Bret and Heather 48th DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ Give Eve...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:07

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream and pet extravaganza. Yep,

**Heather** 00:13

number 48.

**Bret** 00:14

Number 48. That's right. Yes. And all of them have been pet extravaganzas to this point, so it should surprise no one who is a long term viewer.

**Heather** 00:21

I don't think that's true. Actually. We were keeping the door closed for a while.

**Bret** 00:24

Oh, the door right. The pets, the pet baffle that is the door. Yes, yes, it has prevented them from accessing certain live streams. So anyway, if you only tuned into those live streams, now we have more pets? Yes. All right. Um, there is as always a ton going on, because it remains 2020. And I will say, I was looking at the calendar today. And you know what I noticed?

**Heather** 00:49

Let me guess. It's no longer August,

**Bret** 00:52

snow. That's one of the bedrooms. The first thing I noticed. Yeah. The other thing I noticed is that we are exactly one month out from Election Day.

**Heather** 01:00

Is that right? Is it November 3,

**Bret** 01:01

I believe it is November 3. So that's remarkable. And of course, remarkable things are afoot in the landscape of the election, we had the presidential debate, which was certainly worthy of a certain amount of commentary and that was different. It was different, it was different. And then also we have the presidential diagnosis of COVID, which we will get to later we are going to talk about that. But to start off with. We are headed somewhere else. How would you like to enter that discussion?

**Heather** 01:35

Yeah, I think I wanted to start with an extended reading actually from Joseph Joseph Heller's catch 22 but in order to set that up, I wanted to start with a shorter reading from an article that I wrote that just came out in the Swiss magazine Schweitzer moan at in both German and English so if you don't read German is I don't you can, you can read it. So could you just show my screen here for a moment, I'm going to simply start by reading the first five paragraphs of this of this piece, which sets up the reading from Heller that I want to go to next. George Floyd died under the knee of a police officer in Minneapolis in the end of May. And people spilled onto the streets of American cities outraged police brutality and racial bias and exhausted by COVID-19 lockdowns in Portland, Oregon, where I live, those protests turned into riots nearly every single night last summer. The homicide rate climbed to the highest it's been in 30 years. One late night in mid August, a man was dried from his car and beaten by a small band of thugs. The next day on a bluebird sky morning. Some of the few stores nearby that were not boarded up had shop owners out on the sidewalks, cleaning up from the mayhem with the previous night. In this once bustling downtown normal human activity is almost entirely absent while the sun shines. And at night, the chaos resumes. fires are started, people are assaulted, human feces is literally thrown around. Someone tell you that my mentioning these facts is evidence that I'm on the political right. In fact, I am and always have been on the left. liberalism had many big wins in the 20th century, securing rights for women, people of color and workers. The advent of disability law environmental protections named just a few. But there is much more to be done. Even as wealth grows, the middle class is disappearing. Health care and education costs climb while quality plummets, and we are polluting our air, water and soil at unprecedented rates. extinction rates are rising and habitat is disappearing under the call for more oil, lumber and spaces for people to live. The gains made by 20th century liberalism and any chance of confronting the big issues still before us are being eroded by a new ideology. This ideology called the woke left or the authoritarian left traffics in blatant falsehoods, and untestable claims. It is focused on markers of identity, sex, race, disability, and effectively carves out ways to divide us rather than unite us in our common humanity. We are being told, for instance, that men and women are exactly the same indeed that sex itself is a social construct. This is a fiction and threatens to disappear many hard won protections for women. Nature magazine, one of the world's top scientific journals now inserts into its new stories the claim that sex is neither binary nor fixed. They do this even in articles that are literally about differential outcomes by sex from diseases, including cystic fibrosis and COVID-19. And central to a season of protests that are nominally responding to society wide racism, we are asked to believe that all white people are guilty of the original sin of racism for which there is neither cure nor forgiveness. Loyalty also demanded that met your racism or be shamed or even fired. If you are not, in fact, a racist. defending yourself against false claims is itself evidence of your racism. Self Defense is taken as proof of guilt. It's a perfect 21st century Kafka trap. So that's the beginning of this essay that was published a couple days ago and both the glossy hardcopy of the Swiss magazine and I'm online and I was reminded of of that piece from it when you mentioned I think on our last live stream or maybe it was our private q&a that we did on Sunday last week that is available to people on my Patreon of the great it's actually not called the Great loyalty oath campaign as we had said it's called the glorious loyalty oath crusade from Joseph Heller and this I will say this is one of I hope it's okay that I say this this is one of the few novels that you have read cover to cover and and you've you've you have actually read a lot but as as someone with a diagnosis that we can discuss separately whether or not it should be a diagnosis at all but of dyslexia. You You read when you have to in fiction doesn't necessarily always seem like the thing that's necessary right?

**Bret** 05:50

Well, I love fiction but I tend to like plays and series another thing you'd like to watch

**Heather** 05:57

your fiction to watch the fiction now send it in through your your eyes and your language are still Yes, but yeah, yes, yes, yes. So this is a four page excerpt from from Joseph Heller's. As I said, catch 22 I forgot to look

**Bret** 06:15

it up I can just say yeah, yeah, this is a book actually my mom pointed me to it in high school originally published 1955 1955 my mom I think recognizing that I was a little you know different

**Heather** 06:31

or something did not everyone in your life notice that?

**Bret** 06:34

I guess they did and that I had something of a problem with authority Yeah, a little bit of a problem with authority I thought this book might be just the thing and it happens that you know a lot of it resonated with me quite strongly so one of the frustrations that I have is that the book is actually not all that well known. In the modern era people know catch 22 itself but they don't know the concept essential they don't even necessarily know what the catch is but yeah know that a catch 22 is you know, it's like a coffee trap basically and the throughout the Evergreen episode I kept wanting to raise this reference because it fit perfectly but I knew nobody was going to get

**Heather** 07:17

wow that's I mean that's that's fascinating. I mean then this is this is the problem with with the loss of understanding of history right and now of historical texts and this Yeah, this is not that deep history this is what 65 years ago that Yeah, published first and so the central catch 22 is if memory serves if you are sane enough to

**Bret** 07:42

if you're crazy, you don't have to fly but if you don't want to fly that's evidence that you're saying yeah, there it is. You know and then you're supposed to go That's some catch Yeah, yeah, it's the best there is

**Heather** 07:54

Yeah. Which you're sorry I'm in the book is constantly facing things which make him whistle and deep admiration and, and concern for his and his fellow fellows lives. Yeah. Okay, so this is from relatively early in the book. And it just without really any context, I'll just, I'll just read it. Okay. Let's see, I'm sorry, Kitty here in the way. I wanted to start with okay here. And when they remarked when someone remarked that major major was somewhat odd, Captain black announced that he was a communist. They're taking over everything he declared rebellious Lee. Well, you fellows can stand around and let them if you want to, but I'm not going to, I'm going to do something about it. From now on, I'm going to make every son of a bitch that comes to my intelligence tent sign a loyalty oath. And I'm not gonna let that bastard major, major sign one even if he wants to.

