

## #1363 An Education in Individualism (in)Action (Back to School)

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award winning best of left podcast in which we shall hear about concerns being weighed in the debate over returning to in-person learning. As the beginning of the school year gets underway clips today, come from all in with Chris Hayes democracy. Now the intercept, the Tom Hartman program, the David Pakman show on the media and Jacobin radio weekends.

### Trump Push To Reopen Schools: The Last Person We Should Trust With Safety Of Kids - All In with Chris Hayes - Air Date 7-8-20

**CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN WITH CHRIS HAYES:** Countries all over the world have successfully reopened their schools. Denmark was the first country in Europe to do so reopening all their primary schools all the way back on April 20th. In Wu Han, the first epicenter of the virus, school started reopening at the end of April. In Singapore, schools reopened in the beginning of June, and they have even restarted some extracurricular activities.

Now, of course, this hasn't all gone smoothly everywhere. Reopening is hard. There have been plenty of places where the virus flared up, and they had to close schools again. These countries who have struggled with the coronavirus prove that it is possible, and we all desperately need American schools to reopen. Pediatricians, parents, educators, basically anyone who deals with kids, they all agree. It should be a priority at every level of government and for all of American society to get full-time, in-person school open again the fall.

But right now, that is looking unlikely because we have the worst coronavirus response in the world. That has not stopped the President. He is now trying to reopen schools the exact same way he tried to reopen the economy, despite the fact that his push to reopen the economy created the disastrous and catastrophic conditions we are in now, which is what makes the school problem so difficult to solve.

Remember when everyone said, when we were locked down, on this show, night after night after night, we needed to use that time to suppress the virus and put infrastructure in place: testing and tracing, PPE and all sorts of stuff to keep it from coming back. We did none of those things. And then, the CDC issued guidelines to the states about how to reopen safely and slowly, but the President pushed states to ignore those guidelines, which many of them did, and they reopened too early.

And now, now what do we have? We have a curve that looks like this. Unlike anywhere else in the world, the virus is on a huge upward spike in this country. We are setting records with the number of cases nearly every day. There are massive outbreaks in Arizona and Florida and Texas and South Carolina and Alabama. New cases are increasing in 38 US states and

territories. We've already seen more cases and more deaths than anywhere else in the world. All the while, the President has been focused on one thing: his re-election.

And his reelection, he thinks, depends on economic growth and getting back to normal. And so, the President and his administration -- and the Republicans who will go along with whatever he does -- are out pushing the message so hard that things are good, and we are moving in the right direction, but it is so preposterous that even Trump TV is not buying it:

**HOGAN GIDLEY - TRUMP CAMPAIGN REP:** Are you better off now than you were before? And the answer undoubtedly is yes. And that strikes me and really ran across this country . . .

**BRIAN KILMEADE - HOST, FOX AND FRIENDS:** [ overlapping] With the pandemic, now, you know that the growth is not there; you know the unemployment still 11%. So, you can't really say you're better off than you were three years ago, because at the very least the pandemic. So you can't really say that, right?

**HOGAN GIDLEY - TRUMP CAMPAIGN REP:** Now? No, absolutely. Of course you can say that.

**CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN WITH CHRIS HAYES:** God bless you, Bryan Kilmeade. You can't. I mean, there's 130,000 people dead and billions out employed, and, I mean, the country is a burning garbage fire. So, I think it's a little hard to sell that message, right?

Instead of dealing with the virus and the public health crisis, the President pushed everyone to reopen to get the economy restarted, right, so that jobs could come back, and he could get his growth and he could be reelected. And now here we are. He is doing the same thing with schools right now.

There are a number, a long list of problems that have to be solved, in order to open school safely. The President is incapable of solving them. He just wants them open so that people can go back to work and so things can be normal so he can get reelected. Earlier this week, he tweeted in all caps: SCHOOLS MUST OPEN IN THE FALL. He threatened to cut off funding if they do not reopen.

Today, once again, he said he disagrees with the CDC guidelines, this time for the schools. He said he will be meeting with them, now, we can only assume to push the CDC to change their actual scientific guidelines. Here's how Vice President Mike Pence, the head of the Coronavirus Task Force defended that today:

**MIKE PENCE - VICE PRESIDENT:** I think what you will see in the coming days, what you heard from Dr. Redfield yesterday at the summit and again today is very consistent with the President's objective and the concerns that he's raised. We don't want the guidance from CDC to be a reason why schools don't open.

**CHRIS HAYES - HOST, ALL IN WITH CHRIS HAYES:** So, if I got that right, we don't want the guidance from the nation's top health protection agency about how to stay safe in a pandemic to be the reason why we don't send our kids to school while we are suffering from the worst outbreak in the world. So, the President will tell them to change the guidance.

And again, it's not the first time he did that. Just like he did back in April-May when the CDC released reopening guidance he did not like. Just like he pressured governors to ignore that guidance given by his own administration to reopen. Just like he pushed the CDC to edit

their guidance for reopening churches. And now he's not happy with CDC guidance on school. So, what do you think is going to happen?

Look, the last person in the world you can trust right now with the safety of your kids is Donald Trump -- not only because he's willing to change or ignore scientific guidelines about how to keep Americans safe or because he's threatening to cut off funds for schools when what they need is a massive amount of money to afford all the changes needed to make it safe to bring back students -- but also because the best-laid plans are not going to survive first contact with an outbreak. This is the fundamental problem for everything right now from elementary school to the NBA.

Other countries suppressed the virus and have kept it suppressed. We never did that. And now we're trying to figure out how to live in a burning building as opposed to putting the fire out. It's not going to work.

## **As COVID Infections Soar, Trump Attacks Dr. Fauci, CDC & Pushes Schools to Reopen at All Costs - Democracy Now - Air Date 7-13-20**

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** As the world and United States shatter the daily records of COVID-19 infections, President Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos are continuing to push for public schools to reopen in the fall, despite concerns from educators and public health officials. They've also vowed to cut off federal funding for public schools that do not reopen.

DeVos is a longtime advocate for privatizing the public school system. In an interview Sunday, CNN's Dana Bash questioned DeVos about the Trump administration, how it could safely reopen schools amidst the pandemic.

**DANA BASH - REPORTER, CNN:** You're the Secretary of Education. You're asking students to go back. So, why do you not have guidance on what a school should do, just weeks before you want those schools to reopen? And what happens if it faces an outbreak?

