Bret and Heather 56th DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ Your Alg...

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**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:19

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream number 50 6am. I correct about that, wow, that's a lot of live streams.

**Heather** 00:28

It's so many live streams, it

**Bret** 00:29

is a lot of live streams. So we are just post Thanksgiving Hope everyone irrespective of where you are American or not if you are American no matter what population you come from, I hope you had a great Thanksgiving, we had an excellent if small Thanksgiving here being under fairly restrictive COVID conditions. But what our viewers don't know is that you have mastered the art of Thanksgiving, and you make a spectacular Turkey and all sorts of awesome things that go along with it. Anyway, I look forward to it each and every year. It's a great holiday. And to the extent that, like America, it was born a bit compromised, we should do everything in our power to bring everyone in on it because frankly, being thankful is the key to so much.

**Heather** 01:19

Absolutely. And we'll say a little bit more about that shortly. One of the one of the items we want to talk about today. But we wanted to start by just mentioning that because many people have asked for it, we now have dark horse products available. So you can show this just for a moment. This is at Teespring comm slash stores slash dark dash horse dot dash podcast. And you can find hoodies and mugs and such there. So we'll we'll return to that at the end of the show at the moment. You can use the code thankful to get 15% off and if you're one of our patrons, you can go there to get 20% off through Monday. And when

**Bret** 02:08

you do go there, we know what you're going to think which is where the hell are the hats and we are working on it. That's certainly what I thought. Yeah, our thought was that people who like things like baseball caps have them. And so we initially skipped the hat and did other things like baseball bats, we thought about evergreen themed baseball bats decided that would be tacky. But I didn't think that no, right. In fact that never came up. That's a total lie. But

**Heather** 02:33

no, I mean, I think actually, Dark Horse themed baseball bats would be awesome, awesome. Awesome. But yes, if you want a baseball cap, so we've already got one, therefore you don't need another one, right? Not really not so much

**Bret** 02:44

doesn't work like that. So they're coming soon enough. In fact, they've just been made available through this remarkable mechanism in which we do not have a garage full of inventory stored up, but somehow the things will magically arrive at your doorstep if you want her doorstep. doorstop depending upon where

**Heather** 02:59

they are, of course, Brenda doorstops There it is. All right. Okay. So you wanted to start so we're going to talk today about a number of things, protests, politics, consider the thinking of Christopher Hitchens and Milan Khun Dre, and hopefully get to a little bit of, of talk about whether or not prehistoric American women wear big game hunting alongside men, which we alluded to a couple of livestreams ago and haven't gotten back to. But first, you wanted to speak to a New York Times op ed by David Brooks that came out today. Is that

**Bret** 03:34

right? Yes, I did. Actually, we have it available. Zack is going to bring it up on the screen. He's going to scroll down here a little bit, and he's going to put it somewhere where I can read it because there's not a chance I can read it at that distance. All right. I'll see if I can read that. The first paragraph here, David.

**Heather** 03:55

It is.

**Bret** 03:57

DAVID BROOKS says In a recent Monmouth University survey 77% of Trump backers said Joe Biden won the presidential election because of fraud. Many of these same people think that climate change is not real. Many of these same people believe that they don't need to listen to scientific experts on how to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. And then he goes on to describe how one of the two political parties in the United States has lost its freakin mind.

**Heather** 04:27

So you told me that this morning, right? You came downstairs and so David Brooks got this new iPad in which he claims that one of the political parties has lost its mind and I said to you, which one does he think it is?

**Bret** 04:38

Which one right anyone's guess especially given that it's David Brooks, you know, has never been an arch conservative but certainly leans right under normal circumstances, or at least under historical circumstances. And here he is in the New York Times which I don't even want to say it leans left but it certainly leans blue. And here he is suggested That the red team has lost its mind and that the blue team is left scratching its head over how people could be so darn crazy

**Heather** 05:08

pure as the driven snow as well. Right? So

**Bret** 05:11

anyway, he goes through an argument about the way that the, you know, the internet is not playing the role that people think it is playing in the, in the fact of the red team having lost its mind and all of that. And he points to, you know, of course, he points to so called conspiracy theorists. And he points to theories like, I don't even want to call it that, but arguments like Q and on and the culture that has grown up around it. But the problem here, of course, is that it isn't one side, he is not wrong about the the fact of there having been a, a break with reality on in certain quadrants on the right, what he's wrong about is that this is in any way unique to the right. And there are certainly things on the left or the blue team that function in exactly the same way. And it's not even hard for us to you know, to go through a list. In fact, if we spent a lot of time at it, we could probably, you know, come up with a half an hour's worth of topics to discuss. But you know, the fact that many people on the blue team think that sex is not a binary, that that's a biologically established fact that to the extent that there are categories of sex, that are even worth our time that people can transition between them at will, that they in fact, can detect internally that they are of one and not the other and that their transition is something that manifests a reality underneath. At the age of 357357. People who I feel must never have been three, five or seven, or they would understand just how confused a state of mind those ages might lead you to have. But people on the blue team also believe widely believe that that there is no biological content to the concept of race that this is entirely a fabrication. Now, I'm not arguing Of course, I'm not arguing that there are not people whose internal state does not match their, their sex and then transition has a an ancient route, and that it is finding a new footing in modern times. I'm not arguing that there's no truth at all. I certainly have argued many times that the concept of race is not legitimate, but it stands in for one that is legitimate population.

**Heather** 07:36

It's an imperfect proxy for population. And it is both woefully imprecise and because of its degree of imprecision. And the way it is used is actually also inaccurate as a proxy.

**Bret** 07:49

Well, in fact, I'll go you one better. And this will, for those of you who are paying close attention to the Dark Horse podcast, you will remember our discussion of systematic versus random error. Now the fact is, race is a bad proxy for population because of racist tendencies, which mean that the error, it's not just imprecision in the concept of race, it is actually systematic bias that is self serving for the people in a position to define it. So race is a thoroughly compromised term. But that is not the same thing as saying that it is biologically total fiction. It's a bastardization of something. So

**Heather** 08:30

yeah, no, I mean, this, this, this is actually a point that I made a form of back in, boy, it would have been 2017. And in the Wall Street Journal op ed that I wrote, in which I observed that it seemed to be the Republicans, bizarrely, who were now standing up for science. And as as Brooks argues, in that very first paragraph of his op ed today that you read from the fact of climate change deniers, being much more common on the right than the left has allowed this sort of persistent fiction, that there are people who believe in science, and there are people who don't believe in science and those map cleanly along blue red lines. And in fact, you know, belief in science isn't a thing that you should have no matter what, you should have an interest in pursuing the truth and understand that the way to get there is by careful and replicated use of the scientific method, and under no circumstances should you trust a result simply because it fits with your previous model.

**Bret** 09:33

Right. And in fact, this leads us to another place in which we have a mixed result on the blue side where I think the blue side has been better in the early days of Coronavirus and figuring out what it was about but it is amazing how many people on the blue side still believe that Coronavirus emerged from nature via a wet market. Right. So the point is this is just a mythology. Now, everybody acknowledge that it didn't come through the wet market. And there is certainly reason to be skeptical that it came directly from nature. In fact, I would argue that that is the much less parsimonious explanation at this moment, because the beginning of the pandemic did not start the way as zoonotic virus would be expected to take off in the human population. So

**Heather** 10:20

not meaning coming from a non human species, right,

**Bret** 10:23

which is not to say that the virus isn't built of natural stuff. But the question is, did it go through a laboratory phase? And so we can't say that it did. But what we can say is that it is unscientific to rule out that hypothesis, and that for many people who have looked deeply into the question is actually more parsimonious, that it would have come from a lab leak than directly from nature.

