Bret and Heather 20th DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ The Plag...

Sat, 10/9 12:43PM • 1:01:32

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

people, protest, point, cops, trump, evergreen, looting, alpha, hypothesis, leader, problem, emerge, protesters, george, yale, person, hugs, fact, question, cell

**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:05

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream. I am back with Dr. Heather Hein who has regained her ability to speak in English. Is it only English at this point? It's pretty much only English. limited to English. Alright, so we have lots to discuss this week. It has not been a boring week. Yeah. Which does raise a question. Do you ever have the sense that reality is gaslighting you? Yeah, sometimes you do get that sense also. All right. Well, we should talk about that, because I'm definitely I get that sense somewhat regularly. And this week, it's been particularly bad. Yeah. Okay, so you wanted to start with some commentary?

**Heather** 00:45

I do. Yeah. So I have, I have 14 points that I'd like to start with. And I have not shared them with you. Although we have been doing plenty of talking about what's been transpiring. Obviously,

**Bret** 00:56

please tell me this is a 14 point plan to get us out of the trouble. It's it

**Heather** 01:01

is not, it is not. But there there are 14 points here. And I'm just going to share them and then we'll talk about them. Okay. All of these things I believe to be true. All of them can be and I believe are true, one. systemic racism has a long history throughout the world. And the legacy of slavery in the US is a particularly salient example, too. In the US, we were making progress against racism both at the societal individual level, we weren't there. We were not post race, but we were making progress. The legacy of the civil rights era meant that it was ever more shameful and embarrassing to be publicly racist, and therefore more difficult to be privately so as well. We were making progress into the last several years when a perfect storm arrived. Just two of the parts of that perfect storm are these one. By the early to mid 2010s. Everyone was carrying a camera in their pocket in the form of smartphone. Video footage of acts of police brutality brought that violence to everyone's living room, there was now no denying it. The flip side of this is that the visceral anecdote will always be more powerful than the dispassionate statistic, so long as any grotesque instance exists, and grotesque instance will always exist, so long as any exist. Even if police and policing improved dramatically, it will now be even more difficult to point to the hopefulness of the second truth. And the second of many parts of the second of the perfect storm which have eroded the advances of the civil rights movement or the ascendancy of woke culture, and intersectional thinking and critical theory. They showed up first in higher ed, spreading to schools of Ed from there into K 12 schools into cubicles, journalism, media, the arts and beyond. This thinking holds among other things, that we have Original Sin based on the color of our skin, and that there's no escaping. Point three black lives matter. point for the organization that has come to be known as Black Lives Matter does not seem to be the upstanding, honorable organization that its tagline would suggest. Five, emotion is high. The reaction that George Floyd's brutal and senseless killing was and is emotional, and that is not actually inherently a bad thing. Reason and considered analysis are not the only ways to communicate in the world, showing raw emotion is sharp and intense and harsh and hard to look away from and therefore it can be powerful when other modes may not be working. But sex, the months of lockdown, which we have Breton I have and continue to argue we're in in some cases may continue to be necessary for public health, made people less emotionally emotionally resilient and they had been before and more fragile. Furthermore, I believe that seeing people in so called red states party over Memorial Day weekend without social distancing may have contributed to the raw emotional outpouring by some blue state protesters. This is no justification, mind you, just an observation of factories contributing to the mass protests that we are seeing. Seven protest and the right to protest are fundamental to democracy. Right? It's not protest. looting is not protest. We have no right to riot or to loot and indeed, rioting and looting are nothing to democracy. No, Trump is correct, that antiva is inciting violence, and that violence is counterproductive to having a peaceable society. 10 white nationalists may also be involved in inciting violence on American streets right now. And Trump has in the past engaged in dog whistles to white nationalists. Furthermore, his explicit mention Trump's explicit mention of the Second Amendment in his mostly scripted June 1 press conference can easily be interpreted as a call to arms. He said quote, I'm mobilizing Available federal resources, civilian and military to stop the rioting and looting and the destruction and arson and to protect the rights of law abiding Americans, including your second amendment rights. Quote, what is the second amendment doing in that sentence in particular? Is it a call to civil war? This is what it is it is beyond anti patriotic, it may even be treasom 11 some cops are racist thugs. Some dentists are also racist thugs. No society should allow racist thugs to rise in positions of power. Racist thugs who are policemen, given their job are able to do more damage to others than are racist thugs who are dentists or grocery clerks. garbageman or electricians went 12 most cops are not racist thugs. Most cops like most dentists and grocery clerks and garbageman and electricians are honest people with an interest in doing good

**Heather** 05:56

13 spreading blanket pronouncements of the uniform evil of some demographic, such as with the acronym, a cab, all cops are bastards, or the, or promoting the inherent and unresolvable racism of all white people, is not just untrue, but bad for the cause, that it is supposedly for force good and honest people to take loyalty oaths, or make an admission of admission of original sin where none exists. And some of those good and honest people will become less good and less honest. Others will wake up to the hypocrisy at the core of a movement that was supposed to do good and wonder where to turn. Finally, young Americans are in debt, their education have failed them. Good healthcare is a distant memory. The prospect of owning a house is a pipe dream for most, many of them younger among us were raised on legal pharmaceuticals that have rendered us psychologically disorganized, unable to track or control their own emotional states or to read that of others. And our economy has become obsessed with making us into consumers. But consumption does not provide meaning. We will find true meaning in different ways some of us will be driven to create, some will be driven to discover, some will be driven to heal others to communicate or to build or to grow or to synthesize. Some will find meaning in the protesting of actual injustice in the writing of wrongs. There are so many sources of meaning to be had. Instead, we're being controlled and corralled, sold to and lied to and divided. Our humans deeply tribal and competitive. Yeah. are humans deeply collaborative? Yes. Let us recognize our shared humanity, and celebrate our individual differences. We can do both. We can both recognize our shared humanity and celebrate our individual differences. And the best leaders facilitators doing just that.

