Bret and Heather 97th DarkHorse Podcast Livestream\_ Lift Off...

Sat, 10/9 12:09PM • 1:25:32

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

point, book, world, conversation, md hearing aid, good, fact, system, day, idea, talk, question, products, hanukkah, hearing, problem, people, public goods, thinking, podcast

**SPEAKERS**

Bret, Heather

**Bret** 00:56

Hey folks, welcome to the Dark Horse podcast live stream number 97. It is am I correct about that? Dr. Hunt?

**Heather** 01:04

You are correct. Third time's a charm.

**Bret** 01:07

It wasn't that charmed, but now it was.

**Heather** 01:09

That was not our wonderful producers fault. Actually, we had asked him to turn off the audio so that we could talk beforehand, but he's now saying it was his fault. Isn't that amazing? This is 17 year old.

**Bret** 01:20

Unbelievable. Yeah, we are not trading him out for anything. Nope, can't have him. No, no, he's he's a good one. He's a keeper. You say around here,

**Heather** 01:28

indeed. Alright, here we are, man. A lot has happened. Much has happened. A lot has happened in the world. And a lot has happened in our world. Our book came out on Tuesday. And we're going to be talking about it throughout the show today and, and some of the some of how that feels and has landed and is going to continue to manifest. But first, we're gonna start with a few other logistics, three ads today, and then we'll launch right into the main part of the show. So I guess I did want to say if you've gotten the book and you've read it, please consider writing a review on Amazon. And the reviews help us with the algorithms and unfortunately we are all in Thrall to some degree to the algorithms Resistance is futile. That is not the message of the book. Resistance is not futile. But short term. We would like to not game but accurately have the ag algorithms reflect what people are saying to us privately.

**Bret** 02:28

So if anyone has told you that resistance is futile, pick up a copy of our book to see a well reasoned, CounterPoint.

**Heather** 02:36

Excellent. We're streaming on both Odyssey and YouTube. Try it out and honestly that's where the chat is happening. We've got question q&a which will happen in the hour after this one, we'll you can ask questions at Dark Horse submissions.com. We've got Patreon which we encourage you to join as well right now on my Patreon is the 48 hour period during which you can ask questions that we will try to address as many as possible in the monthly private q&a. Those that question asking period is open right now. And yeah, maybe we'll maybe we'll stop there. For now. We will do three ads and they get right into

**Bret** 03:13

it. Fair enough.

**Heather** 03:16

Okay, our first sponsor, our first sponsor for this week is a new one to us MD hearing it. Well, neither of us has used this product that's MD hearing aid. While neither of us has used this product, we asked a friend with hearing loss to try it out and we'll share her testimony below. But everyone can empathize with what it feels like to be left out of a conversation others are enjoying or they need to crank the volume up on a show beyond what other people need. Those with hearing loss. suffer an invisible set of harms invisible quite literally, to those of us without without it. So MD hearing aid is an FDA registered rechargeable hearing aid the cost of fraction of what typical hearing aids cost. The average price of hearing aid in America is 20 $400. But their volte plus model is just $299 each when you buy a pair MD hearing aid MD hearing aid was founded by an EMT surgeon who saw how many of his patients needed hearing aids but couldn't afford them. He made it his mission to develop a quality hearing it that anyone can afford. They aim to fit so well that no one will know you're wearing them. They're rechargeable with a battery life that lasts up to 30 hours. They're water resistant and up to three feet of water and you don't need a prescription or doctor's appointment you buy directly from them. We're audiologists and licensed hearing specialists are available seven days a week. md hearing aid has knocked the price down hearing aids by recognizing that about 95% of people who need a hearing aid only require a few settings. So they simplify the need for certain components not needed by most people and they cut out the middleman that's how the price is so low. md hearing aid is brought affordable hearing over 600,000 satisfied customers and they offer a 45 day risk free trial with 100% money back guarantee. So here's a testimonial from a friend of ours who we had MD hearing aid ship their product to she tried it out for a little while. And she relies on hearing aids herself. We asked her to try this product and she said, quote, with my particular type of hearing loss and deep male voice in a noisy room is the hardest situation for me to hear and understand speech. I wore the MD hearing aid to have a conversation with a deep voice man in a room with a lot of white noise. md hearing aid pass the test as my conversation partners voice was clear and understandable. At a price point of under $1,000. I was amazed at how effective they are and quote, so go to MD hearing aid calm and use promo code Darkhorse to get their buy one get one $299 each offer plus they're adding a free extra charging case $100 value just for listeners of Darkhorse, so head to MD hearing aid calm and use our promo code Darkhorse or you can even call them at 83377 to 1392. All right, our second ad our second ad, which I will also be bringing you before we switch to Bret is for for SIG Matic which we've talked about before that's for fo you are SIG Matic it's a wellness company known for its delicious mushroom coffee. I know that sounds weird and kind of off putting it certainly did to me. I was skeptical myself, but I've been drinking it lately most mornings and it's really really good you I like it too. Yeah, I forced some on you this time and you liked it too. For socratics mushroom coffee contains organic Fairtrade single origin Arabica coffee with Lion's Mane mushroom for productivity and Chaga mushroom for immune support. It adds a little something some Christmas and focus in my experience the world seems just a little more clear after drinking it. It's delicious just like regular coffee. You can't taste the mushrooms if that's what you're worried about as I was, but it is just like your favorite coffee, dark, nutty and delicious. All four sigmatic products are organic, vegan and gluten free. Plus every single batch is third party lab tested to ensure its purity and safety so you know you're getting the highest quality coffee and mushrooms possible. It's got over 20,005 star reviews backs their products with 100% money back guarantee. And we have an exclusive offer with four SIG Matic on their best selling mushroom coffee. This is just for Darkhorse listeners get up to 40% off plus free shipping on mushroom coffee bundles to claim this deal you must go to for SIG Matic fo you are sig matic.com Darko slash Darkhorse. You'll save up to 40% and get free shipping again. So right now go to fo you are si g Ma, ti c.com. Slash Dark Horse and fuel your productivity and creativity with some delicious mushroom coffee.

**Bret** 07:33

Awesome. All right, dyslexia begone. public goods can simplify your life as a one stop shop for everyday essentials. Their ingredients are carefully sourced, high quality and affordable. public goods has towels, glassware and sponges, razors and shampoo and toilet paper mustard and coffee and coconut oil. They've got niche items like bone broth concentrate, and gluten free pasta and small batch marshmallows. We've tried several of their products and have yet to be disappointed. public goods cares about health and sustainability for its customers and for the planet. They plant one tree for every order placed and the ingredients are ethically sourced, their products are largely free of harmful ingredients. public goods products have a great design to the aesthetic is simple and clean. There are no garish colors like for example imagine perfectly clear dish soap. I don't want products that I use to draw attention to themselves so public goods is a great fit. Finally, their subscription service is efficient and simple and easy to use public goods members can buy all of their premium essentials in one place. It really is in everything store. For Dark Horse listeners we have the following offer received $15 off your first public goods order with no minimum purchase. They are so confident that you will absolutely love their products and come back again and again that they're giving you $15 to spend on your first purchase. Go to public goods.com slash Dark Horse use the code Dark Horse at checkout that is spell it out he said saying the quiet part out loud public goods.com publicgods.com forward slash dark horse to receive $15 off your first order. Scared you didn't I

**Heather** 09:17

know that was good. All right. I think we're beyond you scaring me with things like

**Bret** 09:21

that. Yes, indeed. Indeed.

**Heather** 09:24

There's there's much scarier things afoot in the world. Frankly,

**Bret** 09:27

right which actually, this brings me to something I was going to say this is now a perfect segue. You have cautioned me sometimes when I have warned that winter is coming that maybe that's not the best thing to say to people that it's a bit dark and foreboding and I believe I have come up with a solution. Okay. I think it is very important that people be warned but you're right that may be a little precipitous and so what I'm thinking is Autumn is coming. right because it is right and you know the it is it equinoxes. frightening, a frightening development and there's nothing we can do to stop it.