**Heather** 08:45

almost overnight, the glorious loyalty oath crusade was in full flower and Captain black was in rapture to discover himself spearheading it, he had really hit on something. All the enlisted men and officers on combat duty had to sign a loyalty oath to get their map cases from the intelligence test tent is second loyalty oath to receive their flag suits and parachutes from the parachute tent. If third loyalty oath for Lieutenant Belkin turn the motor vehicle officer to be allowed to ride from the squadron to the airfield in one of the trucks. Every time they turned around, there was another loyalty oath to be signed. They signed a loyalty oath to get their pay from the finance officer to obtain their PX supplies to have their hair cut by the Italian barbers to Captain black. Every officer who sport his glorious loyalty oath crusade was a competitor, and he planned and plotted 24 hours a day to keep one step ahead. He would stand second to none in his devotion to country, when other officers had followed is urgent and produce loyal deals of their own. He went them one better by making every son of a bitch who came to his intelligence test sign to loyalty to send three then four. Then he introduced the Pledge of Allegiance and after that the Star Spangled Banner, one chorus, two courses, three courses four courses. Each time, Captain black forged ahead of his competitors, he swung upon them scornfully for their failure to follow his example. Each time they followed his example, he retreated with concern and racked his brain for some new strategy that would enable him to do Turn upon them scornfully again. Without realizing how it had come about the combat men in the squadron discovered themselves dominated by the administrators appointed to serve them. They were bullied, insulted, harassed, and shoved about all day long by one after the other. When they voiced objection, Captain black replied that people who were loyal would not mind signing all the loyalty owes they had to, to anyone who questioned the effectiveness of the loyalty oaths, he replied, the people who really did owe allegiance to their country would be proud to pledge it as often as he forced them to, and anyone who questioned the morality. He replied that the Star Spangled Banner was the greatest piece of music ever composed. The more loyal to the person signed, the more loyal he was to Captain black, it was as simple as that. And he had corporal kolodny signed hundreds with his name each day so that he could always prove he was more loyal than anyone else. The important thing is to keep them pledging explained to his cohorts. It doesn't matter whether they mean it or not. That's why they make little kids pledge allegiance even before they know what pledge and allegiance mean. To Captain Prichard and Captain run the glorious loyalty oath crusade was a glorious pain in the ass, since it complicated their task of organizing the crews for each combat mission. Men were tied up all over the squadron signing, pledging and singing and the missions took hours longer to get underway. Effective emergency action became impossible, but Captain Prichard and Captain Ron were both too timid to raise any outcry against Captain black, who scrupulously enforced each day the doctrine of continual reaffirmation that he had originated a doctrine designed to trap all those men who would become disloyal since the last time they had signed a loyalty oath the day before. It was Captain black, who came with advice to Captain Prichard and Captain Ren as they pitched about in their bewildering predicament. He came with a delegation and advise them bluntly to make each man sign loyalty oath before allowing him to fly in a combat mission. Of course, it's up to you, Captain black pointed out, nobody's trying to pressure you, but everyone else is making them sign loyalty oaths, and it's going to look mighty funny to the FBI, if you two are the only ones who don't care enough about your country to make them sign loyalty notes. If you want to get a bad reputation, that is nobody's business but your own. All we're trying to do is help. Milo was not convinced and absolutely refused to deprive major major of food even if major major was a communist which Milo secretly doubted. Milo was by nature opposed to any innovation that threatened to disrupt the normal course of affairs. Milo took a firm moral standard and absolutely refused to participate in the glorious loyalty oath crusade until Captain black called upon him with his delegation and requested him to national defense is everybody's job, Captain black replied to Milo's objection. And this whole program is voluntary. Milo Don't forget that. The men don't have to sign pleasured and rent oil to you if they don't want to. But we needed to starve them to death if they don't. It's just like catch 22 Don't you get it? You're not against catch 22 are you? Dr. Niko was adamant. What makes you so sure major major is a communist. You never heard him denying it until we began accusing him Did you? And you don't see him signing any of our loyalty oaths. You weren't letting him sign any? Of course not Captain black explained that would defeat the whole purpose of our crusade. Look, you don't have to play ball with us if you don't want to. But what's the point of the rest of us working so hard? If you're going to give major major medical attention? The minute Milo begins starving to death. I just wonder what they're going to think up at group about the man is undermining our whole security program. They'll probably transfer you to the Pacific. Doctor Nika surrendered swiftly. I'll go tell gossan wants to do whatever you want them to do. up a group, Colonel Cathcart had already begun wondering what was going on. It's that idiot black off on a patriotism binge. Colonel corn reported with a smile. I think you'd better play ball with him for a while since you're the one who promoted major major squadron commander. That was your idea. Colonel Cathcart accused him petulantly. I never should have let you talk me into it. And a very good idea was to report a Corolla corn since it eliminated that superfluous major that's been giving you such an awful black guys and administrator. Don't worry, this will probably run its course soon. The best thing to do now is send Captain black lawyer a letter of total support and hope he drops dead before he does too much damage. Colonel corn was struck with a whimsical thought. I wonder you don't suppose that imbecile will try to turn major, major end of his trailer Do you? The next thing we've got to do is turn that bastard major major out of his trailer, Captain black decided I'd like to turn his wife and kids out into the woods too, but we can't. He has no wife and kids. So we'll just have to make do with what we have in turn him out who's in charge of the tents. He is. You see Captain black, they're taking over everything. Well, I'm not going to stand for it. I'll take this matter right to major to cover himself if I have to. All of Milo speak to him about the minute he gets back from Rome. Captain black had boundless faith in the wisdom, power and justice of major to coverley even though he had never spoken to him before and still found himself without the courage to do so. He deputized Milo to speak to major to coverley for him and stormed out and patiently waited for the tall executive officer to return along with everyone else in the Squadron Squadron. He lived in profound on reverence of the majestic white haired major with the craggy face and Jovian bearing, who came back from Rome finally with an injury die inside a new siloed. eyepatch and smashed his whole glorious crusade to bits with a single stroke. Milo carefully said nothing when major de coverly stepped into the Marcel with his fierce and austere dignity the day he returned and found his way blocked by a wall of officers waiting in line to sun to sign loyalty oaths. At the far end of the food counter, a group of men who had arrived earlier were pledging allegiance to the flag with trays of food balanced in one hand in order to be allowed to take seat to the table. Or the at the table is a group that arrived earlier was singing the Star Spangled Banner in order that they might use the salt and pepper and ketchup there. The hubbub began to subside slowly, as major to cover the pause in the door with a friend of puzzled disapproval as though viewing something bizarre. He started forwarding the straight line and the wall of officers before him parted like the Red Sea. Glancing neither left nor right he started dominantly up the steam counter, and in a clear, full bodied voice that was gruff with age and resonant with ancient eminence and authority said, gimme eat.

