

#1415 Accountability Not Justice

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of Left Podcast* in which we shall learn about the trial of Derrick Shovan itself before moving on to various responses, a wide angle lens on some of the forces at play in policing, and the work is still to be done. Clips today are from *The Brian Lehrer Show*, *Criminal (In)justice*, *Democracy Now!*, *The Majority Report*, *Progressive Faith Sermons*, *The United States of Anxiety*, and *The Takeaway*.

Chauvin Found Guilty on All Counts - The Brian Lehrer Show - Air Date 4-21-21

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:00:28] Yesterday at this time we were breaking down the closing arguments and the legal considerations for the jury in the trial of defendant Derek Chauvin. This morning, the way we described the former police officer is officially different. He is convicted murderer Derek Chauvin according to the judge.

JUDGE PETER CAHILL: [00:00:47] The State of Minnesota, County of Hennepin District Court Fourth Judicial District, State of Minnesota, plaintiff v. Derek Michael Chauvin, defendant. Verdict: count one. Court file number 27, CR2012646. We, the jury, in the above-entitled matter as to count one, unintentional, second degree murder while committing a felony find the defendant guilty. This verdict agreed to this 20th day of April, 2021 at 1:44 PM.

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:01:16] Judge Peter Cahill reading the jury's verdict yesterday on the most serious count, second degree murder, in case you hadn't heard it from his own lips and wanted to hear it from his own lips. This is not a hoax. So, there was the murder of George Floyd accountability trial. Now, Congress will debate the George Floyd Accountability Act. States and local police departments are having different conversations, too than a year ago before the number . . . before the murder. Sorry. They're having different conversations than a year ago before the murder of George Floyd. So can the end of jury deliberations in the one case be the beginning of something more systemic? Here's Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison speaking yesterday after the verdict.

ATTORNEY GENERAL KEITH ELLISON: [00:02:04] The work of our generation is to put unaccountable law enforcement behind us. It's time to transfer the relationship . . . transform the relationship between community and the people who are sworn to protect them from one that is mistrustful, suspicious and in some cases terrifying into one that is empathetic, compassionate and affirming. With... that will benefit everyone, including police officers who deserve to serve in a profession that is honored in departments where they don't have to worry about colleagues who don't follow the rules.

BRIAN LEHRER - HOST, THE BRIAN LEHRER SHOW: [00:02:40] And Ellison went even further than that, further than the work of this generation being to hold police merely accountable.

ATTORNEY GENERAL KEITH ELLISON: [00:02:47] The work of our generation is to put an end to the vestiges of Jim Crow and the centuries of trauma and finally put an end to racism. We can end it. It doesn't have to be with us into the future if we decide now to have true liberty and justice for all. The work of our generation is to say goodbye to old practices that don't

serve us anymore and to put them all behind us. One conviction, even one like this one that creates even when this one can create a powerful new opening to shed old practices and reset relationships.

Chauvin Guilty - Criminal (In)justice - Air Date 4-22-21

DAVID HARRIS - HOST, CRIMINAL (IN)JUSTICE: [00:03:23] Now, what was that trial like? Well, here are a couple of takes on it from my point of view. Number one, as I said it already, it was very well tried by the prosecution. They had that video, of course, as their centerpiece of evidence, and it's extremely powerful. As we all know, it was powerful enough to ignite a nationwide, really worldwide movement demanding changes in how police act, how they use force, and many, many other things. But the good thing about the prosecution's case was that they did not rest on that alone. They knew that the only real cards the defense would have to play would be whether or not the jury would agree that the death was caused by Officer Chauvin.

Now that may seem like a ridiculous question to you, given that we've all seen the video, what else could have caused it? But we knew that the medical evidence in the case included at least two important things. Number one, evidence of some kind of heart disease that Mr. Floyd had. And number two, evidence that he may have ingested some illegal substances. And therefore the prosecution was right to anticipate that those arguments would be made and they countered them very well with medical experts who said, nope, he died of asphyxia, that meaning suffocation basically from having a knee on his neck and the weight of a man on it.

It was not heart disease, it was not other substances, and others suggestions like that. So they made sure that in their own case they cross those T's, dot those I's, and close those doors. They were also able to do a wonderful job, I thought persuasively, by bringing in live witnesses who were there. That wasn't strictly necessary, but they brought in the young lady who made the video. They brought in other people who were standing there. They brought in the clerk who had called the police at the insistence of his boss when he'd been passed a counterfeit \$20 bill. Why did they do all this? They wanted to humanize the situation overall to show its grave impact on everybody. And then they had a chance of course, to humanize George Floyd himself through other civilian witnesses. They did this with his current romantic partner and with others. That's all allowed under Minnesota law and they were right to do that. It really made for a very strong case.

And they pulled all this together in the end, in a closing argument, in which they said the police are not on trial here, Chauvin is on trial here. And that was crucial in the sense that it told jurors, a juror might be wavering, thinking I don't want to blame the police for everything that goes wrong, well, it's not about **the** police, it's about Derek Chauvin. And you know that lots of other people outside that courtroom were saying, no this is about **the** police as an institution or the Minneapolis Police as an institution, and the prosecution was saying, nope, not true, it's about this man on this day, doing this thing. And the result was that they had no jurors try to hang the jury. Everybody had enough evidence to go forward.

On the defense side, defense attorneys often just have to play the cards they're dealt. And that was the case here. They could not argue, crucially as they do in so many of these death cases, that the officer was in fear for his life, that it was a split second decision, those things

usually play a big, big role in police shooting and otherwise killing cases, but they just didn't apply here. When you've got officer Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd's neck, looking for all intents and purposes like he's waiting in line at Walgreens or something, you can't argue that he looks like his life is in danger or that he thought something was going to happen to him. None of those things applied. So they were left with the very weak cards of something else caused the death.

Now that's not nothing. I want everybody to understand, in every homicide case, a homicide is what we call a result crime, you have to prove that there is a connection between the actions of the defendant and the result, in this case the death of Mr. Floyd. That is crucial in every homicide case. So they were attempting to show that something else interfered with that, or actually caused it. And you could not lay blame with Mr. Chauvin, it's just that their evidence was not strong enough. And it was well countered by the prosecution.