**Heather** 10:47

Well, some of what's going on, I think, is that the vast majority of people and really, I think all of us sometimes feel extreme anxiety, and, and nervousness if, if the ground on which we are walking metaphorically feels unstable, if we can't figure out what's real, what's going to what has been real, what's going to be real. And what this can result in is a desire to get answers quickly, and then to stick with them, even if they prove to be not right. And so the early, gosh, a little bit like the early days after 911, the early days of the pandemic were really, really hard on everyone. But it didn't feel nearly so divisive, as it did, you know, in January 2020, and before or by, you know, June 2020. And afterwards, right for a couple of months there, there was there was chaos, and there was dissent and all but no one really had a sense of what all might be true and who could be trusted. And, you know, some of some of some of that sense of unease was propagated by by our president. But some of it was I think organic, because we just didn't know and still don't know a number of things. And because no one yet had picked aside. We were all kind of in it together, trying to figure it out. And we spent a lot of time early on in these podcasts. Talking about that, you know, going into the preprint servers and talking about this is this is so democratic, like this is what this is what the results of science should be should allow people who were interested in and who can make sense of this research is being done to go and say, Yeah, actually, that headline, based on this isn't what isn't what the research says, or actually, this is a hidden gem. And we should be focusing on this. And as soon as people pick teams, then they become trenched in their teams, then you get tribal affiliation, and a real reluctance to change and to take in new evidence, even if that evidence is something that prior to picking your team, even if it was, you know, two days, two weeks, two months ago, you would have been totally open to it.

**Bret** 12:55

Yeah, you know, so I think the thing is, teams are natural and normal, they can be healthy, they can be malignant. Yeah. What can never be healthy, is the belief that there is nothing that exists outside of the team dynamic. In other words, the idea that we're going to differ over everything, and we're going to pick this set of beliefs, and you're gonna pick that set of weights, there ought to be an awful lot of stuff that we just agree on, right? Like, it would be really great if we could drive Coronavirus to extinction. So that we could go back to doing what we do well and figure out what went wrong and prevent it from ever happening again, that should all be nonpartisan. And yet, this has become this dynamic where you believe one set of things or another and it is very likely to align with a bunch of other beliefs, which have nothing to do with it. And so, you know, to continue down the road, we've got many on the blue side, who believe that the 2016 election was hacked by the Russians write a story that absolutely collapsed. We have belief on the blue side that either there is no deep state, or that the deep state is people who keep the lights on and not something worthy of consideration. Right, when there's a huge amount of evidence that there is some sort of deep thing which is involved in the continuity exercise that makes it unaccountable. And we don't know what it's up to certainly

**Heather** 14:14

in the 1970s 80s 90s, it would have been exactly the democrats who were most likely to acknowledge that such a thing existed.

**Bret** 14:23

Absolutely. So anyway, the amazing thing about Brooks piece is not that it doesn't contain a piece of the truth. It's that it contains what you know, and you close one eye and you see the Brooks version of the truth. And you don't understand that if you look through the other one, I mean, it's a terrible analogy, but But in any case, the point is there is a flip side and once you spot that both sides are losing their mind and that we are hostage to some dynamic which is causing us not to recognize the huge number of things, in fact, the vast majority of things over which we ought to have very little argument Then, you know, it is time to step back and reevaluate, because, you know, you could write that same article from the read perspective. And, you know, it matches. In fact, something I've been saying for, I think at least 15 years, which is the Fox News viewer regards the NPR listener is crazy. The NPR listener regards the Fox News viewer as a fool. And you know, at some level they're both right, you know that these perspectives are they are unnatural, they are scripted for political purposes. And, you know, the quicker we get a majority of people that stand outside of these things and see the defects in both perspectives, the sooner we can get back to a sane world.

**Heather** 15:48

Absolutely. I totally agree. Let's talk about some more evidence that that's not the direction we're going, shall we? Yep. So the protests that quickly turned into riots that began in Portland after the death of George Floyd and the end of may have receded just a little bit since the election as as if it was a temper temper tantrum about Trump at some level, but not completely at all which then suggests well what what is it what what are you people doing? So act of vandalism continued in Portland, even though the weather now here is, you know, quite chilly, quite wet, you know, quite not conducive to hanging out in the street party. Here's a story from the Oregonian from a couple of days ago. Or actually, just two days ago, police arrest three after protests related vandalism in southeast Portland. They of course, went after the local chain of excellent thank supermarkets New Seasons, and say that they were protesting, quote, colonialism, gentrification and capitalism. This is Wednesday night in specific prelude to Thanksgiving because that is what they see the holiday as? Thank you, Zack. They're never gonna run out of excuses, of course. Right? So those those words could, I should have and I did not predict that they would have been the words used in this case, colonization capitalism and gentrification that Thanksgiving represents, according to some process protested the talk to the author of that Oregonian article. But the fact that they aren't going to run out of reasons that can fit any absolutely any scenario does not answer the question of why the adults in charge continue to let it happen. What what could possibly be going on here, and you know this, I don't want to be talking about this again, but you be weak in the face of a tantrum, and then be assure that the tantrums are going to get worse in the future. Of course, they will, if you've ever dealt with a small child, or especially if you've seen some other parents failing to deal with the tantrums of their children, it's easier if it's not your own, and see them get worse and worse and worse, the kid get less and less and less, both controllable and productive and happy in the face of a parent who is is weak willed and makes fake threats, etc. And there's just there's no good resolution down that road. This is about power. It's about power, we should be listening to them when they say that everything is about power and take it back from them. They've demonstrated they're neither mature nor wise enough to have power, why are we giving it to them?

**Bret** 18:38

All right, so we are giving it to them, I believe, because, you know, we keep running into the same structure in stories that are so different from each other, that we don't recognize it as the same, right? We have a conflict between the individual level and the higher level of analysis. In other words, governance is the manifestation of our collective interests, or at least it's supposed to be, but it's staffed by individuals who have interests that make them manipulable and can cause you to get them to do things that are actually bad for all of us. Right? So the politician may understand, in fact that the right thing to do is to deal with the protest, but they may not want to pay the price of the person who makes that call, right? We have an

**Heather** 19:27

election just happened. Oh, I agree. If they were they've got a little time here and gone?

**Bret** 19:34

Well, I guess my point would be I would agree that if you were going to see a shift in which the collective well being took precedence over the individual survival of the politician, you would expect it to be right after the election when they have the longest period of time for the memory to fade before the next election. So the fact that we're not seeing it now to scare the hell out of us because it means even under the best of circumstances, these people can find their balls and, you know, make the right call,

**Heather** 20:03

it's also true that I am certain I do not have the data to back this up, but I am certain that a majority of Portlanders do not want this garbage to continue. This, this is this is not what most people want. Lots of people quietly will say, I can't believe this is continuing to happen. In fact, you know, I interacting without people knowing what my positions are not being familiar with the podcast, etc. have had no one say, you know, good on them, keep it up. And everyone who has brought it up, say, this needs to stop. I don't know where leadership is.