**Heather** 15:48

Instead of eat, Corporal Stark gave major de coverly a loyalty oath to sign. Major dicover lease fucktard away with mighty displeasure at the moment he recognized what it was his good eye flaring up blindingly with fiery disdain and his enormous old corrugated face darkening and mountainous wrath. Gimme eat, I said. He ordered loudly and harsh tones that rumbled ominously through the silent tent like claps of distant thunder. Corporal snark turned pale and began to tremble. He glanced toward Milo pleadingly for guidance. For several terrible seconds there was not a sound than Milo nodded. Give him it is. Corporal snark began giving major de coverly eight major de coverly turn from the counter with his tray full I came to a stop his eyes find the groups of other officers gazing at him and mute appeal and with righteous belligerence, he roared, give everybody eat, give everybody eats Milo echo with joyful relief, and the glorious loyalty oath crusade came to an end.

**Bret** 16:46

So yes, for months, I harbored the desire to say, give everybody eat, and have the madness come to an end, but I knew it would have been lost and everyone

**Heather** 16:55

you didn't have the authority to do so. No, you didn't you you would not return from Rome, with one eye bandaged and the eminence of a long military career behind you. What we needed was an adult, as we need now an adult with the eminence and the authority, unfortunately, to come in and say this will stop, well, this will stop I wasn't

**Bret** 17:16

imagining in my wildest dreams that I had the authority to do it. But what I was imagining was that the reference would cause people who were engaged in this loyalty bullshit to recognize what they had become, and suddenly become so embarrassed that they would withdraw it. But

**Heather** 17:32

I think I can think of a few people who were privately supportive of us and who were publicly on the fence, who, who, for whom that would have caused a pivot. Right? And I think probably in every organization where this is happening, that is that is true. But is it widespread? Is it widely known enough for it to cause a substantial fraction of people, you know, a population large enough to cause a tipping point, to recognize it and to reflect on themselves what they're doing? normally not

**Bret** 18:05

know, there is, I think, no chance that those circuits are still active, somehow, a huge fraction of the population becomes what they hate, and never realizes that that's what what has happened. And so

**Heather** 18:19

it's easier to do so when they're handed language that makes it appear that they're cloaking themselves. And that makes it appear that they're working on the right side of history, and for truth and justice for all and for Black Lives Matter and all of these all of this language Bringer that they're they're anti fascists. And you know, they're anti, fill in the blank phob whatever it is, and no, they're not there. They're they're working on behalf of a kind of great loyalty oath campaign, and what will they do with you, if they actually win, which they might

**Bret** 18:50

write. And, you know, the blind spot is created by the fact that, you know, we can all sort of see the nationalists, the petty nationalist running away with a loyalty of campaign to the flag or to the nation or something like that. And these people who, you know, frankly, don't like the nation cannot see that it is the same damn process they are employing that it is, you know, blind allegiance to some other thing that is driving them but the loyalty oath part of it is completely generic. Right?

**Heather** 19:21

Well, that's I mean, this this is exactly right, that this that these kinds of human responses to situations in which someone wants to accomplish something and others can be caused to follow along. No, no ideology there, there are no ideological or belief bounds on whether or not such a strategy or such tactics will be effective. And so you know, when we are told up but this isn't the you know, this isn't that because those people believed something else doesn't matter. tactic and belief are not the same thing. And there's really, I think, no relationship between them inherently at least over in this kind of space that we're talking about. Yeah,

**Bret** 20:00

the irony is that I must have had this thought 100 times in the last few years is that what the folks who are deploying one wrong idea after another really need is a high quality college education. Right. And the fact is, you know, it is normal, childlike, but it is normal to have this sense that your cause is different. And therefore, it's not vulnerable to becoming this, you know, caricature, but, you know, just the simple benefit that would come from people understanding the rawlsian veil of ignorance,

**Heather** 20:40

the simple enough to give a two sentence description

**Bret** 20:43

of it. Yeah, the idea is that the only legitimate policy is policy that is indifferent to who is deploying it, if the value of the policy you're advocating requires that you're the one administering and and as soon as the enemy is administrating it, you're going to hate it, then you shouldn't want it so the idea so that is

**Heather** 21:01

the that is the rauzein veil of ignorance that we should all aspire to, and that should we should seek in our, in our laws and our, in our decrees,

**Bret** 21:07

right, it's the only stable thing because otherwise, what you get is everybody advocating policy that puts them ahead, while they're, you know, nominally in a position to do it, or in a power situation that they can pull it off, and then they suffer from it on the other side. And so you know, that one idea has just tremendous power for for one thing, you see it in places you don't even really expect it, like the claim that we sometimes make that people end up scratching their heads about with respect to patriarchy, right, that there's something hollow about this claim of a patriarchy, what is it, it's that the genes live in a rauzein veil of ignorance situation, which is if they make rules that put males at advantage, because they're in male bodies in a position to do so then the half the time they end up in female bodies, they suffer the downside of it, which doesn't mean that the rules are fair. But it does mean, it isn't that the genes have put men ahead of women, because the genes are neither the genes or both.

**Heather** 22:07

Okay. I don't think we want to spend much time here. But my my pushback to that would be the genes, so long as they're transmitted into future generations don't actually give a damn about what the individuals lives are that they are contained in. And so the fact that there have been clearly, many societies through history that have put women into a position of being denigrated, through any number of mechanisms, would would seem to kind of put the lie to what you just said, partially, precisely, because individual lives, still end up propagating the genes in the bodies. And you

**Bret** 22:48

can see how a proper college education would emerge from exactly this discussion. Because the point is, as soon as you see that the genes do live in the situation, and yet you have a situation where things are unfair in a predictable direction. Why? Because the individuals don't matter. And then you start to see they don't

**Heather** 23:05

matter from the perspective of the genes, which is not interesting, but it is true, right? Yes,

**Bret** 23:09

then the question is, okay, what are the genes up to? And how much do I like it? And the answer is, they're up to a lot of things. And more than half of it you probably wouldn't like, and what does that mean about our ability to do something different, which gets you to free well, and all of the other things well in there

**Heather** 23:27

and this is this is exactly I'm I feel like this is one of the places that we started almost every single college program that we ever taught, which was, we want to provide you with the evolutionary toolkit to understand as much as possible about what it is that you do, and why you do it, so that you are most fully armed to do that, which is against the will of your genes, when the genes have things in mind, in mind, in quotes, that are actually not honorable, and not good for society or yourself or both,

**Bret** 23:58

right, and to cap it off the recognition of what the genes should want. If their purpose is to advance themselves into the future as far into the future as they can get, then it will ultimately cause them to favor patterns that result in people looking at each other through a lens of how related are we and therefore How much do I view you as a competitor, versus a collaborator, which is, of course, the basis of racism, of most warfare of genocide, tribalism of all sorts of well, but there's other kinds of trends, not not of all sorts of tribalism of its most basic sort

**Heather** 24:41

app, it's certainly the earliest types, right? And so the biggest phenotypic markers of identity were a were a tool to be used to identify whether or not it was Friend or Foe you were looking at. And this is this is ancient and it is that does not make it honorable and indeed is one of the things that we should be fighting against most strenuously, but pretending it doesn't exist, makes it more likely that will continue to exist.

