

#1399 Myths are written by the victors, history by the scholars

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning Best of the Left Podcast in which we shall learn about the competing histories fighting for dominance in the minds of Americans. Between the mythologized and romanticized history as represented by the "patriotic" framing of history from the 1776 Commission report and the much more fact-based approach that doesn't skirt the issue of race from the 1619 Project. Clips today are from, *Why Is This Happening* with Chris Hayes, *The Medhi Hassan Show*, *Start Making Sense*, *Past Present*, *In The Thick*, *Know Your Enemy*, and *The Michael Brooks Show*.

The 400 Year Legacy with Nikole Hannah-Jones and Ibram X. Kendi - Why Is This Happening with Chris Hayes - Air Date 12-6-19

NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES: [00:00:40] Whiteness is a property in and of itself, right? It has a value and white Americans both explicitly know this, but also explicitly deny that they know this. At the same time, when I go out and give talks and say, "I have never found a single school district in all of America where black kids in their separate schools have the same resources as white kids." And I always ask, "Is anyone surprised?" And I never get a single hand. What that tells us is that is the expectation, that it is expected that white Americans will have more, will get more resources, will have better opportunities, will be in better everything. That is just the expectation of a country built on white supremacy.

But there's also that denial of that at the same time, and the other thing is, we are awash in anti blackness from the moment we take a breath in this country. And that anti blackness, like if I asked everyone in here to list 10 stereotypes about black people, you could do it in 60 seconds without even having to think about it, and no one ever had a conversation with you and say, "Black people are criminal, black people are lazy, black people don't work as hard."

No one ever had to tell you that, and you just know it, and that is because that idea about black inferiority arose to justify slavery and you cannot say people are not human under the condition of slavery, and once those people are free, grant them their humanity. So we've had to keep that lie, I don't know how we purge ourselves of that. I mean, that's kind of the point of "The 1619 Project" is, it only took 12 years after Jamestown to begin a caste system and 150 years before we were a country we had a caste system. So how do you purge yourself of something that is in your very DNA? And we don't, we just know these things.

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: [00:02:28] But here's my question, there's two ways I think, to think about white supremacy in this context. One is that it's evil, but rational, whiteness is a privilege, it's a thing of value, holding onto it, is again, evil but rational. It's a good to be hoarded when folks hoard that good, they do actually appreciably make their lives better. So the hoarding of it isn't some big rocket science, you've got this thing, and you want to hold onto it. Another theory, and one I think I'm more inclined towards, but I'm curious what you guys think, is that it's both evil and irrational. That

essentially the nature of white supremacy means that people support all sorts of crazy policies that make everyone worse off, and when you look at OECD countries, and when you look about things, health, I mean, everything, right? All the measures of social spending, things like universal healthcare, all sorts of things that are part of social democracies around the world and the developed world that the US is exceptional about.

The reason we're exceptional about those things almost invariably I think comes back to racial questions. I mean, the fight about Medicaid and Medicare was about segregating hospitals, right? The big fight about social security was about whether domestic workers, who are predominantly Africa American, were going to get benefits, right? Race has been a wedge wielded time and time again, to destroy projects that would lead to more equity and more human flourishing in total. But I'm curious where you guys come down on this question because, Nikole, I feel like you're more on the, "It is rational in its own evil and perverse way"?

NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES: [00:04:01] I think it's both as well. I mean, the whole concede of "The 1619 Project" is that you can look all across American life at things that you think have nothing to do with race or racism and actually trace them back to slavery and anti-black racism. And it's rational in that, yes, if I am white, and I can hoard resources and accrue certain resources just by virtue of that whiteness, that is a natural thing to want to maintain. At the same time, what's irrational is anti-blackness then leads white Americans to do things where we say they're doing things that are not in their best interest except I say the best interest of white people is whiteness. So if you look at "The 1619 Project," we talk about when you're sitting in traffic in Atlanta. If there's one message I hope people get from the project is that the harms of anti-black racism have never been able to be contained just to the black communities, right?

So everybody is sitting in that f---ing traffic in Atlanta, right? It's not just black people sitting in the traffic, but what's created the traffic was to create a high way system that was not designed to get you quickly to and fro but to segregate black communities. When they don't expand Medicare in the South, in the former Confederate states. When we don't have universal healthcare despite the fact that every other country that looks like us has it. When we have the lowest rate of union membership when we have the stingiest maternal leave. The stingiest social safety net period is because poll after poll shows if white Americans think that a lot of black people will benefit from a social program, they oppose it. And this means that millions of white people are also dying from lack of healthcare, millions of white folks can't stay home with their babies, millions of white people cannot negotiate for rights in employment. They can't get a living wage because they think that, "By doing this, we will sacrifice some white people to hurt a whole lot of black people." So we need to liberate ourselves from racism because it's never, ever just been able to hurt black folks.

IBRAM X. KENDI: [00:06:05] And I think, to add to that, historically within the racial justice movement, we have made the case to white people that in order for you to be anti-racist, in order for you to be a part of this movement, you are going to have to be altruistic. In other words, there's no way in which you will benefit from a revolutionizing of this country, and so then that's paused people, and most people are like, "Shoot, I'm only going to do things that help me." So it's led to many people not being able or wanting to be a part of this struggle.

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: [00:06:44] Or wanting to be part of the struggle at a great distance.

NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES: [00:06:46] Yeah.

IBRAM X. KENDI: [00:06:46] Exactly.

CHRIS HAYES - HOST, WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?: [00:06:47] Like, "I will send money to the folks down in the South to integrate the southern bus system, but I don't know about my school."

IBRAM X. KENDI: [00:06:54] And going back to your sort of dichotomy, it's rational to, within the current sort of system, where if you are white, you're going to benefit from racist policies and from white supremacy, so it's rational to support whiteness, to support white supremacy. But the question is always if we were to transform society, would that be better for white people? And that is actually yes. So within the current society, it is rational to support whiteness, but it's irrational to continue to support whiteness because it prevents us from moving to that other society. So that's just like in 1860, you had 5 million poor whites in the South, many of whom were supportive of slavery, and many of whom recognized that they benefited from their whiteness because they were not enslaved. But at the same time, their poverty was directly related to the riches of a few thousand wealthy slave holding families who, in a few years, would send them off to war. And you had some of those very poor whites believing that one day they could become a wealthy slave owner just like you have working class whites today, believing that one day they could become Donald Trump.