**Bret** 20:38

Well, I agree. Now, I do think there's a sampling bias There

**Heather** 20:42

sure is, you know, like I said, you know, these are people who don't know who I am, I think, but obviously, there's, you know, there are circles in which I travel,

**Bret** 20:50

right. And, you know, just by virtue of what one does in the world, at the moment, the people you're most likely to interact with are people who, you know, have businesses and, you know, things,

**Heather** 21:01

you know, retail clerks, I try to engage the people, not just who are, you know, who owned the small businesses that are still managing to stay afloat, that we can manage to go to at this point, but anyone who's raising up a purchase, who presumably is, you know, not a small business owner, for the most part,

**Bret** 21:18

right? But even, you know, I'm, I hate to say this, but even those people, you know, have jobs, they're working towards something, and so they're not hell bent on destruction. So, you know, it's a, it's,

**Heather** 21:29

but that's the thing, do you think a majority of Portlanders don't have jobs? And are hell bent on destruction? No, you don't

**Bret** 21:34

know. But But here's what i do think is that the game theory that causes a mayor to do things that any rational analysis would say are insane from the point of view of what a mayor is supposed to accomplish those same phenomena, structure the interactions of the public because the public A Portland is involved in signaling its agreement that there is something dire about our, you know, racial dynamics that this is having important impacts on, you know, people's well being and you know, to that extent, I agree, but but the point is that active signaling, and in fact, the, the positive feedback as people are one upping each other and signaling just how irate they are about these dynamics, and just how interested they are in the solution is causing those at the higher level at the level of actual governance, to be paralyzed because they think they are facing at, you know, an angry population that is demanding these things. And, you know, that is, of course, fueled by the fact that those people who are breaking the law are actively punishing anybody who tries to say, hey, look, this is unreasonable, right? Those people if you say, this is unreasonable, you're a fascist, you're a Nazi, you're all of these things. So what that means is there's artifact from the point of view of the power structure, there is an artificial deficit of disagreement over what has to happen next and a, you know, a false consensus about do more do it now. And here's the stuff you know, defund abolish all of these things.

**Heather** 23:12

Although, I think it was the first action of the city council after the recent election, which had an important vote that went a different way because mangus maps one this this seat from incumbent, Chloe usually voted against city council member, Hardesty his desire to defund by $18 million, the Portland Police Bureau, so that that it seemed like that was going to go through which would have been I wish I knew what fraction of the police budget that was, and I don't remember, it seemed like that was going to go through and that would have been a devastating blow to police in policing in Portland, but it's not go through. So you know, again, there are these are little things, you know, the election happened. We got an apparent rejection of the chaos on the streets of Portland. And yet, still, as of two or three nights ago, there is still Black Bloc marauding on the streets doing, you know, vandalism, and and why? Like, why? Who wants to live in a society like that?

**Bret** 24:17

Yeah, it's nobody. It's not a society. And, you know, one hopeful note, I did talk to somebody this week who I'm going to interview on the podcast, who has been close in with the circles and it sounds like the that, you know, we've argued that there are two forces that came together this summer that you had a Black Lives Matter force motivated by George Floyd's death, and you had a long standing our arc. Why did I just lose the word anarchist thread here in the Pacific Northwest and that these things became one and you had COVID exhaustion? Well, you had lots of contributing factors that you had to factor Okay. Yes, marched together and we're involved in some kind of dynamic that was big And they seem to be going their separate ways. And to the extent that what is going on in Portland, and in some other major cities is actually about anarchism, maybe the public is going to start to wake up that just because they say Black Lives Matter before they bust in your storefront is, you know, doesn't make this a coherent action that yeah, these people, if you talk to them, they really do have this nonsense idea that the the route to the better world is just to tear it all down, and that we will be better off without it. And you know, they're nuts. And frankly, I think it's a lot easier to recognize the insanity of their position than it is to understand what's wrong with black lives matter. Because, of course, you know, the Black Lives Matter slogan is Right, right. And so it covers a lot. But just to put the the final thing on the part about the levels of analysis, we see an analogous structure, when we talk about something like vaccine safety, right, we see a public health level analysis that we are then told that we must adhere to at the point we talk about individual safety. Now there's a reason for that, right? There's actually a hazard in people doing the individual calculation rather than the group calculation. But nonetheless, it doesn't make it true, right. So we have not figured out how to deal with that. And it's the same, you know, individual versus population level analysis flaw, where what we effectively have is a collective action problem.

**Heather** 26:34

I think this is actually one of the biggest failures of education that we have with regard, you know, there, there are plenty of failures of education in terms of how it's done about which we have a lot to say, and I've written a lot in the book that will be coming out next year. But in terms of what are things missing, from the minds of people who have supposedly been educated is this distinction between individual and population, and I think I may have even said it at a live stream before but you will be familiar with with my story of in 2006, I was teaching with this terrific entomologist jack lonja knows a friend of ours, freshmen level program, so we had 5018 year olds, mostly freshmen program did tend to have a college age typical students. And we took them into, you know, the scablands, in eastern Washington and week two, and it was, I think it was called understanding species. And so we were talking about species from, you know, genetics all the way up to sort of landscape level, you know, we went through all these different levels of understanding scale at in biology. And we also did statistics workshops. And I asked him in advance, you know, what is the thing that you want, that you think the students are most most in need of understanding at the end of this? And he said, exactly this, and this is the first time I'd heard it framed this way. But they need to understand the distinction between what it is to be an individual, and what is to be a population. And that statistics deal with populations, and that they don't have as much to say about what individuals are capable of. And you know, that last bit is my editorializing. But I think I know that man's mind well enough to know that he would have thought that too. And it is, it is both critical, and extraordinarily hard sometimes to get people to pull back whenever you make a claim that unless you're constantly signaling, I'm now talking at population level, everyone assumes that it's always about the individual.

**Bret** 28:27

Yes, and this is, ironically, a bias of the mind built by evolution, because you can very rarely do anything about the population level analysis. And so we're obsessed with individual self stuff, because it's where our power is not because it's what's important. You know, so we also see this in the analysis inside of evolutionary theory, this is why I argue we have failed to understand lineage selection, we have a skew in our understanding to individual level selection difficult to operationalize, right. But yeah, I would say, the pair with the idea of individual versus population is collective action problem, right? How many of our societal problems simply come down to this, which is if the individuals have the ability to negate the policy that correctly mirrors our collective interests, they will very frequently do so. And so you know, we get into very deep territory very quickly, right? You've got tragedy of the commons. And then you've got Elinor Ostrom, wonderful work describing how populations with long standing tragedies of the commons have solved them and what the necessary characteristics are. And frankly, you know, it's worth a year, right? If you took a year to study these topics, and you just focused on them exclusively, right? You would come out so much wiser about how it is that we are to manage the future. But no dice. It's very hard to sell people on that idea.

**Heather** 29:55

Well, and I think I'm just speaking for me, and I totally, you know, Actually, I've got austroads book now on my nightstand and I have yet to crack it open, I've been working on some other stuff, but it doesn't draw me, right, like, I know it's important, and I very much want to read her stuff and to internalize it, and I find it, I find it hard to access. And it's not that I can't do it. But the motivation, you know, if I've got five books before me, so far, it hasn't been the one that I have chosen. So that we do, we do also need to do something, to either change the motivation, or offer this sort of material in a different way, you know, at least at least at this point, it can't be us like, I just don't, I don't know it enough, yet. I basically know, your sound, the sound bites that you have provided here, and you're a little bit more, but not not a tremendous amount more.