**Heather** 10:03

It's it's not a frightening development I've actually I've been thinking about the equinox. I figured you had I've been thinking about the equinox and the fact that this year, it comes right about it exactly a full moon as well which is which is, you know, not meaningful in in most senses except it also happens to coincide with the day that I will be making my next post on natural selections by substack newsletter. So I've been thinking about the ways in which the equinox is a deeply meaningful time of the year. In terms of the days being equal length and changing very, very rapidly, much more rapidly daylight that is photoperiod changes much more rapidly around the equinoxes and it does it either solstice. But it would have been the actual Equinox would have been very, very difficult for the ancients to identify precisely, right, as opposed to the moon. Right so you know, the the phase of the moon is a giant sky clock, in many ways, and Yo, for sure, it's a giant sky calendar and if you understand the ways that it processes also also to some degree o'clock, but the equinox. While very important for things like planting and harvest and such, is, um, is going to be much less precisely used by ancient people, then then things like moon phases, because cloud cover notwithstanding, cloud cover will change this but in general, you can see the moon's phases and it's very hard to get precise on the equinox,

**Bret** 11:32

it is difficult to get precise. There are of course, these physical clocks installed by many cultures around the world that allow them to figure out where they are not by calculating but by the you know, the sun sets in this notch in the building at the solstice or the equinox and so

**Heather** 11:51

it's an amazing one of these Inca perca right beautiful one. In fact,

**Bret** 11:55

maybe I'll dig up a photo and that can be our our thumbnail for this episode. But

**Heather** 12:01

the burqa sorry Inga perk of being Ecuador's largest Incan ruin the income not having gotten that far north until relatively late, you know, so they were only the income were only and what's modern day Ecuador for 80 years, less than 100 and this place that is now called Inca. Perko was a place where the canary people lived. And the Inca kept trying to abolish obliterate them, and they failed. And so what often happens in these cases, when one one population does not simply trounced, the other is a royal marriage was arranged. And this Ingo perkupp became for you know, the 80 years or so before the Spaniards came and changed everything. Basically, a combined can Yari and inkan. stronghold, and the city, which has one of these, these sunglasses is a chemical

**Bret** 12:48

physical clocks. Yeah. There's a primitive one of these in the, in the Midwest, where the beauty of it I forgotten exactly where it is. But the beauty of it is that they tripped over how to calibrate the thing. And so they ended up having to keep reading it and adjusting it because it was off slightly, and it would get worse and worse as the years progressed. But anyway, this this goes to this really interesting point, which I don't know this. Yeah, it's

**Heather** 13:19

this is pre Columbian people. Oh, yes.

**Bret** 13:21

Yeah. But anyway, that I i've always sort of thought that the fact that the solar system does not work as a function of integers that there are, you know that a year is not an exact number of days, for example, which causes a calendar that's really close to right to get worse and worse over time. This is about the best proof we've got that the universe was not constructed intentionally by a loving God, it could have been constructed by a malevolent God, or no God, but a loving God or God, yeah, jokester, God willing, a jokester, God who wanted your harvest to get less and less effective over time as your clock revealed its imprecision. But anyway, yes, these celestial events are really important and the number of cultures who figured out the answer by not having to calculate it and therefore not having to deal with these fractional issues, but empirically, you know, it settles in that notch. And that's how we know we're back at that place in the calendar. Yeah. Is is the right way to do it if you don't have a really sophisticated model.

**Heather** 14:24

Absolutely. Absolutely. Great. Okay, so Yom Kippur was this week, and it is the highest holy day in the Jewish calendar, a time traditionally of atonement often associated with the fast and I don't have much more to say about that, except by way of segue to saying Hanukkah is not a holiday in any way in the Jewish calendar. But But we being from, you know, we are a secular household who come from different religious traditions and And we we celebrate a secondary level both Christmas and Hanukkah in our home. And we have adopted a new tradition associated with Hanukkah which makes up the epilogue of our book a one page epilogue. So while we are not going to continue to do excerpts from the book, going forward, we you know, we were doing one a week per chapter for the 13 weeks before the publication, but the one page epilogue, I think will make for fodder for discussion for a little while,

**Bret** 15:27

right. So we have effectively felt some license to tinker with Hanukkah, it being a lesser holiday, and our household being a non traditional one. And so anyway, what we've done is, in a sense, a prototype, we have tried to make it meaningful in a way that grows with us as the years pass. And, anyway, Heather's about to introduce it to you.

**Heather** 15:49

Yeah, absolutely. So I'll read through them. And then we'll just we'll talk a little bit about either each of them or whichever ones we feel like. So epilogue to a hunter gatherers guide to the 21st century tradition and how to tweak it. In our home. One of our annual rituals is to celebrate Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights that occurs just before around the northern winter solstice. We like the menorah, as is traditional and each night review and additional principle, which is not our family's new Hanukkah rules. So again, there are eight days of Hanukkah, we haven't said that there are eight new Hanukkah rules, day one, all human enterprises should be both sustainable and reversible. Day two, the golden rule, do you want to others as you would have them do unto you. day three, only support systems that tend to enrich people who have contributed positively to the world. Therefore, don't game honorable systems. day five, one should have a healthy skepticism of ancient wisdom and engage novel problems consciously, explicitly. And with robust reasoning. They six opportunity must not be allowed to concentrate within lineages. day seven precautionary principle, when the costs of inaction are unknown, proceed with caution before making change. And day eight, society has the right to require things of all people, but it has natural obligations to them in return. So should I go through one by one or? Or what do you what do you think care?

**Bret** 17:16

Whatever you think, I mean, I always like revisiting them. I look forward to Hanukkah and the the celebration of these things.

**Heather** 17:25

And what we do you know, we, whatever dinner we're having that night, we don't have it, you know, special eight nights of Hanukkah dinners, but we discussed that principle around the dinner table with our boys. Yep, as well. So okay, the first one, all human enterprises should be both sustainable and reversible. And I think that that reversible word is the thing that is often missing from discussions of sustainability. And, and is often missing in sort of more naive discussions of what it means to be a liberal versus a conservative. You can you can be all in for progress, but not be interested in making change if that change is going to be permanent.

**Bret** 18:04

Yeah. And it really it's an attempt to fix the precautionary principle, which anybody who has tried to figure out a way to operationalize the precautionary principle realizes that it is very difficult to do, right, because, you know, what, if you interpret it very strictly, it can paralyze you. And what we don't want is to paralyze us, we want to be able to take advantage of, you know, reasonable risks, but we very frequently find out that risks we thought were reasonable turned out not to have been. And so the reason to talk about reversibility is that if you make a change based on a reasonable guess that the consequences of it will be safe. And you, you do something that cannot be undone, if you turn out to be wrong, you're actually taking a much bigger risk than if you've said, Well, what we need to do is build up the capacity to undo this at the same scale that we have built the capacity to do it, right. So the point is, you know, at the first first moment that you invent an automobile that burns fossil fuels and make co2, you are altering the atmosphere, but you're not obligated to do anything about it. At that level. It's such a tiny alteration, that it's not significant. But at the point you ratchet up the capacity to burn fossil fuels so that you do start changing the chemical composition of the atmosphere, you're taking a risk that you'll change the heat trapping capacity. And so therefore, you need to build up in tandem the capacity to undo it if need be. And if you haven't done that, you find yourself where we are now, which is we've got to change. It is out of our control and it threatens to trigger a positive feedback and in the Arctic, with the frozen methane being released the so called clathrate gun hypothesis. But if if we had recognized the need to be able to undo changes to the atmosphere at the same rate that we change the atmosphere, then the point is at whatever point We discovered that this had been a mistake, we would already have on hand the solution? Absolutely.

**Heather** 20:08

Day two is the golden rule, do unto others, do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Classic, of course not, not something that generally shows up in a Jewish holiday well, but you know, modern, modern, you know, modern Judaism, obviously, in encompasses the golden rule, as do all

**Bret** 20:30

modern. And it has been invented multiple times, including Rabbi Hillel has a prior version of what we now call the golden rule. And so the point is, societies that work have figured this out as a basic principle, and it is really important that it be understood even you know, again, the devil is in the details with all of these things about operationalizing them, but

**Heather** 20:52

right, and they're and they're, they're good, they function as single sentence, prescriptions, in which you need to understand that, you know, conditions will vary and will affect To what degree you should I attempt to make these real? Yeah. So let's see only number three, only support systems that tend to enrich people who have contributed positively to the world. And I guess I would add to that day six opportunity must not be allowed to concentrate within lineages. Alright, the, the idea that we should, you know, recognizing that we cannot actually achieve complete equality of opportunity, because, because conditions vary, but we should be seeking to maximize equality of opportunity, absolutely, as much as possible for all human beings. And part of the way that we will do that is to, to, to spread the opportunity across lineages, and also to ensure that those who are profiting from from doing ill and the world profit as little as possible.