So, where are we now? Where does all of this leave us? I think there's a tendency at this point to take two different positions. I hear it from the police side that "Chauvin was a bad apple", that "he doesn't represent all police", that "he doesn't represent the whole Minneapolis Police Department". Or "it's over now, we got the bad guy outta here, he got what he deserved", and by the way, police didn't have any great things to say about Officer Chauvin outside or inside the trial.

And inside the trial we actually saw police testify against him. His own police chief testifying against him. Another very high ranking officer testifying against him. A former officer, a retired officer, testifying against him. And this had two important purposes. Number one, it cuts off the defense argument that he's just following his training, he's following department policy, all of that stuff, they said, "No, absolutely not. That's not our training. It's not our policy." But more than that, people want to think that maybe this is the crumbling of the "great blue wall" of the of the practice of all police officers always backing each other up. I think time will tell, I think this is a pretty interesting sign, but whether this will happen in other cases, we'll have to see.

But there is talk on that side of things. "We're under siege, " he's just one bad guy," this whole thing, we got to get past it". That is a, I think, a sign of what we face. We should not regard the verdict in this case as the end point. It isn't the end point, it is just a, waystation. A very important one, don't get me wrong, there had to be justice here in George Floyd's murder for what Derek Chauvin did. Now the Attorney General of Minnesota, Keith Ellison said, and I think properly so, justice would require a complete restoration to where things were before, and we can't have that because George Floyd is dead. But we do get some measure of accountability and accountability, I believe, is a basic, maybe the most important part of justice. Certainly in a murder case where you can't bring the victim back.

So it's important, but this isn't the end of the discussion about what we want policing to look like, how big we want it to be, what do we want, police officers, the folks with the handcuffs in the guns, to be doing versus maybe social workers or mental health workers or others. We have had, and are continuing to have very important, often heated discussions in this country about the issues of race and how that plays into all of policing, but somebody other aspects of our society and those discussions and those changes must continue. They cannot stop and they shouldn't stop.

Black Visions Collective: We Need to Abolish the Police & End Militarized Occupations of Our Cities - Democracy Now! - Air Date 4-21-21

JUAN GONZALEZ: [00:11:45] And in terms of the sentencing for Chauvin, will he be in about — in approximately eight weeks, your sense of what would be a just sentence for him in this situation?

KANDACE MONTGOMERY: [00:11:59] I don't necessarily think that I have an assessment of what would feel as a just sentence in this moment. As an abolitionist and as someone who really thinks that justice is tied up much beyond someone being imprisoned, I think it's important to really think about justice, going forward, actually looks like defunding and abolishing police. It actually looks like ending militarized occupation in cities that are responding to police murders and the like, and truly uprooting the hideous roots of this institution of policing in this system that continues to kill Black people. At the same time that we were, you know, exhaling or collectively celebrating the verdict of George Floyd's murder, we also witnessed another murder of a Black teenager, Ma'Khia Bryant, almost at the exact same time. And so, really, as folks are looking forward to the sentencing, I really want to encourage people to think about justice as much more long-term and that we set our bar a lot higher when it comes to calling for justice than an adequate sentencing or not.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:13:24] Last year, Kandace, in the days after the protests erupted over Derek Chauvin's murder of George Floyd, the majority of the Minneapolis City Council made a pledge to dismantle the police. This is Minneapolis City Council President Lisa Bender.

LISA BENDER: [00:13:43] Our commitment is to end our city's toxic relationship with the Minneapolis Police Department, to end policing as we know it and to recreate systems of public safety that actually keep us safe.

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:13:58] Around the same time last year after George Floyd's murder, organizers with your group, Black Visions Collective, and others convinced Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey to step outside his home to speak with them. In this clip, we hear you, Kandace, questioning the mayor.

KANDACE MONTGOMERY: [00:14:21] Will you defund the Minneapolis Police Department?

MAYOR JACOB FREY: [00:14:24] I do not support the full abolition of the police department.

KANDACE MONTGOMERY: [00:14:28] All right, fine! You're wasting our time! Get the [bleep] out of here! Get the [bleep] out!

PROTESTERS: [00:14:33] Go home, Jacob! Go home! Go home, Jacob! Go home! Go home, Jacob! Go home!

AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW!: [00:14:38] So, that's Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey telling you, Kandace Montgomery, "I cannot support the full abolition of the police." Now, that was last June. I want to ask you two things. First of all, the importance of

the activists? It's something that the Floyd family repeated over and over last night in thanking activists. The only reason the first African American elected to statewide office in Minnesota, Keith Ellison, was in charge of this prosecution is because it was taken out of the hands of Hennepin County by the governor as a result of the massive protests. And then, I want to ask about the protests very much centering around this whole push for defunding the police in Minneapolis, including the City Council's vote, what, in December to cut \$8 million from the \$170 million police budget and divert the funds to mental health and violence prevention. Lay out for us what you have proposed and what you feel has been accomplished and what you think needs to be accomplished.

KANDACE MONTGOMERY: [00:15:53] Yeah. So, for the several last years, even before 2020, Black Visions and our partner, Reclaim the Block, and other community organizations have been calling for the divestment from policing and, in particular, the investment in our communities — investment as in investment in real safety, the things that actually create the conditions for safe and healthy and vibrant communities, like housing, like healthcare, like quality access to jobs, like water that you can drink, things like that, instead of pouring and wasting millions of dollars on policing, that we know, ultimately, have, one, never been designed to protect and serve low-income people, people of color ever — in fact, were intentionally created to oppress and keep us in our current conditions. That has really been our call since 2018.

And so, in 2020, it was really an important and immediate call to action to defund the police after the murder of George Floyd, because, for me and many of my comrades, that is what justice actually looks like, is ending this and making sure that there is never another George Floyd or a Daunte Wright or a Dolal Idd or a Ma'Khia Bryant or a Breonna Taylor ever again. That has really been the work that we've been doing.

And we have been working with the City Council to push forward that demand. Right now what that looks like here in Minneapolis is calling for the development of a Department of Public Safety and a charter change in our city that will eliminate the requirement for the current shape of our police department, the amount of officers, and really the amount of money that we waste every year here in Minneapolis on policing, and allow us to move those resources and create the infrastructure at a citywide level for real investment in safety alternatives that do not rely on the police solely, and a public health approach to how we think about safety here in Minneapolis that truly centers care for all of our people. And the City Council, along with community organizers, have been working on this initiative this year and are excited to bring it to voters in November, this proposed charter change.

