

[Transcript] The Realignment / 385 | Wesley Lowery: Backlash Politics from Obama 2008 to the Summer of 2020 and Beyond

Marshall here. Welcome back to the Realignment.

Today's episode is with the journalist, Wesley Lowry. We're talking about racial backlash in America. We're going to cover a bunch of different topics, everything from the reparations debate, to the defund the police debate, to everything in between, especially the Obama presidency to today. So lots of great stuff here, lots of interesting perspective. We'd definitely love to know what you think. This is the perfect follow up to the previous episode I just did of Peter Turchin. That episode focused on America, the lens of power, class and education and today's is all focused on the lens of race. Hope you all enjoy the conversation and have a great rest of your weekend.

Wesley Lowry, welcome to the Realignment. Thanks for having me. Yeah, I want to start by going through a bunch of definitions of terms and concepts that are covered in the book but also are reflected in your reporting and writing. I'd love to hear your definition of backlash.

Well, backlash, backlash is anything that is a negative response, registered to a development or a step, right? And so in this specific sense, I'm thinking about the backlash to recent current events and the perception of advances towards multi-racial democracy, right? So the book's titled American White Lash. And so you go from backlash to white lash, well, let's talk about what is white and what is whiteness, right? Now, we know that race is a biological fiction, that there are not races, that humans are all the same. And the science tells us that and if you're a person of faith, then pick your faith, they all tell us that too. But science is proven. And so what is whiteness? You know, whiteness is a race, race is why it's a biological fiction, race is a societal, sociological reality, right? That we have created a caste system based on how people are perceived racially. That's a caste system that is not, that is not inflexible, that people's, the way they are coded racially can shift and can change both in specific contexts, as well as over time, whole groups can move from one thing to being the other. And that in the United States of America, by law, since the colonial times, we have codified this type of racial caste system into our laws. We wrote that white Americans had one set of rights, and then others had another set of rights, we created the distinction. And so when we talk about a white lash, right, what we're talking about is a backlash, a negative response

from the majority of Americans who are codified as white, two steps, and what they perceive as progress towards a fully multiracial democracy in a multicultural society.

So this is where my ideological priors must be very curious about this question. Now, just in my audiology, I mean, just my frame of the word, I'm pretty centrist in my politics. And I'm also an interviewer. I'm not an activist, I'm not a politician. So there are certain things that I think you would do that I understand an activist wouldn't like to do.

What degree do you think it is the responsibility of an activist to guard against backlash? So for example, the reason I'm asking that is, if you were to take me and drop me into BLM in June of 2020, I'd be the guy who's saying, well, look, if we say this thing with defund the police, or we do that thing, it's going to cause center left parts of the Democratic Party's coalition to get really concerned, like on and on and on and on. So I have one approach towards guarding against backlash, but I would admit that activists who have different roles in our societies, the interviewers or media people do are going to have a different perspective. So given your reporting, your writing, how do you think they should conceive of backlash and whether it should be guarded against or as a cost of doing business?

I think I really appreciate that question, because I think very rarely do those of us in the media acknowledge that our job is fundamentally different than the job of activists, right? No, I mean, I think we assert that all the time and try to define ourselves against activists, right? It's interesting, right? But what I mean by that, rather, though, is that our sensibility and our kind of status quo bias might be fundamentally and functionally different, right? In the same way, and I talked to my attorney friends about whether or not details of an investigation should leak, they have a different perspective as people whose the Hippocratic oath is to their attorney client privilege than me, whose professional goal is to get information and put it into the public, right? And so when we think about, and I actually do think members of the media are at large, we talk all the time about political bias, and I think some of that's overblown, but they're members of liberal institutions, and I don't mean that politically, but I mean kind of in the broad, classically liberal sense, that broadly believe in a multiracial democracy and broadly believe in the exchange of ideas and

that's why, right? And so because of that, I think very often individual members of the media see themselves as theoretical ideological allies of a lot of activists, even though tactically, we read from different holy books, right? Yes. I say all that to say, I think that, I say all that to say, I think that almost every juncture of almost any movement that's made significant societal change, you could go back and argue that things being said went too far, were too radical, were going to prompt backlash that in most historical cases, such things were being argued, right? And that it can be very difficult to suss out what is true and what is not, in part because when you're a member of an ideological movement and your opposition are members of an opposing ideological movement, you cannot pretend as if this all operates within an intellectual good faith, where Barack Obama is going to pass Mitt Romney's healthcare plan because he's scared of backlash if he passes single payer, they're going to call it socialism. And then what does the conservative movement do? They argue that Mitt Romney's healthcare plan is socialized medicine, right? That trying to triangulate this for like intellectual honesty is actually unhelpful, right? In that it's limiting in a way that, well, all right, there is an argument, I'm not making it, but there's an argument that if you're going to be called a socialist anyway, then do socialism, right? Then do it, right? And very often what we see in our politics is a triangulation in that way that ends up leaving basically no one happy. In this particular context, right, you have a, there's also a difference between short-term and long-term backlash. Almost any act of any act of political activism, social activism is going to lead by its very nature to blow back. The question is, is the short-term blowback worth the long-term a potential achievement or a potential change, right? And so a similar counterfactual works in the other direction, right? Well, okay, the desegregation of American public schools led to the rise of a hyper-conservative homeschool movement, led to the rise of segregation academies, hyper-private education that actually zapped a lot of resources from public education, right? That a step towards creating equality under the wall could be said to have resulted in a backlash that furthered a bunch of inequities or at least codified the moving forward. I think very few civil rights activists would, and frankly, I think very few legal scholars would agree that