**Bret** 07:50

Wow, I have a great joke, but I can't deliver it because that was a very sober and nuanced presentation. So I'm going to resist the urge to make light of it says the joke. No, I'm saving the joke, I will, I'll fight I will. If I have to organize a podcast to justify that joke delivered at the end of the punch line at some other point, I will do it. But at the moment,

**Heather** 08:16

I just respond on mass or go back through individual points.

**Bret** 08:21

Point, there's one point in the interest of fairness and clarity that I want to I don't want to say correct, because I think what you said is technically right, but having tripped this wire last night on Twitter, I am sensitive to the hazard it implies. I have as yet seen very little evidence of white nationalist active at this moment in this protest.

**Heather** 08:49

I have I have I have seen no evidence. Okay. But many. And in fact, the thing that I left out here, you know, people are saying, Is it an Tifa? getting in the way of legitimate protesters? Is it and doing the rioting and looting and inciting violence? Is it white nationalists? Is it foreign countries? Right? I know all of these are out there as hypotheses and at some level. The fact is, it's divisive,

**Bret** 09:16

right? So all I want to do is make sure that we do not leave the impression that there is evidence for something for which we do not have evidence. So I've seen lots of stuff that suggests there is unnatural behavior. I don't know if these pallets of bricks did show up. I had another conversation with a business owner today he was having trouble sourcing bricks. something odd might be going on or not, we don't know. But all I want to say is there is no question in my mind that what is taking place serves those very divisions and may in fact lead to my biggest fear is something like a race war that turns into a civil war. But as yet, I have not seen the misbehavior that I might have. On the white nationalist side, so make a bit what you will. In terms of the rest I I'm, I think you and I have not talked about this but I am now having conversation after conversation where one person after another somebody I respect will say to me words to the effect of we're all evergreen now. In fact, Holly math nerd was the first person to say something like this. And what she said was it took three years to go from for the country to reach the Evergreen stage after evergreen did it. Now, my perspective is a little different, because we lived this three years ago.

**Heather** 10:48

Was it less, there's at least one key difference that I see, and we have not talked about this,

**Bret** 10:52

while there are important differences, especially evergreen did not have a Trump figure. It had a George bridges figure, which is a very different phenomenon. Yeah.

**Heather** 11:00

I don't know what that is from from history. But it's not Trump.

**Bret** 11:04

Let's put it this way. It is a lot easier to make light of the situation when your bridges and aptitude is in charge rather than the ferocious power that any president would have in the instincts of this president. strike me as particularly dangerous in a crisis like this. But

**Heather** 11:28

one one other key difference is that there was no obvious instigating incident at evergreen, there were widespread claims of racism without any actual incidents. And while we don't, we may never know everything that happened with regard to the killing of George Floyd. Clearly, there was an incident, and it was awful. And it was recorded and televised.

**Bret** 11:58

So I mean, I think your your 14 points do a great job of bringing us to this question, because, for my part, I'm nervous about any single incident, triggering an outpouring of anger like this, because especially in this case, you know, I don't know what reports I've seen one report that says that George Floyd died of asphyxiation. I've seen another report that suggests he was saying he couldn't breathe before he was ever on the ground. And so to the extent that you and I think both believe that this protest was initially a, an honest outpouring of grief and frustration, one doesn't want to pin it. Obviously, this was an act of police brutality. Did it killed George Floyd? Well, probably but it you know, there's at least one scenario in which he was dying of a heart attack was deserving of care he didn't get because this officer had his knee on his neck. And so yes, it's a terrible incident. But if it is not exactly what it is understood to be by the people in the streets, does that undercut the reality of this, but it is,

**Heather** 13:06

it is also true, that if it is what it appears, that does not inherently make it a racist act, right? He could just be a white cop who kills a black man is not inherently doing so because he is a racist,

**Bret** 13:23

right? As I said in the talk years ago, how the magic trick is done, you know, a woman who's walking down the street and takes me to have given her a look that has some sort of content, too, it doesn't know whether or not that same awkward look was given to the guy who passed right after her or if it was actually about her being females. You just can't tell from anecdote. But none of this. I mean, I think you and I would agree, none of this really matters. There is honest anger and frustration. And it is really, truly based on something even though the data on police killings of black people are not reflective of the pattern that many people believe is just clear, right? So there is disproportionate killing of black people by cops, but in absolute terms, and more often happens to white people. And in any case, the data is muddled. But that does not mean that when people who have experienced brutality, see it on film, that it does not call forth an honest reflection of some different experiences they are having with cops. And so in any case, I'm very troubled that everything gets hung on a single incident which can then undercut it if the incident isn't what it appears to be. I'm more troubled by the undercutting of the legitimacy of the initial outpouring of emotion that came from the looting and the violence which we have seen so much. And I am very interested in us unpacking how this all works and why this protest has turned so ugly and so cynical, I would say, just the simple prevalence of needless beatings and, and stealing of goods and all really just makes it it makes it very hard to say anything nuanced about it, because I feel like there was something to be said at first. And now, those of us who would say it have found ourselves in the very awkward position of wanting to be wanting to be very clear that we don't support the wanton destruction. I mean, what even is this? There's no, there are no demands on the table, there's nothing obvious that could be done to placate other than signs of failed tea, which are not even appropriate.