What I'll say about our mayor, Jacob Frey, is that what we've seen since last summer and to this point is that he is completely inadequate to fulfill the responsibilities of his executive role, to be clear about the types of decisions that he does or does not have power around, to actually fulfill the promises that he ran on when he was being elected, and has continuously tried to pit Black communities against each other in order to preserve his political standing and actually not move forward on investments in community safety like his constituents have been calling for. So I think it's important for people to understand the ways that our mayor has really blocked and gotten in the way of justice.

You know, I want to shout out the George Floyd Square organizers, who for almost an entire year have been out there every single day, out there between 8 a.m. 'til late into the

evening, protesting and holding down truly sacred space that is providing mutual aid and care to community members, that is curating the art of this movement, so that people can memorialize and remember this moment, and is not letting the city back down from its promises. That has been so crucial, as well as the organizing led by young people during the uprising last summer that truly lit the fire under the conversation here in Minneapolis, but across the country and across the globe, and put pressure in all of the right places that were needed. And then, of course, our demands, alongside others, to not just call for Black lives mattering, but for — to call for a clear demand to change this system by defunding the police, as we move towards abolition of the police ultimately, over the years to come, and invest in a new model, a new future, a new vision, for how we do safety. So, that's really the moment here. And I really appreciate you lifting up the importance of activism, and not just activism, but intentional organizing, that folks have put into, intentional strategy that community members have been building for decades to get us to this point.

Chauvin's Conviction Wasn't An End But A Beginning - The Majority Report w Sam Seder - Air Date 4-25-21

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM SEDER: [00:20:54] What's your take on Nancy Pelosi's comments? I know we've covered them, we covered them on the show, but they were particularly, in my view, out of touch and seemingly she had time to prepare for this and yet she thanked George Floyd, for the viewers that don't remember, for sacrificing his life so that he could get justice for his murder. That, to me, that signals that in her mind, she sees this conviction of Chauvin as something larger, akin to legislative action, than it actually is. In addition to just the I think completely tone deaf way to describe the murder of a man.

OSITA NWANEVU: [00:21:33] Yeah. And she wasn't alone in that. Jacob Frey I think made a very similar statement after the verdict, saying in effect this city is better off for George Floyd having died because now we understand how unjust things are. And there's been this moment of justice.

Look, I think that this is indicative of a kind of broader mentality within the Democratic party and amongst a lot of Democratic voters where the victories that are important are the symbolic ones, right? Like even if there are systems of inequity that everybody understands and knows are unjust, you can have these moments of symbolic resonance that ought to mean as much as a real policy victory.

I think you see this on issues beyond policing and criminal justice issues. I think this is just a general approach to politics that is really deepened over the last decade or so, or at least since the Obama administration began in 2009, since Obama's election in 2008, there's just been sort of attention to the symbolism of politics.

There's always been symbolism within politics, but I think you have now a kind of way of thinking about politics in the Democratic party, where the symbols are most of what's there. And that view of politics sits in real tension with obviously rising crop of progressives a rising Left that is pushing the president now on substantive policy issues and asking for meaningful concessions and not just these kinds of fables where the death of one man can stand in in place of broader reforms.

And, it's important to say that this isn't just a statement that was sucky and bad. You've had people, it actually has reported I think yesterday that the verdict has convinced some Democrats on the Hill that they don't need to push as hard on criminal justice reform because people are happy now, people who've seen justice done in this way. And so the pressure on them to actually turn to legislation, as Biden promised during the campaign he would do, that pressure has been lessened by the verdict. So it's more than just Nancy Pelosi and Jacob Frey, and these people made a weird, bizarre statement.

I think this kind of symbolic politics has real-world consequences because it shapes the kinds of policies they're being proposed, if any policies at all rather that shapes actual concrete politics.

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT W/ SAM SEDER: [00:23:45] In the wake of George Floyd's killing, what do you see that tension between what is happening with many people who still see this is a systemic problem, and this hope or excuse or whatever, by the Democratic party, who certainly rode a lot of that into office, and their sense that, okay, we're done now.

What's that tension? Where do you anticipate that tension expressing itself?

OSITA Nwanevu: [00:24:12] I don't think the activist community is going to let things go and ease up now, in part because the police are going to keep killing people. Immediately after the verdict, we heard about this case of the police shooting and killing a teenage girl, and that got headlines. That sort of tainted whatever happiness people felt about the Chauvin verdict. So I think that the activist energy is going to sustain itself, just because these, again, like nothing has been done to systematically reform policing in this country and we're going to continue to see abuses and people are gonna continue hearing about them.

I think there in the interim, for the reasons I just described, on the Hill at least, and within the Biden administration, it does seem like people are taking the Chauvin verdict as a reason to hold back.

It's hard to say much more than the activist community is going to be as serious as they've been from the get-go on these issues. And they're not going to let a temporary victory dissuade them. But in terms of concrete political action happening on the national level, I think the Democrats in power are going to use this as a sign that they should pull back on an initiative that they're already wavering on. And you remember the "defund police" debates during the election. Oh, progressors shouldn't give, come out and meet all of the systemic critiques of policing. The Democratic party was already looking for excuses just to step back from this because they think it's politically, it's a political bomb for them. And they think they do about it politically on this issue. I don't really have a crystal ball say much more than the police are going to keep killing people. The police are going to continue to abuse people and in ways that don't make it to national headlines, in ways that often aren't even necessarily violent. Communities across this country have policing shaped their lives in all kinds of deep ways that don't necessarily always translate into somebody being shot, but they're still repressive and oppressive and still hurt the disadvantaged, impoverished people in cities like the city I live in, Baltimore.

So all of that is going to continue until we start reforming the system in a more serious way. I don't know that there is a national -- I don't know that there's will on a national level to do

something, but certainly local activists have already won a set of victories as a consequence of the protests that happened last year. And I think that those victories will probably continue.

What have we learned - Dr. Roger Ray Part 1 - Progressive Faith Sermons - Air Date 4-25-21

DR. ROGER RAY - HOST, PROGRESSIVE FAITH SERMONS: [00:26:19] No one can rationally celebrate in a case like this, George Floyd is still dead. The court system can only do so much to give justice to his memory, but at least they did what they could in this case. We're not guaranteed that they'll do it again. The trial of the three other officers involved in this incident will come up in June, and we can only hope that this at least sets a new direction.