**Bret** 25:07

And if you were going to fight it, the way to fight it would be to understand what it was made of, and what the countervailing forces are, because the countervailing veiling force exists also, and the United States is the prime example of an experiment with stabilizing that countervailing force. There are reasons for us to collaborate irrespective of how related we are, which is the thing that is most special about this country. So the irony of a bunch of woke people attacking the foundational principles of the nation and the epistemology on which it is founded, when the alternative is actually Let's calm down and have these discussions with full nuance. And you will discover that the enemy isn't what you thought it was. And the solution isn't what you think it is. And there is a way to get there. But there's no shortcut. Right?

**Heather** 25:58

Right. So actually, I know we weren't going to go here just yet. But this might be the moment just to show one, one new thing that's happening with the woke hold on just a second sack. I can pull this up here. Okay, here we go. So the Who are these people, this is the mathematical Association of America has tweeted, it is time for all members of our profession to acknowledge that mathematics is created by humans, and therefore inherently carries human biases. Until this occurs, our community and our students cannot reach full potential. Okay, we're, we're done, Zack, we're done here. So this, this is a classic conflation that is happening over in a workspace right, the idea that the language that we use to describe something is the thing itself that has been discovered over in science and math land in general we are doing is discovering not creating. So math is discovered math is the underlying truth of the universe. And the language that we use, you know, the fact that we ended up with, you know, Newton's version of calculus and not Leibnitz is both of those are social constructs. Both of those descriptions of calculus are social constructs. But the calculus underlying that was true between both of them is true, regardless of which human language you use to describe it. If the mathematical Association of America is actually confused on this front, they need a complete reorganization. And really, you just don't have any business doing math. If you think that's true, right? No,

**Bret** 27:34

we need a new one. If we had new What if the organization that is the flagbearer, for mathematical, whatever it is, the Association of America is confused on this point, then what we need is a different mathematical Association of America that isn't confused on this point. Because this point is, you know, at the Foundation, guess, right? Yeah, exactly. And so, you know, run this little experiment. It's not math, but actually, you can do it in that space. The aliens step off the spaceship, they have had no contact with our epistemology, they just see that something interesting is going on on the earth they come to visit, right? We put our scientists in touch with their scientists, do they agree on the value of pie. My sense is they will agree exactly on the value of pie, which is not to say, you know, obviously, it isn't endlessly repeating a non repeating decimal, so it's not like it has a precise value we can agree to but as many decimal places as they will go, once we figure out the conversion factor, you know, if they're 12, divided creatures, and they use base 12,

**Heather** 28:39

then you're talking about the actual value of pi, I thought you were talking to sort of like the the value of pi and haven't gotten to where they are, which is also true, but that's also true, they will, they will 100%, not only will they have the same value for pi that we have, but they will also be using it in the same ways that we do because it is necessary, in order to do the kind of work that you would need to do in order to get a spaceship across a galaxy or pillar wherever these right imagine aliens came

**Bret** 29:07

from so they will have gotten ever greater precision on pi, we will agree on the value itself there could if you want to steal man, the position of the mathematical Association here, yeah, there are actually two ways that they're probably more than two ways. But there are two major ways that different cultures came up with their approximations for pi. There's an inscribed polygon way, which is the Greek way Yeah, and there is an inscribed and is out, scribe the right x scribe, scribe. way in that the Chinese did it where they used two sets of polygons.

**Heather** 29:41

That's the language. That's the description of the underlying truth.

**Bret** 29:45

Well, it's a process that undoubtedly has a

**Heather** 29:49

method. In this case, it's a method that results in a language, but the method is discovering the underlying truth. And the language describes the method which describes the underlying truth and we call it all all roads. Keep on pointing Back to the underlying truth. And if What if there wasn't an underlying truth, then I don't know, maybe we'll be doing socio modern sociology or something. And like, we actually know some good modern sociologists. But mostly, that field has been totally captured and corrupted. And it really is just a bunch of social constructions that are meaningless.

**Bret** 30:18

You can do the experiment yourself, you can calculate pie both ways, the Chinese way, the Greek way, and you get the same value. And the aliens, they may have a third way, or they may have settled on one of those ways. And they will have the same value as well. And so the point is, that tells you that it isn't about who described, right.

**Heather** 30:38

And it also, you know, say the aliens landed, and, and they happen to use the Chinese method, that doesn't make the Chinese method better. It means that's what they discovered, and maybe it was better for their environment, in what whatever planet they came from, but the fact that we have two different discoveries on this planet, and I don't know, you know, did the Maya discover a third, you know, the Maya had astronomers

**Bret** 31:06

may have had another right. So

**Heather** 31:08

maybe there are yet more ways to to calculate pi. And if the aliens happened to use one of the ones that we use, that does not mean right away, oh, well, they got here, therefore, they're better therefore it's best like no, as always, it's context specific. And when it's math, and you have multiple ways of getting there, one of them may be better for some circumstances, and one of the maybe globally better, but you don't necessarily know that just because someone you know, who arrived from a different planet is using that, for instance, right.

**Bret** 31:39

And, you know, the fact is, the inferior method still gets there, it gets there slower. And I think in this case, actually, it's the Greek method which gets there slower. Because it starts you know, if you inscribe a square inside a circle, you get a very rough approximation of pi. So you keep adding sides to the polygon in order to get a better and better approximation, which is how you get further and further into the decimal places. So one of these ways can be better, but it doesn't matter. Because it's like discovering a mountain, right? You know, you may approach a mountain from a really arduous path, or you may approach it straight away. Same damn mountain, right, good. Yeah. And, you know, and we could do this with chemistry too, right? The aliens step off the spaceship, what are the chances that we will agree, you know, on the fact of there being an element, iron, right, they will have a different name for it, but we will agree on how many nuclear particles it has, and how many electrons is typically orbited by and we will agree on what the, the, the isotopes will be, and how common they are. Yeah. So anyway, this thought experiment just tells you this kind of formulation is very attractive, right? Oh, well, if people discovered it, then their biases are in it. And it's like, the closer you get to the absolute bedrock, the less true that is. Right. Right.

**Heather** 32:57

And especially when there are multiple routes in and they've all arrived at the same answer. Right.

**Bret** 33:03

Exactly. Okay, so the question now is, where do we go from here? We have several issues we want to discuss, we want to talk about I'm a little concerned about it, but I think we have to talk about the the events unfolding in the presidential election space. Okay. Yes, exactly one month out. So we had that rather remarkable debate seems to be almost universal agreement about its nature, I do wonder how much of a thing like that is the result of people formulating their opinion, in concert with each other, right? Because people are paying attention to the commentary as it's happening.

**Heather** 33:48

Now this is I mean, this is one of the very many problems with social media era when you have very little time almost no one you know, if you're watching the debate, you have access to the constant shattering and analysis of lots of other people and you have to actively decide I'm not going there. I'm not going to make I'm not going to fill my head with what other people think of this until I have not only watched this, but sat on my my sense of what it might mean for a while preferably you know, many hours probably sleep on it and see if your position position has changed before you start filling your head with what other people think about it, and almost no one does that now on any number of topics. And it really it contributes to a a less rigorous analytical framework.