**Bret** 30:45

Well. Interestingly, there's this little debate that has threatened to break out between me and David Sloan Wilson, in fact, we've twice scheduled it, and it's gonna happen, it has to happen between his group selection and multi level selection and my lineage selection. And the interesting thing is, I will argue, a lot of the stuff downstream of that conversation we agree on, right, are in disagreement with most of the field. And I think, frankly, we're both right about the importance

**Heather** 31:16

of what's downstream, including you are both in disagreement with most of the field, we are

**Bret** 31:20

in agreement with each other. And we are both in disagreement with the majority of the field. And frankly, the you know, the field has to catch up to the meaning of cultural evolution, which it can't see, because it's so focused on individual level selection of genes, and genes, of course. But in any case, the, you know, a pillar of what's downstream is this Austrian work. And to the extent that I think you're right, I think, you know, people who get into it, and are aware of the questions in this neighborhood find it profound and important. But it's not, it's not super accessible. So maybe there's something that needs to be done to, you know, just as with tragedy of the commons and other collective action problems, there's something that needs to be done. To make it clear why this is so important. It's like it's an unsolvable problem, or it's a solved problem. And, you know, either you see what solutions look like. And you figure Well, how do we import that into the system? Or you don't and then you're constantly fighting? Why are people doing dumb shit? They're doing dumb shit because of conflicts between levels of analysis. Yeah.

**Heather** 32:28

Speaking of which, Jordan Peterson announced his new book this week on his YouTube channel, and right on cue, number of employees of the publishing house, I believe it's penguin Canada, where his book is being published. When I it's like the opposite of ballistic when we be and, and woke and complained probably, that they're safe, that they were endangered by having such a, you know, outright transfer, which of course, he's not be published at the same in the same place that he that, that they work as if they even have to read the book or interact with him in any way. So

**Bret** 33:08

right, or is it publishing books with bad stuff in it is somehow not done? Now? You know, right? Right. If they viewed it as bad, then still not an argument against publishing it?

**Heather** 33:19

Yeah. So I don't know if we want to say anything more about that. But it's, we wanted to walk through a few examples of the kind of bad thinking and bad do you know at some level collective actions that are taking place right now and the presumably decision by at least some small cabal of employees at Penguin, Canada, to resist who objected to this book? is a perfect example of bad thinking. And you know, wow, how did you end up in publishing? How do you end up, presumably caring about literature and books? If the idea of a book being published in the same under the same name as you draw your paychecks from? is causing such distress to you? Seems like it seems like you may be in the wrong field in the

**Bret** 34:09

wrong field. Indeed, I will say I did find something distressing when I read this news for the first time in which news that was of the publication by Penguin Canada because I regard penguin Canada as a woeful geographic misinterpretation of phylogeny and I don't know if it was puffins or what that had been misidentified but frankly, it's a non sequitur. Yeah. Okay. There are no penguins in Canada not remotely

**Heather** 34:39

right. But they didn't think so. No, they didn't know and that is just another example of you know, this is a couple of months old now but it's still it's it's active at the moment is University of Chicago's English department has outlined let's see, let's go to their website. Here's Zach. This is the Department of English at the University of Chicago, one of the top universities in the country. And they make all sorts of claims about how awesome their department is, which I would imagine are true once famous for the Aristotelian Chicago School of criticism of the 1950s. Today, the department ranked first among English departments in the US stands out for its interdisciplinary approach to literature and its commitment to close reading combined with historical and conceptual analysis. Well, that sounds awesome, doesn't it? We certainly need English we need intact, amazing deep diving deep, hard driving humanities. We absolutely do. I began my college career, as you know, in an English department, I was a literature major for two years before I ran away because it was making no sense. And that was in the late 80s, early 90s. So let us go down, however, to the faculty staymatrix, released in July of 2020. The second paragraph reads for the 2020 2021 graduate admission cycle, the University of Chicago English department is accepting only applicants interested in working in and with black studies. We understand black studies to be a capacious and electrical project that spans a variety of methodological approaches, fields, geographical areas, languages and time periods.

**Bret** 36:18

So I'm sure you're headed here, but go for it. And well, I first of all, want to point out that this isn't just a spectacular miscarriage of academic integrity. But it is happening in a most unfortunate place, because this is the University of Chicago. And the University of Chicago was like the one example of a school doing its best to stand its ground against the the nonsense emerging from the illiberal left. Yeah. And so the Chicago principles are famously a statement of a refusal to kowtow to this, and to have their English department deciding that the only people they are interested in talking to are people who are studying. What was their term black studies? Oh, yeah, it's

**Heather** 37:15

black studies,

**Bret** 37:16

Black Studies is an indication that, you know, well, I mean, this has been the message all along. If there were a disagreement, you know, if 60% of American universities were falling prey to this, and 40%, were not, we'd be in a very different situation, if it was even 10% that we're not we'd be in a very different situation, because those schools that resisted would have an advantage. If we are right, that this is nonsense, thinking, then they would have an advantage. And over time, the system would self correct, but the very fact that it's no schools that are successfully resisting This tells you the nature of it, right, it is authoritarian in nature, and very powerful. Because if it weren't, it couldn't be dictating terms to all of these schools in which frankly, there are, you know, 1000s of people who know better,

**Heather** 38:03

yeah, now and so for those of you who aren't familiar, sack, you can just put up very briefly, this is the Chicago principles. The actual statement at Provost dot u chicago.edu. Which is short, but I won't read the whole thing here. From its very founding, it begins the University of Chicago has dedicated itself to the preservation and celebration of the freedom of expression as an essential element of the university's culture in 1902, and is addressed marking the university's decennial presidential President William Rainey Harper declared that quote, The principle of complete freedom of speech on all subjects has, from the beginning been regarded as fundamental in the University of Chicago and that quote, this principle can neither now nor any future time be called in question. So at the point that campuses were beginning to become unhinged in I don't know 2015 2016 the Chicago principles came as this just like beacon of light, and it seemed clear that many many university should follow should adopt them and a few did formally adopt Chicago principles. But that no one is standing up to say Actually, this this here goes down exactly that road this this what the Department of English is doing at the University of Chicago, in terms of limiting not just not actually not who can get in, but what you must be interested in in order to get into their Ph. D. program for the fall of 2021. is a step down the road to lack of freedom of expression. It absolutely yes,

**Bret** 39:36

it really is. And I was listening. I haven't listened to the whole thing. But someone pointed us to a very recent interview with Glenn Greenwald on the reason podcast in which he says very much like what Matt Taibbi has said that he initially dismissed what happened on college campuses because much happens on college campuses and people grow out of it. Right. And basically he said, I think this is a quote he said, it turned out the people that were concerned were right. Because this ideology was taken into the world from these colleges, and it is now affecting editorial boards, etc. That's not all a quote, that's me paraphrasing. But sir, but in any case, this is very important. And it remains important because it's not like the people who learned this on college campuses took it into the world, it's until we stop it from being the gospel that is being dispensed on college campuses, it will continue to be taken into the world. And the point is, you know, it's like climate change, right? You, you know, if you fixed things today, you would still have a problem for for some time because of the delay in the process. And so if we want to get this right, we have to get the college part of it right, instantly. And we're just we're heading the wrong direction.