With Hours Left in Office, Trump White House Tries to Rewrite U.S. History - The Mehdi Hasan Show - Air Date 1-19-21

MEHDI HASAN - HOST, THE MEHDI HASAN SHOW: [00:08:23] In the midst of everything else, all the mass death, the historic tumult and uncertainty, what is the White House busy doing on its way out the door? Clumsily trying to rewrite American history. No, really. The Trump administration chose Monday to release the 1776 Report, a long-promised revision of American history, that Trump ordered up last year to counter, quote, "anti-American propaganda in classrooms." After spending several pages claiming that, quote, "The American people have ever pursued freedom and justice, which of the political conditions for living well," it concedes that there may have been movements that claim people do not have equal worth and equal rights, such as slavery, fascism, racism, and, uh, progressivism, identity politics. Yes. The document claims that American progressives were evil because they, quote, "created what amounts to a fourth branch of government called at times the bureaucracy or the administrative state. This shadow government never faces elections, and today operates largely without checks and balances."

Progressives started the Deep State. This isn't American history. It's your second cousin's mother-in-law's Facebook page.

But it gets worse, stating that the civil rights movement should of been done after, quote, "three major legislative reforms in the 1960s." And so everything that's come since --

affirmative action, social justice, et cetera -- has been a regime of formal inequality known as identity politics.

Who wrote this pseudo history? Well, a panel of 16 Trump-appointed commissioners, none of whom holds an advanced degree in American history. Actual historians have blasted the 1776 Report as a hack job full of outright lies, with one wondering whether any actual books were consulted in writing it. And in fact, some pointed out that significant chunks of the Report appear to have been plagiarized from one of its author's previous writings on a variety of right-wing websites.

So. Why is the outgoing Republican administration beclowning itself with this silly document? As many observers have pointed out, the GOP no longer campaigns on policies. It campaigns on owning the libs and on convincing as many Americans as possible that whatever they believe, liberals are trying to cancel it. Hence the weaponization of what's taught in America's classrooms.

Just look at 2024 GOP presidential hopeful Mike Pompeo's tweet today that, quote, "wokeism, multiculturalism aren't what America is because they distort our glorious founding." Oh, by the way, here's a 2019 tweet from Mike Pompeo celebrating conveniently his own Italian-American heritage and its contribution to, quote, "the story of American greatness." Then there's Josh Hawley, another aspiring 2024 GOP candidate decrying the woke mom that got his book deal canceled, after he incited an actual mob to storm the Capitol. He hasn't yet tweeted about the fact that his book deal, by the way, has found a new publisher. Funny that .

Conservatives like to rail on about progressive reeducation. But now they're offering the country de-education. If you read the 1776 Report uncritically, you will be the dumber for it, further from the realities of history and less capable of distinguishing well-intended interpretations from bad faith political piffle. And it seems like that's the whole idea.

Joining me now is Eddie Glaude Jr., Chair of the African-American studies department at Princeton and an NBC news contributor. Eddie, this morning you tweeted that you'd read the report and it was quote, "mindless drivel," you said.

EDDIE GLAUDE JR.: [00:11:48] Yeah. Yeah. I don't know what else to say. That lead, Mehdi, was so, so devastating. What else is there to say? I mean, it is absolute propaganda. It makes little sense in so many ways. Actually, you're making a mistake by treating it seriously. So I think the main thing for us to do is to understand it for what it is, is the latest salvo in the attempt, by the Republican party, to stoke the culture wars, to play on white grievance and white hatred and white resentment, to make them feel that this is no longer a white country in the vein of old Europe. It's an ideological document that should be read as such.

MEHDI HASAN - HOST, THE MEHDI HASAN SHOW: [00:12:30] Yes, ideological document is a great way of describing it. It was written as a response to the New York Times's 1619 Project, which highlighted the enduring role slavery played in America's founding. This report says, Eddie, quote, "the institution of slavery has been more the rule than the exception throughout human history," and then after that, there's another page trying to square that with all men are created equal. There's a downplaying of slavery. Is that where we've got to with the GOP in 2021?

EDDIE GLAUDE JR.: [00:12:58] Yeah, it seems that way. And you know, even among more serious writers who are on the right, there is this kind of gesture to the evil of slavery and then they move on.

But here it's even clumsier, right? There's this kind of sense that slavery is a feature of that world. There is even an attempt to read Frederick Douglass as rejecting his Garrisonian position and accepting the Constitution as it was, as opposed to him engaging in an ongoing re-interpretation of the document.

So it is silly on so many different levels. And there's no attention to the jurisprudence around race in the country, the way in which immigration law reflects race in the country. It's just an attribution of bad identity politics to the South. That being duplicated by Black folk, who were trying to argue for freedom and full citizenship.

Again, it's actual historical nonsense that is kind of in, how can we say, reasonable drag, as it were.

MEHDI HASAN - HOST, THE MEHDI HASAN SHOW: [00:14:02] Yes. And this historical nonsense plays into today's politics. So you mentioned immigration law and identity politics. We have the Italian-American Mike Pompeo blasting multiculturalism, which reminded me of this tweet, Eddie, the other day from a UK immigrant, Andrew Sullivan, agreeing with a Canadian immigrant, David Frum, that Biden will, quote, "capitulate to the far left on immigration." And Biden is of course expected tomorrow to announce, among other things, an eight-year path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants. But these tweets for me, Eddie, are kind of a reminder that when conservatives rail against immigration and multiculturalism, it's Brown and Black, not white immigration and multiculturalism, that they're objecting to.

EDDIE GLAUDE JR.: [00:14:44] Right. And this is part of the important work that we have to do by not allowing certain Republicans to disentangle Trumpism from the kind of Republican ideology that has emerged out of the response or the backlash to the mid-20th century. And the black freedom struggle that was such an important part of it.

Because when you disentangle it, you tend to see Trumpism as some kind of aberration. When in fact it's just a caricature of what Republicans have been doing for the last 40 plus years. And so what we see in Pompeo or what we've heard from David Frum, who has been a great anti-Trumper, or what we hear from Andrew Sullivan, whose bile gets on my nerves at times, right?

All of this reflect in some ways the ingredients or, shall we say, the fertilizer that provided the richness of the soil that gave birth to Trumpism. We just need to be clear about it, that this stuff is all connected. And we just need to reject it out of hand and understand that what the 1619 Project was all about, Mehdi, was not so much an origin story, but what happens to our understanding of ourselves, if we begin in a different place? What happens if we start with Jamestown, as opposed to Plymouth Rock? As opposed to 1776? Certain other things come into fuller view.

**Eric Foner on The 1619 Project - Start Making Sense -
Air Date 11-21-19**

JON WEINER - HOST, START MSKING SENSE: [00:15:57] The New York Times, they support their thesis that 1619 is "our true founding" with several arguments, I'd like to look at them some of the most significant. First they say, if you want to understand the brutality of American capitalism, you have to start on the slave plantation. That essay was written by Matthew Desmond.

What do you think about that?

ERIC FONER: [00:16:24] Capitalism is brutal wherever it is but I think as Karl Marx wrote, capitalism came into the world dripping with blood and much of that blood was the blood of enslaved people from Africa, not only in the United States, of course, but in the entire Western hemisphere. So a lot of scholarship has shown the centrality of slavery, particularly the cotton plantation, cotton exports, and cotton financing, the centrality of that to the growth of American capitalism, particularly in the first half of the 19th century.

