjecture in this conversation about people who are socially uncomfortable, and maybe not especially well skilled, playing a larger and larger role in our online interactions with each other. Yes. And that basically, that sensitivity is manifesting in dysfunctional ways that we're sort of all becoming dysfunctional in the context of these rules that can't possibly be adhered to, and, and things like that. So I do think that's interesting.

**Heather** 1:09:32

Yeah, I think absolutely. That's true. Yeah. Yeah. It's not just that we're all being made worse, but that what's driving it is some some subset of people who started out more dysfunctional than most of us. Yeah, yeah. Good afternoon to you both. What do you imagine is the evolutionary explanation for fainting goats? I own four of them. I can't quite figure out how they survived without human intervention thoughts. I never quite right Remember what the story is on fainting goats I this is one of these things that it just like it enters my head briefly and it there's something that seems so amorphous or not quite real about it to me that I don't remember what the story is got it I'm

**Bret** 1:10:12

no I'm in more or less the same same boat I think we are I think they are domestic goats

**Heather** 1:10:17

so they've been they've been created by humans right which basically somebody selected for funding somehow

**Bret** 1:10:21

well we selected for something and fainting came

**Heather** 1:10:23

twice it somehow yeah selected for something that was associated with fainting or maybe some some Yahoo decided to actually select for fainting who knows

**Bret** 1:10:31

well it could be you know, you could imagine that a goat you know, obviously we don't raise goats for wool but let's just say that you had an animal like that you could select for sudden passivity. Yeah. So I don't know that wow. I'm not saying I

**Heather** 1:10:49

mean we're doing is sudden passivity. I just hadn't framed it that way in my

**Bret** 1:10:53

sudden catastrophic passivity, right? Yes. I've never actually suffered sudden catastrophic.

**Heather** 1:11:02

Failure to do so. Yeah, we'll get you the goat salts.

**Bret** 1:11:06

Right? But yeah, so anyway, there could be something you know, to select for that would directly reward that there could be something. Something that carries it along as a byproduct. But unless it's wild goats, then the question doesn't really exist. On the other hand, yeah, right. possums play pass. Because it causes animals that are reluctant to eat already dead prey to mess with them. So

**Heather** 1:11:38

and they do smell Actually, that's interesting when you just said that it occurred to me. The possums who are the organisms that play dead as a way of not getting eaten come pre smelled. So so it's it's a more compelling behavioral defense than it would be if they smelled fresh

**Bret** 1:11:56

and also got smell. goats and everything associated with goat smell.

**Heather** 1:12:00

What I smell like

**Bret** 1:12:02

there's like there's a kind of a goatee smell that is Yeah, you can detect it in some goat cheese goat milk goat

**Heather** 1:12:09

so are you proposing that maybe they're they're playing dead?

**Bret** 1:12:14

I am saying that is a hypothesis here that makes predictions I'm not saying I believe that's the case. But I believe it's if it turns out that wild goats faint ever. Yeah, that would be the next place. I would Yeah, sure.

**Heather** 1:12:29

I don't know what's going on behind our curtain here but someone is definitely not playing dead.

**Bret** 1:12:33

Yeah, yeah. Something like that. Yeah. Okay,

**Heather** 1:12:36

let's get a couple more of these in here. This is going to be a recommendation of somebody to look at Jerry pournelle PhD is better political access.

**Bret** 1:12:48

knows that an alternative to the political compass I guess.

**Heather** 1:12:51

So I can't quite it's hard for me to I can't I can't I can't do it here because it's an driving it's not working. We'll take a look. Is the legalization of human vices like gambling, prostitution and drugs have net benefit to society as a safe outlet? Or of net detriment? Well that's a small question isn't it? I don't think I don't have the same answer to all of those Yeah. Right and depending upon what you want Yeah, so it's not just human vices but gambling prostitution drugs and then within drugs even even gambling has multiple things like you know I feel I feel differently about making it really easy for people to waste their their money on computerized slots in gas stations then the prospect of betting on the outcomes of races for instance Yep, it just it there's there's much more at stake. You just you can use you just have more skin in the game. And you there's more of a narrative structure for community possible there

**Bret** 1:13:59

might even be something real. I mean, yeah, being able to interpret which of course is likely to win under what conditions? Some Scofield, right. So it's at least in principle, not empty the way a slot or even worse, a computerized slot. Yeah,

**Heather** 1:14:14

would be. And you're again, you know, poker is real. Yeah, court cards is very more.