**Heather** 40:58

Yes, we are. And, yeah, Yes, Yes, we are. Maybe, maybe, maybe that so. In partial response to all of this, this madness, I wanted to read a passage from Milan Kundra, which is, you know, I find it both hopeful and sad. This this passage, for those who were Black Bloc, and vandalized supermarkets and statues, they pulled out another statue in a cemetery as well in Portland a few nights ago. And for those who declare their lack of safety at yet another book of Jordan Peterson's being published, and for those academic departments that would like to limit the kinds of questions that are asked, in some really misguided attempt to right the wrongs of history. This would also be useful, I would say, to illuminate for, for instance, New York Times op ed columnists, what kinds of things can happen if you go down this road, so for those who don't know coonara is his check ride I actually had, I thought that he was gone, but he's not he's 91 years old, now Born in 1929. He went into exile in France in 1975, and considers himself now a French writer, I think of him as a Czech dissident. But before the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, which was in 1989, which overthrew the Communist Party, which have been in power for many decades. The Communist regime banned his books. So he is a he was and remains a long standing criticism of things like totalitarianism and communism, where it where it shows up, including in his home country, his Czechoslovak citizenship was revoked in 1979. But he was given Czech citizenship in 2019, something I learned in in reviewing, wow. And I received an email a month ago, from a viewer of the podcast, who pointed me to a short excerpt from from this book, which I can only say, the book of laughter and forgetting which I have a copy because as I've mentioned on this podcast before I read a bunch of coonara and social needs in my very first quarter in college when I was when I was a literature major. And before I read this excerpt is short excerpt, I will say there's an historical note for a couple of people who were mentioned in here. And so this again, from the person who wrote to me, the framing cooinda mentions both gottwald and Clement, us and I'm not sure I'm pronouncing that right. gottwald was the president of Czechoslovakia from 48 to 53. And he allowed Stalin to get the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, of most, if not all, the semi independent and well intentioned intellectuals. Clamantis, who famously had given his Ferhat gottwald on a freezing day in Prague, and there's a photograph of gottwald wearing Columbus's fur hat was later seen as an enemy of the state and was cropped out of images. He's This is one of these famous stories of someone literally being cropped out of images, so that you only see gottwald and clematis has been literally erased from photographic history. So those are gottwald incluant is from this and Oh, so I have this this book that I've had since I don't know I guess 1987 but I actually found that the the translation that was sent to me is why I like better so I'm gonna read this one.

**Heather** 44:26

Since there is not that this is so this is again sorry from the book of laughter and forgetting which was written in 1979 when the Czechoslovakian Communist Party was still in power, before the Velvet Revolution 10 years later. Since there was not a single historic event we can count on being commonly known. I must speak of events that took place a few years ago, as if they were 1000 years old. In 1939, the German army entered Bohemia and the Czech state cease to exist. In 1945. The Russian army entered Bohemia and the country once again was called an independent republic. The people were enthusiastic about the Russia that are driven out the German And seeing in the Czech Communist Party, its faithful arm they became sympathetic to it. So the communists took power in February 1949, with neither bloodshed nor violence, but greeted by the cheers of about half the nation. And now please note, the half that did that you're in was the more dynamic the more intelligent the better. Yes, Say what you will the communists were more intelligent. They had an imposing program, a plan for an entirely new world where everyone would find a place. The opponents had no great dream only some tiresome and threadbare moral principles with which they tried to patch the torn trousers of the established order. So it's no surprise that the enthusiasts the spirited ones easily won out over the half heartedly cautious and rapidly set out to realize their dream, that idol of justice for all. I emphasize idle and for all because all human beings have always aspired to an idol to that garden, we're Nightingale saying to that realm of harmony, where the world does not rise up as a stranger against man, a man against other men, but rather with a world and all men are shaped from one and the same matter. There. Everyone is a note in a sublime Bach fugue, and anyone who refuses to be one is a mere useless and meaningless black dots that need only be caught and crushed between thumb and finger like a flea. There were people who immediately understood that they did not have the right temperament for the idle and tried to go abroad. But since the idle is in essence, a world for all those who tried to emigrate showed themselves to be deniers of the idle and instead of going abroad, they went behind bars. 1000s and 10s of 1000s of others soon joined them, including many communists like the foreign minister Clemente us, who had lent his Ferhat to gottwald. timid lovers held hands on the movie screens, adultery was harshly suppressed by citizens tribunal's of honor, Nightingale sang and the body of Clemente swung like a bell ringing in the new dawn of humanity. And then those young, intelligent and radical people suddenly had the strange feeling of having sent out into the world, an act that had begun to lead a life of its own, had ceased to resemble the idea it was based on it did not care about those who had created it. Those young and intelligent people started to school, their act, they began to call to it, to rebuke it, to pursue it to give chase to it. If I were to write a novel about that gifted and radical generation, I would call it in pursuit of an errant.

**Bret** 47:15

Yeah. So my goodness, struck by many things there maybe top of the list is his point about the fact that the communists were smarter. And I would point out that this is not uncommon, that there's something very appealing about a Marxist analysis to smart people. And it's in part because there's some truth in it, great deal of truth. But the problem is, it misses the collective action problem issue. This is exactly why it falters. And it is exactly why it necessarily leads to totalitarianism. Because the fact that you cannot get there through people's individual alignment of interest causing the collective well being phenomenon to function, the fact that that is unstable, because people's individual interest functions against the collective interests, that thing forces you to punish people into compliance. And yeah,

**Heather** 48:14

he's arguing not only that they're smarter, but that they're more charismatic. He's He's speaks to the appeal of the movement as well, that the people who, in the case of the of what happened in in the Czech Republic or Czechoslovakia in the mid 20th century, the people who were defending who were against the Communist Revolution, were defending a status quo, and there was no passion there, there was no interesting narrative, they didn't have any interesting way forward. They were just defending what had been. And this is how much of the modern stuff is framed to that anyone who is denying this movement must be backward looking regressive, conservative, all of these things. And, frankly, this is I think, often that is simply dishonest as dishonest framing, but it but it does reveal that they they've got the messaging, right, they've got the charisma, right? That we can simultaneously recognize the traditions and the founding principles on which we stand are necessary, and that we can do better, and that we can move forward with new ideas and be better than we have been. And that does not require and actually absolutely mandates that we not destroy all that has come before.

**Bret** 49:28

It also I think reflects a tendency, a very bad habit that virtually all of us have to some degree or another, which is to pay closest attention to the top of something and pay less and less attention as you move down right. So read the abstract version and then barely skimmed the paper, if at all nominal that we see in academia has a more general analog and you know so the thing about Marxism, the part that does have real merit has to do With the analysis of what happens under other circumstances, and the problem is that the prescriptive part is completely wrong. Why is it completely wrong? Well, not least because of this collective action issue, right? And so the idea that people that smart people are suckered by the, you know, the first paragraph that sounds like something that they've seen. And then what they misunderstand is that if you apply the remedy that's proposed, you know, it's snake oil at some level,

**Heather** 50:27

yeah, no, it is and nuanced. respondents will say, What do you not think that socio economic class divisions are driving a lot of the problems in society today, and at any other moment when a communist revolution has been proposed? To which many of us can say no, absolutely. But But your solution is wrong. And it will make things worse, but your

**Bret** 50:51

solution is wrong. And the degree to which you think that this is a problem is also wrong. So I have, you know, the older I get, the more I realized that there is some sort of fundamental difference between those of us who think that absolute economic equality is a desirable objective, and those of us who believe that actually it isn't, and then although we would like a safety net that protects people from falling below and honorable standard of living, right, that the, you know, you want people who bring great things to the world, because they are determined to do it and invest mightily in order to get there. You want those people to have some upgrade to their quality of life, and you want people who decide that they're not really interested in doing anything for Planet Earth, you want those people to live less well, doesn't mean anybody should be homeless, it doesn't mean anybody should, you know, lack health care. But the fact is, you know, some equalization is probably desirable, you know, a floor to well being is surely a desirable state of being, but those who would pursue equality to the point of absurdity, and I mean, economic equality, obviously, other kinds of equality. We should strive for them, but economic equality is not in and of itself, a good greater equality is from where we are, because the inequality is so great, but equality itself is not the objective.