JON WEINER - HOST, START MSKING SENSE: [00:16:59] They asked, why doesn't the United States have universal healthcare, which of course all the other countries of the developed world have, and they connect that to policies enacted after the Civil War, which they say are the beginnings of a national health policy, when smallpox ravaged the south after the Civil War. Of course, this is your area of scholarly expertise, what's the argument they're making here and what do you think of it?

ERIC FONER: [00:17:27] The smallpox epidemic is one piece of it, by the way, that also comes from recent scholarship, James Downs a PhD student of mine and in his book called *Sick From Freedom* is about the health challenges that faced a really health disaster that faced African-Americans in the immediate aftermath of slavery and the Civil War. Lying behind that argument is unfortunately something which we see at many points in American history, that large numbers of White Americans, it seems, are willing to forego benefits for themselves as long as they are assured that Black people won't get anything. In other words, our absence of a national health system is not only based on what happened in the reconstruction, but over and over again in the 20th century and into the 21st century, White Americans have opposed national health care, partly for fear that the wrong people will benefit from it.

That is at the root of much of the opposition to what is called the welfare system, the welfare state. And when a lot of people, not all of course, come to support these measures, they're written in a way that keep Black people out. So for example, the social security system, when it was put into effect in the 1930s, was designed to exclude Blacks. It left out the two major categories of employment that Black people at that time were engaged in; domestic work in people's homes and agricultural labor.

Now, of course, there's a lot of White people agricultural labor too, but somehow it seemed that it was all right to deprive them as long as you made sure that Blacks weren't getting anything. So I think one of the key points of the 1619 Project is yes, you find the legacy of slavery and racism in places you might not expect, or you might not even think of looking, but nonetheless places that affect all Americans, not just African-Americans.

JON WEINER - HOST, START MSKING SENSE: [00:19:21] And another part of the New York Times 1619 Project connects our extremely high rate of incarceration and our huge prison industrial complex with slavery. They argue that slavery gave America a fear of Black people and a taste for violent punishment. Both still define our criminal justice system. This piece

was written by Bryan Stevenson. What do you think of that way of connecting 1619 with the rest of American history?

ERIC FONER: [00:19:56] Stevenson of course is very important lawyer and a museum designer. He put together this famous now lynching museum in Alabama, which highlights this particular piece of our history, of the murder of over 4,000 Black people from 1880 to the 1960s. Slavery itself is a violent, brutal institution, there's no question about that, and slavery had built into it all sorts of terrible punishments and torture and violent ways of trying to make people work and things like that. But I think Stevenson's piece, and I admire him enormously, also reveals, perhaps... one of the little, one of the problems with the 1619 Project, which as I say, I admire the project very much, but the fact is that, actually up to about 1960, there were a heck of a... it's not a law of nature that only Black people are in prison. That's the way it is today, that's the way our criminal justice operates today. In 1960, most people in prison were White people. There's a lot of fear of White criminals. Also, in other words, the legacy of slavery is not the only factor involved in some of the pathologies really that the 1619 Project is unearthing.

Now this is a magazine section of the New York Times, it's not a giant doctoral dissertation or a tome, a long tome on the history of race so you can't do everything, but I do think that in some cases there are other factors at play that would actually expand the analysis if they could be brought into the picture without in any way limiting, or that is to say neglecting, I think the impact of that slavery and racism on all sorts of aspects of American society.

JON WEINER - HOST, START MAKING SENSE: [00:21:49] To me, one of the most surprising and provocative arguments was the one by Kevin Cruz who poses the question, what does a traffic jam in Atlanta have to do with the legacy of slavery? I thought he was able to show that the answer is quite a lot, actually.

What did you think about that and what is his argument?

ERIC FONER: [00:22:09] I thought Cruz's piece was very persuasive because it deals not only with traffic, but the whole history of racial segregation and housing, how Black people are kept out of certain kinds of neighborhoods. And then in the 1940s, 1950s, how highway building destroyed some of these Black neighborhoods, these highways are there mostly to enable people to move from all White suburbs into the center of Atlanta. In other words, they're predicated on racially segregated housing. Now, today it's a little more integrated, the housing around Atlanta, but still the infrastructure created by residential segregation is still there. And if you actually had a more rational system of housing and community development, you wouldn't have all these highways going in the wrong direction half of the time.

It makes the point, again, one of the main points of this whole project, of how the legacy of slavery, and not only of slavery, of then a hundred years of racism and Jim Crow following, still his part of our society, even though in many ways, we've moved beyond it, certainly in terms of legal rights, things like that, but you want to understand America today, you need to know this history.

JON WEINER - HOST, START MSKING SENSE: [00:23:23] I want to look at some of the responses to the project. Of course, the right really went crazy about this. One right-wing magazine said the authors and supporters of the 1619 Project suggest that we should hate America and hate all of its institutions and replace them with others based on diametrically opposed values. And Newt Gingrich, who you may recall, calls himself a historian and actually has taught American history.

ERIC FONER: [00:23:54] He has a PhD in history.

JON WEINER - HOST, START MSKING SENSE: [00:23:56] I stand corrected. He went on Fox News and, speaking as a PhD historian, said this whole project is a lie. That's a quote, what do you make of the whole right wing attack on the 1619 Project?

ERIC FONER: [00:24:12] Well, yes, Newt called it a lie. By the way, Newt's PhD is in African history, not American history. So he knows a lot more about the history of the Belgian Congo than he does about American history, even though he had a whole American history TV show at one point. You know, this is ridiculous. People want to go back to a celebratory, feel good history of the United States. We've debated this for years, as you remember back in the 90s. The historian Ernest Renan, back in the late 19th century, french historian, said the historian is the enemy of the nation. Nations are built on myths. The historian comes along and destroys those myths and actually tells it like it was. But I think weirdly enough, there's a certain homogenization in this project of African-American people and White people as if they're both homogenous groups, and the White group is basically racist.

In fact, somewhere in one of the articles, they say racism is part of the DNA of the United States, which is not an analogy that I like, because it's a biological analogy and DNA doesn't change. You can't change your DNA. And to say, as part of the DNA is like throwing up your hands and saying, well, there's nothing to be done about it in that case. And I don't really think that's necessarily what they want to suggest, but, making it into just a biological element of the whole society, at least the whole White part of the society is not the right way to look at it historically. Racism is part of history. Racism has a history. Racism goes up and down. There are periods of intense racism and there are periods of much less racism. The job of the historian is to track all that up and down, not just to throw up your hands and say, forget it, racism is here forever, there's nothing to be done.