**BETSY DEVOS - SECRETARY OF EDUCATION:** You know, there's really good examples that have been utilized in the private sector and in — and elsewhere, also with frontline workers in hospitals. And all of that data and all of that information and all of those examples can be referenced —

**DANA BASH - REPORTER, CNN:** I'm not —

**BETSY DEVOS - SECRETARY OF EDUCATION:** — by school leaders, who have — who have the opportunity —

**DANA BASH - REPORTER, CNN:** OK, but I'm not hearing a plan from the Department of Education. Do you have a plan —

**BETSY DEVOS - SECRETARY OF EDUCATION:** But — but the — the plan —

**DANA BASH - REPORTER, CNN:** — for what students and what schools should do?

**BETSY DEVOS - SECRETARY OF EDUCATION:** So, schools should do what's right on the ground at that time for their students and for their situation. There is no one uniform approach that we can take or should take nationwide. ...

**DANA BASH - REPORTER, CNN:** But you are arguing, over and over, that they should handle this on a local level, but at the same time, as the Secretary of Education, you are trying to push them to do a one-size-fits-all approach, which is go back and reopen schools. You can't have it both ways.

**BETSY DEVOS - SECRETARY OF EDUCATION:** I am urging all schools to be — to open and to providing their students a full-time education.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** Democratic Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts tweeted in response to DeVos, quote, “you have no plan. ... I wouldn't trust you to care for a house plant let alone my child,” she said.

This comes as the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers are calling on Congress for more funds to help schools to purchase personal protective equipment, as well as new ventilation systems and cleaning equipment. A new study from the Kaiser Family Foundation finds nearly one-and-a-half million teachers are at risk of serious illness if infected with COVID-19. In Arizona, three teachers who shared a summer classroom at a school all contracted coronavirus last month. One of them, Kimberley Chavez Lopez Byrd, died at the age of 61.

Last week, Trump lashed out at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, saying the CDC's guidelines on safely reopening schools was “very tough and expensive.” Hours later, the CDC announced it would revise its guidelines, which call for staggered scheduling, new seating arrangements to encourage social distancing, the use of face coverings and the closing of communal spaces.

**PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP:** We hope that most schools are going to be open. We don't want people to make political statements or do it for political reasons. They think it's going to be good for them politically, so they keep the schools closed. No way. So we're very much going to put pressure on governors and everybody else to open the schools, to get them open. And it's very important. It's very important for our country. It's very important for the well-being of the student and the parents. So we're going to be putting a lot of pressure on open your schools in the fall.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** For more on all of this, we're joined by Dr. Leana Wen, emergency physician, public health professor at George Washington University. She previously served as Baltimore's health commissioner. She's also a contributing columnist for The Washington Post. Her recent piece is headlined. If Trump wants to reopen schools, here's what his administration needs to do. Welcome back to Democracy Now, Dr. Wen. What does Trump have to do? What is the Trump administration not doing, as it demands all schools reopen and that they will cut federal funding for public schools. If they don't.

**DR. LEANA WEN:** Well, this is the thing. I agree, and I think every American agrees, with the goal of reopening schools, just as we would agree with the goal of reopening the economy. The key though is we need to be doing this safely.

In fact, we've already seen what happens when we use shortcuts and go against public health guidance in reopening. We're now seeing these massive surges occurring in multiple parts of the country. And frankly, it's very strange when you hear "Well, if we cannot meet these guidelines, that are evidenced-based, so the answer is to change the guidelines." That's not right. It should be the opposite. If we're unable to meet the guidelines for safe reopening, then we need to put in the hard work so that we can actually meet these guidelines and ensure the safety of our students and teachers and staff and their families. It's not to go back and change the guidelines. It's to do the work.

And to your point, the single most important thing that we can do right now in order to ensure safe reopening of schools in the fall is to reduce the level of coronavirus in the communities, because there's no way that you can keep a school safe from coronavirus if the virus is raging out of control where the school is in the community. We have multiple parts of the country where one in a hundred people have COVID-19. So, if you have a school of a thousand people, on day one, you're going to have 10 people in that school who have COVID and don't know that they have it.

That's outbreaks that are going to happen on day one.

And so, we as a society need to think through our priorities. If the priority, if the goal is to reopen schools in the fall, maybe we should keep bars and restaurants and nightclubs closed in the summer.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** I want to turn to the superintendent of schools for Fairfax County in north Virginia, one of the largest school districts in the country. The district plans to have students return to schools just two days a week and have remote learning the rest of the week. He explained to CNN how schools in his area were planning to reopen in the fall and was viciously attacked by Betsy DeVos.

**SCOTT BRABRAND:** So, you're in a classroom now where we've spaced apart desks at six feet. We're going to have PPE for all of our teachers and students. And we are going to have a return to school and a new normal. ...

COVID doesn't discriminate based on wealth or poverty. COVID hits all of us. And the guidelines for six-foot social distancing simply mean that you can't put every kid back in a school with the existing square-footage footprint. It's just that simple. ... We are the size of five Pentagons. You would need another five Pentagons of space to be able to safely accommodate all of the students in Fairfax County Public Schools.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!:** So, Dr. Wen, that's the superintendent of the Fairfax schools. The Education Secretary Betsy DeVos attacked him in her news conference last week, attacked his plan. Talk about what it means to reopen when increasingly, tests are not available. As we see in places like Texas and Arizona, people are waiting 10 hours on line to get a test. President Trump has signaled he wants fewer tests, because he thinks it makes him look bad. How you have a sane public health-based program where you can't figure out who's sick. and then people, once again, do not have enough access to personal protective gear.

**DR. LEANA WEN:** Yeah. So I've spoken to school administrators and teachers across the country who are trying their best.

I mean, they are balancing some incredibly complex factors, including they're trying to follow the CDC guidelines for physical distancing, and for PPE, for ventilation. They're also trying to take into account the needs of students with special needs who may depend on the school for lunch and may depend on the school for a place for safety, combined with the real health risks of students and teachers and their family members. They're trying their best.

And really, what the Trump administration should be doing is to support them in this, not shame them or threaten them with loss of funding. All of these things, like changing bus routes, having schools be open different hours, spacing out these desks, buying new equipment, that all will cost funding. And we really should be putting in the work and putting in the resources to help schools reopen.