**Bret** 1:14:20

You know, there's the underlying card game. And then there's also the human dynamic. People know who's bluffing. So that could be that could have value in it, the question poses it as an outlet. I've wondered about this with respect to prostitution. And on the one hand, you would imagine that prostitution probably reduces the amount of rape in the world is there's likely, you know, an outlet. Yeah, on the other hand, prostitutes are very vulnerable. So it channels some of that violence on to a vulnerable population

**Heather** 1:14:59

and That whole conversation is so. So damaged right now by the so called sex positivity movement, right, which wants us to celebrate all outlets of sexuality at all times and simply say that sex workers are doing, you know, admirable and amazing work. It's like no you can you can simultaneously say that some forms of prostitution probably should be illegal for the safety of prostitutes, frankly, and also simultaneously be trying to absolutely minimize 100% minimize sex work in in the world.

**Bret** 1:15:38

But I would I would also add there is a question about what the effect on relationships is Yeah, in other words, to the extent that the normal situation basically uses sex as an incentive to maintain, you know, good relations with somebody, to the extent that people have an economic outlet to free them. It may be very bad for relationships. And so anyway, it's certainly an interesting question, I think you would want you would want systematic study of what the consequences is in, you know, in similar situations that have different rules about these things.

**Heather** 1:16:21

And then, you know, with regard to drugs, such as you know, there's drugs isn't a thing, right, we've already we've got some legal drugs already. And we've got a lot of drugs that are not legal, and this is a longer conversation. But you know, at one level, at first very broad brush pass, the drugs that have been synthesized and enhanced and concentrated in lab and then are taken in high concentration form into the body are, are likely to be the ones that are most dangerous and should most 100% be kept away from, you know, almost anyone knowing that they're out there in the world, and people are still going to find them. But the question of, say, legalizing hallucinogens, both strong and weak versus cocaine are really those conversations should be happening in different places.

**Bret** 1:17:11

Well, and cocaine versus coca, and yeah, heroin versus OPM. Yep. Right. These are very different questions. So it's the concentration that makes these things lethal. Yeah. And that is not necessarily the molecule itself.

**Heather** 1:17:27

Yeah. What are you planning to do when you go in the voting booth? Hearing your interviewer describe a vote for orange man as a stay of execution felt apt?

**Bret** 1:17:38

your interviewer trying remember who this would be? I don't know. zubi?

**Heather** 1:17:44

No, so I

1:17:46

don't know. Doesn't matter. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:17:52

I won't be voting for Trump or Biden. Yeah, I'm voting. I will vote. I will vote. I've always I've voted in every single presidential election. I think I might have missed a midterm or two, but I voted. Every time. I have voted. I voted third party once before and I didn't last time and I regret it. Yep, I voted for two Clintons. I did not vote for bill in 96. I voted green because I couldn't stand him already. But I did vote for Hillary last time, and I resent it. I regret it. And I won't vote for either of the parties this time.

**Bret** 1:18:26

Most important vote, most important vote I ever cast was for Bernie Sanders in the general election of 2016, which at the time seemed pointless, and it turned out to be really important. So anyway, yeah. I think the necessity of ridding ourselves with the system that keeps giving us unacceptable choices, is so great that as much as I understand the arguments against doing it, it's the only path.

**Heather** 1:18:54

Yeah. The cap is blocking my screen. Oh,

**Bret** 1:18:57

is he? Alright,

**Heather** 1:18:58

there we go. Do you concede to the possibility of you being unable to honestly look into and talk about conspiracy theories, either due to lifelong mainstream media conditioning or out of fear for your reputation? Are there any conspiracies you believe JFK 911? So the beginning Do you concede to the possibility of you being unable to honestly look into and talk about look into and talk about are different? Right? I mean, I think i think that's that's the key, if well look into and talk about our different and lifelong mainstream media conditioning. All right, if you're, if your reputation are two different possible reasons. So we've talked about between ourselves an awful lot of things, much of which we have not yet shared publicly, some of which we may never. Why? Well, I don't wait, why don't I talk about everything that we wanted? We talk publicly about everything that we talk about privately.