But that is a reflection of the moment we're living in. The post Obama moment, where a lot of people felt when Obama was elected, that racism had really been kicked to the side, and now it seems to be back in the White House and other, such places, and that leads to a somewhat pessimistic set of conclusions about the possibilities of change in the United States.

The 1776 Report - Past Present - Air Date 1-26-21

NICOLE HEMMER - HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:26:28] Last September, Donald Trump announced the creation of the 1776 Commission—the administration's attempt to promote what they called "patriotic education". On Monday, the commission issued its first and final report, which sought to counter the 1619 Project, a New York times initiative that explored the central role of slavery and anti-Black racism in US history. We talked about it on the podcast a little while ago when it first came out in August of 2019. The report argued that

there was no internal contradiction to a country founded on the idea of equality but with the reality of slavery. They wrote the John C. Calhoun, who called slavery a positive good, was the father of identity politics. And it argued that anti-racists and anti-fascists were in fact, the real racist and real fascists. Natalia, the 1776 Commission is already on the ash heap of history, why is it still worth talking about?

DR. NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA - HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:27:25] Well, I think because of the forces that gave us the 1776 Project are still very much with us. They were not a product of the Trump years and they will not be eliminated with the dash of a pen, as satisfying as it was for Biden to add that to his list of first day activities. And so I think it's funny all of our research interests actually show, I think in different ways, how much the key tenets of that project are so long-standing in American history. Just coming from the history of American education and conservatism, this idea that left-wing teachers are seeking to indoctrinate children to hate America, specifically because they will embrace socialism and they will question the conventional family authority ecology, that goes back at least until the 1930s.

And, you see throughout the last almost hundred years or so that in moments, particularly of political volatility, you see this increased anger and inflamed rage about how "tax supported schools, this bedrock American institution that you're paying for citizens, are actually making your kids hate America and disrespect you." I saw a lot of that in the 1776 Project, even as it took on its own Trumpyness, which we can talk to, but yeah, I don't think that form of criticism of American public schools is a product of Trump or will be gone with his departure either.

NICOLE HEMMER - HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:28:55] Those classroom wars, as you might call them, are something that are pretty much as old as public education itself. You see it with religious conservatives in the 1920s who are concerned that there's not enough biblical teaching or that there's a teaching of things like evolution in the schools pushing back against that. The *Scopes Trial* is very much rooted in fears of what's being taught in the classrooms.

And when we think about the modern conservative movement, remember that William F. Buckley Jr's very first book was called *God and Man at Yale*, and it was a broad side against this very same thing that universities had become too secular and they were promoting Keynesian economics and somebody needed to do something to change this. And I think it reveals an underlying belief that one, history is really, really important and that what people learn in the classroom ultimately shapes what the politics of the country looks like. So it's really an argument that education is vitally important in a democracy and so as control over it.

NEIL J. YOUNG - HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:30:00] I think there's a lot of different historical antecedents we can bring into this conversation. We probably won't be able to touch on all of them because as you say, this has been a, really an ongoing aspect of the history of public education. I'm thinking about the textbook wars of the 1970s and the early 80s. Fights in school boards, one very prominent one that starts in West Virginia but really becomes one of national implications. These are textbook wars, mostly over things like sex education and biology, whether or not we include evolutionary biology in biology textbooks, but it spilled out into other realms—into English literature textbooks, into history ones. These fights over

what is our culture and what sort of cultural objects and cultural memory do we want our students learning about? I think the curriculum here, the fights over curriculum and the texts that the school boards use and school districts use is an ongoing one.

And this is really interesting because of the way that I think the 1776 Project seeks to do something that it's often argued against, which is a uniform approach to American education. The conservative argument has been for local control, even as they often embraced these textbooks that were nationalized, but I think particularly with this idea of the 1776 Project as this guide for all public schools to embrace goes against that sort of notion that different school districts can pick what it is they want to teach, that makes sense for the kind of local culture and politics of place.

DR. NATALIA MEHLMAN PETRZELA - HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:31:44] Well, yeah, I think you point out the latest version of a longstanding kind of tension or contradiction and a lot of these right wing critiques, which is often that they are... the centerpiece of them that's been consistent is this is about indoctrination and we believe in individualism and in free thought. But actually, always, and I think this is no exception, the version of education that they are supporting is just an alternative form of induction. It's America is a good place, the best place in the world, all of the sins that have been increasingly acknowledged throughout the years, slavery, racism, sexism, yes those happened, but they are just steps on this forward march of progress and have been overdetermined by the left.

But I think Neil that what you point out that is interesting and true is that there has also been this hallmark of conservative criticism of education, that we need to push back against big government, particularly since the 1960s and the great society which had all of this education legislation, but the 1776 Project, like you say, that was intended, though without any specific recommendations or implementation, to be a top down approach. It's not only about indoctrination really, but one that is enacted at the federal or national level.

NICOLE HEMMER - HOST, PAST PRESENT: [00:33:01] Yeah, I think it's smart to think about this in terms of education, that's how it's framed, but I also think that it is about public history, and the fact that it doesn't have those curricular guidelines points to that as well. And I think that's why the 1619 Project comes in. I've noticed that both of you have called this the 1776 Project instead of the 1776 Commission, and I think that conflation is because we think of the 1619 Project as what this is in response to, it doesn't say it anywhere in the project, but it clearly is. And while the 1619 Project did have a curricular component to it, the Pulitzer center worked with the New York times to create ways that material from the 1619 Project could be used in classrooms, it was also part of a public debate about what American history means. And this is trying to wrest that debate away from being centered on the 1619 Project, but it's also a reminder that the history wars have long been held outside the classroom as well.

There's this moment that's often referred to, especially for the wars in the 1990s, about museums, and in particular about, in this case, one of the Smithsonian Museums and this exhibit of the Enola Gay, which was the plane that dropped the atomic bomb in Japan. And there was a real public wrestling over how that should be presented because people were like, if you show the Enola Gay and you give a real accounting of the damage that it did, to killing so many people and to damaging the environment, and launching this nuclear weaponry age, that's not a positive story.

And veterans groups came forward and were like, this doesn't make us feel very good, we need to present a more positive history of World War II in this exhibit. And that tension over whether history should make us feel good or whether it should be an accurate reflection of things that happened often takes place, not just in classrooms, but in those places of memorialization and public history.

The Original Sin of 1619 - In The Thick - Air Date 8-20-19

WAJAHAT ALI: [00:35:11] I read Nikole's initial essay. I recommend everyone does it. That's a MacArthur genius, Nikole Hannah-Jones, I would like to add. And it's extremely powerful, right? The 400-year legacy, the enduring legacy of racism and White supremacy, not just slavery but segregation, Jim Crow, the Ku Klux Klan, voter suppression. And to this day, we feel the effects because Tucker Carlson says that White supremacy is a hoax. And so we have a president who is a racist, right, and says that Black and Brown people come from asshole countries. But then we know that millions were forcibly brought over here through the middle passage, and we see the lingering effects.