We can't say much more than that, in this case, the dark wall of injustice has been cracked, but it's going to take a lot more hammer blows for that wall to be broken. I'm relatively certain that all of you who listen to my sermons will have spent some time listening to some of the evidence during the trial. You saw a large black man with his hands handcuffed behind his back with his face down in the pavement with Chauvin's knee on his neck as he pleaded for his life, telling him, "I can't breathe," and finally, even calling out for his deceased mother to help him.

But folks, I want to take you back 11 months to May 25th of last year, before the video went viral, before the police officers involved were fired under public pressure, and before Derek Chauvin was charged. The day after Chauvin had murdered George Floyd in the street, the Minneapolis Police Department released this statement. And I'm going to ask you to give me two minutes to read it aloud, because I think we need to hear the whole thing.

Press release from the Minneapolis Police Department, May 26, 2020. On Monday evening, shortly after 8:00 PM, officers from the Minneapolis Police Department responded to the 3,700 block of Chicago Avenue South on a report of a forgery in progress. Officers were advised that the suspect was sitting on top of a blue car and appeared to be under the influence. Two officers arrived and located the suspect, a male believed to be in his forties, in his car. He was ordered to step from his car. After he got out, he physically resisted officers. Officers were able to get the suspect into handcuffs and noted he appeared to be suffering medical distress.

Officer's called for an ambulance. He was transported to the Hennepin County Medical Center by ambulance, where he died a short time later. At no time were weapons of any type used by anyone involved in this incident. The Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension has been called in to investigate this incident at the request of the Minneapolis Police Department. No officers were injured in this incident. Body-worn cameras were on and activated during this incident.

The Minneapolis police gave themselves several hours to concoct an account of the murder of George Floyd that sounded like "there's nothing to see here." They made it sound like they were almost sympathetic, that this was just so unfortunate, that he was just having a medical incident when they were trying to question him. We know that George Floyd had been dead for the last five minutes that Chauvin was kneeling on his neck, but the police, in

their official press release, said that the police intervened, called an ambulance, sent him to the hospital, and **later** he died at the hospital.

Chauvin was found guilty of murder, but there were four officers involved in the incident. There was a dispatcher who was watching on video. There were other members of the police force who were aware of this while it was happening. And when it was all over their official officers wrote this piece of fiction to try to convince the public that these helpful officers had noticed with deep concern that he was having a medical incident and they acted to save his life, but sadly he died in spite of their best efforts. So folks, what have we learned from this incident?

Why Cops Don't Change - The United States of Anxiety - Air Date 4-19-21

KAI WRIGHT: [00:31:25] Just to lay down the basics here legally. The point here is that the Fourth Amendment is what protects us against violence by the cops or by the state in general, I guess. It includes this idea of reasonableness, explain the Fourth Amendment like one on one?

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:31:41] Fourth Amendment says that the state cannot do unreasonable search and seizure. Now, obviously the founding fathers did not define what unreasonable meant because the founding fathers were some unreasonable white men. They had some beliefs that would be canceled in this culture. Let's just put it like that. The way that phrase "unreasonable search and seizure" has been interpreted for most of American history is a reasonable man on the street standard.

I should add it is always a man, it has always been a white man, but it as a reasonable white man, what would they do? How would they think? How would they react? That is the standard for unreasonable search and seizure.

Over time the courts have increasingly interpreted that what a reasonable person would expect from the police is to my mind quite different than anything that approaches reason. Already we're in a world where the police can search you and sees you from patting down at your body to forcing you to take your breath. There are all kinds of things that the police can do already that I think question the reasonable man standard.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:32:56] The seize part is the violence part. Is that what I'm to understand? They can't come and beat me up under the Fourth Amendment because that's unreasonable seizure.

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:33:07] Seizure is what we call bullets now I guess. We've determined that shooting you, beating you up physically assaulting you, we've determined that that is a kind of seizure, which I guess it is if we're going to use that archaic language. Sure. There are occasionally, Kai, I wouldn't lie to you, there are occasionally and there was one argument from the Supreme Court this term, cases where the cops argue that shooting people is not seizing them.

There was a New Mexico lady that tried to get away in her car. They shot her in the back, but she was able to drive away. They said that because she was able to drive away, that proves that shooting her three times in the back wasn't a seizure. The cops lost, but they tried it.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:33:57] Well, okay. The Supreme Court, you bring us to the Supreme Court. we got the Fourth Amendment it says we're protected against this unreasonable seizure, which may or may not include bullets. Along comes 1989 in a case called *Graham V Connor*, which the Chauvin defence team has been citing repeatedly, you point out. This case is now foundational in deciding when and how cops get to hurt people. Let's walk through the history of that case. Who was Graham and what happened to him that was being litigated?

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:34:31] Dethorne Graham was a diabetic. This happened in the mid 80s. He went into a store to get some orange juice. He was having an issue. He went into the store. He immediately determined the line was too long for him to deal with it. I'm sure many New Yorkers have been in that situation. He went back into his car. His friend was actually driving the car and back into the car they drove off a cop who was outside the store observed a Black man walk in the store and immediately walked out and determined at that point that perhaps something suspicious had happened, perhaps he had done some--

I don't know what he would have done, but he trailed Dethorne Graham's car for a couple blocks. Pulled them over and at this point with the slow walk to the car there, "Let me see your license." Dethorne Graham is now in full diabetic shock. When they pull him out of the car, again, on suspicion of being in a store and then leaving-- Stopped for being in a store and leaving, they're saying he's resisting, he's in diabetic shock.

The friend, the driver is like, "Look, I have his card. I have his diabetes card. I have his letter. Just give him a drink, just give him some orange juice. That's all we're trying to do." Cops are not listening to him. They decide Dethorne is resisting arrest. They slam his head into the hood of the car because I don't know what the cops have about slamming heads into hoods. It's like why they joined the force. Slam has happened to the hood of his car, try to get him into his car.

He's just freaking out at this point, break his foot, get him down to the ground. At which point another cop actually goes to the store, which says nothing happened and they let him go. That was the seizure. That was the seizure that happened to Dethorne Graham. He sued for excessive force, violation of his rights, blah, blah, blah. Pointedly, he sued under the 14th amendment. He said, "This was a racial biased stop." When the case got to the Supreme Court, and I'll save you the procedural history.