**Heather** 52:23

Well, I guess, also, there may be a problem with the words, right, like, we know that equality and equity are not the same things. And equality in general refers to equality of equality of opportunity, and equity in general referring to equality of outcome or identity of outcome. But then we can also speak to, for instance, equality under the law of men and women, right, and under the law, is the important thing there. And it says nothing about what we expect outcomes to be with regard to relative representation in particular, fields in particular professions, right? Or, or death rates from particular diseases, you know, you're not, you can't democratize the selective forces that have been acting differently on men and women for hundreds of millions of years, men and women, but males and females for hundreds of millions of years, you're not going to be able to do it. And imagine that, you know, putting that as your goal means that, you know, you win, if part of your point is you always want to be in struggle, you always want to have a cause. And what you are primarily is an activist who must go on to the streets and proclaim that things must change. But if you're actually interested in a better world in which there is a there could be a moment if you cannot imagine a moment when you would be satisfied enough to leave the streets, then it's not good faith protest, and you have no business getting any of our attention.

**Bret** 53:53

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I had a thought I lost it. But in any case,

**Heather** 54:01

all right. Well, should we go on to talk a little bit about Christopher Hitchens? Yeah, let's these clips that you found,

**Bret** 54:07

actually, they were sent to me by a mutual friend of ours. And I think I want to set this up because Hitchens is sort of the punchline to it. And the point is that you and I encountered something I will speak with a bit obliquely, for the moment, we encountered an analysis of where we are with respect to COVID that is very challenging. And the I was struck by the fact that apparently this analysis will pull was pulled down from YouTube within two hours of being put up. Now I expected something like what we ran into with pandemic and Judy Mecca, which were you and I separately watched that video, and alarm bells were regularly ringing about the analysis. There were things about it that were clearly wrong.

**Heather** 54:55

There also there was also that video put out by the Kern County doctors early on Which is different from the endemic. But similarly when we did we, we did an analysis of it just nothing

**Bret** 55:06

didn't stand up. Nothing worked right now in neither case, would I and I assume you advocate that these things shouldn't be viewable right,

**Heather** 55:14

that both of those were also pulled down, and they should, then they shouldn't happen.

**Bret** 55:17

Right, right. But this analysis that we've most recently seen is very, very challenging. And I have to say, I think the assumption has to be that there is something seriously wrong with it. But the person advancing the analysis is very well credentialed, which is also arguably the case in Judy mickiewicza use case. And the current county doctors also had a clinical background. So anyway, you know, these were not Kooks with no position from which to speak. But in this case, you've got somebody who's really well positioned. And he makes a very interesting argument, which I will say I now think I know how to test but but here's the problem. It was pulled down from YouTube in two hours, it is now viewable on a blockchain based video site that effectively protects it from, you know, from interference of, you know, below a certain level lbr. Why decided? I don't think so. But I'm not sure. In any case, here's the problem. We have a YouTube channel, that YouTube channel is subject to guidelines that are impenetrable, and unfavourable. To discuss this question. For us to talk about us to talk about it leaves open the possibility that Google will decide we are over some line some line that we would obviously argue and most certainly win the argument that the line is nowhere near this, that this is a discussable, hypothetical deductive question that there are proper tools to be brought to bear on it. But the fact is, there is no the guidelines themselves are vague. The there is no community guidelines of Google right, there is no court in which you can plead your case. The fact that the video was pulled down in the first place says that Google has taken up the opinion that a discussion of this too, because the presentation itself is responsible. You're right, it makes arguments that are evaluatable. It suggested Google takes a view that I would argue is indefensible. But there's nowhere to make that argument.

**Heather** 57:28

It suggests just like we were talking about at the beginning of the hour, that there is this vision of what science is in blue teams heads that once we have an answer that we've agreed on, that is the truth. And no further evidence can possibly take that truth off its pedestal, because that is has always been will always be true. And that, of course is not at all how science works. So what we want to do, what we have been doing is speak to the uncertainty and and weigh evidence and talk about what it would mean if but in this case, it would be really, really dangerous to us it

**Bret** 58:05

would be it would be dangerous. And there is no mechanism to figure out ahead of time, what comes of it, right or you know what line, you know, Google can be wrong about what the line is, but it could be specific about it so that we could say that line doesn't belong here. But in the interest of continuing to be able to talk about these things, we'll stay on the side of it, but we there is no line is the problem. The line is a judgment call to some unaccountable mechanism. So here's the here's the predicament. You and I were driven out of very secure jobs by nonsense. We are fortunate that the tools with which to architect a different livelihood exists in the world, right? We were able to, you know, we didn't have to build a server farm to serve videos, every corner of the world, that thing simply exists, you can sign up, you know, build your channel, the tools, you know, to sell merchandise, or whatever all of these things are just available there. And that's a marvelous thing to exist. But the problem is, they are all subject to the veto of an unaccountable authority that delivers guidelines that you cannot adhere to the only way to be anywhere close to certain that your livelihood will continue into next week is to say so far, basically to do the bidding of those who would control speech, right? You have to stay away from anything that could be understood, you know, and maybe this is another place to point it out. The reason that something like Google might decide that we can't have a discussion about the validity or lack of validity of this experts point about current COVID and its apparent resurgence that has again to do with the difference in analysis between the individual and the collective in effect. what Google is doing is they are deciding that a discussion of this will cause individuals to make decisions that are not in our collective interest. And so Google has decided for us that the way to address that problem is to inflict a conclusion as if it is absolutely secure, so that the actual analysis does not occur in public, so that nobody will draw what they consider to be the foregone wrong conclusion. Right. So all of that, is Google deciding what the answer to the question is, and therefore, what people are to do in light of it. And this is completely intolerable. heterodoxy does deal with all of these ambiguities, it does deal with the difference in level of analysis between the individual level and the collective level. And there's a lot to be said about it. But what you know, the world we're living in is one where we are free to make a living using tools provided by Google, but we dare not disagree with it about whether or not this can be discussed in public, right. And this is absolutely preposterous, and it raises all sorts of questions as your Kundra passage does. Now, what does that have to do with Hitchens? So the point is that if as I was describing this to a friend, he pointed me to a couple of quotes that come from Christopher Hitchens, actually, we put the first one up, Zach.

**Bret** 1:01:31

You, yep. It's November. I just thought I'd mentioned that was November while Zach is returning to the job in hand and bringing up the relevant quote. Yeah, still November. Yep. Christopher Hitchens, I have a word. Okay. Okay. Oh, boy. All right. It says the true essence of a dictatorship is in fact not in its regularity, but in its unpredictability, and Caprice. Those who live under it must never be able to relax must never be quite sure if they have followed the rules correctly or not. And that's Christopher Hitchens from the book catch 22. You want to scroll down? Here's the other quote, The essential principle of totalitarianism is to make laws that are impossible to obey Christopher Hitchens term, God is not great. So I have a principle from long ago, which I call the low posted speed limit. Yes, Yes, you do. And the low posted speed limit is the speed limit posted so low that a reasonable driver will almost certainly violate it. And what this allows you to do is punish those you like so you you the state, you believe, if you're, you know, a cop in a town with a speed limit so low that everybody violates that, then you can pull over gays or Jews or longhairs, or whoever you don't like, right. And the point is, the law does not read as if it is biased against the laws not bigoted, right, but it allows for bigotry to flourish Exactly. And so the arbitrariness and the Caprice of the of the structure, the fact that the standard is set so low that enforcement is perfectly arbitrary, or can be allows all kinds of things to happen. And the fact that Hitchens connects this to totalitarianism, that he argues that this is in fact a feature and not a bug, that in order to make totalitarianism work, you have to constantly be looking over your shoulder with the fear that you have violated the rule, even if that wasn't your intent, because that thing can come back to haunt you and in in a dire manner. That is what keeps the thing humming. And to be defined that we are facing this in our relationship with these platforms that are frankly giving us all of these marvelous tools with which we might otherwise be, you know, upgrading our collective understanding of things, but instead they're gonna manage our collective understanding in ways that prevent people who do have relevant expertise from sharing it discussing its possible implications falsifying it in public, right, is, is is absolutely disastrous.