If you only read one essay, just to start off, read her introductory essay which is a very personal story. And then she takes that personal story of her father, who allegedly was born a free Black man but really couldn't escape the bondages of slavery in the South. He was just stuck picking cotton because that's the entire system oppressing him. You know, to me as I was just reading her essay in particular, there's just a profound sadness. There was also a rage, and there was also hope. It's an introductory essay so she gives you the landscape. And it's really important because, as Eddie was saying, she punctures these myths Abraham Lincoln, we all love Lincoln. At the same time, Lincoln didn't see Black men as his equals. He wanted them to leave and go to another country. [In] 1776, Thomas Jefferson had no problem excluding Black people from the Constitution or the promise of America, or you see Reconstruction, how the Whites in the South at that time, Southern Democrats did everything in their power to try to get back to a system of slavery without calling it slavery.

And the reaction to 1619, which one would assume would be celebration, oh, thank you so much *New York Times*, the paper of record, for bringing all these brilliant minds together to educate America about its historical fact. The reaction on the right to this project tells you where we are and how far we have to go.

EDDIE GLAUDE JR.: [00:37:07] Absolutely.

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, IN THE THICK: [00:37:09] And we're going to talk about the resistance in a second. Yeah. Julio, what was your takeaway?

WAJAHAT ALI: [00:37:14] Oh, my takeaway was here's journalism.

JULIO RICARDO VARELA - HOST, IN THE THICK: [00:37:17] This is what journalism is all about.

This is what we're supposed to do. And why haven't we done this? Why haven't generations, you know, previous generations of American journalists, why haven't they done this?

Or why haven't they used the power of this outlet? Like, it's not like the *New York Times* couldn't have done this in, say, 1955? You know what I'm saying? Like that these were things that have always been part of the American foundation, and the fact that it's taken 400 years to get to what I believe is a seminal, perhaps some of the greatest work of journalism I've ever read.

And I'm continuing to read it. So, that's a big question I have. It's like now it's happening. We're coming to terms with this and now where do we go next? Maria, what about you? What are your thoughts?

I

MARIA HINOJOSA - HOST, IN THE THICK: [00:38:13] think that part of what crystallizes here is that it's four of us right now on this that we created giving our reactions to this.

And none of us feel threatened by acknowledging the fact that this country was trafficking in human beings and making money off of them based on this notion that they were less human because of the color of their skin. So, we're like, guys, we got to acknowledge this, but it doesn't mean we're freaking out because we have to acknowledge this. We see it for what it is because we are part of this country and its history. But I find it so interesting that if it touches you and if you're White and if you get upset about it, that that that's where you focus on because you guys, as Nikole Hannah writes, it is not incidental that 10 of this nation's first 12 presidents were enslavers. And some might argue that this nation was founded not as a democracy, but as a slaveocracy. Yeah. So ,acknowledging that because it's the truth.

So, on Monday morning, I woke up at quarter to five in the morning. My eyes just break wide open, and I'm like, [gasps]! because all I can think about is babies alone crying in a cage. But that happening here is all based on this original hatred and this original dehumanization which was corporatized government ties, taxed made money off of, and it was this anti-Blackness.

I mean, I'm just so proud of Nikole and all of the writers and artists who were part of this because we have to center this. As Nikole Hannah-Jones writes, and I quote her, "anti-Black racism runs in the very DNA of this country." And that means all of us. We've all got to do the work of antiracism.

JULIO RICARDO VARELA - HOST, IN THE THICK: [00:40:11] Yeah. And I think that's where we have to have more conversations like this. Right. Because like you just said, Waj. And in three, two, one -- here comes to what-about-ism, here comes the reaction and, and predictably. I mean, it was so predictable that you would have mostly conservative voices going out there and saying slavery's abhorrent but why do we have to talk about slavery and race in 2019? And then there's also this other subcritique, anti-Blackness among POC, particularly when people weren't saying, Oh, you didn't tell the native American story. You didn't tell this. And I feel like already we're already trying to crap on this amazing journalism. And that's where I'm having problems with it. I mean, Waj, what's your take on the racist pushback that the 1619 project has been receiving?

WAJAHAT ALI: [00:41:13] Yes, you brought up two interesting points. First, the predictable reaction from the right wing. You know, it says a lot about someone if their initial reaction to

this is anger, fear, anxiety and defensiveness. These were the same people who, by the way, oftentimes dress up in a Confederate costumes and recreate the Civil War and talk about the need for a confederate heritage and culture in history and defend statues of losers. Let me repeat: losers, who are treasonous losers, who are criminal losers. They lost the war. Imagine, You know how I know White privilege exists? Because White men who are losers get statues. Like, wait, bro, you lost, and there's a statue of a loser. But I digress. But the fact that people feel threatened by a work of journalism that simply exposes historical facts tells you that what we're witnessing right now in America, and I've said this before on your show, is the death rattle of White supremacy which has transformed into a global death march. The quiet parts are now said out loud. The anxiety now fuels the Republican party and the entire candidacy of Donald Trump, and we should not be surprised, but we should be outraged by it and we should confront it because it's going to get worse. And then very quickly, when it comes to people of color, oftentimes we do the minority suffering contest. Yeah. Oppression Olympics is also, yeah. Or it's also -- I'm a child of the eighties, let me go pop culture: Highlander. There can be only one. So, there can be only one minority in the spotlight, and it's a divide-and-conquer tactic that oftentimes works to help White supremacy. Where if we step back, what we should say is as a fellow person of color or a marginalized community, we embrace and share in both your joys and your pain. And let us lift up this amazing project, which if you think about it, highlights the original sin of America and Thanos White supremacy that is coming for all of us.

Eddie, what do you think about all this pushback?

EDDIE GLAUDE JR.: [00:43:19] So, the first thing that I think about is this: that it's very difficult for certain people, certain White people, to concede to the truth of such claims of the articles because of what that truth says about them. I said before that America is not unique in its sins but we may be singular in our refusal to acknowledge them.

And it's because our identity as a country, and particularly among White Americans, is so bound up with this legend that we're the city on the hill, that we're the redeemer nation, that to kind of rend that is to somehow threaten to undermine the very idea of individuality, of American individuality, of American Whiteness itself. And so they cleave to it, they cling to it as if everything is at stake. So, if you take just a little bit of the luster off the American idea, then somehow you're threatening them. It's like Eric Erickson saying that it makes the whole project illegitimate.

JULIO RICARDO VARELA - HOST, IN THE THICK: [00:44:16] Yeah. So Eric Erickson, one of the top conservative voices in America, I think. He's been very active tweeting to Nikole Hannah-Jones about the coverage. And he's been a big critic of this entire project.