**Bret** 22:03

Yeah. Is this the point? You know, throughout the book, basically, we're pointing to the fact that we live in an evolutionary system and an evolutionary system where you profit by externalizing harm on to others, that behavior will spread and be elaborated in a system where externalizing harm on to others is costly, that behavior will dwindle. Yes, exactly what you want. And really, the question is, you've either built a system that evolves in a direction that's positive, or you built one that evolves in a direction that's negative, and you know, how well you built it will adjust how quickly it moves in those directions. But the real question is trajectory, which which way do you want to go?

**Heather** 22:40

And I think I mean, this is, this is a good time, probably to remind most of the audience, hopefully, but inform some of the idea that to identify something as an evolutionarily stable strategy to identify that something has, as has been promoted by selection and is thus gaining ground is in no way to suggest that it is either a good thing or a moral thing, or that all conditions would result in that being a stable strategy. So there will for most, for many things be multiple evolutionarily stable strategies. And when conditions change, are there endogenous or exogenous? The suite of environmentally stable strategies will change as well. And I'm reminded, actually, one of the, one of the podcasts we did this week about the book was the realignment. And I think I think that's actually out now, a really nice conversation we had and we ended up talking a little bit about the misapprehension that so much of modern academic social science has about what evolution actually is that most, especially I think Sociology and Anthropology have actually taken the sort of the social Darwinist, the eugenics version of what evolutionary biology is. And imagine that that's what all of us who are trying to explain the world through evolution are doing. And it's it's absolutely 100% wrong, right. So what what things like eugenics imagine is that survival of the fittest is both a stable state in which whatever is most fit right now is most of it forever and ever. And also that things like wealth are good indicators of fitness. And of course, in markets where you have things like opportunity, having concentrated and lineages, the fact that you were born wealthy may have to say absolutely nothing about your ability to accrue goodness in the world, nor is wealth inherently a good indicator of that. But more to the point is the idea that there is no stable survival of the fittest everything and evolution is context dependent, and as the environment changes, so too, does what the what the appropriate measure of fitness might be.

**Bret** 24:53

So I want to refine one thing here. Wealth is not a good indicator of fitness in any meaningful sense. lead to fitness. In other words, your wealth gives you power to, you know, protect your family and things like that. But it is not indicative of the fact that you have brought something special to the table. But it should be right we should want markets that cause that effect where wealth actually is an indicator of having provided some real benefit rather than having externalized harm. So, one, you know, we've been very deliberate in constructing these principles. And so the phraseology is often precise for a reason. And note that we say opportunity shouldn't be allowed to concentrate in lineages, right? That is not the same thing as saying wealth. Now, obviously, there's a degree to which wealth can accumulate within lineages that is very destructive in large measure, because it leads to opportunity. And so to the extent of the wealth is all concentrated. And that means that people who might be able to do something useful, which should be rewarded don't have the opportunity, because either they don't get the educational benefits, or they're too preoccupied, sustaining themselves. That's a bad thing. And this

**Heather** 26:03

and this is the wise version. This is the informed version of what activists talk about when they talk about privilege.

**Bret** 26:10

Right? And and so the point is, there is a there is a real critique in there one needs to be really careful I, you know, the more I think about it, the less one wants a world in which the the product of productivity in which our gains are evenly distributed. That's a desperately unfair world, and it doesn't do good things. And, you know, this is the failure at the heart of communism. But there is an enlightened version of Well, what do you want to equalize? And the thing that I think separates these two things is, if you if you're a believer in markets, alright, as we are, if you're a believer in markets, then they work best when everybody has access to them, right? meaningful access, not just theoretical access, but when everybody has the tools to actually innovate and bring things into a market than the

**Heather** 26:56

things just access at the consumer level. Right? I mean, right, it's that not just access at the consumer level, which all Americans have pretty much but access potentially at the producer level, right?

**Bret** 27:06

That's the most important thing. And so if you have a market that rewards things that are actually positive, that actually create meaningful wealth, rather than transfer wealth, then the reward arising because you've innovated the opportunity has to be spread most widely because then we get the maximum number of opportunities to evaluate and the good ones rising then results in a reward and that's how you get a system that evolves to meet the values that we claim to hold rather than one that is constantly running up against those values.

**Heather** 27:42

That's right. Let's see don't game honorable systems maybe we've done that already. But why would we have a game The Honorable system that we don't talk about? Yeah,

**Bret** 27:54

I will just say sometimes with customer service you have to be ruthless

**Heather** 27:59

customer service really good chance Customer service is not an honorable systems why it's written. Exactly. But I mean, this is this is one of the things and we you know, we have this in the epilogue, not in the end of either the childhood or the parenting relationship chapter. But this is one of the messages that we were teaching our children very, very early and you know, all of all of these we were giving to our children every year you know, with with Chanukah, but the idea that, for instance, we as their parents have rules that they may not understand, but they are they are honorable, they are intended to be good. And sometimes we will make errors. And when we make errors, we are expected to figure it out and change them or to have our to respond to them when they figure it out and change them. But the idea that they would game us and this is true for any parent child relationship. If the parent is a good parent is a good and loving parent, as all parents should be, but of course, not quite all are their systems, their rules that they have in place, no matter how good they are, if they're honorable, should be definable over time, and that is much, much harder if the child is simply reacting to Oh, it's a rule. I don't like it. And this is this is unfortunately a place where we have lost nuance in the modern in the modern world, among especially some on the on the sort of what I call the pseudo left the idea that if it's a rule, if it's a law, if it came from the before times, whatever that means, it must be bad is absurd. And you know, some of what we're being handed down right now is bad, and is dishonorable and, and is not worthy of being protected things like customer service, maybe in some cases, but but the idea that, for instance, the founding principles on which the United States were, were based, there to some degree outdated, they're not as up to the task as they should be anymore, but they are deeply on And they have been deeply functional.

**Bret** 30:01

Actually, it strikes me. So in the book, we talk about the precautionary principle and Chesterton's fence, which turned out to be inverse of each other. And I'm thinking actually, that there's another one of these about how one addresses a dishonorable system a system built to do harm or to give control where it doesn't belong. And that it's the flip side of what we say about immoral orders, right, you have an obligation not to follow immoral orders, and you have no obligation to treat a dishonorable system as if it were an honorable one.

**Heather** 30:41

And, yeah, this is good.

**Bret** 30:43

Yeah, it's civil disobedience in a moral order. So the flip sides of each other, I guess, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Or the response to immoral orders?

**Heather** 30:51

Yeah, exactly. The five one should have a healthy skepticism of ancient wisdom, and engage novel problems consciously, explicitly and with robust reasoning. So this is, this is a twofer. Really, it is it is both a, that which came before has worked if it's been persistent, and complex and long lived persistent, long lived being synonyms here. But that doesn't mean that it's up to today's challenges. But that also doesn't mean that you throw that out and just take whatever is new as an appropriate response.

**Bret** 31:25

Yeah. And so the second the last chapter of the book is really about this puzzle. It's not that we don't like ancient wisdom, we love ancient wisdom. But the point is, the more rapidly your situation is changing, the less likely that wisdom is to apply. And so the skepticism isn't like, it's not cynicism about ancient wisdom, it's a you have to evaluate each of these parameters and whether they fit our current circumstances because, you know, how do you apply, you know, the moral tenants of the Bible to Twitter, right, you know, with bots, and multiple anonymous accounts, and D boosting? I mean, you know, yeah, the Good Samaritan gets slaughtered. Right? So we have to, we have to think about these things. And you know, very frequently the formulation that we arrive at, is you've got a value, which motivated a prescription from the past, the prescription goes out of date, the value doesn't. And the question is, well, how can you do? How can you protect that value in the present circumstance, without obligating yourself to a prescription? That's inadequate?