**Bret** 1:19:55

I think the question reveals the problem All right, as soon as you say conspiracy theory, my sense is you fucked up. Right? Not conspiracy theory, conspiracy theory, if we use the term theory consistently means a hypothesis of conspiracy that has withstood test, right? It is a proven conspiracy. So conspiracy hypothesis, I believe we are in a better position to talk about that than most people because there is discipline to be had surrounding the the underlying logic, the philosophy of science that goes into knowing what did and did not take place involves advancing hypotheses predictions that would tell you if they were true, and then testing them. So anyway, I feel at liberty to talk in the context of conspiracy hypotheses, I feel jeopardized by the fact that if we talk about a conspiracy hypothesis, there is this eagerness to immediately say, Ah, you're advancing conspiracy theories. It's like No, I said hypothesis for reason. Right? So if the world would be better at recognizing the distinction between somebody who is talking in the context of hypothesis where we know what it is that will validate or discount any particular instance, then fine, then we can have great conversations. If we're going to talk as if people who entertain conspiracy hypotheses are conspiracy theorists, well, then now you've got a trap. It's a Kafka trap, and I don't want to play that game. So anyway, let's do it properly.

**Heather** 1:21:32

Okay, let's do it properly. Let's just get a little bit, drill down a little bit more on the idea that has lifelong mainstream media conditioning, made it impossible for us to even consider some some possible avenues here. I don't I don't actually think so. Because, well, I, because I know the extent of the things that we have looked into and considered and talked about, right, and you should be too And yet, and many of which still wonder, you know, there's just that the jury is out on a lot of these ideas. And it's not, it's not worth talking about some of them publicly yet. Maybe ever, but there's a lot of batshit sounding ideas, that may not actually be untrue.

**Bret** 1:22:18

Well, but you know, glorious thing about using hypothesis for its intended use is the fact that one advances a hypothesis that involves a conspiracy doesn't mean that you necessarily think it even happened, right? It just means you're saying, here's something that might explain X, Y, or Z. And here's how you would know. Yep.

**Heather** 1:22:38

Second emotion to have Dr. Steven pourhouse. Poor guess I'm not sure. On to discuss polyvagal theory, it's pertinent to our times and based on evolutionary biology, lots of love. I've heard of polyvagal theory, I can't I can't place it at the moment. Yes, I

**Bret** 1:22:53

think I may have promised to look it up and then did okay. So Zack, we're looking it up?

**Heather** 1:22:58

Would you highlight what I've got highlighted there? If you if that makes sense. I don't know how to answer this next one. What is your longest standing disagreement? our longest standing is our longest? I mean, at one level, this is the kind of question like, what's your favorite movie that in them? Like? What's your favorite movie? Wouldn't be a good question. But like, you know, what are your top 10 pieces of media that you've enjoyed, like, being asked that question, I have a memory break? So it's possible I'll come up with something here, but I'm not sure you know, I'm not sure exactly. It's framed this way.

**Bret** 1:23:41

I'm not even sure. Maybe that you know, 20 minutes after we're done here. It's going to dawn on one of us. But I think in some sense, the nature of the relationship is such that, you know, a disagreement is either trivial, and therefore not likely to be long standing in the sense that it's not going to be a topic that keeps recurring

**Heather** 1:24:03

out, resolve it, but we move on, right? Yeah. Or

**Bret** 1:24:07

it's something that's going to take work to figure out what we actually do believe. And you know, there have been plenty of places where I have thought something you've thought thought something inconsistent with it. And I know in retrospect, you are right. There are others where I was right. Yep. And I think the point is, maybe it's even evidence of something being off. If you do have lots of long standing disagreements that you did it, you know, is it the kind of baggage that accumulates in a relationship? And so in fact, in effect, what you want to do is put in the work to actually figure out who's right or if it's not either one of you, then what is it that you haven't figured out about? You know, what explains some discontinuity?

**Heather** 1:24:48

Well, and there can be I mean, I guess there are a number of ways that one can understand the word disagreement, right? So no, two humans are totally compatible with one another. We will, I found it okay. Hold on, though. Yeah, we will, you know, to to humans living closely for decades will drive each other crazy in some ways, no, no matter what. And those things that will be persistent could be understood to be a disagreement, but more to the point, I think it would be a sort of every now and again, like I want to check in like, right, this thing that we already know we aren't totally simpatico on is driving me crazy at the moment and that's where I am and that's like, you need to know that that's in my head at the moment. So that's not I don't I'm not thinking any particular examples but we can we could come up with those. You know, there aren't any that are, you know, years old, I don't think are you know, certainly not decades old. But there's certainly like, repeated types of things just because we are the at some level the same people that we have been forever. So what did you come up with?