When the case finally got to the Supreme Court, the conservatives on the court led by William Rehnquist, they converted his claim from a 14th Amendment, these cops were racist claim, to a Fourth Amendment these cops conducted an unreasonable search and seizure claim. I think that's always important to remember that this case that changes the way police can use force wasn't even what the man asks for, so just remember that.

Anyway, they convert it to a Fourth Amendment claim, and then they say, the Supreme Court says unanimously, by the way, this decision ended up including liberals, that the standard should not be what a reasonable person would do because obviously, a reasonable person would not beat the crap out of the diabetic. Can't argue that. The standard should not be

what a reasonable person should do, it should be what a reasonable cop on the scene should do, and that changed everything then.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:37:33] Why does that change everything? Explain why that's such a big difference.

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:37:36] Because now the standard for cop violence is whether another cop would be violent. It's like saying, "The standard of food is what my dog would eat." Well, that's not-- That completely changes what food is now, doesn't it?

KAI WRIGHT: [00:37:54] Right.

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:37:54] Now all the cops have to say, "As long as these cops stick together." As long as the next cop and the next cop and the next cop says like, "Oh, I would've beat up Dethorne Graham. Oh, I would have definitely broken his foot. Oh, I would have broke two feet." You see how that violence-- it's literally a situation where violence begets violence.

Now, the reason why the liberal side on, I'll give them some-- I'm not going to completely trash them. The reason why the liberal side is not because before Graham V Connor, the standard was that you had to show that the cops acted unreasonably under the reasonable man standard, but you also had to show that they intended to harm you. They had to have a malicious intent when they were beating the crap out of you or whatever. Liberals felt like that was too high of a standard.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:38:38] Because you could never prove intent.

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:38:40] Right. The cop, "I didn't mean to break his foot. It just happened when I was beating him up." The liberals thought that by moving it to a reasonable cop standard, you were actually making it easier to bring excessive force cases against the police, but history has shown that they've just made it harder because the cops always stick together, and they always tell each other, "Oh, this is reasonable. This is reasonable. This is reasonable." They're basically saying, "We can only judge police action based on police action," as opposed to based on something objective.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:39:15] Is there a political fix to Graham V Connor? How do we fix Graham V Connor then barring a Supreme Court deciding they were wrong?

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:39:26] You want the possible issue, or you want the right answer?

KAI WRIGHT: [00:39:28] I want the answer.

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:39:29] The way to fix Graham V Connor is through legislation, we should have a national use of force guideline promulgated by the federal government that should apply to every single police locality. If the Supreme Court says that that is unconstitutional because of some federal's concerns, then we should pack justices on the Supreme Court until we get enough who think that it's constitutional, period, end of story. We cannot live in a country, we can no longer live in a country where the use of force is defined by the police, and it's defined differently by the police depending on which side of a county line I happen to have a broken taillight. That just has to stop.

Now, what should that new legislative standard be? That's where you get into a lot of different, I think, arguments or concerns. California made an effort to change their state standards and the police unions fought it bitterly. Cops argue that if you change the standard, if you make it so that you have to be right with 2020 hindsight, cops might hesitate on the job, and that's what I want. I want cops to hesitate before they shoot people.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:40:34] Exactly.

ELIE MYSTAL: [00:40:35] My standard would be what I call reasonable in fact. If you think that the suspect has a gun and you shoot him, he better have a gun, because if he doesn't, it should be automatic strict liability jail time for you. You don't get an opportunity to be wrong. If you think he had a gun and you shoot and it's a cell phone or a wallet, or a refracted gas off of a planet, then guess what, you go to jail, end of story. Do not ask [unintelligible], do not collect \$200. That would be my standard, that would be quite a difference that would make cops hesitate. That would make cops hesitate before they shot me or my kids. That's what I want. That's not what cops want.

I would set the standard at objectively correct. Other reformers will allow for some leeway for cops trying their best in a quick and difficult situation, but whatever we do, we need to change the standard for when cops are able to deploy deadly force.

What have we learned - Dr. Roger Ray Part 2 - Progressive Faith Sermons - Air Date 4-25-21

DR. ROGER RAY - HOST, PROGRESSIVE FAITH SERMONS: [00:41:45] There was a 17 year old girl there who recorded on her cell phone Floyd's death. Chauvin threatened to pepper spray her if she didn't stop videoing, and you should all know you have a legal right to video record a police officer at work, but she didn't lower her phone. Say what you will about Facebook, and there was a lot of things to say about Facebook, but she posted that video on social media, it went viral, and the lies that I read to you from the Minneapolis Police Department fell apart with an eye witness video of what actually happened. Without her courageous action I'm afraid that you and I might never have even heard of George Floyd. And had it not been for the person who videoed the execution of Walter Scott in North Charleston a few years ago, when a policeman shot him in the back as he tried to run for his life, if that hadn't been videoed, we might never have heard of him.

None of the police on the scene had the courage to just tell the truth about what happened. That's heartbreaking. That's heartbreaking because you know there's a bad apple here and there, but were 100% of the police onsite that day, bad apples? Can we keep using that language if it's common, rather than rare? Everyone standing on the sidewalk was asking for them to stop it. The police never wavered. Undoubtedly every one of those people. Had a cell phone in their pocket and they could have recorded it, but it was just this teenage girl who did it. She saved George Floyd's memory and she led all of us in a pathway towards justice.

Now, when I say that she had courage, it should be said that she had to have courage in the face of a police officer who was murdering one large Black man, who was threatening to use violence against her. She had courage then, but then she also testified in court during the

trial. And what I want you to understand now is that her life is at risk, which is why I'm not going to show you a picture of her, and why I'm not going to say her name, and I wish that the news media would show her the same deference.

She deserves our praise and adoration, but she doesn't deserve to have a target drawn on her, which I'm afraid the media is doing now. She had the courage to put her life on the line to speak truth to power, and we should all try to protect her from the many white supremacists who would now take any opportunity that could find to kill her.