**Heather** 32:31

Absolutely. Very good. Okay, we already did the next two. So the final one is day eight. Society, as the written society has the right to require things of all people, but it has natural obligations to them in return. This is, this is one about which people will disagree. I mean, people may disagree with all of them. But I think the idea that society actually has a right to require things of us is something that many find anathema. But it is true, as long as the contract is a good one.

**Bret** 33:11

Yeah, let's put it this way. It has to be true, there are too many of us who can't all decide to go hunt and gather and say I, I reject being part of civilization, I'm going to go back and do what I was born to do. If you if you do that, right, the earth will not be able to sustain our population, it'll crash. So the point is, we've actually signed you up for civilization, and you can't opt out of it, right? You can't go claim territory or whatever else you might have done in the past pay

**Heather** 33:40

taxes, and we get licenses in order to drive and such right.

**Bret** 33:44

However, the point is, that naturally comes with the obligation that the society that robbed you of your right to go do what you feel like doing has to protect you from certain things, right? It has to protect you from the predatory behavior of powerful entities. You know, for example, well,

**Heather** 34:02

if if it's an intact social contract, it's not that it's not having been robbed.

**Bret** 34:06

Right, right. Well, the point is, you didn't have a choice but to sign you were born into a society and you're obligated to be part of it. But that comes with obligations. And the problem for us moderns, typically, is the thing is in breach of contract, right? The systems that are supposed to protect us and are supposed to provide the opportunity that was the thing that we got in exchange for giving up our right to go out and gather, right? Those that capture is now predatory. And it takes advantage of us and so the problem is the society is in breach of contract and that changes our obligations to it.

**Heather** 34:45

That's right. You want to enlist if that wraps up that little section, so you want to before before I had some more stuff to talk about you want to talk about Pegasus spyware. Yes, I Do which I know nothing about. I only knew enough to say it I'm going to down tell you

**Bret** 35:04

a little bit about it. So Pegasus spyware has been in the news you may have just had your Apple iPhone update itself. Pegasus spyware is apparently a, a spyware program that was loaded onto my understanding is virtually every iPhone, iPad Mac I watch in existence when well that's I'm going to get that. Okay, so this program was essentially a backdoor and it was a zero click exploit which means in the past, you might have gotten an email that you would have to open an infected file in order for your computer to be infected. So a person could be careful and not click things from people they didn't know where files that looked funny. In this case, that was not true, the file could land in your computer or your iPhone, and the exploit could be delivered. And this exploit which was created by an Israeli company, the NSO group of very cryptic entity, allowed access to your email, your phone calls, your text messages could apparently allow your camera and microphone to be turned on without your knowledge. Now, I would just point out, if your neighbor figured out how to do this to your phone or your computer, right, your neighbor was just curious about your life. And they figured out how to use your computer in order to spy on you. They look through your email, your text messages and all of that stuff. You would be beyond irate. Right? This is such an incredible invasion of privacy, to have a private entity, set up the conditions for this and then apparently sell access to the data of individuals to their enemy enemies and competitors. Right. They sold access to the devices of, for example, activists to the governments that oppose, right, this is such an asymmetry, right, the activist would have had no mechanism for buying the same information about government officials, this is just a completely asymmetrical mechanism for preventing change, right. So this exploit existed, they got it onto the majority of Apple devices, they then sold access to enemies of people. I would point out the reason I wanted to raise this is that I think we have to start asking the question. How much effect has this had on recent history? How much effect is this have on what we think is true? Right? How many of the people who might have been telling you some uncomfortable truth have been unable to do so because their enemies knew all sorts of things about them that prevented them from reaching the position they would otherwise have ended up in? It's a very difficult question, and we don't know the answer. What we know is and

**Heather** 38:10

how, how is the answer even knowable? I don't think the answer is no,

**Bret** 38:15

the answer is not knowable. Right? In fact, we got a patch that just got delivered over the air that eliminated this malware but Okay, so we know maybe, well, maybe is one thing, but also how many others are there? So we know about Pegasus? Are there other exploits like this that are lurking in our devices? If you said, Well, my goodness, I can't believe that Apple allowed this to happen. I'm going to get a different phone. Well, okay, now you're in Google's universe, right? So there's doesn't seem to be an escape. Right? There are ways that you can do other things. There are phones that have been D googled and things how good a protection is that it's a little hard to say. But we're stuck in this paradigm where the exact things that we know are necessary for progress, the ability for people to talk with each other the things that are protected in our constitution for exactly this reason, right? They can't stop you from gathering with other people and talking to them and saying what needs to be said, that doesn't mean that what sad is necessarily good or right. But we have to protect that right in order for history to work, right? And so we are we're losing this and it's and it's barely noticed. So what I discovered in researching Pegasus in advance of this podcast, that apparently Pegasus isn't even new. Right Malwarebytes reports. You want to show the malware bytes link that I sent you Malwarebytes which is an industry group they sell anti malware products says that this isn't even new that they've known about this since 2016.

**Heather** 39:50

So I can't see the data on this article. This This article is new and responsive to the current wave

**Bret** 39:55

current wave which was triggered by at a privacy group have Analyze the phone of a dissident who had had his phone infected, or not just infected because apparently they were all infected but exploited. Right? And so

**Heather** 40:10

how does a person come to know that their phone has been

**Bret** 40:13

exploited? Well, that's just the thing is apparently there's some group of 50,000 phone numbers that have had special access gained. Maybe 10,000 have been actively surveilled. But we don't know what those numbers are. And they're, you know, it isn't easy, I did encounter there's some mechanism that an infected phone, there's a mechanism, you could back it up to a computer, and then do some command line work with a tool to see if the files that would be generated in the functioning of this exploit are present, right. But that's First of all, that's not a simple thing to do, right. So most people will just simply not know, likely your phone got updated without you even knowing what was going on. So the evidence may be gone. But for God's sake, this is just this is an incredible moment where we, I mean, for one thing, look, we all have this person in our life, or we are this person who says if we're going to talk about important things, maybe the phone shouldn't be in the room, maybe we should put them in the fridge, maybe we should go take a walk, right? We all have that person. And we all think that's probably just, that's got to be unnecessary, right? That's true, we now know that that thing is there. And if you're talking about stuff that doesn't change the world, it probably doesn't matter. And if you're talking about stuff that does change the world, then you got to ask yourself the question, Is somebody going to listen in? Are they going to figure out what I do understand? And what I don't understand, are they going to figure out who I suspect and who I trust and play us off against each other like a fiddle?

**Heather** 41:44

I mean, I think getting back to your point about the neighbor, if a neighbor did this, it would be clear to everyone why this is totally unacceptable. And the idea that it's an anonymous company that may or may not be doing it should, in fact, give us no comfort, I would say it's quite the opposite. At least at least a neighbor is a real person who could be touched to whatever nefarious purposes they might be up to. But there's no there's no reasoning with an abstract entity that has made a move on it sounds like at least 10s of 1000s. If not, no well, more than that of people and their and their devices. And there's just there's there's no accountability, and there is no to go back to our earlier point. reversibility in that once this thing has been breached, as Malwarebytes is saying has happened as has been true for a long time. Now that this capability exists, it will continue to exist, there's no going back to a world in which this capacity does not exist.

**Bret** 42:47

Right? You would have to you would have to build for it. And you know, yeah, there's no

**Heather** 42:52

question. Well, that's a possibility. If you if you

**Bret** 42:55

compare the neighbor having done this to you to some anonymous, murky security cooperation in some foreign state, there's no question that the neighbor is a far better scenario. As infuriating as that is right to have a an economic entity gain access to your phone and then be able to sell it to your enemies is just so trouble.