And also, you mentioned about testing. I can't believe that it's now July, and we're still talking about the need for a national strategy around testing. When we look at other countries that have been successful in suppressing the level of COVID-19, they have one thing in common, which is that they have a national coordinated strategy. They don't just let different regions and different states and cities figure it out on their own. They don't have different areas compete against one another for things like masks and other PPE.

And I also cannot believe that we are at this point again. Back in March, you and I talked about how doctors and nurses on the frontlines don't have enough masks and gowns and are begging their friends over social media in order to try to get that extra masks so that they don't get infected from their patients. I can't believe that we're facing the same situation once again. And this all comes from not having a national strategy. And also, unfortunately, having this really confused and mixed messaging coming out from this White House that instead of using science and evidence to make their decisions, they're making it based on ideology and partisanship.

And that has--politics has no role in a public health response.

## **D.C. Teachers Fight for Distance Learning in the Pandemic - The Intercept - Air Date 8-3-20**

**LAURA FUCHS - WTU SECRETARY:** So the stakes are high. This is literally life and death. For both us as educators, for our students, and then for all of the families in this community that we return home to.

**MONTAGE OF PROTESTING TEACHERS:** Well, we came here because this is BCPS, this is the headquarters.

We're not invited to the table to make the decisions that are going to impact us way more than the people who sit in this building. But they're actually not even sitting in this building. Cause they're going to work from home.

Nobody wants more than any of us to be back in brick and mortar and teaching the kids. Cause that's how they learn best. But at what cost?

We have families, we have multigenerational homes in some cases. Like everyone in the community is at risk when schools open.

We asked what's the situation with nurses because there have been schools, um, schools with no nurses and we asked and they said, it's going to be normal staff. Is it acceptable to have no nurse in a school during a pandemic? No.

So many schools without COVID, did not have soap and toilet paper. How do you promise that you're going to have the correct amount of PPE for us, and you don't even have soap for our kids to wash their hands?

Don't plan for us; plan with us, so that we know how to come back to school in a safe, appropriate manner.

**LAURA FUCHS - WTU SECRETARY:** And so we wanted to send a strong message, a striking message to the mayor. This is too important. Lives are at stake and we're not going to back down.

**MONTAGE OF PROTESTING TEACHERS:** So we talk about going hybrid. That means two days out of the week or three days or four days. Let me just tell you my reality. I am at home. I care for my 75-year-old mother who has underlying health conditions. It is unrealistic. I think it's unhealthy and unwise

**CHRISTIAN HERR - MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER:** In 2011 while grading papers during a planning period, I had a heart attack in my classroom. My students saw me wheeled out of my room on a stretcher in the middle of a transition. The risk of death in COVID is greater for people with hearts like mine. More likely than my students would again see me rolled out of my room on a stretcher. Although this time I might not come back.

There's no way that they have not done some sort of projection of how many people will get sick and how many people will die if we reopen the building I'm dying to know what that number is. Because it can't be zero.

**MONTAGE OF PROTESTING TEACHERS:** I don't want to teach on the screen. With pre-K children, I mean--they're at a window, like there are no camera like this--they're not focused. It is a horrible situation. But I'd rather have them in that situation than them to be dead. If there's one child, one teacher, one custodian, one administrator that loses their life, that is one too many.

**LAURA FUCHS - WTU SECRETARY:** And the decision keeps getting delayed. All we can hope for is that we will have direction and that direction will be the right choice, which is a hundred percent virtual until it's safe.

**MONTAGE OF PROTESTING TEACHERS:** Today's action is highlighting some of the current safety concerns that existed in our buildings before the pandemic. In addition to the extra precautions we would need to be safe in a pandemic, we have all these other baseline concerns that have not been addressed for years. And I think unfortunately, or fortunately the pandemic has brought to light a lot of these inequities and our kids deserve a lot better than they've been getting.

Specifically for Ward 8 schools because they don't have HVAC systems and we have poor ventilation. We already lack soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels on a steady basis. So it's that all those deficits are going to be exacerbated because of COVID-19.

So here alone, their ventilation system is very poor. Classrooms don't have functional AC or heating. The water fountains don't work. Their bathrooms--staff and students--are without soap and paper towels. And there are no touch-free soap or paper towel dispensers at this particular school.

I believe we are going to the chancellor's house. I just hope he hears us. And hears our concerns and hears that our care is genuine. And that he makes the choice that supports this community. He speaks a lot about wanting trust with the teachers and the only way to build that is through genuine collaboration.

Chancellor Ferebee, there should be no reason why teachers have to come to your doorstep. You should be coming to us. Why aren't we at the table?

You go to ill-prepared buildings first and try it out. You go into a building with no PPE.

You are not the one that is going to teach in a middle school with windows that do not open.

I feel like I'm trying to convince you that our lives are worth living.

Only when it is safe will you go into work. Only when it's safe, we will then go to work. Come down and speak to us. Thank you.

**LAURA FUCHS - WTU SECRETARY:** These are basic questions, not tactical ones. How will we ensure that we have the necessary PPE? Who's going to pay for it? How will we ensure social distancing occurs outside the classroom? Are teachers expected to balance the requirements of teaching both in person and online simultaneously? What if we have preexisting conditions and health risks? What if we are taking care of those who are most at risk for COVID? You have no answers to the most basic straightforward questions, despite having asked them at every forum we can think of.

**MONTAGE OF PROTESTING TEACHERS:** Only when it's safe! Only when it's safe! Hey.

The WTU speaks on behalf of teachers and you're telling the WTU what you're going to do instead of actually having a conversation. Because that shows people respect. We're going to have to take up the mantle ourselves.

This is the most galvanized I've felt or seen the union maybe ever. It feels good.

You did have permission yesterday from our larger umbrella union, the American Federation of Teachers, to strike. The president of our local union says, we'll pay the fine. It's not a big deal. We've done it before.

And what's our number one rule for staying safe during opening drills? All together now: We keep our hands and feet inside our own square at all times.

I'm here to demonstrate a little bit of what it might look like to have a social distancing classroom under the protocols that DCPS teachers were sent by Chancellor Ferebee and the mayor so far.

Jackie, legs back in your square! Went up the spout again. Wasn't that fun?

So the mayor had said, he's going to announce on Friday whether or not you're going to be doing hybrid or distance learning. Instead, she decided to do a press conference this morning.