EDDIE GLAUDE JR.: [00:44:30] And you just kind of say, okay, now we see the stakes here that the admission of the truth for you will tear down the house of cards, right? The house of cards will come tumbling down. That's not unusual. And then the second point I would make about POC and the critiques of the pieces, we have to nuance it a bit, I think. So, on the one hand, I think Waj is right, that you have this kind of competition among those who are the most victimized. You have to pay attention to the nuance because 1619 isn't 1859. So the very idea of America in that moment is much more ambiguous. So how slavery, what it looks like, the form it takes, the racialization that's happening in that moment is very different than under the context of the plantation economy. And so, the kind of fluidity that's happening in

this moment, not equating the enslaved with indigenous servants, but the presence of native Americans in this space requires that we not. In some ways collapse this early period with the period that we tend to associate with cotton, right? With king cotton.

So, on the one hand, you have people saying, pay attention to the native American, 'cause you just want to pay attention to Black folk, right? That's not the argument I'm making. The argument I'm making is that we have to understand slavery as a historical process. Right, right. That it emerges and evolves over time, given the different degrees or different ways in which capitalism takes shape. And so, when you say, okay, let's look at 1619 as a founding moment, and when you do, America was a corporation before it was a country. Slavery is a critical part of who we are. Right. But there's all this other stuff here. It's like reading Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*, right? Where race doesn't make sense in the novel because it's fluid. You can't hang on it in the way in which we hang on it today. So, I think we want to celebrate what's going on, but we also want to use it as a way of fleshing out even moreso the complexity of our founding so that we can understand this thing as best as we can.

Midnight in the Garden of American Heroes - Know Your Enemy - Air Date 2-11-21

MATTHEW SITMAN - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:46:40] So it's as cobbled together document, hastily put together in the last couple of months of the Trump administration. And again, it's a rejoinder of the 1619 Project and it's one conservative view of the founding. It's again, very particularly a product of the West Coast Straussian project.

So why don't we begin by talking a little bit about West Coast Straussians, who they are.

SAM ADLER-BELL - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:47:01] Let's do that.

MATTHEW SITMAN - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:47:02] Because I promise it will all come back to this Report. So patients, dear listeners.

SAM ADLER-BELL - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:47:06] Who are these freaks?

MATTHEW SITMAN - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:47:08] So the West Coast Straussian School, it's also often referred to as the Claremont School, because it's long been associated with the Claremont Graduate University where the founder of West Coast Straussianism, Harry Jaffa, was a Professor of government. And there's also the Claremont Institute there, which publishes the *Claremont Review of Books*. We'll talk about that a little bit more because they published, if you remember, the Flight 93 essay by Michael Anton, and they also run this program called the Publius Fellows. And it's basically, it's a week or two, all the fellows fly out to California and it's this two-week bootcamp about this way of viewing the founding in American history. And if you look at who's been through the program, it's everyone from Ben Shapiro to Julius Krein. So a lot of writers on the right, a lot of scribblers in the conservative firmament have passed through this program.

Now, as for Jaffa himself, he was actually a student of Leo Strauss's, great man himself. And of course, Leo Strauss was a German emigre political philosopher who came to the United States. He was German and Jewish and so he fled Germany with the rise of Nazi-ism ended up teaching the United States. Most famously at the university of Chicago, but he started this

school of political philosophy, but it's kind of long had, as Strauss himself once used the phrase, he had the odor of conservatism about him. And so a number of conservative intellectuals have had some association with Straussian political theory.

SAM ADLER-BELL - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:48:35] Right. Famous Straussians ends are people like Allan Bloom, and Harvey Mansfield, and Paul Wolfowitz, who we've talked about we've talked about on the podcast before, I think, that the George W. Bush era foreign policy elite, a lot of them had Straussian connections. And there's a story that is told about the Bush administration's global ambitions that it was some kind of secret Straussian agenda at work there.

MATTHEW SITMAN - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:49:04] Yes, but Paul Wolfowitz was a student of Allan Bloom and, I recently read Ravelstein, which is Saul Bellow's novel that fictionalizes his relationship with Allan Bloom, but there are scenes in that book where Allan Bloom is on the phone with Paul Wolfowitz talking about the day's policy decisions coming out of the Bush administration. So this idea of there being this brain trust of students, students of Strauss who then became students of his students that links right up with sort of neo-con foreign policy, and neo-con domestic policy too, kind of finding it to Zenith in the Bush administration. That's not just a left-wing fever dream, that really was happening in some way.

SAM ADLER-BELL - HOST, KNOW YOUR ENEMY: [00:49:45] Right. Right. And I think the Claremont scope fits into it in complicated ways, which we'll get to, but just as another example, Bill Crystal has a PhD from Harvard in political theory in government and he was a student of Harvey Mansfield's, and there's a famous line of Mansfield's, I forget when he was asked this, but someone because Mansfield is a well-known conservative in academia, and once he was tenured and established fought various battles at Harvard on the Harvard campus. He was the only faculty member to vote no to the creation of a women's studies department or something like that. But anyways, he was asked about the fact that many of his students were also conservatives and didn't get jobs in academia, and Mansfield said, "well, that's all right, they just go to Washington and run the government instead."

Adolph Reed Critiques The 1619 Project - The Michael Brooks Show - Air Date 5-14-20

ADOLPH REED: [00:50:25] The first sentence in the first essay is a lie, right? In 1619, 20 African slaves, the first 20 African slaves showed up in North America. Back then they weren't slaves. So it's time to drop the curtain, pack up the props and go home. But were they were sold as indentured servants and they served their time of indenture and they melted into the population of -- while when they were serving it, they melted in the population of indentured servants, and then they were free.

There's like a 50 year period. And for listeners who would be interested in this, there are two great sources. The original one is Edmund Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom*. And the newer one is my colleague Kathleen Brown's first book, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches and Anxious Patriarchs*. And that's a study -- they're both studies of the emergence of race and class, and in Brown's case, also gender, as technologies of hierarchy in colonial Virginia over the 17th century. And there's a good 50 to 60-year period between the time

that the first Africans showed up, and the time that you come out the other end of it with slavery and the racialized understanding of slavery, like you can watch over the course of that half or two-thirds of a century, how gradually -- and it's at the local court level, right, it's not big statutes of the House of Burgesses -- where gradually the distinctions between slaves and indentured servants become sharpened. And the distinction between enslaved and free Blacks become compressed. And they both point out that this was in response to other shit that was going on at colonial Virginia that had to do with, Oh my God, I don't believe it politically huh? The market for indentured servants from England was drying up, partly because after the first generation of Anglo Virginians got settled in and began to see themselves, not as hustlers who are getting rich to go back to England, but as a founding ruling class. Shit got nastier and nastier and they got more and more brutal and the word got back to England. People said, fuck it, I'd rather go in the galleys rather than go over there.