**Bret** 34:39

Absolutely. And it says it's a practice art, keeping your opinion, isolated long enough that you can correct for everybody else's opinion collapsing into one because they formulate it with each other in their ear.

**Heather** 34:53

This is gonna seem totally an aside and we won't take more than 30 seconds, but I'm reminded When I was in Quito, with my students for my first study abroad in Ecuador, and would have been 2014, maybe, very first day, I was out with three students. And we were mugged at knifepoint. And I've written about it. But after it happened, and before the police showed up, and before we right in the middle of the thing, but after all, the danger was over. I said to my three students, let's not talk about it, just try to find space in this crazy street scene right now just even take two minutes to figure out what you think you know, about what just happened. And that because we're going to be talking, we're going to be telling the story for weeks now. Because we was just at the beginning of this, this trip, we had what 21 people that we were going to go back to the hostel be like this happened, right? Let us let us first figure out what we think we know without any other input aside from our own senses and our own experiences, and the fact that our stories converged. And then where they were different, it was because, you know, for me, I didn't have any color for the whole thing, like the entire scene was remembered in black and white. And for someone else, they didn't have any, you know, any, I don't remember what like the nice smells. And, and so that we had this concerted understanding of the event, which if we just started talking about it right away, we would have had very, very much lower sense of whether or not that is actually what had happened. Or if one person's dominant sense of what had happened had simply overwritten everyone else's sense. Well, and I

**Bret** 36:25

think it actually hints at this tension between the two kinds of history. So I will argue that history is the fact that we use one term for two different things is very likely to cause conflict, and it is causing conflict. So for example,

**Heather** 36:50

you want to define the two types of history you're talking about.

**Bret** 36:53

Christopher Columbus discovered America. Okay. That's the kind of history what kind of history

**Heather** 36:59

its history like humans discovered math. Yes,

**Bret** 37:03

it's Eurocentric, and fictionalized. Right? So we have the sense of Christopher Columbus, you know, arriving on the shores of North America. The, you know, and already that story is is carved. Right? Right. That didn't even happen. Right, right. First of all, there was no such a person who Staubach along with his name, why we take why we angle sighs, a name a historical fact. Right? Makes no sense. But the point is, what you're doing in that case, is you're creating a narrative for a population. Now that narrative is completely at odds with the formation of nations that are pluralistic, right. In other words, the idea that we that we Americans celebrate Columbus Day is preposterous even if you wanted to celebrate something about the historical fact of this person arriving here because it was meaningful arriving in this, you know, hemisphere, you would celebrate the historical aspect to it, not the fictionalized narrative because that fictionalized narrative is obviously in conflict with the well being of a large population of Americans. Right? So who were here before him, right? So my point would be, one thing history does is it generates a story on which we agree, it's a self serving story on which we agree, and therefore the question of whose self is matters? And then there's the question of history, which is what actually happened and why, right? What actually,

**Heather** 38:42

so your first your first kind of history, which is actually happens later, it's sort of an, an overlay is the narrative, which serves a purpose of basically directing a population and the friend. And the second one that we're about to talk about is at least trying to describe factually what happened with the understanding that there is a kind of highs and birbee and truth about, like, where you were standing. And what it is that you know, you're the very act of observation can can change what I understand to be true. One

**Bret** 39:11

thing I'll disagree with you on is that I don't think the narrative thing is an overlay on top. Okay, what actually happened, I think it's actually a primary driver. And that the thing that you were as a scientist protecting against with you and your students, formulating your view of what took place separately, before you ever talked about it, was the fact that it is very normal for human beings to settle on a story of what happened. And the important thing about that story is not that it's accurate, right?

**Heather** 39:38

Now, not not in my case, but in the case of people coming together and agreeing on a shared narrative, and then moving out in the world without sharing

**Bret** 39:45

right? If you normally have something happened to you with a group of people, you deciding together, what it was, is partially you recovering some factual information and partially you figuring out what's the best story going forward. They're interleaved. They're interleaved. Exactly. And so the actual study of history requires you not to do that just as the actual study of science requires you to ignore what will advance your career in order to see what's actually true, even if it embarrasses you, right? So that suspension of the normal instincts is necessary to the deeper problem of sorting out how things actually work so that you can, you know, make a longer term kind of progress. It's an enlightened kind of insight rather than a self serving kind of insight.

**Heather** 40:28

So, alright, two kinds of history in light of the unprecedented presidential debate this last week,

**Bret** 40:36

right? So in any case, the part of the problem is that our current environment now allows arbitrarily large numbers of people to compile their sense of what is taking place in real time. You know, people are on Twitter and elsewhere, discussing what is taking place as it happens, as somebody says something interpretation of what they meant, unfolds immediately. And that that's very corrosive to the normal process of having a bunch of different opinions about what was said and what it meant and what that implies going forward, which would then force a discussion that would be at some level interesting, we've skipped the discussion and went straight to the knee jerk interpretation in this case, I guess two knee jerk interpretations depending upon you know, which Twitter you're paying attention to. Right now,

**Heather** 41:22

what do you mean which Twitter? Well,

**Bret** 41:24

presumably there are two for Americans there are two Twitter's right. There's I mean, a new actually stumbled across this line earlier this week, where or somebody else stumbled across it into you, right? Somebody who lives over in democrat Twitter, right? Post at some point, she's now deleted it, but she says, Oh, my God, I stumbled into a large number of people who think this woek stuff is off the rails.

**Heather** 41:53

Who are they? No, no, not just that what she says. So this is, yeah, this is interesting, actually. Right. So she, a she's got a vested interest in in keeping critical race theory alive, because what her business appears to be is running dei diversity, equity, inclusion trainings. And she tweets, we just lost her. Well, there's a couple of them, we just lost our first client to Trump's order to count to forbid, your critical race theory training and in federal organizations. You know, I know I'm on the right side of the history, but I fear you know, I fear this mean at the end something like this. And then she says, I'm running across a cohort of people that seems to be 1000. Strong, and it's a lot stronger than that, but seems to be 1000. Strong, who detests er ci, but also seem to be anti Trump, who are these people? Right, right. And so many people, myself included, responded and said, Yes, we're here. And we're reasonable. And we're all across the political spectrum. But yes, some of us are indeed democrats and always have been and I can't promise we always will be but you know, this, this is true. And please, you know, please would do you would you listen, would you be up for a conversation? I actually you specifically invited her to talk if she was willing. And she deleted the tweet. Yeah.