**Heather** 1:04:08

So it really is a third thing that you've just said. So your low, your low posted speed limit principle, which is that you make a law which almost everyone breaks, such that the enforcement of that law allows individuals who are tasked with enforcing, to enact their internal bigotry or whatever it is. That's one thing. That's what you have said. Hitchens says, You make laws that are impossible to obey, which is different from low posted speed limit, low posted speed limit is you tend not to obey them. But you could Yeah. He says totalitarianism is the creation of laws that are impossible to obey. And then his third one, though, when we started with is the unpredictability and Caprice of the rules such that you never know this is where we started with regard to Can we talk about some of this possible new code discussion that's coming out. We don't know, Google, Google has not told us the community guidelines are vague, presumably intentionally. And this gets to Hitchens point, right, that it is the unpredictability and Caprice. And effectively, that is, it's certainly related to your low posted speed limit. But I think it's distinct. I think these really are three distinct things, all of which we're seeing and play with things like the tech giants at the moment, who have such remarkable control over not just those of us who are creating and producing content. But you know, all of us who are also consuming content and having are having the options before us changed by hidden forces, that we cannot see nor into it.

**Bret** 1:05:48

And I would say you either cannot figure out whether something is, is against the rules, or you can but only putting your livelihood in jeopardy, which is not unlike what totalitarian regimes do, you know, you do something and you may find yourself behind bars, you know, and in this case, I do want to emphasize, though, there is something hauntingly familiar from these totalitarian regimes. There's also brand new stuff here. And one of my concerns is that because I actually did a little checking, because none of the phenomena which carry the hallmarks of totalitarianism or fascism, check all of the boxes, right, we are going to persistently be in this state where we see hints of these things. But we never crossed the final threshold there. Because in fact, the list of characteristics that we have been led to expect are based on a historical world that we no longer live in. And so you know, we're not going to face fascism, again, of the same kind, but we're going to face something with those tendencies and very different tools. And, you know, the the worst thing here is that one of the tools in a world of platforms using algorithms to enforce arbitrary standards, there is a tendency, both naturally because it's simple, and arbitrarily and politically, because it's expedient for each side to do it, there's a tendency to say, this is our team, here's what we believe anything outside of that zone is the enemy and is to be dealt with as such, which means that the, the surface of that bubble now cannot be penetrated with new information, or you know, the stuff of upgrade, right? It can't be because everything else is viewed as hostile and wrong. And so I think you and I are continually tripping over this, right? And the stuff around unity being suspended at Twitter. And the stuff about me being tossed off of Facebook has to do with the fact that these goddamn algorithms don't know what to do with heterodoxy because in general, what they encounter is people who show themselves to be on one team or another. And if your litmus test for that is doesn't believe these things, then lots of us don't believe these things. But we also don't believe those things. And so the point is, you know, your, your algorithms, no good here, right? Yeah, the it is head rarities renders the algorithm incapable of figuring out what you are, right? You know, you're a platypus in a world where you've got, you know, birds with bills and, you know, mammals with fur, right? And, you know, how much harm are we doing to our collective sense making by virtue of stupid algorithms that are looking to put us in too few categories to deal with those of us who, frankly, might have something important to add to the conversation, but it's going to be, you know, neutralized out of existence? Yeah.

**Heather** 1:08:50

So we have talked, and your brother has talked about trying to be negative, right? To not be the person who conforms to patently false things that are being said in your presence. Be the kind of person for whom the algorithms of big tech and everyone else are no good here, be able to say your algorithms, no good here and figure out ways to obscure yourself from it, to hide from it, to evade it to move forward without it seeing you. And I don't know what all of those ways are at all. But heterodox thinking is the way forward not accepting an ideology that has been handed to you by blue or by red or by the left hand or right or whoever it is, that if you've accepted an ideology, because you agree with one thing in it, and assume that therefore everything else is true. You are not an independent thinker, and you are very likely to get conned.

**Bret** 1:09:41

Yeah, you're very likely to get conned as is right. I will say I'm struck. I know some people weren't all that into us discussing clubhouse. But this platform, this new platform that is still in beta but is growing in terms of its population is really Feeling to those of us who are paying attention to it, why this is so difficult, because inside of this platform, and again, the platform is all spoken word real time, it's synchronous, we get into a room and you have a discussion with people, many of them, you don't know. But there is a feature in which you can block people, of course, like every other platform, but those blocks have an impact. If somebody who is in a position, I think somebody is a moderator in a room, where they blocked you, you can't see that the room exists at all, which means that from the point of view of the people in the room, there is a tendency for the conversation to actually conform to a standard. So to the extent that, you know, I might be disliked by people who are advancing the BLM banner, they may block me it means I can't see the conversations they're having, I won't be present in those conversations. And they will have an artificially narrow view of the range of thought on this issue, because people who are heterodox won't be there to speak. And so, you know, it's a damned if you do damned if you don't problem they're trying to solve one problem and creating what I think is a much bigger problem in so doing, but you can just see that people,

**Heather** 1:11:14

I don't know the solution to that one, though. I don't, I don't think you can. I don't know anything about this platform or been on it. But I don't think you can have a social media platform. And that doesn't allow you to block

**Bret** 1:11:23

well. You could allow people to individually block and then there's no way to stop such Oh, I'm

**Heather** 1:11:28

sorry, I missed something about the you individually block,

**Bret** 1:11:31

but then the the platform infers from your block that you are not welcome in certain spaces. So you can't even see that they exist. So instead of I see, so it infers something that in some cases, you know, if you've got a troll there is just making trouble. Sure, right, you can imagine that you don't want such a person to show up in that room. But by doing that you are creating power for those who would block and in fact, this is an analogue for the system that the other platforms have established in which they claim Oh, an algorithm flag, do you Sorry, right. Why did the algorithm flagged me? Oh, because a bunch of people reported you. Why did they report you? Oh, because they viewed you as on the other side, they were doing a political job by reporting you, which then triggered the algorithm, which then allowed the platform to decide what it thought of you. And it used the algorithm as an excuse. Yeah.