Harvard professor Cornell West regularly reminds us that justice is what love looks like in public. Because love is a verb, it is something that you do. You may feel love, but primarily meaningful love is not just something that you feel because love does involve risk. Love requires courage. To love someone and means you are giving up some part of yourself. When we started this church in 2008, we took as our motto that famous quote from the Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, "thou shalt not stand idly by." We cannot hope for justice if we want to remain neutral in the presence of injustice, silence never creates justice. Silence is always interpreted as tacit support for the oppressors. The powerful will never give justice to the weak out of the goodness and generosity of their hearts. Presidents will lie. The police will lie. And though I hate to say it, denominations, bishops, popes, and pastors will lie to make their worst crimes seem either benign or unavoidable

I want to tell you, if you stand idly by you are a part of the propaganda that insists that no one is responsible. Remember how the police said this. The police were just questioning him about a counterfeit bill when they noticed that he was having a medical problem. What we have learned when we compare what we know about how George Floyd did die with what the police told us in May, is that you cannot believe what the police say. It seems unavoidable to me that we all have to assume a certain posture of questioning authority.

Why Cops Don't Change Part 2 - The United States of Anxiety - Air Date 4-19-21

KAI WRIGHT: [00:47:17] Thinking about all those years you spent on the force, two decades, it's a long time. I wonder what if anything changed in the culture of policing over that time, did it shift at all from the beginning to the end of your career?

MARQ CLAXTON: [00:47:31] You said something that's key and that is the culture. Since I've concluded my career with NYPD, there is not much that has changed police culture. It is still as insulated as, "Us against them, as no one knows what we do, except for us. We're against the world. We defy everything that's outside, any instances of reform, any suggestion about reform or change or update or upgrades." The culture itself, the cliquishness of it still very much exists. It preceded my career and it has continued up until this day for what I can see. I don't think I realize even during my time in NYPD how strong and just how toxic the culture was that would prevent any significant or substantive reform. I don't think I grasped it.

There were incidents that occurred throughout my career that I thought, "Okay, well, this will definitely change things," or "This will make a difference," or "This change that behavior or that policy." Then, when I saw that it didn't happen regardless of how egregious and crazy it was.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:48:45] What do you think that's owing to the stasis in culture in that way? Because anything else over the course of 30 years, journalism has certainly changed. I think probably almost every profession. People would say, "Yes, the culture of my place has changed a lot." Why do you think that's true for policing that it doesn't change?

MARQ CLAXTON: [00:49:05] I think it's because other professions have national standards and other professions are constantly evolving to stay updated and current. Other professions consider outside input and are influenced by outside factors. Policing and the profession of policing really remains quite insulated and isolated. The way police look at it as only police know what police do, what police should do, and how police should do things. It's a very different culture. It's not a typical profession. That's a shame to be honest with you.

KAI WRIGHT: [00:49:47] Well, and that stubborn defiance you talk about, it makes me ask just some fundamental questions about reforming police when you have this culture that you've described and what kind of reform is actually possible, given that culture. In the past year, certainly, we've seen such a shift in mainstream conversation about policing, and it feels like a lot more people just at minimum agree with the idea that police are involved in far too many things. Regardless of how they do it, we have too many police doing too many things. Do you agree with that?

MARQ CLAXTON: [00:50:23] Yes, I do, but I come from a mindset, I'm comfortable with reimagining policing. I'm very comfortable with it. I believe it's necessary to do that. In your professions, there is evolution. When better you do better. If there is a better way, you seek that better way. Sometimes that better way decreases your role in society. Sometimes it increases your responsibilities.

I have no problem with reimagining police because when you think about it, most of the calls that you responded for as a uniformed police officer in patrol deal with motor vehicle accidents, or people who need medical assistance and you go in there, or if the building is burning down, before the fire department gets there, or while the fire department is there you respond to that.

There are a lot of areas that could be handled by people who don't necessarily carry guns, who don't necessarily come with the history, and the stigma attached with their parents. If you delegate some of the responsibilities that are traditionally police responsibilities, you have less interactions with people, you have less opportunity for the police to stop someone for a relatively minor traffic infraction, not even a crime. Somehow this incident during the interaction turned into a fatal shooting, or a choking, or strangling. Reimagining police is not only necessary, the reform is going to come in one form or another.

The Work That Remains in the Wake of Guilty Verdict for Derek Chauvin - The Takeaway - Air Date 4-28-21

NANCY SOLOMON: [00:51:56] Aaron, let's bring you into this. Following the guilty verdict for Derek Chauvin, the US department of justice has now announced that it's going to be investigating both the Minneapolis Police Department and the Louisville Police Department, that's the agency that killed Brionna Taylor. Why are these investigations being announced now?

AARON MORRISON: [00:52:19] I think part of the reason is because pretty much during the entirety of the Trump administration there were no new DOJ investigations into police misconduct or what they call pattern or practice investigations into police departments. What we're seeing right now, it's really just a restart of an effort under the Obama administration and prior to the Obama administration in which the federal law allows the DOJ to go into local police departments and investigate any violations of the constitution and any practices that basically violate citizens' rights.

NANCY SOLOMON: [00:53:02] Do we have any sense yet of what the investigations are going to look like? What exactly are they going to be investigating?

AARON MORRISON: [00:53:10] It's almost like, and I hate to use the word autopsy, but it's almost like an autopsy of a police department. It's not to say that police department is dead, but it's essentially saying, "We're going to go in and just put a really fine-tooth comb through all of your practices. Your hiring, use of force, arrests, racial data around who gets tickets." All of the things that a police department would do, the police agency would do. All of that gets reviewed by the DOJ and specifically the civil rights division. If you're familiar with this practice or these investigations it's because you've heard of it before.

They did that in Ferguson Missouri after the shooting death of Michael Brown and what the DOJ found was that there was a pattern of practice of police there conducting stops without reasonable suspicion, disproportionately stopping African-American residents of the St. Louis Suburb. Also, not just in the policing practices, it was supported by the municipal court in Ferguson. We're talking about, they found a focus on using police to drive revenue and basically create debtors' prisons were folks who had tickets for jaywalking or not adhering to some sort of municipal ordinance, they were racking up debts. If they didn't pay those debts, that could get them in jail. That could get them jail time.

That's just some of the things that DOJ investigation into a police department can uncover. I think that's one of the reasons why you're seeing it now is because there is a real push among the advocates and the public to crack down on these long, unfair, and biased police practices.

NANCY SOLOMON: [00:55:12] What was the outcome with the, in the Michael Brown case after that investigation? What actually happened after they found all that wrongdoing?