**MURIEL BOWSER - MAYOR, WASHINGTON, DC:** Good morning, everyone. I'm Muriel Bowser. I'm the mayor of Washington DC.

**LAURA FUCHS - WTU SECRETARY:** She had her people in after the first term would be distance only.

**WASH, DC GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE:** We are moving forward with an all virtual start to the school year until November 6th.

**LAURA FUCHS - WTU SECRETARY:** Which is what we wanted. And we're glad that we won that. What we're not glad about is that, one, we were not notified. We're still not being communicated with.

**REPORTER:** How much did the teacher's union's clear desire not to go back to school right away, play into this decision?

**LAURA FUCHS - WTU SECRETARY:** We have won the first term of distance only, but it's only the beginning. They still haven't given tech to our students, one-to-one. We're going to keep fighting for that. And then of course, we're going to fight about the conditions that will take and what it will take to return in November. Should that even be a possibility?

## **COVID-19 Will Devastate Schools... And Already Is... - Thom Hartmann Program - 8-4-20**

**THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THE THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM:** Israel- - it's in the New York Times, on the front page in fact--when COVID subsided, Israel reopened its schools, it didn't go well.

And they say: As the United States and other--this is Isabelle Kershner and Pam Belluck --as the United States and other countries anxiously consider how to reopen schools, Israel, one of the first countries to do so illustrates the dangers.... The Israeli government invited the entire student body back in late May.

Within days, infections were reported at a Jerusalem high school, which quickly mushroomed into the largest outbreak in a single school in Israel, possibly the largest outbreak in a single school in the world. The virus rippled out to the students' homes and then to other schools and other neighborhoods.

Ultimately in fact, impacting hundreds of students, teachers, and relatives. Other outbreaks forced hundreds of schools to close. Across the country, tens of thousands of students and teachers were quarantined. Israel's advice for other countries? "They definitely should not do what we have done," said Eli Waxman, a professor at the Weizmann Institute of Science and chairman of the team advising Israel's National Security Council on the pandemic. Quote, speaking of Israel's experiment with reopening their schools, "It was a major failure." And this is a country that had largely squashed the virus.

We had a, we've had a couple of callers from Israel in the last few weeks, talking about how, well, life seems to be getting back to normal. I mean, people are wearing masks and stuff, but you know, we're reopening restaurants and things, and the schools are reopening. Well, apparently not so, not so fast.

They thought they had it under control. And this is popping up, by the way, in countries like South Korea, the entire country, in the neighborhood of 300 deaths total! We're at 155,000. There are 51 million people--one-sixth the size of the United States--they have 300 deaths. But now they're saying, Oh, wait a minute, we're starting to get a little, you know, the hotspots are popping back up.

This virus is insanely tenacious. It's insanely strong. It's very, very potent. And, it's something that we're going to have to deal with and live with for a long, long time.

## **Kids Positive for Coronavirus After ONE DAY in School - David Pakman Show - Air Date 8-7-20**

**DAVID PAKMAN - HOST, THE DAVID PAKMAN SHOW:** The experiment of sending kids back to school during a raging hundred-year pandemic, by this administration has failed. And, it has failed very poorly and I'm not pleased to see this. And to be clear, I wish it were possible to send kids back to school safely right now. It's become very popular among some on the right to say the left wants to hurt businesses, the left wants to hurt education, left doesn't care about people's emotional health, all because they want to close, close, close in order to hurt Donald Trump. I don't deny for a second that there are tangible benefits, intangible benefits, and psychological benefits to getting kids back to school. I don't deny that many parents can't get back to work unless their kids are back in school. So I get it. The considerations are economic, they're emotional, they're wide ranging.

When you have 50,000 cases a day, 1400 deaths a day, and we've already debunked the false notion that kids can't catch the disease or spread the disease, it just doesn't pass the sniff test that this would work, and case in point, a Georgia second grader tested positive on day one back in school. By day two, the classroom was closed, the teacher and students were quarantined for two weeks and out of school. And there are many of these examples, 260 employees either tested positive or were exposed in Gwinnette County public schools in Georgia, that's Georgia's largest school district, hours after the first day. In an Indiana district last week, the County health department notified Greenfield central junior high, that a student who had been in a bunch of classrooms all over the school in contact with teachers and students was helping students, I don't remember the exact details, was all over the school, tested positive for coronavirus, and once again caused a mass quarantine of 14 days for everybody that they had been in touch with. We saw what happened in Israel, where they successfully dealt with the virus, crushed the curve, I mean, just obliterated it, obliterated the curve, opened school, and then things went backwards very, very quickly.

So it's not inconceivable that states could open schools, some states could open school safely, maybe, but a lot has to happen in order to do that. First and foremost, when we were down to 20,000 cases a day, every state started opening. That was not the time to actually start opening as aggressively as happened. Number two, I know that it's August, but we still don't have enough testing or fast enough testing. The testing is falling behind the viral

spread. When we talk about how much we test relative to other countries, remember that at this point, circumstances are so different in countries that in order to keep up with our level of spread we need dramatically more testing and we need dramatically faster testing. People are often not hearing back for days, five to seven days in some cases. A travel blogger I know waited 20 days for his test results, got them the day before he was going to a different state. This is the same issue we've been talking about for a long time. When it comes to lots of types of businesses and organizations, and certainly schools where people are even more crowded together, for hours all day, there's not an easy answer. I am not pretending this is simple. I get all of the reasons why we would want to open schools, but what we've seen so far, we have to be guided by the data, tells me the risks exceed the possible rewards.

## The Long-Brewing Crisis in Higher Education - On the Media - Air Date 8-28-20

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** About the pandemic. Wouldn't it be great if, as former CNBC host and current director of Trump's national economic council, Larry Kudlow, declared, it was all over?

**LARRY KUDLOW:** Presidential leadership came swiftly and effectively with an extraordinary rescue for health and safety to successfully fight the COVID virus.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** After spring semester held mostly over Zoom, many of the nation's colleges and universities have reopened with precautions for the fall.

**TAPE - MONTAGE OF REPORTERS:** "Today, Cal reveal plans for undergrads, universities using a hybrid model with large lectures provided remotely...." "Potential guidelines for UC Berkeley students living on campus this coming fall. Only a limited number of students would be allowed to live in dorms on the campus...." "The University of Arizona is helping contain the coronavirus pandemic by using a special new app that tracks students...."

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** These precautions are a gesture toward sensible public health decision-making, but they've so far failed to protect against some predictable coed behavior.