**Bret** 43:12

So and that I would point out is a perfect analog for what happened throughout the Evergreen riots where progress can be made with an individual very briefly, but it wasn't durable, because they would get pulled back to something. Yeah, right. So anyway, tragic that she sort of discovered this land of people that didn't fit what she'd been told the enemy looked like, and then basically burned the bridge. I mean, it's metaphorical, but almost literally, yeah, burned the bridge. So she couldn't get back there. By the

**Heather** 43:43

original, the original missive on Twitter. You know, it's a ridiculous platform, but seem to suggest a curiosity. Yeah, as an actual genuine surprise and an openness because she had presumably been in one of these, one of these silos, and really, truly believed the, you know, the headlines from wapo and the guardian and the New York Times and everything that if you oppose critical race theory, your white supremacist, those are the same thing. And no, that's not true. Yeah,

**Bret** 44:15

it reminds me actually of the young woman. I've described her situation before who wanted to who sought me out as I left the the meeting, we nearly violent now quite famous. meeting at the top of the library building at evergreen, right? 2017 sought me out. And basically her point went when other protesters attempted to shut down the conversation. Her point was, no, I want to talk to him. And she actually says, Benjamin Boyce covers this very well on his channel. She actually says, He seems okay to me, right? I'm talking to him and he doesn't sound like what you're telling me he is and then anyway, they recaptured her The following day, but I'm sure

**Heather** 44:59

she was Made to sing many courses of Star Spangled Banner and signed many loyalty oaths. She

**Bret** 45:04

was, in fact, forced to read a statement the following day at one of their rallies. But anyway, let's not get lost here. So the debate happened, and then we're not or maybe we are now, in the situation where I believe it was yesterday.

**Heather** 45:23

Friday. Yep. So the debate was Wednesday night, or no debate was Tuesday night. And then Friday morning, very early. Trump announced everyone on Twitter because that's what happens that he and milania had tested positive for coping and

**Bret** 45:38

tested positive for COVID.

**Heather** 45:39

There's that? Well, it was. Well, I've seen it was it was Friday morning, his time

**Bret** 45:44

was Friday morning, his time but before bed, I think. Not that we know when he sleeps. But okay. I mean, we'd

**Heather** 45:53

instantly asterisk those aliens that have landed and understand pi and the value of pi, and the periodic table, and it might look different, but it's got the same underlying thing, just like old interest, you guys, those aliens will also sleep,

**Bret** 46:07

they will sleep. But I believe they will depart from our perspective with respect to whether there's always room for pie. Yeah,

**Heather** 46:16

exactly having nothing to do with sleep at all

**Bret** 46:18

right? Or pi in the sense that we will agree on it. But right. In any case, we have a remarkable situation surrounding the president having contracted COVID. And I want to talk a little bit about what this actually implies. But I also feel an obligation to be extremely careful in a way that I think is almost not even possible. The problem is, because this issue was so thoroughly politicized, and frankly, was thoroughly politicized on both sides. But I think Trump was more political about COVID. It is very hard to avoid the Shakespearean narrative that is unfolding. Or maybe it's biblical. But the fact of Trump having contracted COVID, after having bought the initial reaction to it,

**Heather** 47:19

downplayed its seriousness, karma, it feels like come up in

**Bret** 47:25

many letters, let us put it this way, that interpretation exists, and it can't be avoided. The problem is, there is and I want to avoid it. Because at the moment, you've got the issue of a human being who has contracted a disease, and gloating over that is unacceptable. But you also have the following thing you've got. This is the commander in chief, this is now a fact of history. And it matters, it matters to all of our well being. What's more, the fact that the commander in chief now has this disease, which we are learning a ton about, but are still new to Yep, that it plays into this election in the final month, in this way, sets us up for tremendous vulnerabilities and uncertainty. And we have to talk about them. So the fact that those things intersect with this, you know, natural tendency that many are succumbing to to shodhan. Freud is a problem because as you talk about what happened, and why you will tread in the same territory that people are experiencing, please. So I want to avoid the glee. But I want to traverse this territory because frankly, our interests as a nation depend on us doing it well. So I want to point out a couple things. One, the nature of this disease and Trump's parameters going into it spell a very serious situation for us, there's almost no way in which he simply has a low symptom case emerges from it quickly, and we go back to the election as it was unfolding

**Heather** 49:09

by Trump's parameters. I imagine you mean, what comes to mind immediately are these three things his age, his sex, and his weight? Yep, is his size, you know, so, you know, by some measures, he's obese, he doesn't really look at but you know, he's got he's got extra body weight, which we know is is a risk factor. He's in his 70s definitely a risk factor, and he's male, which it's it, you have worse outcomes in men than women. So all three of those are particular risk factors. All three

**Bret** 49:37

of those are particular risk factors. And so I think what we know is that just by age and sex alone, we are at double digit possibility for death. Right? That's not a huge possibility, but

**Heather** 49:54

I don't think that's true. I don't think that's true. No, I think the double digit if you just looking at age starts in the 80s 80s earlier and it actually it's that's like double or even more what it is in the 70s. And the and the increased risk of bad outcomes from COVID for men versus women is a couple of percentage points. It's not and I don't remember it is different across different studies, but you know, might even be as much as like 5545. But I don't think it's doubled. At the

**Bret** 50:21

very least, we are talking about a non negligible possibility, much more likely is a severe case. And a severe case could mean all kinds of things that interface with the national interest quite badly. Like he has to go on a respirator which I believe would require him to be sedated. Effectively, it would put us in the territory where pence would be acting commander in chief.

**Heather** 50:53

Right. And this I believe, Boris Johnson was put on a respirator when he contracted COVID, 234 months ago. Yeah. And that was, you know, that that was the biggest head of state that had contracted it. Yeah. And he's

**Bret** 51:07

quite a bit younger. Yep. So and I was speaking to a Brit this morning. And the fact is, it was a month before he was back to anything like normalcy. So my point would be given Trump's age and other factors, we've got one month to the election, right? That is effectively very likely to be completely eaten up by whatever this is. So I guess I would say unlikely that presidential debates can happen, which changes the electoral picture dramatically. Yep. We are already in the situation where we are dealing with transparently false medical information or transparently misleading medical information. And of course

**Heather** 52:01

we are, I mean, we wouldn't be no matter who he was virtually no matter what party and how beloved or not the candidate was. The the advisors closest to him would be putting accurate and complete medical information under lockdown, they just wouldn't be getting out. I don't think.

**Bret** 52:22

I agree. And I also think there's something so many people have talked about the fact that Trump was on stage with Biden, now they were quite far apart. But this far apart business doesn't work the way we initially thought it did. So if people have been tracking this, there was initial doubt about aerosolized COVID. So this, this is a little bit technical. But initially, it was thought that the COVID particles were of the nature that they were heavy, and therefore breathe out, they would tend to fall. And that's where the six foot spacing idea came from. What we now understand is that this aerosolized transmission happens, where these particles effectively hang in the air indefinitely long,

**Heather** 53:06

they can sell for hours, it's possibly just misspoke. And I honestly haven't kept track of the distinction between the language airborne versus aerosolized, which do so I thought that you just said both of those aerosolized, can we just go back, I believe

**Bret** 53:17

airborne is the larger particles that are affected severely by gravity, and therefore short distance.

**Heather** 53:23

And so aerosolized the smaller particles which hang for

**Bret** 53:27

which hang for long periods of time, and can therefore go great distances, so and

**Heather** 53:31

they are less likely to hang at least near the person who breathe them out in a place with excellent ventilation, hence, the value of being outside because no matter how good your ventilation is inside, it's still an enclosed space. And so whatever was breathed out, unless it's already gone through, you know, the H back that has great scrubbers or something, it's still in the room somewhere.