So that's already wrong, right? And in the argument about the sources of the Revolutionary War. It's what really -- I was thinking about this earlier -- if you want to identify a core problem, a conceptual problem with the 1619 Project, it's what Touré describes as race reductionism. That's because that's all they see, right? So anyway.

MICHAEL BROOKS - HOST, THE MICHAEL BROOKS SHOW: [00:53:33] So that's yeah, and it's interesting because even like one of the basic things that I saw that was responding to, it was saying like, look, the engine of the revolution is coming from New England, which has more abolitionist politics than the South, obviously.

Now the Constitution is an objectively pro-slavery document. And that's a product or, it's a compromise -- it allows it to go on is what I mean. And that's a political trade-off with the coalition you're trying to build across geographies to fight the battle. And that turns it again.

And I guess the question I have for you that also is disturbing to me is why is it -- like nothing that has just been said says the founding fathers were great. And what a nice thing -- I remember Bill O'Reilly going, slaves should thank the Americans because they got to come -- all of this, wing racist, American mythologizing. None of that is happening here. In some ways it makes it even, it adds to the varieties of obscenity, it's that, there's the class dimension, the gender dimension. And then also just the way things work wherever they are East West, North, South, which is I'm in New England, I don't happen to like slavery, but I need to partner up for muskets and money with some guys in Virginia whose whole economy is dependent on this thing. We're going to cut a deal. That's

politics.

ADOLPH REED: [00:55:03] Yeah. And on top of that, okay. Yeah, Jim Oakes is somebody you should have on; his book, *The Scorpion Sting*, is really great on this issue actually. But 'cause it was from the beginning a separate tradition of anti-slavery constitutionalism. And what some of the founders, I'm not saying all, right, but what they thought was, okay because of the deal, you've got to accept slavery where it exists. But they wanted to make sure that it couldn't expand. And the idea behind *The Scorpion's Sting* was that if you could freeze the institution in the lower South, and wean away the border States, it couldn't survive and it would shrivel and die. Well in the first place, they were too optimistic about being able to wean away the border States. But that tradition was there.

What's also interesting about this, is, and like this -- pardon me -- and this connects with -- oh man, a soft shell crab taco is really great, but. . . .

I'd like that now.

Oh yeah. But it connects with the shift from the defense of slavery as a necessary evil to the defense of slavery as a positive good that happens in the 1830s. Because people don't often think about is that the other thing that was happening during the 1820s and thirties was mass enfranchisement: the emergence of universal white male suffrage happens.

So say at the founding, you've got a bunch of rich guys sitting around a room, figuring out how to make decisions about all the rest of us, basically, about what to do with all the rest of us -- slave, indentured, free, like whatever.

And we're basically coming out of an historical context in which the distinction between slave and free was one that had a bunch of shit in the middle. So it wasn't quite as sharp. And in 1789 or three or 76 or 1800, Jefferson and -- what's his name? --Madison and Patrick Henry. I have an all the rest of them could say in Pinckney and anybody else you can think of in South Carolina could say, look, man, I know that this institution really is ultimately fucked up, but I gotta get paid. I got to make my money. I need it. Well, so by the late 1830s, you got all of these broke white guys out there voting. And the argument that we need to support slavery, 'cause I got to keep making my money, doesn't work quite as well. And this is at the same time that scientific racism is starting to take shape and whatever. But there's like a complex social and cultural and ideological dialectic that's playing out. And between -- I'll tell you what's a great book on this: Johnson and Roark's *Black Masters*, which is a study of a slave owning family in South Carolina, antebellum period actually. And one of the nice things about it is that they show how after the nullification crisis, the South Carolina elite starts thinking more and more that secession might actually be on the table at some point.

The white yeoman and what working class population starting to grow in the state with people coming in from outside of the country, too. And what is pretty self-consciously appealing to these working class white people and the artisans on the basis of racial identity, right? And even as those motherfuckers were complaining about competition from the free blacks and the slaves in Charleston, who who actually could rent out, sell some of their own labor to some extent, and you can see them self-consciously producing something called an identity as white men to get ready for secession.

MICHAEL BROOKS - HOST, THE MICHAEL BROOKS SHOW: [00:59:26] So what's so troubling...

ADOLPH REED: [00:59:28] Politics is doing all of this, right? Sorry.

MICHAEL BROOKS - HOST, THE MICHAEL BROOKS SHOW: [00:59:32] No. That's great. No, because it isn't. The idea that by complicating these things and talking about all the variables you're taking away any of the moral punch is a problem for analysis. And then I guess, the question then becomes in 2020 not a project that took these things on, including obviously the racial dimension, but all of the dimensions, or maybe even just the racial dimension, but actually said we're focusing on this facet of it. Not that this is the single explanatory variable for everything. And I guess, and I think the stake of it, I guess if I read you correctly, is that the stake of it practically in 2020 then becomes, if we get back to making the stuff just

metaphysics, then again, where do we go? Where do we go politically? What's to be done with that?

Summary

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [01:00:25] We've just heard clips today, starting with Chris Hayes on *Why Is This Happening* talking with Nikole Hannah-Jones and Ibram X. Kendi about the aim of the 1619 Project. Medhi Hassan spoke with Eddie Glaude Jr. about Trump's clumsy attempt to cement a propagandized version of history. *Start Making Sense* broke down the 1619 Project piece by piece as well as the conservative response to it. *Past Present* discussed the long history of the so-called classroom wars over which versions of history we should be allowed to teach our kids. And *In The Thick* discussed the deep impact of, and predictable conservative reaction to, the 1619 project.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard bonus clips from *Know Your Enemy*, explaining the Straussian origins of the political philosophy behind the 1776 Commission and *The Michael Brook Show* addressed some criticism of the 1619 Project coming from the Left

For non-members, those bonus clips are linked in the show notes and are part of the transcript for today's episode so you can still find them if you make the effort, but to hear that and all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly into your podcast feed, sign up to support the show at BestoftheLeft.com/support or request a financial hardship membership because we don't make a lack of funds, a barrier to hearing more information. Every request is granted, no questions asked.

And now, we'll hear from you.

Proper attribution for vaccines - Dr. Gay

VOICEMAILER: DR. GAY: [01:01:57] Hi Jay, this is Dr. Gay. In your episode on inequalities and power dynamics around the COVID-19 vaccine, there were several times when the "Moderna" or "Pfizer" vaccines were mentioned. The Moderna vaccine was primarily developed by the NIH while the Pfizer vaccine was developed by BioNTech. Therefore, by referring to these vaccines by financial backers and distributors, you are contributing to the corporate infrastructure behind the inequalities and power dynamics that you object to in the episode. It is like referring to Haymarket Books' publication "No is Not Enough," rather than attributing it to its author Naomi Klein. In practice, I find it best to refer to the research institute first for proper attribution followed by the corporate sponsor because that is how it is often misattributed in the news and media. As such, it should be the NIH-Moderna vaccine, the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine, the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine, and the BARDA-Johnson and Johnson vaccine when referring to the vaccines, it is important to focus on who is doing the work rather than who is funding and profiting the most from it.