**TAPE - MONTAGE OF REPORTERS:** "UNC issued a campus-wide alert reporting new clusters, Texas A&M ordered chapter-wide quarantines for two sororities, and a fraternity house at Georgia Tech is on lockdown after at least two dozen tested positive..."

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** At the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, over 500 cases. At the University of Missouri in Columbia, over 200. These infections not only imperil the students, they also threatened their institutions' blue collar workers and their parents and grandparents and communities.

Scott Galloway is Professor of Marketing at NYU Stern School of Business and cohost of the podcast Pivot. I asked him, why the decision to open the doors?

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** Money. If you're a liberal arts private school, or even a public school. And you get say between 30 and 50,000 in tuition. Let's say you get half of that upfront and you

have 20,000 students. I mean, you're literally expecting, in some instances, three, four, \$500 million to roll in, in a two week period in the late summer.

And then all of a sudden you wake up and you're facing potentially 10, 30, 50% reduction in that cashflow. When you see these university presidents making strident statements around welcoming students back to campus, I think that's Latin for "Parents, please send in your tuition checks."

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** And in the face of all of this, what kind of school suffers the least and what kind the most?

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** So let's take Princeton, Harvard and Stanford. Princeton has the largest endowment per student. Harvard has the largest endowment just by gross tonnage, 40 billion. And I think Stanford is in the top five. So if there's three schools that should have the resources to figure this out--testing every day, protocols, reconfigure the dorms-- it's these three universities. And despite these resources, what they've decided is they're going all remote. And the reason why they're going all remote is again, because they have the most resources. And that is, they're not worried about a short-term hit to their balance sheet, which indicates that the companies that aren't going remote feel more financial pressure to stay open.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** You contrasted the ivys with a publicly-funded school, like Cal State, and suggested that those schools also have more flexibility than the ones in the middle.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** That's right. There's the guys at the top that have a lot of resources and can afford to stay closed and be remote. And they have amazing brands. And by the way, the 20% of students who say they're not going to show up at Harvard this fall, Harvard will have no problem filling those seats with their waiting lists that consists of 95% of the people who applied and didn't get in. So they're fine. They're bulletproof. And then on the other side of the spectrum, you mentioned Cal State. Half a million students, \$7,000 tuition in state, \$17,000 out of state, about 80% are commuters.

So the value position there isn't a leafy college football game experience, the value proposition of some certification, some education at a really good price. That largely remains intact in a period of COVID and as a result, they were one of the first to announce they're going all online. They have the confidence to say, look, we're going to focus totally on online learning. We're going to shut this down for this semester, and we look forward to welcoming you back, hopefully, in the spring and January or February. The ones in the middle are in a more difficult spot that has led them down this rabbit hole of what I would call incremental bad decisions.

Are there data that show enrollments have, in fact, fallen?

According to the surveys you read, over half of kids, freshmen kids, say they would prefer an all-remote experience.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** I wonder what the number one preference is among parents of freshmen.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** We should be careful not to conflate the calculus around deciding what we're going to do with K through 12 and higher ed. When you're talking about the decision to send kids back to school with K through 12, you're talking about developmental disability, you're talking about economic strain. You're talking about a single mother who can't go to work. Nutrition. You're talking about the collapse of households. A 19-year-old stuck at home who can't return to Tulane for his or her sophomore year is a nuisance, not a tragedy. And I think the media portrays it as a tragedy because it's happening to wealthy households.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** You've suggested that we were kind of headed in this direction anyway, with regard to higher education.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** Just to use a pandemic as a metaphor, there's several co-morbidities across higher education. And this has been the opportunistic infection that may kill a bunch of them. And that is, just demographically, population growth among college-aged kids has either been flat or down in most States. So there's just fewer consumers. Two, we've been raising prices faster than inflation without any underlying increase in quality or innovation. So whenever you raise prices faster than inflation, you make yourself vulnerable. Especially if the product isn't very strong.

Think about technology that every year improves dramatically. Your computer, your browsers, the apps you use [are] dramatically different. And the price goes down every year.

Education is the opposite of technology. Less for more is the way you would describe education over the last 40 years. And we've reached a tipping point. After talking to a bunch of leadership at the what I'll call the elite universities, the MITs, the Browns, the Dartmouths of the world. I'm now convinced they'll double down on their exclusivity. They no longer see themselves as public servants. They see themselves as luxury brands and their key attribute is their scarcity. They're essentially hedge funds, educating very wealthy kids. And some are freakishly remarkable kids from middle and lower income households, such that they can wipe Vaseline over the fact that they've totally lost the script. They're not about education. They're about positioning themselves as luxury brands.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** You've said that the ultimate vehicle for a luxury item is to massively and artificially constrained supply.

Harvard had more people in the past, but now they celebrate the fact that each year they're able to reject more.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** At NYU, our Dean will stand up and say, we rejected 88% of our applicants and people see that as a good thing. I would argue, it's tantamount to a housing shelter bragging that it turned away nine in 10 people who showed up last night. I don't think it's anything to be proud of.

Spring used to be a nervous, but an exciting, time to see where you're going to college. Now it's become the Hunger Games where you have to call on every contact. And then if you're lucky enough to get into a school, you have to sit down and plan out how the household is going to take on that level of debt.

The real value here is the certification. The \$380,000 that Yale is going to cost you, that value is recognized when you get in. And that is for the rest of your life, you'll have this branding that says you got into one of the world's most elite exclusive clubs. Just look at influence.

Only a third of America has a college degree. Only 10% has a graduate degree, but look at the economy, culture, media, the most powerful cohorts in America. What is it? 90, 98% have a college degree?

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** You say the cruel truth of what pretends to be a meritocracy is a caste system in that your degree largely indicates your lifetime earnings.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** The angle of the cannon you're shot out of is not only whether or not you're getting a college degree, but where you're getting that college degree. And then the question again is, well, who gets shot into this world of amazing prosperity? And it's generally two cohorts. The first is the children of wealthy people.

If you come from the top 1%, you're 77 times more likely to get into an elite university. If you come from the other 99%, 88% of kids from households in the upper quintile go to college and the lowest quintile it's 8%. You just had an entirely different prospect of not only going to college, we're going to a great college, when you have access to what I'll call the industrialized test prep complex, where your dad might know somebody. I see it happen personally. Most of my friends are financially successful. They call me because they might think I have some pull at one of the universities I'm affiliated with. And you can just see how kind of the wheel spins.