**Bret** 53:50

Yep. So there's a question. I don't know that anybody in the public knows the answer to this. But there's a question. I think so one of the really important stories buried somewhere in this is the fact that the White House could not effectively manage Trump's risk while he was playing games about being brazen and wearing a mask, not as frequently as you should. Yeah, and all these things, you would still think with all of the availability of testing, and the availability and the ability to modulate exactly how people meet behind closed doors, and all of these things that the White House would have been in a position to protect the president while playing politics with COVID. And

**Heather** 54:37

they, the problem is that we just didn't know enough about how it was transmitted.

**Bret** 54:41

That's part of the problem. I think the other problem is they believe their own press. And then there was a culture of bravado that surrounded COVID. That began to feel rewarding because they were more liberated to the extent that your enemies are wearing masks and you have your full facial expression. And so there was this culture Have callousness and carelessness that ultimately I think does play into why the President and the First Lady have gotten sick and why so many people in the White House seem to have gotten sick. And in any case, what will have happened during the debate, right, the debate, they were spaced far apart. That's good. The President and his party, were not wearing masks. That's bad, especially since multiple of them were sick. You've got multiple source points.

**Heather** 55:32

Yeah. I need to fact check this. But I read that actually, no one in the Trump family was in direct contradiction to the rules, except for milania. Apparently, milania was for at least some some of that she wasn't when she walked up on stage at the end, obviously, but that's, you know, good for her if true.

**Bret** 55:53

Yeah. But here's the question. If they thought about COVID, as a serious possibility in setting up that debate, then they could have managed airflow to reduce the chances to near zero. Yes, I bet they didn't. Yeah, right. I bet they didn't, because I bet other competing concerns like era noise over microphones and things like that would have dominated and they would have thought they're far apart good enough. They don't have COVID. We do a lot of testing whatever they would have thought. So maybe we find out the answer. Maybe we don't. But the question has been raised by many people, as to whether or not Biden might have been exposed. Right? And, you know, yes, they were far apart. They were also vigorously challenging each other vocally, which is

**Heather** 56:41

sometimes looking at each other doing so. Right. And that, you know, that even if it was about airborne only and six that you know, that six foot thing is, is a poor approximation, under all circumstances, really, because it doesn't account for, for everything. Yeah, it's an average. And it only works if you're talking kind of quietly Right, right. And it may even actually be more staggered if you're just breathing. So as soon as you're talking loudly, or certainly if you're singing or shouting, those droplets are going to be going a lot farther. Right. And they were certainly in each other's they weren't literally each other's faces. But they were as close as they could have gotten a Mustang behind their lecterns. Yeah.

**Bret** 57:23

And you know, Biden is notably frail. And so what what we have been talking about on

**Heather** 57:29

Yeah, he's got two of the three risk factors that Trump does. He just he's not overweight, I

**Bret** 57:34

don't think right. I think he's physically more frail. Yeah, so that's probably, yes. It's similar. Yeah. And so anyway, the, the possibility exists, but now that Trump has, I think, been forced to admit COVID because it would have been difficult. You know, I've heard people say that maybe this is phony. I think it can't be I don't think it plays positively for Trump. So I think that something that had to be acknowledged, but I mean,

**Heather** 58:05

it's it's a it's a hypothesis, of course, that's a hypothesis on the table. Yeah, it occurred. I think it occurred to everyone, right, like,

**Bret** 58:11

that's why I think most of us who are paying attention, don't trust either of these parties, to be honest with us about this, especially

**Heather** 58:17

who's how, how is which party going to play this tool? Well, right, right.

**Bret** 58:21

But the question is, let's suppose Biden came down with COVID. We now know he's been in the room in the last week with a bunch of people who that

**Heather** 58:30

within, you know, just a little more than 48 hours of someone who, you know, 4048 plus hours later, tested positive. Right.

**Bret** 58:38

So there is a question about him coming down with it. If Trump is sidelined from public appearances, ie debates, would the Biden camp acknowledge it if it happened? I don't think we know but I must tell you I don't trust either of these camps to be straight with us. And the question is, you know, let's be adult about this. The amount that is at stake in an American presidential election is trillions of dollars, right? That means that that's the game being played. People who are jockeying for position relative to that massive value that gets controlled in in these contests have a huge incentive to do whatever makes it most likely that they will have the influence to paddle on the other side won't. Yep. So in any case, the I don't know what would happen. Were Biden to get COVID. But more importantly, the thing I really want to get to is, in light of the symptoms that show up with many cases of COVID in particular, these long haul cases of COVID right, people have brain fog that goes on for months. Some people have things that recur on them monthly. That has implications for the commander in chief. In other words, I think we have to be talking about the question about whether or not a z 70. For

**Heather** 1:00:17

the president. Yeah. Sounds about right. And that 74 year

**Bret** 1:00:20

old man who has COVID in October, right, is in a position going forward? Will we even know if he is in a position? Right? Will his doctors know? I don't think they will know. But even if they knew would we know what the implication was of this diagnosis going forward? This disease is so eclectic, with respect to the tissues that it affects. It is so clearly having cognitive implications for people. And we don't know what the long term prospects are for these long hollers, of which there are many of them. The fact is, even in our circle, I know people who have long haul problems with COVID. So and you know, young people, yeah. So anyway, we have a predicament where we are now and you know, Americans have this bad tendency to see everything as the sort of internal to America discussion. And to forget the international context where we have antagonists around the globe who, you know, look at the question of how fit our commander in chief is likely to be at any given moment.

**Heather** 1:01:30

Right? Totally makes strategic decisions based on that,

**Bret** 1:01:33

right. So anyway, I don't know how to have this conversation well, but I do have the feeling that we are not having the proper conversation, which is a fuck the goddamn duopoly forgiving us to fragile candidates at an era where you have COVID circulating, and you've got a, you know, peril that demands a commander in chief who can fire it up at a moment's notice and make good decisions where we cannot have, you know, people randomly sidelined and, you know, some sort of theater going on where we don't know how sick they are and what condition they're in today. And you know, the garbage today with the doctors playing games around? Well, he's not on oxygen now. Right? Not on oxygen now. Right? Was he ever on it? Well, he's not on it. Now. That's not like an answer to the question. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:02:24

But I mean, I'm sure the doctors have been told what they are and aren't allowed to say so. Yeah, it's like we can't, we shouldn't blame them. I expect.

**Bret** 1:02:35

You know, at some level, I'm I'm lowering my threshold of tolerance. Because, yes, this isn't this is bigger than any individual. Right? This is bigger than the election. This is about the Republic, and it is these processes in which everybody is policing, you know, their own well being and adhering to rules that, you know, keep them in positions of power that has put the republicans such a dangerous position. And so my sense is, actually you have an obligation to tell us the truth, because this isn't, you know, this isn't about President Trump. This is about the Republic and whether or not it has a commander in chief who's in a position to do his job. Yep.