**Heather** 43:19

Yeah, well, I mean, at some level, this is also consistent with a theme that we've heard ourselves talking about over and over and over again, with regard to the benefit of engaging with physical reality and physical space over entirely social reality, or in this case, abstract reality where I think it may not have ever been said by whoever it was attributed to. But the idea that good fences make good neighbors, somehow that's apocryphal, but good fences might make

**Bret** 43:45

a soccer field, but the poem means the roughly the opposite. People think oh, that's

**Heather** 43:49

that's, that's right. Yeah. But the fact is that fences are a reality and fences can be built. And if you do have a neighbor who is spying, you can actually erect physical things, and you can talk to the person, whereas there is neither nothing to erect except with similar tools, which most of us don't have access to. Nor is there anyone to talk to, in part, you know, see your earlier point about customer service, right, you know, that that itself is a dishonorable system, even largely in companies that are themselves trying to be honorable,

**Bret** 44:19

right now, this nice. Look, the first step to solving this problem is admitting that we have a need for a constitution like entity that declares our right not to have this happen to us. Right. And that we are therefore, we are entitled to devices in which this is impossible, and those who breach it are committing a crime. And, you know, obviously, in some sense, this needs to be global, but I

**Heather** 44:46

do so by the way, those who would say, well, this doesn't apply the constitution doesn't apply here. So what are you complaining about? Well, then we have discovered the reason that the constitution or something like it needs to apply needs to be invented, it needs to be widely deployed the media Because we're clearly in need of it, right,

**Bret** 45:02

which is why the principal our Chanukah principle says that you need skepticism of ancient wisdom. Because the point is our Constitution is effectively ancient, it did not envision the technological world we would live in, it did not understand the the possibility of corporations that would be more powerful than nations incredibly forward

**Heather** 45:23

thinking like such amazing predictive power. And yet, it's just too old to be fully up to the task of right now,

**Bret** 45:30

right? The values are right, but the prescription is not wrong, but it's inadequate to the full scale of the problems. I would also point out, though, that something I haven't really seen explored is for there to be a corporation that generated this very expensive and highly effective exploit which can be obliterated, apparently, in a single update of the the iOS software. There has to have been a market. That is to say the kinds of people who have enemies, apparently know that they can buy access to their phones enough that it happens, either that or the NSO group is approaching people and saying, we have information on people who don't like you, would you like it? And here's the price. Somehow, there's a world of people that is effectively trafficking in our private information, and doing so on the basis of our political perspectives or our scientific viewpoint or who knows what it might be. But it's a it's a very frightening world. And and they

**Heather** 46:32

once once they have the data, they can parse it however they like.

**Bret** 46:35

Right? And the fact that this is not that this is a news story among many rather than a Hey, what effect is this having on what news I even know about? Right? That's the level we need to think about this. What how has this affected the world that I live in? What would the world look like absent this force? To what extent has Apple eliminated one such entity? And there are others still playing this role? Yeah, you know, these are all important questions.

**Heather** 47:03

Yeah. Okay. Total Change of topic. Unless you were, you're not done.

**Bret** 47:10

Well, I just want to again, emphasize that Autumn is coming.

**Heather** 47:14

Sorry today, it sort of seems like it's here. But we're actually getting summer back next week. So I think the, the equinox may actually bring summer like

**Bret** 47:21

weather. Yes, by the way, if you are confused by what I just said, You are probably in the southern hemisphere. And this will make a lot more sense six months from now.

**Heather** 47:30

So we've been doing a lot of a lot of media, nothing mainstream, except, you know, four minutes on Tucker Carlson, you were two nights ago, I guess. But entirely podcast space, really. And, and have been having a lot of fun with you see some highly variable conversations, but we're doing a lot of them. And there were three in particular, that we either did this week or came out this week, all of which prompted some thoughts that I think are relevant to the kinds of things we talk about here, which is to say, it could be anything, right? Let's talk about Michael Shermer first, okay? So Michael Shermer is I kind of should have looked it up. But he's, you know, the founder of skeptic magazine. And I think there's a skeptic foundation too, as well. And the podcast is actually the Michael Shermer podcast but it's all you know, sort of avid type. And he is famously skeptical of your bad thinking and pseudoscience and such. And we had a very nice conversation with him. I think we actually had the conversation maybe a couple weeks ago, but it came out day of publication maybe Tuesday of this week. And, and his just his announcement of it of our conversation, which I think he even announced it before the conversation itself was out. So no one could even see what it was that we had talked about a number of people who came at him with How dare you talk to these two. They are, you know, quacks scientifically illiterate, doing damage.

**Bret** 49:09

All of these things are all usual tropes, all the usual

**Heather** 49:13

tropes from that section of the internet that seems to get off on hating us, came after Michael Shermer for having had a conversation with us. And it revealed in part go on well clearly want to say Yeah, I

**Bret** 49:30

do. We are watching a phenomenon that we are so familiar with unfolding in a novel place, right and so what this looks like from our perspective, is kancil culture pure and simple. And the tropes are the same, right? What they do is they inflict costs on people for certain crimes that decent people realize aren't really crimes, right? Like talking to People that you don't agree with, right? So you will be stigmatized for what's called platforming for having a discussion with people about with whom you don't completely agree. And frankly, who do you completely agree with,

**Heather** 50:13

right? Or for going on someone show whom you don't completely agree with. Right, exactly. So I think actually right now, Glenn Beck show is actually is actually streaming we had that conversation in person with him a little over a week ago. And I mean, he begins the conversation with, we wouldn't have been in the same room together 10 years ago, right? We thought we were complete opposites. And the fact is that we can come together as human beings and see our shared humanity one other and how is that bad for anyone?

**Bret** 50:43

Right? It's necessary, it's smart, to know that it's necessary. And so we watch. They just drive your costs, you know, they're trying to drive up, Michael Shermer is cost for even talking to us. And part of the point is to punish him, so we won't do it again. And part of the point is to warn others. So they will see what happens to Michael and think I don't want any part of that it's easier for me just not to talk to them. Right. So this is this is about shaping the discussion. It is the thing that creates the walls between these echo chambers and makes it impossible to solve problems. Because you really don't understand the thing on the other side, you see it as a caricature. So it is the thing that facilitates bad thinking. And it's obnoxious, but I want to draw a distinction, right? So you mentioned our haters, of which we have some very dedicated ones, right? There are some, you know, people like Michael Shermer, who's not a hater, but he is an influencer. And the haters have gone after him in order to shift the conversation. So it doesn't contain uncomfortable truths that they cannot field and so that we cannot navigate our way to a better synthetic understanding. And then there is this vast group of people who feed each other, right? And they are constantly posting things to each other. And I began to think of them as the rank and file.

**Bret** 52:10

Yep, that's just how I filed them in my mind, the rank and file so they know who they are. And we know who they are. But anyway, we need to pay attention because what's what's surprising about this moment from our side of the camera, is the degree to which things that two years ago all sorts of smart people would have agreed were absolutely obnoxious and had no place in discourse. The heterodox community of people understood that guilt by association was a dangerous trope that prevented the kinds of discussions we need to have, well, some of those heterodox people are now engaging in this behavior. And so anyway, everybody who is needs to step back and think Wait a second, have I become that thing that I hate?

**Heather** 52:57

Yeah, basically, if you are engaging in the kancil culture, do your it is no doubt because you are certain that you are on the right side of history. But if you have previously decried the idea of canceled culture, because it is clear that you can't ever know if you are on the right side of history, well, then you're acting hypocritically. And you're probably stuck. Somehow, in your own thinking you may be just dead wrong on exactly the topic on which you are claiming so loudly, and you might not be but you are at the very least, not honoring, not honoring the very principles that you have in the past said that you would be standing by,

**Bret** 53:38

yeah. It is not safe to cancel in the middle of a pandemic, I would point out, that's just a dangerous thing to be engaged in. Anyway, many people want to know better. Yeah.

**Heather** 53:52

Okay. So I also wanted to say and I don't know that you will be able to say much about this, because you weren't part of the conversation. But a friend of yours for a long time, Jim rot, had had me on his show the gym rat show to talk about the book, because he likes to have one on one conversations. And I know him a little bit, but not very well. And you and he were really kind of you know, along with Jordan Hall and Jordan green Hall and you know, a few other people whose names might be familiar to some listening. We're really present to help form game Be

**Bret** 54:30

it was it mean, it was an informal small group of people?