Financial health of the show? - Nick from California

VOICEMAILER: NICK FROM CALIFORNIA: [01:03:04] Hey, Jay, I'm really back for the new bonus episodes, the conversational ones.

I just wanted to ask what the financial health of the organization was now. How're things doing? Maybe in a bonus episode, give us an update. I know you put a deadline on speaking about the shape of the show. That is, you said, okay, well, this will be my last time for a while or whatever at some point in the past.

But, maybe on a bonus episode, you could let us know how you caught up. If you caught up. I hope you have. I hope things have gone well and tide you over, but, I'm interested to know.

All right, well, if you don't want to cover that, you don't have to, but, if you have any interest in that, I'm sure I'm not alone in people who want to know how the show is doing, and if you've made up some ground and how things are going.

All right, Jay! Stay awesome. Bye-bye.

Final comments on framing vaccine manufacturers properly

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [01:04:13] Thanks to all of those who called into the voicemail line or wrote in their messages to be played as VoicedMails. If you'd like to leave a comment or question of your own to be played on the show, you can record a message at (202) 999-3991 or write me a message to jay@bestoftheleft.com.

So, quick response to the messages we just heard. I agree with the framing that Dr. Gay brought to the vaccine issue. To be totally honest, I have not bothered to get into that level of weeds, but I think it's a perfectly good argument that we should so that we know how to properly frame who's doing the work versus who's making the money. So, it's a big distinction that we actually are trying to make on the show, and I think he makes a perfectly good point that we should do a better job of that. Of course, when it comes to pulling clips to use for the show, we're, we're stuck with the framing everyone else uses, which as he points out, a lot of people misframe it. And so you tend to go along with framing it the way everyone else does so as to not have to constantly correct and reframe and reeducate, but in an ideal world, we would all be doing a better job of that.

And then secondly, just real quick response to Nick. You know, as he alluded, I'll go into more details on this in the bonus episode. The answer to the fiscal health of the show question is pretty okay. We're definitely okay for now. It's just a really complicated question figuring out the cash flow versus cash on . . . It's just more complicated than it feels like it should be. And so I will go into more details about that on the bonus show, but for everyone, yes. Pretty much everyone who signed up for memberships and as the memberships continue to come in and a whole bunch of one-time donations came in toward the end of the year last year that got us to a perfectly okay place for a while. And if we had more members, then I would be more confident that that for a while could be converted into indefinitely, if that makes sense. So don't worry about it. We're not in a panic, you shouldn't be in a panic, but that's kind of where we are.

Now, just a quick comment on a clip that only the members heard. So, for the members, this is a teaser for the bonus show that you'll all be getting. For everyone else, bear with me or sign up for membership so you can hear the clip for yourself and get our explanation in the bonus show.

One of the bonus clips for the members today was not a traditional clip that I think this is a great perspective, and you should hear it. It was a total mixed bag of really interesting takes and things that sounded good and also coming to conclusions that I don't necessarily agree with, which are some of the most frustrating takes I've come across as you say a bunch of interesting stuff and then come to the wrong conclusion. That's kind of where I'm coming down on one of these clips. It was critiquing the 1619 project from the left and maybe correcting it a little bit of factual detail here and there. And here's what you're missing or here's what you're putting undue focus on or because you're focusing so much on this, you're missing this other thing over here which is maybe equally important. And all of that stuff is good and interesting, but its sort of comes to the conclusion like the 1619 project totally screwed up and is leading people in the wrong direction, and that I just don't buy.

So, as I said, it's a teaser. It's not supposed to make a lot of sense. I'm just giving you a little taste of what the members heard. And if you want to check out the clip for yourself, it's linked in the show notes. If you want to hear us talk about it in more detail, Deon primarily helped with the research for today's episode and so he's going to be on the bonus show with us, and we're going to discuss in more detail this sort of complicated, very muddy water kind of aspect of where criticisms from the left are coming from when directed at the 1619 project.

And now just a quick reminder. We are running an experiment with a new game I just invented sort of based on the *New Yorker's* comic caption contest except for writing misleading yet truthful headlines. And this is all based on the inoculation theory of educating about and discussing harmful subjects like misinformation. It can actually be more effective to teach the tenets of disinformation like the actual techniques used so that people are helped to recognize them when they see them out in the real world, like an inoculation. So, we're running the test. We've gotten a few answers already, but I'm hoping to get a few more.

So I gave three headlines because you can pick just one or more than one, however you want to do it. So, you have some options and the game is just look up these stories, just familiarize yourself with them a little bit. I know everyone's busy, but this is for education. It's important. Then write a headline which is as misleading as you can make it while still being entirely factual. It's basically an art, and if you can understand the tenets of how to do it, it really is going to help you recognize them when you see it in the real world.

So, the three stories I put out there were that the Biden administration is launching a review aimed at closing the Guantanamo Bay prison. Also, they are all about Biden. The second one is about Biden's administration looking to rescind Medicaid work requirements. And the third is that Biden is beginning to allow, or will begin to allow, asylum seekers waiting in Mexico to enter the US.

So, if you want to look at the details of those stories and come up with a misleading headline of your own, please send it in the disinformation techniques that I think are a really good jumping off point for any of these would be to mischaracterize or twist or cherry pick facts to make it seem extremely left-wing or extremely right-wing, whereas the reality is probably something different. Bonus points for clickbait, anything that's real clickbait-ey. That's always nice and manipulative, manipulating data, what we lovingly refer to as lies, damn lies and statistics and then appeals to emotion or stoking polarization. Anything along those lines are

great ways to mislead people. So, if you want to play along, please do. You can of course just email me or leave a voicemail with your headlines.

So, as always, keep the comments coming in, whether about this game or anything else. The number to dial (202) 999-3991 or email me at jay@bestoftheleft.com. That is going to be it for today.

Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show. Thanks to the Monosyllabic, Transcriptionist Trio Ben, Dan, and Ken for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together and thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic design, web mastering, and so on. And of course, thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at bestoftheleft.com/support as that is absolutely how the program survives. And now everyone can earn rewards and support the show just by telling everyone you know about it using our Refer-o-Matic program at bestoftheleft.com/refer. You just have to refer five people to get our super secret Best of Left artwork for your phone or tablet which everyone is raving about. The can't get enough of it, and that's literally the only way you can get it. You have to refer five friends; you get amazing artwork. And if you don't do that, then you never get to find out what it looks like. That's the deal.

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 be found in the show notes, on the blog and likely right on the device you're using to listen. So, coming to you from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of the Left Podcast coming to you twice weekly thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.com.