There is a second cohort, and it's what I would call freakishly remarkable 15 to 17 year olds. And here's the thing. America needs to fall back in love with it's unremarkables. I can prove that 99% of our children are not in the top 1%. To be fair, universities have done a great job reaching into lower-income communities and finding remarkable kids. But the test of a society and the role of higher ed is not finding remarkable kids and making them billionaires instead of millionaires. It's what we do with our unremarkables. And the U S higher ed, I would argue, World War Two to 2000 used to be a place, with a son of a single immigrant mother who lived and died a secretary, got to go to UCLA for total tuition for \$4,000, into graduate school at Berkeley for a total tuition of \$5,000. And then go on to be a productive citizen and have remarkable opportunities and have the chance to come on public radio and talk about higher education. Yours truly. Yeah, that's not happening any longer and it's a national tragedy.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** So what happens next?

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** Well, I think where we're headed as a following: I think the truly elite universities are going to double down their exclusivity. They're going to look, smell and feel the same. They use technology to enhance their offering, but it's not going to be core.

I think the opportunity is for some of the great state systems, Ohio State, University of Texas has 200,000 kids. University of California is a quarter of a million kids. Cal State has half a million. To embrace small and big tech. And if you take 50% of your classes online--and another dirty secret of academia is about 50% of our classes probably could be online without a huge erosion in value-- but if you take 50% of the classes and put them online, you've effectively doubled the size of the campus, doubled the capacity. So good kids, not

just remarkable kids, have an opportunity to get a remarkable education at a much lower price.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** But they won't be credentialed if the school's not fancy.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** Yeah. I think the degree from UCLA and the eighties may not have the same level of prestige as it does now, but I still think you can get a great job.

I still got a job at Morgan Stanley. I still got into graduate school. When UCLA was letting in 60% of its applicants, it's now 13%. I think this erosion and brand value is BS. They are not in the business of education. They're not in the business of advancing our society. They're in the business of being alternative investment hedge funds. Stanford-- Stanford just decided because of quote unquote, financial pressure to shut several sports teams down.

And then, well, why don't you use part of your \$35 billion endowment? And they said we don't have access to our endowment, because we might have capital calls from the commitments we've made to private equity funds that we're investing our endowment in.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** What's a capital call?

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** So an organization like Stanford, who has an endowment of \$35 billion and a huge team of well-compensated investment managers charged with increasing it, they make investments in private equity funds or hedge funds that will go out and buy companies, buy stocks, and they commit to say a billion dollars. And then over the course of the next three, five years, that private equity fund will say, okay, we need the money and they call it or draw it down. And then when you get a capital call you're supposed to send in your money. Nearly every decision among university leadership, I believe over the last two decades, has been with one goal: and that is to reduce our accountability and increase our compensation.

And the net effect of that is there has been a transfer of about one and a half trillion dollars in wealth from middle income and middle-class households to universities and tenured faculty. That transfer has to stop. We need a reckoning. We need to dramatically lower costs and dramatically increase supply. We need to let technology set us on a path where we can substantially decrease the cost of delivering education over the next decade.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** So when you say embrace big tech and small?

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** That's everything from handheld technologies, from Apple to CRM, from Salesforce to some of the existing tech out there, to Zoom to SquadCast, you're going to see an explosion in tools focused on higher learning. There's gonna be more money invested in ed tech over the next 24 months than there has been over the last 24 years.

I think that's a social good. I think that's an investment worth making. The way I would summarize the issue here is, I teach 160 kids typically in the fall. My brand strategy course. It's \$7,000. Because we're going online, they've increased the capacity and I'm now teaching 280 kids starting in three weeks. It'll be all online.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** And it'll still be \$7,000.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** That's exactly right. As a matter of fact, they've increased tuition three and a half percent. So think of it this way. Over 12 nights of Zoom, NYU is going to charge these 280 kids, approximately \$2.1 million. Pfizer just came out with a drug to treat muscular atrophy, that costs \$2.1 million for a treatment.

And I started thinking, okay, which is worse--preying on someone at the most vulnerable point of their life and asking them to figure out a way to give you \$2 million to help with their disability? Or is it preying on the hopes and dreams of middle class households, spread across 280 of those households, and putting them \$7,000 more in debt, such that they can have access to a better life? And I think the answer is yes. Which is more morally corrupt? Yes. I think we have to take a hard look at what this means in terms of a transfer of wealth from middle income households to universities. It's gone on too long. The reckoning is overdue.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Thank you so much.

**SCOTT GALLOWAY:** Thank you.

**BROOKE GLADSTONE - HOST, ON THE MEDIA:** Scott Galloway is Professor of Marketing at NYU Stern School of Business, and cohost of Pivot podcast. Coming up, math schizophrenia, and the story of a life saved by the Internet.

## **American civil society is not equipped to deal with a collective problem like Covid-19 - Jacobin Radio Weekends - Air Date 8-8-20**

**ANA KASPARIAN - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** Oftentimes, when we hear about businesses or schools prematurely opening in the United States amid the coronavirus pandemic where--let me remind you, we are seeing a surge of active coronavirus cases throughout the country--we think of Republicans, right? I think that that's the narrative that we've seen in the mainstream press. Oh, here's a GOP lawmaker. Oh, look how callous he is. They want to reopen schools. It's so dangerous for teachers. And to be clear, teacher's unions do not want to open, because it's premature and we have not handled coronavirus appropriately.

But there are some people on--I don't want to say the left, but some Democrats, some mainstream Democrats--who are very open about their support of reopening schools. One of them is a reporter with the New York Times. She is the person who started the 1619 Project at the New York Times. And so Nikole Hannah-Jones tweeted the following: "The discussion has grown completely hyperbolic, to the point that it's virtually impossible to have on here. People are going to work every day in this city. To act as if it's immoral to even have the conversation of how to open schools with a 1% infection rate is just..." And so she's minimizing the infection rate, but when you consider that 1% of a densely-populated city, for instance, is a high number of people. You can understand why that's a callous statement. And again, we have not really handled this virus appropriately. That's why we're seeing these surges throughout the country. And by the way, this is still the first wave; we haven't handled the first wave of coronavirus. There's a second wave expected to come in the fall. So understandably, teachers' unions are like, uh, no. Kids don't live in a vacuum, We'd have to

educate them. And that puts our lives at risk. It puts our family's lives at risk. And there is some newer reporting, newer data indicating that some children really do suffer serious consequences from this virus. One of the more recent studies showed that some students develop neurological problems as a result of this virus.