**Bret** 1:25:49

Dark chocolate?

**Heather** 1:25:53

I don't even know which way you think this goes. That I like dark chocolate and you doubt?

**Bret** 1:25:59

Yeah. Okay. I think that, that and you know, I have been saying for some time that dark chocolate is objectively inferior, and that there is a way in which it is fetishized?

**Heather** 1:26:13

Well, I feel like I grant that.

**Bret** 1:26:18

But But you do have dark chocolate rather than preferring Nope, chocolate.

**Heather** 1:26:27

So I bought about at the moment instead of sober October we're doing sugar free October. So there's I'm buying chocolate for the boys to have and one of our children doesn't like dairy. And so he doesn't like milk chocolate. And so I get dark chocolate for him. Yeah. Often there are things on offer in the dark chocolate area that I find more interesting than what's available in the milk chocolate. And I think in general the quality is higher because maybe in part because it has been fetishized because like if you can afford the slightly higher price point. And you know if they're going to put dried cherries and then almonds into the dark chocolate, it's going to be delicious. And the the comparable milk chocolate might be a lower quality chocolate. And so it's really hard to control for the cacao content and the quality simultaneously.

**Bret** 1:27:19

Yeah, I agree. And there are some places where dark chocolate by virtue of its having been mixed with something else is maybe the right thing. Yeah, but on its own. It seems to me, no contest ever and you you found an essay this year, they argued this very forcefully, which I thought was was beautiful. But

**Heather** 1:27:39

anyway, what it was thinking oh, maybe it was it would have been about a Halloween candy. Actually, maybe I can find it again. Now that Halloween is coming up. Yep. Okay. Yeah, interesting question. Okay, let's do let's do three more. The American solidarity party, pro labor, health care environment family, low, low Jenny. What's Ginny

**Bret** 1:28:04

is a measure of economic disparity.

**Heather** 1:28:08

Gi is an acronym for any coefficient. Yep. Okay. Oh, there she is. Okay. Anti capital, anti capital punishment. Not pun, okay. I'm going to start over this. American solidarity party, pro labor, pro health care, pro environment, pro family, low Gini coefficient, anti capital punishment, anti abortion. I think anti interventionist war, social democracy within Catholic social teachings. origin point a political matrix useful beyond the present? I'm not sure what that last sentence means? I don't know. I don't know either. Most of that looks looks good to me. There's one thing on your list that I have a problem with, which is no access to abortion? No, right? Yeah. And I don't want to say anti abortion, just like I don't want to say, you know, that would be the pro life position. But I'm pro choice at least for early term. And, and evidence throughout the world suggests that women who have access to abortion and up in society, in societies where women have access to early term abortion, those societies have even just economic measures like higher GDP and higher levels of education, both men and women, lower birth rates, obviously, maybe, and just higher levels of productivity without necessarily just producing more kids. So there are a lot of reasons that I am, I am pro choice, but otherwise, everything on that list seems interesting and relevant. I'm not sure what the final question means origin point of political matrix useful beyond the present. You know, that means I don't Yeah. Do you know anything about the American solidarity party? No, I

**Bret** 1:29:56

can't say that. That rings a bell.

**Heather** 1:29:57

I don't know for me there. I haven't heard of it. Next question, might humans have a predisposition to mate with those of different ethnicities? It seems mixed race offspring are better looking and more intelligent than average as compared to the polar opposite in breeding.

**Bret** 1:30:14

You, let's put it this way. Now. Yeah, this is a topic that gets ugly pretty quick. But from the point of view of males looking to reproduce without commitment, then yes, you would expect this for reasons of genetic introgression. So there will be many circumstances in history that reflect this predisposition, it doesn't mean that necessarily the same predisposition will exist in the context of high investment relationships, you would predict a much more complex, complicated pattern for both males and females, it would depend a lot on various costs and benefits, which you could do the analysis but anyway, topic for another time. It's a good one, but it's not going to be a simple answer.