**Heather** 1:12:22

So your algorithms, no good here. Yeah, it's more of that when you have that. Yeah. I think we are way past an hour at this point. So I'm going to advocate that we move big game hunting in the Americans by women to next week, make sure we talk about that the top of the hour, but I want to say just a couple of minutes before we before we break before going to Super Chat questions about about the value of going outside specifically again, it's something that I've said at the end of some of these live streams get outside for those of you in the Northern Hemisphere as most of you are it's increasingly unpleasant unless you happen to be you know, if you're in that shoulder season, as we are on the in the Pacific Northwest, at low altitudes, pretty much consistently is, if it's, you know, in the 40s, and cold and wet, it's about as difficult to motivate to go out as as it gets. But I was I was thinking the last time actually that I was out on my stand up paddleboard, which is longtime viewers will know I started doing just in August of this year, and quickly fell in love with it. And I was out on it in the penultimate week of October, when it was already was pretty, pretty cold that day, pretty windy. And I was just so filled with love for it being out there. And it reminded me of how I have never been able to get into being in a gym. I've never I've never had a gym membership. I've never spent time in a public gym. And you know, and why, like what what is it specifically about that kind of exercise that cannot motivate me in any way. And the thing that I came up with while I'm standing out up out there on the Willamette with the Whitecaps on the river was that there's no stakes, there's no stakes in the gym, and, you know, I I know so little about this and I'm sure I'll get pushed back here you know, that's there are some things that you need a spotter for, and that you need to make sure that you don't, you know, drop things, if you if you don't have a spotter, you know, on parts of you. But really, it's so controlled and so uniform and so homogeneous from from one visit to the next. And indeed that's part of the point for people that we have this focus on quantification and metrics and allows us to imagine that we're tracking progress and therefore that we're making progress. But the stakes, it seems to me are almost entirely social, you know, did I embarrass myself in front of the cute guy or girl over there? You know, was, did I do? Do I look ridiculous? Or am I you know, am I showing myself in my best form and because we have so Before many times, seeking out those things that reveal physical reality and not social reality are a better way to actually know whether or not you're making sense in the world. And of course, if you know you can or cannot lift, X amount of weight, if you can, or cannot benchpress X amount of weight, this time and you and you couldn't a month ago, that does tell you something real. But you're not at any risk, really, right. And anything outside really even walking, certainly biking, skiing, stand up paddleboarding, but even walking, the weather might come, right, there might be rocks or slipperiness, or you know, any number of things, that just increases the chances that there might be some damage that is unrelated to the, you know, physical activity that would use to describe it. And it's, it's related, I think, to this idea of having skin in the game, which is an idea that's older than to lubs formulation. But Nassim Taleb talks about this a lot. But it's not a perfect overlap with skin in the game. But it's it's related so that you can you you, I would say that we are all going to be more inspired to be our best selves, both in terms of our mental acuity and also our physical selves, if we can figure out at least sometimes ways to go and move our bodies in active ways outside where there's actual challenges that we cannot completely foresee as opposed to entirely in fully controlled environments.

**Bret** 1:16:33

So I would add one thing to it, I agree that there's something to just the reality of an environment with stakes, even if you're attempting to be safe at it. There's something to the variation in the outside environment, the variation, which is specifically purged from the gym. Yeah. So a couple places that shows up, I've been trying to keep at biking as the weather has become less and less pleasant for it. And the app that I use to just keep track of where I've gone, allows you to store a picture with each trip. And trying to figure out, you know, especially when I'm going the same place very frequently, the question is, okay, well, what picture will I take somewhere along my ride, I need to get a picture that is unique to this ride, right? That doesn't just look like the same Vista or whatever it might be. And that is a mental puzzle worth engaging. Right? Likewise, the difference in weather between one ride and the next and frankly, the always surprisingly difficult puzzle, a feeling of figuring out how to dress for the, you know, the fall, winter, spring months, that puzzle is thought provoking, right? And especially because it does have consequences, right? You dress incorrectly and you're either overheating because you haven't figured out a way to shed enough heat. Or you know, you're losing heat faster than you can generate it and you know, even the how you remain in the zone between building up heat faster than you can lose it and losing heat faster than you can build it. Right. That's an interesting physical puzzle. Yeah, right. And so anyway, something anything that causes you to engage with the world to think about the moon phase, the number of hours of daylight, which is frankly it will surprise many of you, we are about to go in, we are still in the ebbing direction. But we are about to turn the corner and go in the direction of longer days.

**Heather** 1:18:33

For those of you in the Northern Hemisphere, although the day length is shortening rather slowly now and will increase rather slowly through, you know, mid February or no late January, at which point it begins to speed up again,

**Bret** 1:18:45

even as temperature continues to drop. Right. Which is an interesting puzzle for people to think about. But anything that provokes you might be doing various Yeah, right, watching the, you know, the change in the biota, you know, in the different seasons, the different sounds, even the different sounds of the city and the way that they reverberate differently, you know, with different weather patterns, different

**Heather** 1:19:08

leaves on the trees, different cloud cover all of it. Yeah. And I guess I feel like I would be remiss if I said all of that and didn't and I think I'd like to just ask us this year and maybe come back to it. But we have a friend, Edith hoists, who's got a program of indoor exercises called revolution in motion and revolution emotion, calm, we'll get you there that that are extraordinary. And the big part of the point of it is it it brings in instability and puts you in different plans relative to your usual gravitational plane of reference, as you are bearing weight and moving on things like a big exercise ball and on inclined planes and on slopes and such. And it you know, and this is she is extraordinary, and she also got You know, she kayaks and stand up paddle boards and bikes and all these things. And this is sort of a way of engaging your, your core self and the myofascia. And you know, all of these things in the side in a way that is never the same from time to time. And so you know, a, I think what she's doing is extraordinary. And I've been actually doing classes with her remotely. But also, I would say that anyone who feels that their best work is done inside if they can't get into the moon phases, and the different beyond the biota. And the ways of the city sounds different when the leaves are off the trees and all of this, although I would encourage you to try figure out some way either try Reverend mo revolution in motion or or figure out some way to increase it to introduce instability and imperfect control into your indoor workouts.

**Bret** 1:20:52

Yeah, absolutely. I'm thinking of the balance board that we have two directions, you choose which direction it's in stable and but it's amazing. You're looking at it, you would think, oh, you'll learn it and then you'll be perfectly stable as like, nope, there's nothing you can do to be perfectly stable. There's enough like jitter in your physiological systems that you're always in motion trying to stabilize

**Heather** 1:21:15

and that's I mean, that's part of what I just fell in love with stand up paddleboarding right away, just like oh, oh, you're just gonna need to be on even if there's no wind. And you know, the current is ABD at our end is is is very Slack, and there's no Yahoo, you know, boats going by really fast. There's no way you still you just have to be on and you know, being on for whatever, you know, 30 minutes, 60 minutes, 90 minutes at a time is not something you're accustomed to doing if you're just walking around, especially if you're just sitting at a desk chair.

**Bret** 1:21:47

Absolutely.

**Heather** 1:21:48

Alright, so we will. We have a few announcements at the end here, but we will be back at in 15 minutes to answer your super chat questions. As we said at the beginning, we now have mirch available at this site teespring.com slash stores slash dark dash force dash podcast. And if you use the code thankful, all caps to the end of Monday you get 50% off. If you want to become either of our patrons at Patreon you get 20% off. Also tomorrow is our monthly private q&a at my Patreon, where we do a two hour q&a with questions that have already been submitted at this point. For just for patrons of mine, email the moderator Darkhorse Doc moderator@gmail.com. If there are other items that you think you'd like, like hats was Brett talked about early on. It's a Discord server that you can access it's benefited both of our Patreon that Patreon owns not this week, but next week, you'll have your private issues and my private conversations at your Patreon

**Bret** 1:23:01

that suggests it's about to be December.

**Heather** 1:23:02

It's about to be in December. Exactly. And we got a clips channel Yeah, the producers clips and and we encourage you to subscribe to that and subscribe to this and stick around. We'll take a 15 minute break.

**Bret** 1:23:16

You might also like and subscribe and she's like notify and if you like you should like if you like you should like and if you have been unsubscribed which is this diabolical thing that seems to happen then resubscribe just check and make sure you're still there. That's right. That's right. All right, everyone. Yep, we'll see in 15 be well.