So we really need to understand what we're dealing with and maybe not make these types of callous statements. Now it's one thing to hear a New York Times reporter say something like that, but it's a completely different thing to hear Democratic leadership make similar arguments. And here's Chuck Schumer doing exactly that.

**SEN. CHARLES SCHUMER:** What is one of the biggest problems facing us in the next month? As the speaker mentioned, schools--opening up the schools safely. If you don't open up the schools, you're going to hurt the economy significantly, because lots of people can't go to work.

**ANA KASPARIAN - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** So Nando, that's really what's at play beneath the surface. Schumer said it out loud, you know? We just want to open the schools so we can free up these people. We've got to free up the human capital.

**NANDO VILA - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** Yeah. You got to unleash the power of human capital. Yes. It's terrifying. it's one of those issues where we're seeing a confluence between the right and the liberal kind of spectrum of our politics. The Democratic leadership, the most influential liberal intellectual right now, probably is Nikole Hannah-Jones. She's on board. The conservatives are on board. So that means that's probably going to happen unless there is this wave of teacher strikes, which has kind of been starting. You know, like the Chicago teachers went on strike and within hours they reversed their position on whether they're going to reopen the schools or not. It just shows that strikes work, that labor militancy is the way to get the goods. But yeah, I mean, it is really terrifying to see. Again, our opposition party just completely laying down at the feet of the party in power, the right wing party in power. I mean, they love to do that. It's their favorite thing to do. They do not do anything to oppose these people in any meaningful way. It is just absolute malpractice. We've seen that our nation is just not capable of dealing with the most basic civil society functions to control this pandemic. And to just reopen the schools, millions of kids. It's not just the kids could get sick. They could transmit it to their parents. It's going to cause chaos that's unimaginable. We are just not equipped to do it. So instead of us re-advocating to reopen the schools, we need more relief for people to stay home. That's what we need. We need relief for people to stay home. We can do it. It's just, they don't want to do it. Like you said.

**ANA KASPARIAN - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** They don't want to do it.

**NANDO VILA - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** Unleash the power of human capital, to go back to work.

**ANA KASPARIAN - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** Yeah, that's it. It is disgusting. And that economic relief is something that Congress is obviously unwilling to really provide--enough relief for people to safely and comfortably stay home. And even the head of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve recently said, If all you care about is the economy, right-- you don't care about the human lives, but you want the economy to rebound--the best way to do it is to shut everything down, not like in a half-assed way like we did a few months ago, but

to really shut things down. That's the only way you're going to slow the spread of this infection of this virus.

And then you got to do the contact tracing.

But you know, the New York Times, of all places, recently published this piece that compared the United States to pretty much every other affluent country. And really we are in a uniquely terrible position to deal with a pandemic because what's been drilled in people's heads over and over again is that what makes this country great is individualism. Right? And so people think that any type of collective effort is some sort of terrible dystopian violation of their rights, so you can't get people on the same page.

And then on top of it, of course, we have this whole healthcare system that functions under a profit motive. We don't have enough hospital beds and that's not an accident. We don't have enough hospital beds because you know, private hospitals have done the cost-benefit analysis and decided, hey, why are we going to have empty hospital beds? We got to make sure we have the exact number of beds that are constantly full.

So that's what we're dealing with.

**NANDO VILA - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** And I think it's very tempting--and it's obviously that Trump has been horrible in his response to the coronavirus; I mean, there's just no way of getting around it--but I just think that the deeper institutional structures of this country are also just incapable of dealing with something like this.

Even if Barack Obama was in power, or Hillary Clinton or Joe Biden, that the structures of civil society to deal with something like this have been decimated with decades of neoliberalism and austerity, that even if someone was, imagine just a more competent person at the helm, it would still be an absolute nightmare to coordinate the entire response to the pandemic.

And this is like a matter of life or death. This is not something to mess around with. So like the "tradeoffs" are absolutely horrifying. It's insane that people are talking about reopening schools. We're just nowhere near, nowhere near there.

It's just not even close.

**ANA KASPARIAN - HOST, JACOBIN RADIO WEEKENDS:** We're not ready. No.

## Summary

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with All In with Chris Hayes, explaining that Trump is the last person we should be trusting with the safety of our kids. Democracy Now spoke with Dr. Leana Wen about whether it's possible to reopen schools safely. The Intercept highlighted the voices of protesting teachers in Washington, DC. The Tom Hartman Program pointed to the experience of Israel reopening their schools as a cautionary tale. The David Pakman Show analyzed the arguments for and against sending kids back to school. On the Media looked at the financial motivations of universities as they make their decisions about inviting students back to campus. And finally, we just heard a discussion on a Jacobin Radio Weekend about the structures of America's civil society that make it particularly unsuited to deal with a major collective problem.

Members will be hearing additional clips about alternative ideas being proposed, such as so-called learning pods, and the potential impact there could be to a heightened inequalities -- surprise, surprise -- if measures like that are carried out. To hear that and all of our bonus content, sign up as a patron of the show at [patreon.com/bestofthelleft](https://patreon.com/bestofthelleft). And now, we'll hear from you.

## **Mail-in ballots in Washington don't require a stamp anymore - Kate from Spokane, WA**

**CALLER - KATE FROM SPOKANE, WA:** Hi, this is Kate Robbins, Spokane, Washington, and I'm just commenting that mail-in ballots in Washington no longer require a stamp. They haven't for a few years now, so we can mail it without a stamp. Goes in first class postage if they mail it, but everybody's going to try to use the drop box this year.

And thank you for your wonderful podcast.

## **The importance of understanding systems protecting themselves - V from Central New York**

**CALLER - V FROM CENTRAL NEW YORK:** Hello, Jay, this is V from central New York. It has been a long time, my friend, but I have been still listening. Unfortunately, life has been, or maybe even fortunately, life has been very busy, as the job that I am working at is considered or has been considered essential these last few months, and we have been very swamped. So, it's been quite a tiring last few months.

However, one of the great bright spots that has helped me move through those very long days has been your great podcast. So, I thank you for the work that you have continued to do during this pandemic.

I am calling today about episode 1358, How a system of power defends itself: a case study.