**Heather** 54:34

Yeah, as you know, gosh, I want to say 10 years 10 ish years ago now. It was 2013. Okay. So eight, eight years ago. And so so you and he and you indeed, we the very first, I think the very first paragraph of the acknowledgments in the book, we acknowledge gem. Some of we acknowledge some of the many evolutionary biologists who stone whose shoulders we stand on and and Some of whom we work with directly and some of whom we just know, from their, from their written work. But then we also talk specifically about game B, and gym rat. And that was really work that you did together. And so he has me on his show, to talk about the things that are most interesting to him in the book. And it's, and it's of course, right in his, you know, his wheelhouse is the theory. And that's much more, you know, to the degree, you know, you and I are both evolutionary biologists, this is our book, these are our ideas. But to the degree that there are some that are, you know, that started one place rather than the other, the theoretical stuff is more often likely to have started with you and in though and in the case of many of the things that Jim brought up in his conversations with him. And so having, having me be the person on the receiving end of these questions was fascinating. I admit that at first, when we can clear that's where we're going, I thought, okay, let's let you know, let's see, you know, I, you know, I was I was, we were writing it together, and we were thinking it together, but it's not as native to me. And it was wonderful, I actually have listened to part of the conversation now. And I recommend it highly, we've got a lot of these out. But I really recommend the conversation that I had with Jim, because it does go deeper in the theory than almost any of the other conversations we've had. You know, it doesn't go into any of the applied stuff, it doesn't do sex and gender or sleep or food. But the The reason I bring it up specifically is the benefit of flying solo, sometimes, you know, we talk a lot about how necessary it is to have someone who you know, will be honest with you, no matter what, with whom you can develop ideas, who will have your back all of that. And it's also utterly necessary to step aside sometimes and say, Okay, well, I'm on my own, you know, no one's got my back here. There's no, there's no net underneath me. And let's see what I do. And to emerge out the other side, intact and, and say, Oh, yeah, okay, did it Got it? Nailed it? Mostly, you know, sometimes not? Sometimes, yes, is incredibly well, it's kind of revelatory. And it's also empowering in a good way. And I was reminded of actually the first field season that I did in Madagascar, that you weren't with me for, and I did have a field assistant, she was 10 years, my junior and I was not I was in my 20s. So she was she was fabulous. Jessica, but she was not appear in the way that you were in shooting, I was teaching her evolution. And we were, you know, learning about these sex lives of these boys and frogs together. But doing hypothesis generation and prediction and experimental design and formal observational design and, and figuring out, you know, how to do the actual field work all of that in, you know, on my own without appear. Without that field season, there might still be a piece of me that wondered, could I, you know, could I do it without Bo just being able to throw ideas back and forth? Well, I can't, I did. And I would say that everyone, no matter how expert you are in your domain should look for those opportunities to explore things that you have typically done with someone else alone as well.

**Bret** 58:19

Yeah, it's a really important point. And it also fits with what we discuss about the way ideas get passed between people and then parallel processed and that's really the whole point of the exercise in the first place. Yeah, it makes thinking better and it's really you know, it's very cool to have you interacting with Jim Jim is somebody I tremendously value. I think it took a little while for us to understand each other. He sort of comes from a conservative background, and

**Heather** 58:49

actually, I didn't say anything about who he is. So yeah, he's the former director of the Santa Fe Institute. And didn't he invent the word

**Bret** 58:58

snail mail snail mail? is an app and it is unfortunately the thing for which he is most faint. Oh, I should I said it that No, no, I was gonna say it myself. Okay. Yeah, he he invented the concept of snail mail. And well, in fact, he

**Heather** 59:13

admitted the name yes, no,

**Bret** 59:15

the mail had existed for some time originally delivered on horseback. It's not that old right? Just not that old now. But anyway, Jim is Jim is a great guy and he's somebody I I frequently go to to talk complex systems stuff

**Heather** 59:30

and continue to talk game be right I'm in this we need something we need

**Bret** 59:35

this. Well, you know, what I what I sometimes say is that the thing about game B, which was you know, effectively a small group of people who met and then disbanded is that for many of us, once we had seen the idea of game B and understood what it was and why it needed to exist, then we never got over it. There was no getting over it. The point is, it's game B until until we figure out how to do it or die trying right because The system isn't sustainable, it's going to be fatal to us if we don't replace it. And once you spot why a better world is not only possible, but that there's a mechanism for getting there that doesn't involve wishing it into existence. It, you know, the question is what version of it and so and you know, it only has to be one version, our version is described in here, fourth frontiers, the the view into it, but everybody who is have a game be mindset has some version of it, and only one of them needs to work.

**Heather** 1:00:33

And so far as people I've met, everyone who has an idea of what game you might look like, recognizes that prescribing a blueprint won't be won't work. And so there are various routes and plans and ideas, some of which will be inconsistent with one another. But I at least I haven't seen a bunch of, you know, maps of the territory to which we're going that are inconsistent with one another because the people who are thinking game B style are not mapping out the future. They're trying to figure out how we can get on our way to a future that is sustainable and productive for all.

**Bret** 1:01:05

Well, I believe, Jim will tell me if I'm wrong about this, he has a very good memory for these things. But I believe that that was an insight I introduced into that discussion was that we need to give up on the idea of a blueprints impossible. What we need to do is think in terms of prototyping and navigating, because that's the only way to solve a puzzle like this. And anyway, to the extent that that has caught on, I think that's good. It makes all of the efforts more likely to work. Yeah. Anyway, yes. Kim's great guy. I'm really I have not heard listen to your conversation. Yeah. Well, I'm

**Heather** 1:01:39

excited to hear is a lot much going on now. And really, it's just there were just a number of questions. He asked me that if we had both been on camera, we both would have just defaulted to you answering not because either of us think I couldn't. But because it's more natively the kinds of things that in your downtime, that's what you think about and I, you know, I'm more likely to think about lizards. Right? Exactly.

**Bret** 1:02:01

I'm not against it's not

**Heather** 1:02:02

actually a lizard back here, much to my chagrin, but there's a book on lizards there's a couple books on love. Snakes tadpoles. Yeah, right. I made this while I was just saying some of the other things that Brett has made this pile in order to Zach share the screen again. For those listening. There's a pile of books behind me and Brett made the pile. But as usual, put the books on bats on top.

**Bret** 1:02:27

Yes, I did. on high actually just the pile of books that was sitting by my side of the bed. Oh. Good one white reading on tadpoles. Yeah,

**Heather** 1:02:38

yeah. No, you didn't know you probably did not know that there was an entire book dedicated to tadpoles. But if you hadn't done that, you might have imagined that I would own it. And in fact, I

**Bret** 1:02:45

do. Yeah. I think my next book might be dedicated to tadpoles dedicated to towels, but not on tadpoles. Right. Yeah, no, it's definitely not gonna be I don't know that world future and past. Yeah, I don't I don't know that much about I know a little bit about tadpoles, but not enough for a book.

**Heather** 1:02:59

Yeah, I think we probably will not do a future episode dedicated to tadpoles, although I could fill an hour.

**Bret** 1:03:05

Probably could. Oh, for sure.

**Heather** 1:03:07

For sure. All right. And finally ish. In terms of things that I was prompted to think about from some of the other media we're doing about our book. Yesterday, we did a live conversation with the awesome guys at trigonometry constant is kissing, kissing, kissing. And Francis Foster. We both talked with them before. I had a great conversation with Jordan Peterson with them early in the summer. And we went on to talk about the book and other things. And I was struck at one point, it was fabulous. And I'm sure it's available now wasn't just live and then disappeared. No one does that. We were talking about the state of higher ed, higher education. And we were talking about the state of the West, and specifically the enlightenment and enlightenment values. And there was a moment at which you said something that struck me as I get, I get exactly why he's saying that. But that may sound inconsistent to those who are not as familiar with what we're talking about. Which is to say, one moment, you said we cannot fix, excuse me, we cannot fix the existing institutions of higher education. We're going to need to reformulate something and then you said we must fix the West and by what you met enlightenment enlightenment values there is there is no burning enlightenment values to the ground. Whereas institutions of higher ed appear to be unsavable. And how is that not an inconsistency?

**Bret** 1:04:36

Yes, I said something more colorful about the academy effectively being like our cherished family dog that has caught rabies, and there being only one reasonable thing to do in that case.