**Heather** 1:31:06

Yeah. So I'm going to drop down I just scrolled through, there's actually a lot more questions that we're not going to get to we'll get to some of them next time. This one which is similarly fraught, but related, have you read a natural theory of rape by Randy Thornhill and Craig D. Palmer? And do you believe there's some credibility to the act of rape was not about power, but a biological trait for primitive non alpha males to continue their genes? So the the modern feminist trope that we are expected to accept that rape is just about power is clearly wrong, obviously. But where did that even come from work at that pot? Like what what? What would that even mean? Was it a strategy that worked for some Yes. Is it a reprehensible and disgusting strategy that should be criminalized every place all the time? Yes. Yeah. Back in the day, I'm not at least skimmed it. You know, that was sort of that that book? 90s? I think so. We

**Bret** 1:32:07

knew Randy Thornhill time. I will say, when that book came came out, every evolutionary biologists working at the time had the same sense of like, well, this isn't exactly news. Yeah, obviously, it's an evolutionary strategy. But that this is making a big splash based on taking something that we all understood to be the case and revealing it as if it was provocative. Now, is it a low ranking males strategy that can be stopped the only context?

**Heather** 1:32:46

So anyway, what I would say is or is another context? Well,

**Bret** 1:32:48

that's the thing is, this is in large measure how war was paid for until a certain point in history. So anyway, there's lots of stuff and you will find it more or less described, you know, in the Bible, there are rules, most laws of war describe things that you would have to take to be rape and setting out rules for them. So anyway, yes, there's a lot here. It's a very ancient strategy. It's definitely evolutionary. But rape is an evolutionary strategy. Laws Against Rape are an evolutionary strategy, right? This is more complex than we give it credit for. So the problem with that book was the implication of saying rape is an evolutionary strategy suggest that

**Heather** 1:33:35

people jump to naturalistic fallacy, right? Like oh, well, then it's inevitable, then what can you do about it? Like you can do a lot about it, and you even we need to do a lot about it. And we need to stop it.

**Bret** 1:33:45

Right? The fact is, you have two evolutionary strategies that doesn't say either one of them is any good, but our values tell us one of them is abhorrent. And that you know, making it so costly that people don't engage in it is obviously the right thing to do.

**Heather** 1:33:58

Yep. So there's just a couple things about helium here that maybe I'll stop stop with, and the next time we'll come back around and get a few of the other ones we didn't get to. Too much helium might disable the memes chip outright, rather than altering the frequency.

**Bret** 1:34:12

I believe that might be possible. These memes and they're very mysterious little objects. Now my sense is that normal levels of helium that might be encountered diffuse in cause the object very frequently to be unusable for a period of time as if it is dead and then it slowly diffuses out and they revive but when you damage the thing permanently, I believe that is possible at least in some cases.

**Heather** 1:34:41

Okay, and please do the helium test on camera on camera recorded not necessarily live stream but would be interested to watch won't be fast enough, would it?

**Bret** 1:34:50

I don't know it might be okay. But But what you don't want to do is have a process that's slow and therefore seems to falsify the hypothesis that then later on Turns out to be right. So yeah, it might be that you want to record the entire test. And then if it takes 10 hours to trigger it, the point is Alright, here's the place in the test where we first see the flaw.

**Heather** 1:35:13

Well, that's why they said not live stream.

**Bret** 1:35:16

Right? Yes, you got it right.

**Heather** 1:35:20

And I'll just finish with this appreciation comment. Thanks so, so much for this podcast. I've been starved for true intellectual discussion during this lockdown, and is just wonderful to hear you both regularly. Thank you, Alex.

**Bret** 1:35:32

Thank you. That's great. Yeah,

**Heather** 1:35:34

thank you very much. And, and yeah, we're, we are so grateful for the audience and for the support and for the for comments like that, and the pushback that we get and support. So if if you do want to be involved in conversations like this with other people who are interested in such conversations, join one of our Patreon 's and join the discord come on to mine to get access to that private q&a once a month, the last Sunday of every month at 11am. Pacific and then we leave it up so you can watch anytime. Oh, that's small enough that we're able to actually engage with the chat a little bit we have so far Ben joined Brett's Patreon at a higher level to join in on those conversations that he has.

**Bret** 1:36:20

The conversations on evolution and on civilization are good conversations. Yeah. And what else? I don't know. Maybe that's it. Like, subscribe, send a clip to somebody that you want to bring into the conversation. That's right. All right. We will see you next time. Thanks so much.