Years ago, I want to say about eight or nine years ago, you pondered what it would take for there to be a drastic political shift in this country. And, as you rightfully pointed on at the time, you were not certain exactly what would have to happen for people to finally stand up and to want to move en masse towards a better future, and actually, now that I think about it, this was prior to Barack Obama's ascension, so it was a few more years than 10. Anyway, I believe we are in one of those decades where a mass movement of dynamic proportions will shift the direction in which this society is headed.

This episode, as with several of the episodes you have produced over the last three years, is a benchmark episode. It's one which I implore you to pin somewhere on your website in order to direct people to it immediately, because it is something that most people do not consider. Not only do they not consider it, but the idea of a system protecting itself is actually quite foreign to most ordinary people here.

I want to be deliberate in my words. The more educated you are, I believe, the more you understand to some degree that systems protect themselves. The less educated, meaning the less time you spent in school, the more you may be aware of it, but you may not be able

to articulate it, and I find this problem in existence with a lot of people who I talk to. An episode such as 13 shatters the boundary between acknowledgement and awareness. It's a very important episode. Please keep up the great work, and I will keep listening. Peace.

## Final comments on Yascha Mounk's incredibly ironic article preaching the importance of defending the falsely accused

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Thanks for listening, everyone. Thanks to our new research assistants, Dion Clark and Aaron Clayton for joining the team and for all of the work they've been doing. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets and activism segments, and thanks to all those who called into the voicemail line. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can simply leave a voice memo by email or simply record a message at (202) 999-3991.

Since V brought it up, I just want to mention this quick little thing because I think I told the members about this few weeks ago. But, in one of the most ironic articles I've ever seen published. If you recall the episode that V is talking about, the way systems of power defend themselves and the New York City Education Council meeting. The primary target of my frustration in all of that was this journalist named Yascha Mounk. He writes for *The Atlantic* and does other things, and he has a podcast that I've used in the past that usually focuses on authoritarianism, but in this instance, he veered over into racism, and in my opinion completely fell on his face, describing a couple of aspects of racism completely wrongly.

So, he goes on to pile on with this emerging internet mob which is attacking people on this Education Council meeting for reasons that I lay out in a lot of detail as to why I think the accusations against them are basically wrong or, if not 100% wrong, like 95% wrong and, you know, just really, really overblown, and people got sort of dragged through the mud on the internet for a few weeks. And frankly, the story's not quite over. People keep bringing it up and talking about it. So, it just kind of keeps happening in a cyclical sort of way.

So, as I said, in one of the most ironic articles I've ever seen published -- this was published about five days after my episode, which means probably like two to three weeks or so after the Yascha Mounk podcast episode that I was criticizing -- Yascha Mounk, on his new platform, which seems to be doing quite well for him and those involved, wrote this article: Stand Up for the Wrongly Accused, sub-headline, It's Tempting to Pick and Choose Whom to Defend Against the Social Media Mob, a Timeless Essay by George Orwell Reminds Us Why That Is a Mistake. The article begins: "Among George Orwell's many essays, the one for which I have the greatest respect may seem at first glance an unlikely choice. It is a defense of P. G. Wodehouse, written in the dying days of World War II against the charge that he was a fascist sympathizer." So then, the article goes on to describe how, look, P. G. Wodehouse worked with the Nazis, but maybe he was just sort of clueless and selfish and, you know, going along, and so the accusation that he was an active participant and a secret fascist was unfounded. That's George Orwell's argument.

So, Yascha Mounk thinks that this is great, and I don't have any particular reason to disagree. He concludes with this flourish, encouraging everyone to be as thoughtful and nuanced in

their criticisms and to not accidentally tar people with the wrong kind of brush because of what's at stake. So, continuing the article all the way, at the very end he concludes: "[F]or what is at stake when somebody is falsely accused is not only the fate of that particular individual. It is the maintenance of a principle without which an honest intellectual life would quickly become impossible. The obligation to stand up for the wrongly accused, even or perhaps especially when they are imperfect, remains as important now as it has ever been. So, I shall do my best to live up to the example Orwell set in much more perilous times, and I hope that you will too."

So, I think you understand my point as to why I think that was profoundly ironic for him to publish that in the wake of -- I mean, tried to, you know, tweet my show at him; I don't have any contact with Yascha Mounk or any way to get in touch with him. And to be honest, I didn't try that hard, but I did tweet at him to encourage him to take a listen to the episode, and, I have no sense whether he did or not, but in the wake of all that, he published that article. So, that's where that story stands, with him at least.

And just quick wrap-up. I want to let you know how things went during my working staycation. There was a lot of work, and there was a lot of staying put. There was not a lot of cation happening, whatsoever. Frankly, I was working more than I usually do, 10-, 12-hour days, something like that. I was very intent on getting some tasks finished, and it didn't quite get there, but I made huge progress. The primary, one of which is that, as I mentioned, we have two new researchers. We've been without research help for the entirety, or near entirety, of the last several months since lockdown. So, welcome, a very hearty welcome to Dion and Aaron for joining, and this episode today is the fruits of their first efforts. So I'm very excited about that. Got them hired and onboard, and all of that. So, that was a huge one, and which means that we can go back to our old regular schedule.

I'm out of, I think, pandemic brain. I think I can function pretty normally and think sort of clearly; that one's still out for debate, though, because I've been working so hard that I can't think clearly, but I think it's because of that and not because of pandemic, so, we're going to call that progress. Hopefully, as the researchers really hit their stride and take some workload off me, things will really smooth out.

So, we're going back to our two-episode weekly schedule. That's the goal. We're going to see how that goes. And then there are other things that I made huge progress on, and I'm just not quite ready to announce yet, but stay tuned for that very, very soon. There will be more things coming which I think you will recognize as not technically meeting the definition of exciting but important to improving the financial health of the show. That's something I think everyone can recognize as important. So, I'll leave it there for now and fill you in on more details as time goes on.

As always, keep the comments coming in at (202) 999-3991. That is going to be it for today. Thanks again to everyone for listening. Thanks, especially to those who support the show by becoming a member or making donations of any size at [patreon.com/bestoftheleft](https://patreon.com/bestoftheleft). That is absolutely how the program survives. Of course, everyone can support the show just by telling everyone you know about it and leaving us glowing reviews on Apple podcasts and Facebook to help others find the show for details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode. All that information can always be found in the show notes on the blog and likely right on the device or using to listen.

So, coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington in DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of Left podcast coming to you now again twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from [bestoftheleft.com](http://bestoftheleft.com).