**Heather** 1:04:47

You did? Yes. Aye. Aye. Aye. learned that from my head,

**Bret** 1:04:51

you blocked that out to colorforms. Well, so it's like this. We don't have an alternative to the west. We can upgrade But we don't have an alternative. And if you abandoned it, you're creating a vacuum into which the alternatives to the west will flow in. Right? If you think you're going to make racial equality flourish by destroying the West. No, you won't, because what will flood in are things that are backwards with respect to racial equality and have not made the gains that we have very clearly made in the West, right? Have we done perfectly? No. But we have done well, and what's more, we have understood the principle to which we must Aspire, right? A colorblind society is the objective. Do we have a colorblind society? No. Are we a lot closer to a colorblind society than we were in 1950? Yeah, we've made great progress.

**Heather** 1:05:46

Let me just add here, and this is a clarification you made actually in the conversation on trigonometry. When you say colorblind, you don't mean pretending that racism, right where you aren't, you don't mean pretending that people don't have different colors that they're reflecting on their skin, and that people don't treat them differently as a result, right? You're saying that just as, under the law, men and women are equal under the law, and in all of its instantiations people of different races need to be entirely equal?

**Bret** 1:06:14

Right. And I don't understand why this is even a hard concept, right? How did the Wilk managed to convince us that there was some problem with colorblindness right, the color blindness is actually

**Heather** 1:06:24

I think it was a conflation of those two points, honestly, I think it's it is, but it may be

**Bret** 1:06:29

willful, right, because it is effectively an allusion to this metaphor, blind justice, right? She's not actually blind, it's a blindfold. Right? The point is, is, is an object that keeps her from paying attention to these details that she must not pay attention to, because they are not germane to the rights of the person being dried. Right? Yeah. So the point is, yes, we want to colorblind society, which doesn't mean, we don't talk about think about notice race, it means that it doesn't play a role in our decision making process. It doesn't count for you or against you. That's the objective. Right? So in any case, I guess my point would be, we know that the and I am not in any way, okay with the failure of the Academy. But I guess the point that I made to, to Constantine and Francis was, you and I have been fighting that beast since the 90s. Literally, since we were college students, right?

**Heather** 1:07:27

Yeah. They didn't let we face the postmodernist. Yep, loons we faced in college or

**Bret** 1:07:32

before we had graduated college. People knew it was a problem, but they didn't deal with it at the appropriate level. They, they coddled, that insane worldview, and they gave it department after department, and it finally took over the Academy. It's not the only problem with it. You've also got markets having effectively wrecked the capacity of the research apparatus to tell us what we need to know, rather than what we want to hear. Now, is that universal? Probably not probably it doesn't apply to you know, radio astronomy or whatever. But where there's money to be made. The corruption has I have I

**Heather** 1:08:12

have no faith that it's that anything is immune. Yeah, I know. I don't mean good guess. I don't know what, how that's gone haywire. But I'll bet

**Bret** 1:08:18

it but it probably has got I mean, if math is having trouble agreeing on what two plus two equals then probably radio astronomy is not immune. But yeah, but the point is, look, the thing didn't get this way overnight. If it did, we could say, well, let's, let's set it back to where it was three weeks ago. And you know, try not to make that error again. But this has been going on for decades. And the point is, the system has not shown a capacity to immunize itself, it has breached every department that we know of. And so the thing that we do know,

**Heather** 1:08:47

and now it lives in HR, which means it's, it's a it's a cancer that probably

**Bret** 1:08:52

can't be cut out, right? It's the rabies. Now, here's the point,

**Heather** 1:08:56

which No, we don't think it's cancer. Just to be clear,

**Bret** 1:08:59

right? I like rabies, because I don't know because now you don't yet know I like rabies as an analogy here. Because the point is the diagnosis. You know, it's not the case where your doctor is going to tell you a nice story about how we have lots of ways to treat this right. There. There isn't

**Heather** 1:09:19

a way once Yeah, once you start showing symptoms and suggestions, you're done. So

**Bret** 1:09:23

right. So I'm going to get at is this, we actually know what the problem is with the university system. There is nothing that stops you from booting up a new university, except for the obligation to plug it into the same thing that wrecked the university system that we've got,

**Heather** 1:09:38

right accreditation grants, student student loan system,

**Bret** 1:09:42

so that systems is the conduit through which the epidemic of stupid will flow into your new institution. So you have to boot up an institution that doesn't have that conduit and then you're going to suffer the cost that conduit was built for a reason it was built to keep people from creating institutions that would throw It's basically a

**Heather** 1:10:02

i don't know that

**Bret** 1:10:03

i don't i don't i don't know that was originally Yeah. But it has become it has become that. Yes, yeah. And you know, go back to our conversations on zero being a special number. The point is it is the accreditation system and the grant system. That means that you can't just say, Well, everybody should want to send their kid to a university that isn't suffering from an epidemic of work, because those kids will come out more capable, and therefore they will succeed in the job market. And that's what I want for my child. So where is that institution? And you know, if it doesn't exist, surely the pressure to build it must be immense, right? So the thing that prevents that is the arm but you won't be able to, you know, award PhDs because you'd have to plug into this other system in order for those PhDs to be recognized

**Heather** 1:10:45

when you won't be able to get money from NSF or from Pell Grants, right? or anything else.

**Bret** 1:10:50

And my point is, that's a bad problem. But it's not an unsolvable problem, right? At the very least in some sense, the recognition that a PhD has a meaning because it comes from an accredited institution that that agreement can break down when people realize, hey, the people I'm seeing with these PhDs don't actually know anything. And maybe I want people with these other degrees that don't have familiar letters in them. But when I talked to those people, they're not crazy. So

**Heather** 1:11:15

yeah, know what I mean. anecdote after anecdote flows into us. And you know, just yesterday, I guess we had a very smart, very successful, scientifically minded entrepreneurs say that he, he is seeing applicants to his company with all the relevant degrees from MIT and such, and is having a hard time wanting to hire many of them, right? Because they do not have the ability to problem solve, among other things, and

**Bret** 1:11:45

how could it have been otherwise? Right? Of course, if you're going to load all of this ideological nonsense into the analytical content of curriculum, you're going to come out with people who can't think straight,

**Heather** 1:11:55

even even in engineering at the elite institutions, right, maybe especially at the institutions, but even in fields that were they should not have been able to encroach at all.

**Bret** 1:12:05

So in some sense, the answer to your question of why my two different positions are not inconsistent is that the things that are being compared are of a different nature, right? It's like saying, you know, if you if you were a hedonist, and it turned out that it didn't make you happy, right? being a human being a hedonist, you could swap out your ideology for a different one. That way, we can swap out this academy for next gen Academy. Okay, right. That's different than the West being a problem, where if effectively, the West is like your body, right? And the answer is, you know, I'm not happy being a human. And it's like, well, you're stuck with that, right?

**Heather** 1:12:45

There are some who would disagree, they may disagree all

**Bret** 1:12:47

they want. And they may even disagree with fancy PhDs that don't mean anything, because they came from institutions to talk them to think crazy, but

**Heather** 1:12:53

and corrupt doctors who are willing to do surgery on them, right, but no, but

**Bret** 1:12:57

my point is, we don't have a choice with the West, right? We can disagree over how functional or dysfunctional it is. But the objectives that it lays out, are more or less correct, to the extent they are not correct, they can be improved. And to the extent that it doesn't achieve its objectives, we can fix the underlying mechanisms, but the alternative to it is going backward, right? It is going backward into a world that meets those objectives less well, it doesn't honor those values. And anyone who has seen the comparison, I think, would have a hard time preferring the alternative. And so it is this naive desire to tear down the West, because you think something better is going to emerge. And you know what it is? It is exactly like the comparison between Well, the Earth is in trouble. But there's Mars and we can terraform it, right? It is always going to be massively harder to make Mars habitable than it is to fix Earth no matter how broken it is. Yeah. So you know, we have we have to fix the West and and address the problems. But we also have to recognize how amazingly successful that has been, not only in generating productivity, but improving the quality of life, even for people who were unfairly treated by in obliterating the bigotries of the past it has been amazingly successful. And yeah, it's not done, but that's hardly an indictment of it.