**Heather** 16:05

Well, and there's a way it is reminiscent of evergreen in some ways, in part because some of what is happening is coming from exactly the same playbook. And you know, what, one of one of the things that I am seeing is a demand for for submission, and a call for ally ship on the part of all those who would join the cause, but don't have the, the right skin color. And it's that part is alarming in its similarity to what we saw.

**Bret** 16:41

Yeah, I mean, I think, in the spirit of history doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes. And as we said, as evergreen was unfolding, evergreen was ahead of the curve. But that given time, we would get there, if people didn't take the warning, we have now arrived there. The particulars are different, you know, the hazards are different. evergreen was dangerous, and I as evergreen was unfolding, I had the terrible sense that it was unfolding that the extraordinary. The exaggerated nature of what we were seeing was very much like a sort of poorly, poorly drawn movie, everything was so over the top that it was, it looked like a movie script in which somebody didn't have a knack for subtlety. And what I worried about the whole time, was that it was very clear based on the way movie scripts go, especially one written without subtlety was that that movie was going to end with an ironic lynching of a white person, and that the most likely person for that to be would have been me. So anyway, I was very glad that we, I think, derailed it. I'm not saying that that would have happened. But given that the violence was escalating, and that the police were out of the picture. That certainly was seemed a possibility. And we are now seeing the same things in play in, you know, in the nation as a whole.

**Heather** 18:10

So one, to go back to the first point you raised with regard to a difference between what we're seeing unfold society wide in in the United States right now, versus what happened at evergreen three years ago, right now is that there was you know, George bridges, the president of evergreen was no Trump and never would have aspired to be such a person. And in fact, the the epithets that people came up with for him involved spineless, invertebrate, and beta. And you know, this sort of thing, right? I think this actually points out one of, you know, we needed a leader, then evergreen, he had a leader, and the country needs a leader now. And in either case, did we or do we have a good leader, but the failures are radically different. So George bridges, could not figure out or was not interested in figuring out how to actually lead or how to be actually alpha, which is what we want in a leader. So if if it's okay, I know you have places that you want to go here, but can I just say a few things about what what an alpha is? Because I think this is something that Trump imagines he is, but the term comes out of animal behavior. And I've thought a lot about this ever since. Ever since we were in college. In fact, when we were studying with Bob Trevor's, and beginning to study the evolution of social behavior, and I specifically was reading the work of Franz the wall, who was an extraordinary primatologist, and his work. He's written many books. His most recent one is Mama's last hug, which is about the evolution and experience of emotion in non human animals. At that point, I was reading peacemaking among primates in service of my undergraduate senior thesis, which was about the role of affiliations and friendships between Female non human primates and you know in typically in social species that have adult males and adult females living side by side you have distinct dominance hierarchies that there's male dominance hierarchies. And as female dominance hierarchies only often play by so sort of the same roles, but not exactly. And then male female relationships are not always inherently sexual, but there's different roles there. Right. So I was thinking about peacemaking among primates to walls book from must be the 80s. And then reference to this, this presser that he held yesterday that Trump held yesterday, that was so remarkable. And you pointed out, the George Will, who is famously conservative, wrote within, I don't know, practically minutes of that press conference coming out an op ed in Washington Post, in which he said, among other things, quote, that Trump is a weak person's idea of a strong person. This is one of the most compelling conservative voices that we still have around you. And I remember him from when we were in high school, so this guy's been around for a long time. The wall makes the argument in, in his newest book, Mama's last hug, that most people have a character in their heads of what an alpha male is based, in fact, and in part on the fact that newt gingrich in the 90s recommended diwas book chimpanzee politics, power and sex among apes, two freshmen congressman in the early 90s. And this prompted this caricature of self confidence and swagger and purpose, alphas beating the hell out of everyone and reminding everyone de who the winner is an alpha goes, it alone crushes the competition, and alphas basically like a bully in this rendering, right? And the truth to all points out in chimps, and he would argue in humans as well. Is that okay? Some alphas are indeed merciless tyrants. Fair enough. The biggest, strongest, meanest they have, they, they, they are exactly that thing. But they're the exception, that many more alphas that he has seen in his decades of working with non human primates is that alpha males don't get to the top on their own. They have assistance. The smallest, you know, the actual physically smallest male can be alpha, if he has the right supporters.