AARON MORRISON: [00:55:23] The results generally after these findings can be mixed. What the justice department can do is essentially entering into an agreement with that city or with the police department it's called a consent decree and this installs a federal monitor to say, "Here's what you're going to do. You're going to reform, you're going to change the training practices. You're going to get better at reporting arrests and things like that." Often that can lead to some change locally, but not widespread.

NANCY SOLOMON: [00:55:59] Shaila, we were talking about the new department of justice investigations in Minneapolis and Louisville. The FBI has also announced this week that they'll be conducting a civil rights investigation into the police killing of Andrew Brown Jr in Elizabeth City, North Carolina. What's the difference between the FBI's investigation and the department of justice? How do those differ, because isn't it all department of justice in the end?

SHAILA DEWAN: [00:56:28] Well, the FBI is investigating a specific case and that would give them the potential to bring civil rights charges against the officers involved. What the DOJ is doing is called a pattern and practice investigation. In other words, not one killing, not one botched raid, but, "Does your department have policies that discriminate, that lead to routine violations of people's civil rights?" Those are two different things.

NANCY SOLOMON: [00:57:00] Do you have any sense of whether this is going to pressure local officials? In the Andrew Brown case in Elizabeth City, they have yet to release much information about that shooting. That's the one where he was shot from behind through the rear window of his car. Does this kind of a thing, with the FBI involvement, does it clamp down on things or is it going to open it up more? Do you have any sense of that?

SHAILA DEWAN: [00:57:28] I think that what's putting pressure on local officials is the people. The protestors in the street, the activists, the advocates, they have really moved the needle in terms of what prosecutors are expected to do in the case of police violence. We've seen cases in the past where families had waited months or even years to see the bodycam footage of their loved one's death and now we're hearing just that is not acceptable anymore. I think police departments and mayors have a new playbook. You saw this with Dante Wright who was killed in the Minneapolis Suburbs during the Chauvin trial.

You could almost see them holding this brand new script in their hands when they addressed that event, and handling it very differently from before. I think that's the result of the people on the street and not necessarily what the FBI is doing.

NANCY SOLOMON: [00:58:26] What about from the perspective of the advocates and activists? What are you hearing from them about the spate of killings post Chauvin verdict? What are their next steps and strategy going forward?

AARON MORRISON: [00:58:42] Well, people thought that maybe with the Chauvin verdicts, that some of the activists who've been calling for the defunding of police would maybe back off or ratchet down their rhetoric, but that's not been the case. In fact, what we know is that one individual officer being convicted can send a signal, certainly to police officers across the country, but it does not mean that you can expect that things will be done differently all across the country. There are 18,000 police agencies or law enforcement agencies that operate in the US and so the idea that change can happen as a result of what happened in Minneapolis can't be absent of federal sweeping legislation or reforms that would spur some of those and really encourage local police departments across the country to do things differently.

Summary

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:59:45] We've just heard clips today, starting with the Brian Lehrer Show, announcing the guilty verdict along with comments from the judge and attorney general Keith Ellison. Criminal (In)justice did an analysis of the case. Democracy Now! spoke with an activist about justice and the way forward. The Majority Report discussed the response from a large contingent of the Democratic party. Roger Ray in two parts from one of his progressive faith sermons explained some of what we should have learned from the Chauvin case, from crime to verdict. And the United States of Anxiety

explained the interpretation of the Fourth Amendment that gives cops cover and the reform we need to implement.

That's what everyone heard. But members also heard bonus clips, including another from the United States of Anxiety discussing the culture of policing that helps prevent reform. And The Takeaway looked at the federal investigations of multiple cities' police departments, and the need for national regulation. For non-members, those bonus clips are going to be linked in the show notes, and are part of the transcript for today's episode, so you can still find them if you want to 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.

A rant for Patrons - Andy from New Orleans

VOICEMAILER: ANDY FROM NEW ORLEANS: [01:01:13] Hey, Jay, this is Andy Collins from New Orleans with a quick rant on your behalf directed to my fellow listeners.

Fellow listeners: I subscribe to about 50 podcasts, and not all of them are active and not all of them are politics, but I know that I know about most of them because of Best of the Left, either from firsthand exposure or secondary contact from the new pods that Best of the Left got me listening to. I support a handful of podcasts on Patreon and because of the great service you have done for my continuing political education, you get about 20 of the 50 bucks a month I send to folks.

I recently got a new phone and in the process of migrating my podcasts to the new device, I saw a disturbing pattern. Newer and smaller podcasts out there are getting way more patrons than you do. Let me give you some numbers.

Best of the Left has about 700 patrons. Red Media, which is formerly the Red Nation podcast, talking about indigenous history, culture and politics, has about 1500. The Majority Report, Rev Left radio, which is great for socialist history in analysis, has 1600. The Dig, which is an arm of Jackman Radio, has 1700. The Antifada, which is Jamie from The Majority Report and her commie pals, have 2100. And our favorite Marxist economist, Richard Wolf, has 2,600.

So, to be honest, Best of the Left is one of the more conservative pods in my stable. And this is the reason for my concern. We all know about the negative effect of primaries in safe Republican districts. The candidates have to go after the voters who are farther to the right, and we ended up with ding-dongs like Marjorie Taylor Greene, or Jim Jordan. Well, this quick Patreon snapshot of mine shows a similar effect on our side. Far to the Left voices that are the ones getting the love from their listeners. Best of the Left has been up and running for like, what, 14 years?

There are so many more people out there that have been touched by Best of the Left. Yet an embarrassingly small number of people support it.

Well, I'm going to take this time to embarrass you on Jay's behalf because he's too nice to do it himself.

If you're having ramen noodles and hot dogs for dinner for the third time this week, I'm not talking to you.

But if you're safe, warm, fed, and sleeping through the night, because you're doing okay, then give them an a buck a month, for crying out loud. Heck maybe even throwing some of that stimmy money from big daddy Biden to get yourself right with your obligations.

I think that we can all agree that Best of the Left is a labor of love for Jay and the gang. But if they ever get to the point where love doesn't do it anymore, and they just all decided that they would rather eat, than all of our lives are going to be worse off when they shut it down.

We should all be out organizing for a better world, building stronger communities for the troubles here, and those that are coming, and exposing ourselves to the best voices on the Left for inspiration for our work.