**Heather** 1:14:24

Absolutely. All right. We wanted to say a little bit about what this week has felt like as our as our as our book launched, it's been, it's been amazing. And so last week, we were still a few days out from launch but but our episode with Joe Rogan had aired And so we'd already made it onto the Amazon bestseller charts. We were at like number 1516, something like that. And we were neck and neck with that very, very, very hungry caterpillar. He remains insatiable, I believe as far as I can tell. I know I know you guys have been waiting for the update on how the caterpillar is doing. We've been in conversation with some of the caterpillars people are actually it was I can't tell if it was the caterpillars people or his butterflies. They wouldn't go on. I don't think caterpillars have people I think you think he probably I know but yeah, we they wouldn't go on on video call with us and we don't know. But we're tentatively moving towards a detachment with the caterpillar. And we're even hoping for a collaboration in the future possibly. And I was thinking, I mean, we haven't actually talked about this, but something along the lines of maybe the caterpillar who feels like he's grown but isn't and that's better for everyone. Maybe or chestertons. Caterpillar, why skipping the squishy phase and going straight to flight is an error. Yep, yep. That's all I got at the moment as possible collaborations between

**Bret** 1:15:47

the hunter gatherers guide lessons to the caterpillar. Alright, cool. I'm gonna have to mull that over. I had not actually thought oh,

**Heather** 1:15:57

maybe you weren't present on this. That's called No, no. Okay. It wasn't it was just me trying to figure out this people are butterflies I'm talking to you right now. Yeah, no, I'm done.

**Bret** 1:16:08

Okay, so here's the thing, amazing stuff happened since last we spoke he, hunter gatherers guide to the 21st century, on day of launch. We had done have a screenshot of this, it's on my phone, actually. But Zach, you want to show the screenshot of the present status of the book. There it is. Number three on Amazon's all around bestseller list yesterday, it's been almost the entire day at two as it did on day of launch. Now this is amazing. I don't think that's true. It reached number two, late on day of roughly Yes, briefly and then spent all of yesterday or almost all of yesterday at number two. In any case, obviously, the particular number doesn't matter very much. What's really amazing, though, is that the book has done this well, despite the fact that the mainstream outlets have not been interested in discussing it, which tells us something, it tells us something really important if we read those tea leaves correctly. Because what has driven this is podcast world, right? That's where this book has been talked about. And it has been really interesting enough to people that they have ordered it in large numbers. In fact, Amazon is out of them there are more common, they're sold. Yep. But we know that there are more coming, because

**Heather** 1:17:28

because we have a relationship with our publisher, a publisher is fabulous. And they assure us that they're they're scrambling to get that second print run. Yep, done.

**Bret** 1:17:36

Should be there soon. But in any case, something is afoot. Right? That legacy world, right, the legacy world, which is usually the place in which books have been discussed, and in which books are made and broken, and all of that stuff. That world has, in this case been bypassed by the unofficial podcast, lower production values, real conversations that are unscripted between people that can go on for hours and hours.

**Heather** 1:18:05

It's much more time to, you know, make errors, but also expand on ideas and give you a sense of what the thinking might be like in the book,

**Bret** 1:18:13

right? And so some episodes back, we talked about the fog machine of war. And the fog machine of war was about the fact that in order to prevent progress from being made, it is important to keep you from knowing how well you're doing right and their words, if you're succeeding in changing things, but you don't know it, you won't navigate very well. And so in any case, this is, I think, a demonstration that the podcast world which you know, we join sort of late. But anyway, that world has incredible power relative to the mainstream world. And, you know, there's a question, I do wonder what will happen, this book is clearly a bestseller. There's a question about whether that will reflect in the official world? And if it doesn't, then that's clearly an indication that bestseller doesn't mean bestseller?

**Heather** 1:19:07

Well, let's let's hope that it does. Yeah, we don't we don't know the answer to that. We don't know. But, but it will be interesting to see. But I mean, it does. I think you're there is a place for highly scripted high production values, media. But there is clearly also a place and maybe just take the production values thing out of it, because, you know, some podcasts are extremely high production values. But there is also a place where for that kind of media where there is time for unscripted conversation. And, yes, it is certainly true that our lives now allow for many of our lives allow for us to listen to long conversations in a way that might not have been true 20 years ago, or 50 years ago. And so the technology has happened at the same time that lifestyles have allowed for people listen, but it also absolutely reveals that there's a hunger that there's a hunger for, to listen to people talking off script, making errors, saying, you know, as I just did, but, but thinking through real thorny problems in real time, and not simply using talking points. This is I mean, this, this, I think is the big message people are just, you know, exhausted, maybe fed up maybe but just done with being fed talking points all the time, people are actually capable and smart and able to take in information that sometimes disagrees with one another. That's what you're supposed to be getting in, in school, right? Like multiple sources of information that don't aren't in agreement with one another. And then you figure out what it means and how to make sense of it. That's what critical thinking is. That's, that's what a liberal arts education is supposed to give you. That's what a high school education is supposed to give you. So the idea that we do, and we don't do that in school much anymore, but then to have the media say, we know that you all are too dumb and not interested anyway, in, in thinking for yourself. So we're going to give you the idiocracy version? Well, no, most, most people don't want that. They don't I think that's what's being revealed by by the fact that the non mainstream media is actually able to draw it enough people that, you know, our book of which we are incredibly proud, and we would love if the mainstream media would talk about as well, but is, you know, near the top of the charts on Amazon, after less than a week, and and nearly no mainstream media mentioned.

**Bret** 1:21:36

Yep. I think it's almost an exact analogue to the point about the Academy. Right, because what happened, and you know, we know some of the early pioneers in the podcast space. But what happened was, people who were fed up with the garbage that was coming over their screens, were bold enough and visionary enough to put something onto those screens that they knew couldn't compete. And, you know, I'll say, again, it's the production values, and even the high production value stuff that we see the discussions because they're free flowing, aren't scripted, as you point out, um, shows up all the time people make errors, they go back, it's not like, you know, the evening news on the teleprompter, right. It's not like the, you know, the edited book review in the times, it's a different kind of mechanism. It's much more human and authentic, almost by definition. And

**Heather** 1:22:31

you know what it is, it's a bit closer to campfire. It is

**Bret** 1:22:35

campfire. And, you know, it's not it's the point is, it's it's new campfire, right? campfire was an actual physical thing around which people gathered, right, it had a glow, this glow is different, and the way we interact with each other is different than

**Heather** 1:22:50

best not to fall asleep to it. Right.

**Bret** 1:22:53

But, you know, I guess the point is a, it's a little bit game B, isn't it? And B, it's a lot like what has to happen with the Academy. And it's a pity because the Academy is so you know, so many of the elements, even still of the academy are top notch, the production values are great, right? They've got marvelous real estate, it sends exactly the right message, their libraries are full of books, some of them even good, right, you know, so the point is, yeah, it would be great if the academy would wake up, but I'm not holding my breath on that one. And what we have to do is the equivalent of what podcast world has done to legacy media world with respect to education, because frankly, no one's coming to save us, right? We have to educate ourselves and what that means is we need a new Academy.

**Heather** 1:23:41

Yeah, excellent. Well, is that it? I think so. All right, that that I think is it for the week, we will be for those of you watching if you want to stick around for the longer we'll be taking a break as close to 15 minutes as possible tech whatever the tech will let us do and then we'll be back with our live q&a and you can ask questions at it's not up there is it we should put that on the screen it's at Dark Horse submissions COMM And I guess maybe and and please like the channel on both Odyssey and YouTube, both this and the darkness podcast clips channel. And maybe instead of going through the rest of the stuff I usually go through here, I would say, if you haven't, please get yourself a copy of the book. We've heard that there are weights at libraries, but if you can't turn or don't want to buy it, get a copy of from the library and and read it and we are interested. We're interested to start hearing and we have already begun hearing what people are thinking and that's you know, that's that's what we want. We want these ideas out in the world. More than more than anything.

**Bret** 1:24:52

So, all right. Before you get to our sign off, yes, I will say Autumn is coming. Make sure your leaf blower is in good condition. You do not want to be caught off

**Heather** 1:25:04

guard. Even if you live in an eighth floor, especially because even a few leaves can mess that up. For sure. Be good to the ones you love it good food and get outside.

**Bret** 1:25:17

Be well everyone