**Heather** 22:28

And most alphas, protect the underdog, keep the peace, reassure those who are distressed and for me, the most surprising thing here as someone who has studied social behavior of animals in the wild for also decades, is that alphas tend to be what the wall calls the healer in chief that he and his his people did an analysis of consoling behavior specifically, who gives hugs who offers hugs after someone has lost a high fight. And in general, females give many more hugs than males in chimps in other species. But even though that's true that across the board, females give more hugs to console losers of fights. The Alpha Male is the exception to that alpha males foreign away, give more hugs to those who have lost fights than anyone else in the entire system. When fights break out, the community looks to the alpha to see how to handle it. And one last thing to while writes, quote, he is the final arbiter intent on restoring harmony, he will impressively stand between screaming parties with his arms raised until things calm down. That's leadership.

**Bret** 23:39

I get where you're going with this, but I do not want a hug from that man. Now, all right, so a this is really interesting. You and I did not talk about this beforehand. And of course, I was on a parallel track. I should just say that the concept alpha with respect to dogs is not what people think it is. That's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about something else. What the important I want to actually take issue with one thing, right, I guess I'm taking issue with George, we'll hear

**Heather** 24:09

a little bit George church will not for a while. Right. Okay. Which is that I so the quote that I gave from George well, was Trump's a weak person's idea of a strong person, is it that or something else in the US that

**Bret** 24:20

yeah, I think that this is easy to get wrong. Trump actually is strong. He has navigated his way to the top successfully, and I believe he is writing this crisis, to his own benefit successfully, to all of our great detriment and to tremendous risk to the Republic. But nonetheless, there is power in what he is doing. I believe he has an obligation not to pursue it and that he falls down on that obligation quite regularly. What I do think will is alluding to here is that Trump is Not a secure man. Trump is an insecure man who is compensating for that insecurity for his desperate need for affirmation. And you can hear this in so many of the things that he says where he's always talking about how great we are and how we never lose. And then I mean, I saw a tweet today in which, you know, he, he has apparent theoretical, thank you, Trump or something. I mean, Thank you, President Trump for some claimed victory, or whatever. The point is, it's transparent, that he is insecure. And my feeling is, as a man who has observed other men over a long period of time, a powerful in the secure man is a very dangerous phenomenon. And at this moment, it could not possibly be more of a hazard to us. So he is powerful, he is successful at wielding at gathering and wielding power, and he is dangerous, because the end to which he will wield it is very frequently a self aggrandizing end when at the, you know, what we need, of course, is a leader who is a patriot, and that inherently means one who will sacrifice for his nation when need be, which means bypassing political opportunity, in order to better the nation to heal the crisis, whatever it is so largely in agreement, but when it is the insecurity that I believe is solely for

**Heather** 26:26

you, I think you use the word needy with me. A week or two ago, you said I wasn't sure exactly what it was apropos. But this this was beginning to boil. Yeah, all of this and you said, I think the trade that I find hardest to deal with and other people is neediness and insecurity and neediness are not identical, but they are certainly closely aligned concepts. Well,

**Bret** 26:49

it is particularly bad in a man whose signature is strength and power, right? Because the strength and power gets wielded in a very dangerous way. So sorry that I don't know what power tool that is. through me here. Indeed. What did I want to say? Well, I've now forgotten it. But okay, let's talk a little bit about the protests themselves, and how they are interacting with all of this. Something that's been on my mind quite a bit on the last several days, is the tension between a a peacemaking dynamic that I have seen hints of many times now. And the thing that disrupts it, and what I want to call our viewers attention to is the way game theory haunts this whole story. So the first thing I want to say is, riots, and looting, have a particular nature to them. Okay, there's a reason that looting is a thing that has a name that very frequently emerges in history at times of crisis. And it basically works like this. If you have a city, you hire some number of police officers, it has to be enough to do the job. And then it's a diminishing returns problem. So you could hire more cops. And if you hire more cops, it costs more. And the good you get out of adding another cop to the force goes down with each unit above some level. And so you want to hire an economically efficient number of cops. And that economically efficient number of cops is inevitably based on what's necessary under normal circumstances. There is a point at which your cops become so busy with some phenomenon that is unusual, with some kind of Black Swan event or something, that the usual force that keeps people in line that keeps honest people honest, breaks down. And those people who are hovering closest to the edge of that border, discover that the thing that would ordinarily penalize them for doing X, Y or Z happens to be preoccupied with something else. And so they engage in looting. That is a very sad but normal phenomenon. The problem here is that it doesn't take very much to put us in jeopardy of that. And in the context of a protest, it started out over something legitimate. We have the added phenomenon of let's say that the protest is one thing it's the George Floyd protest. And the George Floyd protests suffers from the fact that if somebody loots a store in Chicago, it is then seen by everybody everywhere, the protest has now paid the price of the looting that went on on some corner in Chicago. And that decreases the added cost of somebody looting in Houston. So in some sense, we have a tragedy of the commons. unfolding were the people who are least in line with the objective of the protest begin to to color the way the protest unfolds. Because they do the dramatic thing that violates the notion that this is an honest outgrowth of sentiment. And it spreads because as long as the protest is paying the cost of looking bad, the opportunity to get an upgraded phone is irresistible for a lot of people. So anyway, it's it's a tragedy of the commons. And tragedy is a real tragedy in this case.