Overwhelmed by it all? That's okay. But you can't let yourself be incapacitated by it. Taking small steps can get you moving in the right direction. For example, go to patreon.com and support Best of the Left for a buck a month. Then see what you can do next.

So be it. See to it.

Final comments on the business of progressive media

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [01:03:40] 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.

In response to the voicemail we got today, I thought, sure, let's talk about the business of progressive media for a little bit. It is something that I think is interesting to understand. So, this isn't just navel gazing and explaining what this show needs, but to sort of scratch beneath the surface of what the caller was beginning to expose I think might be interesting for more people to hear. So, I think there are two major things happening that the listener is describing, with the far left, the sort of Marxist communist, explicitly socialist wing of progressive media and podcasts and YouTube; there's that that's part of the issue. And then there is a fundamental divide between podcasts and YouTube shows. So, I'll talk a little bit about both.

The first is the power of the niche. So, every Marxist -- I'm obviously overgeneralizing -- listens to about the same 20 podcasts or YouTube shows: 20, 50 or whatever the actual number is, established long running shows, a few dozen, which is great. I'm glad they exist. I'm a fan of many of them. But basically, if you are looking for that kind of content, the number of places you can go is relatively limited. Okay. Whereas you compare to, if you're trying to reach a broader audience, the math works out a little differently and you would think that, well, if you're reaching a larger audience, then you'll get a larger audience and more people will support you, and you should be able to make more money by going after a larger audience. And it just doesn't quite work out that way necessarily, with exceptions that

I'll get to. But I think the way it's working out is with a smaller pie, meaning the total number of possible listeners -- talking about the group of people in the country or around the world looking for explicitly socialist communist Marxist type of content -- that pool of people is relatively small, but because the number of shows that they can find to consume are also incredibly small, then that pie gets divided into a lot fewer pieces. And so each show can actually garner more supporters per show than a show that is reaching a broader audience. So again, good for them. I'm glad that they're getting lots of support. That's kind of how it's supposed to work. I am doing something a little bit different. I'm trying to be a bridge that converts people into thinking more progressively. So, for those who are not very progressive thinking, they're sort of middle of the road or they think that they're progressive but then listen to this show and realize they're not, which has happened to a good number of people. I'm trying to convert MSNBC watchers into Democracy Now watchers or Democracy Now Watchers into Richard Wolf watchers, and so on. And there is a huge potential audience for that kind of content, but there's also a huge number of shows that appeal to that group. And so a large part of that group just end up listening to Pod Save America because they heard about it and stop their search. They watch MSNBC and they have sort of a middle of the road podcast and they think, okay, I'm getting the news. So, in terms of the pie and how it gets divided, I'm might be appealing to a larger pie, but I am getting a smaller slice, so that that's kind of how that works out.

But the other incredibly major, major, major aspect of this is the podcast versus YouTube divide which brings me to the YouTube algorithm. And I just wanted to touch on this because this is the most interesting aspect of it because we actually talk about the YouTube algorithm, not to mention Facebook algorithms and all of the algorithms sort of run the media, social media, but also media media these days, because a lot of media happens on YouTube. And we've talked about it in how dangerous it can be, how it can lead people down dark paths, and so on. But there is a flip side of that, and I haven't done the math to actually figure out in dollars and cents how much it's worth, but the YouTube algorithm, having a show on YouTube, is worth thousands of dollars of a marketing budget per month. Just putting your show on YouTube and having the algorithm do your marketing for you is a boost of thousands of dollars a month that I would have to spend to get an equivalent benefit from not being on YouTube. And you may say, okay, well then why don't you put the show on YouTube? And hopefully it's obvious to some degree Best of the Left doesn't translate that well to YouTube for a variety of reasons. We'll just leave it at that for now. So, this show doesn't translate to YouTube. We're not on YouTube, and therefore we are effectively losing out on thousands of dollars a month that could be spent on marketing.

And one of the best natural experiments that I know of is to compare the David Pakman Show and Best of the Left because we started our shows at very similar times. I met David when he got in touch with me, cold email, in 2010 I think, emailed me. He said hey, I sort of randomly found your show. I realize we're of similar age and we're doing sort of similar work. We should know each other and cross-promote or do something along those lines. And so he was just getting started; I was just getting started. Our shows were of very similar sizes. And David got his show on YouTube and I didn't. And now, he has 1.3 million subscribers on YouTube and the size of our podcast audience is larger but not that much larger than it was 10 years ago, which sort of surprised me. I mean, I thought word of mouth and just sort of natural growth would take over, but instead of doing actual marketing, I just sort of hoped that marketing would take care of itself, which it doesn't. And I will admit that David is better

at marketing than I am, but really it's the Youtube algorithm. Having that in your corner doing your marketing for you is enormous, nearly incalculable how beneficial that is. And so, you can see how that worked out. Over the course of 10 years, the possibility for growth can be geometric as opposed to incredibly incremental.

So, there's a couple of lessons I could take from that. The first is I will just toss out there that if you would like to bankroll a marketing campaign, I know exactly how I could spend \$5-10,000 a month and boost our listenership to a very respectable level. Alternately, we are experimenting with some new ideas. They're not ready to be announced, but I sort of know where the problems are, and I know what could potentially be done to position ourselves a little bit better. And so I am working in that direction, but we're not there yet. And in the meantime, we have stretched our budget pretty much to the max and all of this is to say that it's still a great time to become a member. We are not just adding new membership dollars to our giant pile of cash or anything like that. It's all been sort of invested back into the show right now as we try to do new and interesting things that hopefully take us to the next level, and so on. None of it is going to be the equivalent of a nice, fat marketing budget, but you take my point, anyway. And as a side note, you know, the listener mentioned Patreon. You don't have to use Patreon. We also have our own system that's super simple and straightforward that you can use if you prefer that style.

So as always, thanks in advance for your support. Huge, thanks to Andy for the very kind call and taking the time to do that. That's really appreciated. If you would like to sign up and support us, you can do that at bestoftheleft.com/support.

As always, keep the comments coming in at (202) 999-3991 or by emailing me to jay@bestoftheleft.com. 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 again, at bestoftheleft.com/support. For details on the show itself, including links to all of the sources and music used in this and every episode, all of that information can always 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.