**Heather** 1:03:16

Can I pivot to just one other little thing about COVID? Sure. Zack, would you show my screen? This is September 30 2020. Daily newsletter from the Oregon Health Authority with a Coronavirus update, I get these I think they sent about five days a week. And the September 30, one was making the headline is making sense of truth versus rumor. And they talk about how it can be hard to make sense of what's accurate and what's not. And they suggest various places where you can go to make sense of what's accurate, what's not. And just five days earlier in their September 25 newsletter, which I also received, they quote, let's see here at the bottom here, State Health Officer Dean side linger. And their media briefing today, advising as to what we all need to do is stay at least six feet apart from people outside your household check. restricted gatherings check, we're a face governing when you're outside the house or indoors, we're distancing can't be achieved

**Bret** 1:04:18

what? What, that's not just for superheroes.

**Heather** 1:04:22

So I like both parts of that third bullet point are wrong. Were face covering when you're outside. No, you don't need to unless you're in close quarters, in which case you should or indoors where distancing can't be achieved. Actually indoors unless you're with the people you're potting with, you're probably a pretty high risk and you should probably consider wearing a mask. Always now that doesn't fly with people who have to be sharing buildings with other people. And it feels like quite a burden. But this is backwards. And this is exactly this is the Oregon Health Authority, who not five, five days later said Don't you know don't be misled by rumors and The new window in bad science Have we got some sources for you? And yet they're exactly the ones who are propagating bad science and and rumors. So you know, no wonder people are confused, fed up feel like the whole thing has been politicized because it has and that was that, you know Trump Trump came out of the gates with us politicizing COVID-19. But everyone seems to be in on the game at this point.

**Bret** 1:05:23

Yes. And the problem is it has actual material costs, people are dying, because, I mean, look, if you've been following the Dark Horse podcast since we began our live streams, which senator in the early phase around COVID, quite heavily, you know, that we've been building a model. You know, our scientific expertise is not epidemiological, you know, in particular, but that we were able to track a bunch of things that were coming into our comprehension about what does and does not work. You know, how people do and do not contract it initially, we were much more concerned about fomites, that is to say, viruses, you pick up from touching things. Now we know it's mostly airborne and aerosolized, right, and that these two things are factors, you need to update your model for that. We know that, you know, opening windows has an effect that effectively the volume of the room you're in matters a lot. And therefore, opening windows effectively increases the volume of the room that the older you are the you know, lower the threshold at which you will be infected. So the point is, there's like, a dozen pieces of useful information that upgrade your model of how not to get sick, and how not to get other sick. And we are still playing with this garbagey political description of the virus that's really more about scolding people. You're not wearing a mask, you're one of them. No, I'm outside,

**Heather** 1:06:58

it's yet scolding people. And it's Sep. It's it's making people more tribal, as they walk around and look at each other on the streets, then the number of times that I have gotten side eye from people walking around outside from a distance, you know, 2030 feet away, when I'm not wearing a mask, and they are and you know, it could be anything, but that doesn't usually happen to me, right? Like, that's, it's I don't, I don't get a lot of nasty looks normally. And in the last two weeks, four weeks, six weeks as increasingly, the messaging around wear masks outside, if you care about yourself and others, and oh, by the way, only wear masks inside if you really can't keep yourself safe. Well, that's bullshit. And it's confusing people. And it's making people less kind and less generous and less sane.

**Bret** 1:07:45

Right? And, you know, at the beginning of this, there was a proper epidemiological conversation happening in public, which we described as relief, because we've never heard it before, even with respect to serious stuff like the flu.

**Heather** 1:07:58

So you're talking about, like the preprint servers and such or no,

**Bret** 1:08:01

I'm talking about actually in public people talking about how to wash your hands, mask wearing, you know, doing videos in which you could see particles being breathed out by somebody in different circumstances. All of that was incredibly healthy from the point of view of Oh, how do these terms actually get in you in? Why do you get sick, right? We should have had that conversation long before there was COVID. But that conversation, that healthy description of what actually gets you sick, and what behaviors actually reduce the chances that it will happen, has broken down into this political nonsense of like rules that you can spot whether somebody is following them. And you know, what I mean, it's life and death. It just simply is and the, the Trump phenomenon, the fact that their culture of bravado resulted, likely resulted in the President himself, contracting COVID. And people around him having contracted COVID, when he has access to the best tools and information, he's got the best testing, that means people coming through the door can be tested with the highest probability of knowing whether they're actually sick, they could have done anything and what they did if they believe their own press and people got sick, and that ought to be scaring the rest of us into building a model rather than following politicized guidelines that are obviously nonsense.

**Heather** 1:09:26

Yes, absolutely.

**Bret** 1:09:29

All right, where are we? timewise Oh, hour, an hour and 13 minutes. Well, there were a couple other things we wanted to cover. Shall we leave them for next time?

**Bret** 1:09:40

Probably so all right, well, we will leave them for next time. If there is a next time. Oh my god.

**Heather** 1:09:49

Yeah, so but we will we will be back in 15 minutes. We will be back to answer your super chat questions that you asked this hour and that you will be asking next hour. And you can also if you're interested access a private monthly private to our q&a that we do by joining me at my Patreon, you can access some monthly conversations that Brett has the $100. One was this morning before live streaming live 250 will be tomorrow. And you can access our discord at either of them. And what else? Yeah,

**Bret** 1:10:26

one this morning was great. as has happened the last few times people didn't want the conversation to end I had to go to get ready for Dark Horse, but people stayed on and we're talking with each other because, frankly, in a sea of craziness, finding a group of people that's committed to having a high quality conversation about where we are and what might happen and what to think about it. I think people just find it very, very comforting. And

**Heather** 1:10:48

people are curious. So this is this is a group of 1015 people.

**Bret** 1:10:52

It's much bigger than that now. Must have been 20.

**Heather** 1:10:59

Yeah, but still still small enough to feel intimate for everyone to have a voice that they wanted.

**Bret** 1:11:04

Yep. And if it grows above a certain number, I was invited to the conversation.

**Heather** 1:11:08

Yeah, I think we had talked about sort of over 20 maybe over 25 minutes to conversations. Yeah,

**Bret** 1:11:13

yeah. Anyway, it's great. And the other one is great, too. The other one is more evolutionarily focused. There's some overlap between them. But anyway, they're quite good.

**Heather** 1:11:22

So find access to those at your Patreon indeed, and ask us questions if you like through Super Chat. Now or at the beginning of the next hour as just lay out the the rules that we use to decide on questions. Again, we never get to all of them for which we apologize. We're grateful to your questions and for your support. We go through and pick up the highest dollar value questions from this first hour and, and then read from the next hour. them in order they come in. And then we always start with a few from the previous episode that we missed, regardless of how much they were out or when they came in. And also often will read one that emerges from the discord server. So a whole whole lot of ways to maybe get your question answered. Although, like I said, we don't. We don't get to all of

**Bret** 1:12:11

them. Alright, we will see you in 15 minutes. Don't forget to LIKE subscribe, notify. And

**Heather** 1:12:19

also Fairfax president.

**Bret** 1:12:21

No, I know that cat a little well. I don't think that would be good for the Republic. All right. Good. Well, everyone.