**Bret** 30:39

Okay, so now let's carry through to the game theory that we're seeing unfold that goes the other direction. And we've seen this several times in Portland this week, and we've seen it elsewhere. There's something new, and this did not happen during occupy, I have to tell you, I never saw it even once. There's a moment at which the protesters are calm, and the cops are calm, and they are trying to figure out how to negotiate with each other. Right? The cops do not like the predicament where they have to crack down on the protesters. Does that mean no cops like it? No, those cops are on the force too. But there are lots of cops who don't want to be cracking down on people and they're getting pushed into it and they don't like it. And anyway, it's all understandable. So they want to negotiate to there's a moment of calm, there's some sort of exchange of lightheartedness or goodwill or something, right? And then some asshole lights a firecracker or throws a bottle or does something right or an asshole on the other side decides to fire some tear gas, or whatever it is, and the thing breaks down in an instant. And all it takes is one, all it takes is one and the point I think that I'm deriving from this always annoyed me that occupy thought that it needed to be a leaderless movement. Now it did that for a reason, a movement with leaders can be co opted, or their leaders can be killed or disrupted in other ways. So leaders are a vulnerability, but not having them as an even bigger vulnerability. Because what it means is there's nobody in a position to to calm the crowd, to punish the person who would set off the firecracker. There's nobody to say, actually, that doesn't speak for us. That's right, that's not us. Right. And because that person is absent, there is no mechanism for this natural peacemaking tendency to actually take over, we could get somewhere without Trump imposing martial law, for God's sake, we could get there, if we had some mechanism to allow the natural peacemaking to happen even now, even after all of the looting and violence that we've seen.

**Heather** 32:47

Yeah, if if any group could define someone, and allow them to speak for the group, there would be fewer bottles thrown at the point that peace is emerging. The prediction one of the predictions of what you just laid out, is that those those things that break and emerging peace in standoffs between protesters and police are more likely to emerge from the protesters, not from the police, because of course, the police does have hierarchy does have leader and if, if the police department in question is not wholly corrupt, and I believe that there are vanishingly few entirely corrupt police departments in the US at this point, not to say that there might not be some or that there aren't some with way higher percentage of corrupt police than then I would, then I would want to know. But someone, a member of the force who does something wrong, as police as emerge as pieces emerging, can be reprimanded by their leader and their leader could say that doesn't stand for us. Whereas there is no mechanism by which that exists among a leaderless hierarchy less group of protesters peaceful, peaceful until they're not protesters.

**Bret** 34:16

Yeah, I agree. There's a hierarchy inherent to the police force, which allows for control if that's the instinct. And this then gets us to this very thorny issue of the anarchists and in particular the the antifa although Frankly, I don't even want to play that game anymore. Yes, the anti fur exists and you know, the President has learned that he can invoke them and rile people up because they make themselves so difficult to to empathize with and the frankly they make the entire protest movements so they by design, they make it impossible to empathize with that's their that's their whole Mo. But the problem here is that they actually have an ideology It's goofy as all get out, right? It would not take two hours of careful thought to explain why it's incorrect and must not be allowed to drive the movement. But you'll never get the two hours, right? I must have spent 100 hours during occupy trying to explain to the anarchists why this wasn't going to work for very simple, mundane reasons that didn't have to do with anybody being out to get them just has to do with, basically, whether the strategy they're advocating is stable, or whether it opens the door to tyranny. But you never get there, which means that that little ideology, which they get together and discuss privately, that thing is then allowed to interfere with the natural, admittedly tense relationship that would otherwise exist between the protesters and the cops. Right. But the the ability of a small number of people to demonize the entire police force so that the police force are not people, they are vermin, and then the police see the protesters in the same light, and nobody's allowed to cross the line, because that's considered treason. That thing is what is causing this tragedy. And I don't know how I'm in a leaderless movement, and this obviously is a leaderless movement at the moment. I don't know how it is that somebody makes the point, generally, actually, for you to have your grievance addressed. You have to get away from those people, they are about something else, they are actually about the wrong idea that if you tear civilization apart, what replaces it will be better, they are wrong about that idea. And they are causing your movement to do their bidding, right? That's unacceptable, and you need leaders to stop it. And if you just imagine, I mean, I've seen a lot of comparisons this week of the current situation with, you know, 1968, and in particular, but the big difference is the total leadership vacuum. on all sides, there's just no leadership, you've got politics being played at the top level, you've got a movement in which nobody is empowered to speak. And, you know, it's just, it's a disaster in the

**Heather** 37:17

making. I mean, another key difference, and this is so obvious, it feels like it's not worth saying, but it's utterly critical is that, as you mentioned earlier, someone loots in Chicago, and the entire world sees it. So there is no ability for any of these protests in any of the American cities to emerge to evolve organically on their own, we would expect that protests that happened in Portland, versus Minneapolis versus DC versus Atlanta versus LA, wherever, to be different. The people are different, even absent differences in cultures, and geography. It's just different human beings involved. And there will be different initial conditions, and different people making errors. And those errors will be different and different people making excellent decisions. And those excellent decisions will be different. What the what social media, and widespread access to the internet allows is for a universalizing of experience, and the destruction of individual cultural and regional differences such that there is no possibility for organic protest to evolve distinctly in any place. At the point that we started, this became a positive feedback chaos, that it was almost impossible that it could be stopped, in less, you know, in any city that wasn't already doing that needed to effectively block itself from being able to see what was going on in the rest of the world. And we have no mechanism for that.

**Bret** 38:53

Yeah, I started having a thought like this. When I first saw the, the footage of Nicholas Christakis being confronted at Yale, right? And there was something so odd about this because we now know Nicholas, personally, and he is every bit as decent as he seems online and, you know, in speeches and all. And so you had these very privileged kids at Yale confronting this very decent person, as a proxy for some battle that, if it's any, anything like evergreen doesn't even exist at Yale, right? So at evergreen, we had a battle over white supremacy that didn't exist there as if it existed there. And the whole thing made no sense because of that same thing at Yale. And so what you're saying and I see it, too is there is an honest, Hartford, heartfelt objection to something but isn't everywhere and to have that objection raised. You've got a problem. Cops and their Enforcement Against citizens is is the question. And you have cops confronting citizens over this question all over the place, irrespective of how those cops are doing with those citizens. And so it basically takes the problem, and it duplicates it everywhere. Even if the problem wasn't so bad in some places, it was really terrible in other places. And

**Heather** 40:18

exactly there's there's real grievance, there is real grievance that people have. But what we're seeing is not based on real grievance, always well, I don't even want to say that. It's not it's not always based on real grievance. I'm certain of

**Bret** 40:33

that. That's not what I mean, of course, there is phony baloney stuff. But let's put it this way. I think there was a conversation to be had at Yale. And I think there was a conversation to be had at evergreen. The thing that made it impossible to have the conversation was the accusation that it was present right there. Right. So in other words, my feeling is if you maybe you're a black person who finds yourself at Yale, and maybe there isn't racism at Yale in the sense that they were complaining about, but because you're a privileged member from that population, in some sense, you have a greater obligation, because you have the opportunity to raise the point that things are not generally fair, and that lots of people don't have those opportunities. You feel some lineage based obligation to raise the point because you've made it to a place where the point can actually be heard. Now, that doesn't look anything like shrieking and Nicholas Christakis now, right, that's the opposite of what it means. But there's no we don't have the proper tooling to allow somebody to speak, you know, for those who aren't in a good position to do it without alleging that it is themselves that they are speaking for, in some sense. And so, we are seeing the dynamic unfold. And it is it is ironic, paradoxical counterproductive. And in the end, it makes, it just makes the point unhireable.

**Heather** 42:08

Yeah, no, and I mean, one of one of the pieces of my 14 point, Introduction to today's live stream. That was just part of one sentence at the very end, I think, you know, we've spent a lot of time talking about this in the past. But I think it's actually critical the fact that we have drugged a whole generation of people, with with legal drugs, with mood disruptors mood, even ORS, as well as steroid hormones, and all sorts of other madness. But especially, especially having drugged children during their development, who were given, who were given diagnoses of either having anxiety disorders, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorders. And they were not allowed to grow up and to learn how to experience their own emotional states to understand their own psychology, at the point that they show up in college or beyond. They've been locked down for a while, they don't see what their prospects are, they don't know how they're going to get out from under debt. They don't know how to have health insurance, how to have relationships. And they see something as brutal as a man being killed while crying for help under the need of a of a baby. But a cop of a different race of who is white, and it all comes out. Yeah, it all comes out. Of course it does. But that doesn't mean that all of the anger is about the thing. This is not all about George Floyd.

**Bret** 43:47

No, I mean, George Floyd is, is the symbol. And you know, there's actually a long history of that, with respect to historic protests, where somebody's death triggers, basically, you know, all of the pent up emotion that comes from all of the deaths of people whose names we don't know. So you know, anyway, that's that's sort of a natural process. But I guess I'm also just struck by the leadership vacuum is really, to me, it's just almost impossible to get past it at this point. And the fact that we are hurtling towards an election that if nothing amazing happens, will result in US continuing for another four years without a leader at the top at a moment when we absolutely positively 100% need one. So that dynamic itself suggests that we have a whole second layer of problem that needs addressing, but in all of this, I keep thinking with respect to interesting dynamic heterodox thinkers no place Do we have a deeper bench than when it comes to people who are of African descent? in America? It's amazing how many high quality people we have. And they are, by and large, sidelined from this discussion. It's not to say they aren't saying things on Twitter. But the idea that we are not drafting these people to center stage to have that conversation, to me is just very odd, because they, in the absence of a Martin Luther King, like figure here is a tragedy. The fact that we have many people who I believe many of them could play some role like that. But combined, there's no question. The firepower is there to move this discussion.

**Heather** 45:50

So you're thinking about just I did not know you're gonna say this, but just off the top of my head. Let's see. JOHN McWhorter. Yep, Glenn Lowry, Coleman Hughes, Chloe, Valerie. Yep. JOHN wood, Jr. Bob Woodson. More and more, more more.

**Bret** 46:05

Josephine Mathias

**Heather** 46:07

is Canadian. Oh, wow. All right. We

**Bret** 46:11

annex Canada, we get Josephine. Yeah. Let's see. Who Have we forgotten?

**Heather** 46:16

Many? I'm sure. But yeah, but I mean, even even

**Bret** 46:19

just there. That's a that's an incredibly Laura Riley. Jason Riley. Not sure. Okay. In any case, you got Thomas Chatterton. Williams,

**Heather** 46:32

no. Okay. So this is not an American now, but he's an American living in France. So this is a lot of people

**Bret** 46:38

who deeply understand stuff. And, you know, I'm, I'm now regularly asked by people. Well, if you were in Trump's shoes, what would you do? And I resent the question, because I never would have let it got this to this spot. Right, I would have done much more much sooner. And frankly, it's hard to imagine boxing the job this badly. But one of the things that I certainly would have done had I found myself in that position was I would have brought all of those people in. And we would have been having a very deep conversation about what the state of race relations are in the US, especially with respect to black and white dynamics. And, you know, how do I know that's what I would have done? Because you and I proposed this very thing when evergreen came apart before they forced us out. Our proposal was to bring many of those people together for a conference on race relations to turn evergreen around to take that absurd spectacle of a meltdown and turn it into something positive that would change the national conversation. And they said no, and they said no, of course because that's the Evergreen way.

**Heather** 47:46

Yeah, so we're nearing the end of an hour. I want to finish with a little dose day of scheme but I know you have some other things that you want to talk about here. I have a couple things

**Bret** 47:54

that I have to turn to dust if scheme. I promised on Twitter to explain why I disliked the Atlantic article which you have a link to. It was an Atlantic article said this Yes. And it says protests. The protests will spread the Coronavirus. And I had an immediate negative reaction to this because although there is positive stuff in this article, that title specifically is very misleading and it is misleading for reasons that people who have been watching this podcast will into it. One thing is we do not know if the Coronavirus is going to be spread by the protests. There's one reason to think that that is actually not highly likely and that is that the Coronavirus there is substantial evidence to suggest it is very difficult to contract outdoors. Now the article does go to great lengths to say not great length, but it goes to some lengths to say that arrests actually that put people in paddy wagons and cells are there for a particular liability. But my concern is there is almost certain to be a jump in the number of cases because the lockdown is being eased. That jump is going to be attributed to the protests, which is then going to be blamed on the protesters which is unfair. Now, if we can begin to segue to the next little piece of this puzzle, it's possible that the protests will spread the virus, I would advise everybody who is out there a you should probably figure out what to do about the riot problem and until you do you should go home. But you should wear a mask. But one of the things we don't know is whether Outdoors is comparatively safe because of UV light, in which case nighttime will not have that effect and they should be very very careful. Or if it is something else like the high volume of the spaces and there's a lot of evidence that circumstance suggests that that will be the case because the movement of air seems to be contributing to safety. And

**Heather** 50:07

I've seen evidence that it's that it's both and perhaps more, but that, that absent UV light at night, there will be less protective effect of being outside but there is still a protective effect of having open space and dispersion of viral particles.

**Bret** 50:21

Right? Okay, so I said something very provocative on Twitter, which was this actually the Coronavirus thing you sent No, no. The the protest could be protective because a lot of people who would otherwise be indoors during the lockdown will be outdoors where it's very difficult to. Okay. I mean, I'm just saying that's a possibility. So that could be protective. But what I don't want to see is as leap to the conclusion when we do see a jump in the number of cases which is almost certain based on the end of the lockdown that it was the protest that did it that's unfair to the protesters, and it treads very close to a recurrent trope in history where the enemy is declared to be something like infectious. Right. So anyway, I don't want to see that happen. Alright, a couple other points on Coronavirus. One, I don't have a link for this one. But evidence started to emerge this week of it being a primarily circulatory blood blood vessel borne virus, which is both curious and interacts with the lab origin hypothesis potentially because one of the possible techniques that might have been used in a laboratory if this did in fact, emerge from a laboratory would have involved passage through what are called HeLa cells. Now, HeLa cells are a very famous cell line from human beings, cell line that has been in circulation for many decades. And the reason that you can have a cell This is the

**Heather** 51:51

Henrietta Lacks. So there was a movie made about her recently this whole story I don't remember exactly what but this is the healer being Henrietta Lacks cell. So it's her line, it's her cell line. Now,

**Bret** 52:01

if you're paying real close attention to the podcast, you'll think how could you have a cell line circulating for decades wouldn't have run out of telomere right? Well, what kind of cell doesn't run out of telomere cancer cells down, Helen lacs died of cancer and these are Henrietta Lacks died of cancer. And these cells are cells from her tumor, which now vastly outnumber as I understand it, the number of cells that were in her body when she was alive, and they are used as human model cells in many laboratory experiments. So cancers have an interesting dynamic cancers that actually function and are persistent, have an interesting dynamic with respect to blood vessels, they have to grow them in order to feed that mass of tissue, which is growing and doesn't have access to the circulatory system of the body. So it would die off, it would get necrotic and die off if it didn't generate its own circulatory vessels. So one question is, if this was created with a laboratory serial passage experiment in something like Ebola cells, would have a unique relationship to blood vessels, I don't know. But it's certainly something we would want to study. And ruling out the possibility that it came through a lab will prevent us from doing so. Which brings me to the next point. So I've told viewers of this podcast that the laboratory origin hypothesis and by laboratory origin, I don't mean that the thing was created fully in a lab, I mean, that a lab would have taken a virus from the wild and might have made a chi mera or it might have put it through serial passage, or it might have done both, and in so doing, modified what the virus does, and then the virus might have escaped, or it could just have been brought into the lab and could have escaped from the lab without modification, but that the viability of those hypotheses is greatly much greater than what we are being led to believe, by establishment sources. And that we are effectively being misled that any such idea is preposterous from a scientific point of view, which is of course not correct. Well, that narrative that those who talk about this idea are obviously not grasping the science, that narrative has begun to crack, it began to crack in a major way with an article by Matt Ridley in the Washington Post earlier this week. So that's this suck if you don't put that up. Here is Matt Ridley. The article is short, but excellent, and it points out that the laboratory hypothesis is anything but dead and that the Wu Han fish market hypothesis is effectively dead. And then there's this more recently a much more extensive article in the independent science news that argues that in fact, the laboratory origin hypothesis is most probable, which is of course the position that I took weeks ago on this podcast. These are both worth reading. They both reference Yuri Deakins work who we looked at In an earlier live stream, and in any case, the point here is not that we know that this came from the lab, we still don't know. And none of these authors would say so. Right. But what we do know is that anybody who was telling you from the beginning that that was a non viable hypothesis was misleading you and we now have a terrible problem, as I warned you, we would. And that terrible problem is that such a large fraction, like nearly 100%, of the virology community has been backing this story, that laboratory origin was a dead on arrival hypothesis, that now we have no experts we can go to almost that's an amazing predicament to be in, in light of the source code to predicament that we find ourselves in. So in any case, that's more or less where things stand, I would argue we have an obligation to take this hypothesis seriously, because this is where the evolutionary dynamics come in. If it did come through the lab, it will have been modified to laboratory conditions that could provide us opportunities to fight it, and it could provide obstacles that we need to know about. And if we don't take this hypothesis seriously, at the highest level, we're not going to figure it out, and the opportunities are gonna pass us by and we're gonna fall right into the hazards. All right. You want to go to duck duck, duck, Fq? Yeah,

**Heather** 56:21

before we before we break, yep, yeah. So to finish up the idea of the plague that we are experiencing being not just the pathogen, but also the societal collapse that accompanies the pathogen, either before or after, was an idea that showed up for me formally this week on Twitter, a, an account at mimetic value. Said, by the way, when modern narrative problems that people focus too much on the virus, it's true that the virus causes the disease. But this focus leads us to missing the whole picture continues traditionally, before the pathogen origin of diseases were discovered people associate the whole time period of chaos with the plague. The social contagion of the virus of the riots is intertwined with a biological contagion of the virus together, they are the plague. So I found this fascinating and asked this, this person, I'm imagining a he I don't I don't know, if he had a reference and he pointed me to a Rene Girard paper from 1974 called the plague and literature and myth, in which Gerard cites Shakespeare and Dostoevsky and many others and specifically, he cites just the very last bits of of crime and punishment of Theodore Dostoyevsky's 18 What is it 66 novel with as is so typical of dusty offski a really complicated and, you know, difficult and yet ultimately endearing protagonists. raskolnikov. So, in the very last pages of crime and punishment, raskolnikov reports a dream. And I just want to finish with, with this directly from dusty ASCII in the in the translation of course, he dropped it, the whole world was condemned to a terrible new strange plague that did come to Europe from the depths of Asia. Some new sorts of microbes were attacking the bodies of men, but these microbes were endowed with intelligence and well, men attacked by them became at once mad and furious, but never had men considered themselves so intellectual and so completely in possession of the truth as these sufferers never had they considered their decisions, their scientific conclusions, their moral convictions so infallible. All villages, whole towns and peoples went mad from the infection. All were excited, and did not understand one another. Each thought that he alone at the truth and was wretched looking at the others, beat himself on the breast, wept and wrung his hands. They did not know how to judge could not agree what to consider evil and what good they did not know whom to blame whom to justify. men killed each other in a sort of senseless spite. They gathered together in armies against one another, but even on the march the armies would begin attacking each other, the ranks would be broken and the soldiers would fall in each other, stabbing and cutting, biting and devouring each other. The alarm bell was ringing all day long in the towns, men rushed together, but why they were summoned and who was summoning them, no one knew. The most ordinary trades were abandoned because everyone proposed his own ideas, his own improvements and they could not agree. The land to was abandoned. Men met and groups agreed on something swore to keep together but at once began on something quite different from what they had proposed. They accused one another fought and killed each other. There were conflagrations and famine. All men and things were involved in destruction, the plague spread and moved further and further. Let's just ask you from 1866

**Bret** 59:44

Wow. Yeah, and then fact 1866 1866 Okay, so just barely post Origin of Species. But there is something to this notion of rotten it years and they're spread and viruses which spread differently but in a parallel fashion and we are seeing

**Heather** 1:00:08

in end up intertwined in an inseparable way,

**Bret** 1:00:12

inseparable way. Yeah, I am put in mind of the President's remarkable speech and then yesterday's photo ops stunt last evening and thinking that he strikes me very much as a man who believes his ideas to be so correct that they are not worth putting through any kind of challenge. So very frightening situation we find ourselves in it is Yes. Alright. I think we have reached the end of this hour. We will take a 15 minute break and we will see you at the zoo. Are we going to continue with this link? Zack, are we going to give them a new link? Okay, a new link in the description. See you in 15 minutes and we look forward to answering your questions.