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then with the suggestion, then well, then we shouldn't have done school desegregation, right? Because the country is going to react in such a racist way to this, we just shouldn't do the good, we shouldn't do the right thing. I think you end up in a like a complicated, I'd be interested in like an ethicist on it or like, you're like, I'm a right, right? But I do think you find yourself in like a very complicated and potentially compromised ethical position when you're saying, I know it is right, but I'm not doing the thing I think is right because I'm scared that me doing what is right will prop someone else to do what is wrong. Yeah. And I guess for me, the reason why I'm asking this question is this leads into 2020 with the defund the police debate. Yeah. Because from my perspective, obviously Black Lives Matter, you know, your reporters, I don't need to tell you this, but became inherently controversial. But that to me seems like a category of if you're going to engage in any sort of pushback against the status quo, like the term Black Lives Matter is going to offend a certain very specific white suburban voter who many politicians who are ideologically allied with you are going to be concerned about. It seems to me, though, that the defund the police rhetoric specifically edged too far into this is pushing the status quo, but it kind of upset the apple cart in a way that wasn't inherently helpful. So I guess part of like, you know, reading your book and just talking to you here is just trying to understand how this all fits together because once again, if we're coming from the media perspective, I just like don't understand. So help me, I guess, understand better how you'd think. I think about it a few different ways. And I think for some of the reasons I laid out before, I think the jury is still out on it. I think we're, I think it's far, we're far too close to 2020, right, to assess anything but the short term. Okay. Yeah. Right. You know, like that. Wait, could pause then. Could you define what the long term would be then? Like, let's start with it. Let's start there. Sure. Well, I think about it. I think about this way. Right. Let's go backwards one cycle. Right. And you noted this, right, that initially, so Black Lives Matter as a rallying cry emerges in 2013, following the quiddle of George Zimmerman and Trayvon Martin's death, the death of Jordan Davis, and the release of the movie Fruitvale Station about Oscar Grandston. And, and then gains national prominence the following year in 2014, following the deaths of Eric

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Gardner, Michael Brown, Tamellis. Right. At the time, there was significant media and political rendering of garments and debate about whether or not the term Black Lives Matter was counterproductive, whether it was going to undermine the greater message, whether it was needlessly divisive, because all these white people were offended. And what about white lives matter and all lives matter? I mean, it was, it was a constant political debate about the tactic. And then we get to 2020, where George Floyd's been killed. Now, a lot happens in those six years. Right. There are, there are many, many other police killings or many other cases that fall into this. You have things like Flint, Michigan, or, you know, other arguments around whether the systemic or structural inequities in the United States of America as it relates to Black people and whether or not our society fully values their humanity. Right. Yeah, lots of things that can fall under this kind of Black Lives Matter umbrella. And we see the election of Donald Trump happens in this period of time and the rise of the MAGA movement and his steps he takes administratively. We see the rise on the left of a resistance to combat him. By the time we get to 2020, meanwhile, on the actual issues that this arises from, we've seen thousands of police departments actively publishing the data. Almost every police department in the country is putting body cameras on. Public opinion has shifted drastically that at the time in 2014 that you would even ask questions about what a police officer had done was was you're veering towards controversial. Now, basically no matter your politics, every person out there has a video they've watched where they go, well, that cop shouldn't have done that. I agree that that was, I mean, it's hard for us to remember how in 2014 the idea that you would ask any questions meant you were anti cop and you hated the police and X, Y and Z. Right now, everyone of every politics agrees that there are cases where this is happening and it's unacceptable. And in part because of all these videos that are produced in part by everyone pulling their cell phone cameras out, in part because of this movement and this activism, and because of all these body cameras I got put on everyone everywhere due to this movement and this activism. By the time you get to 2020, Mitt Romney is marching in Black Lives Matter protests. So the thing that was like so counterproductively aggressive about is completely

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politically malleable, like is no longer in any way considered radical. And what is a very short amount of time off? Six years is not a billion year, you know, like On the civil rights timeline, if we were looking at that six years is nothing. It's nothing, right? Like there's not any. And so I say all that to say, right? And so I think that my and I think that's one of the reasons I there's a reason I go there in talking around defund and these other questions, right? Is that it's been three years. And and what has happened, by the way, and I've seen this happen time and time again, what happens in this very specific space, not just around civil rights, but I think even specifically in law enforcement and justice is that what happens is when we have these inflection point moments, it forces some sets of people within the institutions, some police departments, some prosecutors, some academics, some whomever, because we have this diffused criminal justice system that's a bunch of systems together. It prompts some people to take aggressive steps forward. And then what happens is it gives them time to work out and work through either best practices or what doesn't work or what does. And then the next time one happens, everyone is looking for something they can take off the shelf and do, right? That I want my police that the next time you have a and so you see in these moments in these inflection point moments, a bunch of stuff happened very quickly that it all stopped. That Michael Brown is killed in Ferguson in around the 2014 moment, you have dozens of states passed legislation to have independent prosecutors. You have thousands of police departments put body cameras on. You have like it all happens, right? Then it stops, but it all happens. You get to George Floyd and a bunch of stuff happens really quickly, whether that's these anti racism trainings or whether it's you do have places that take steps to say we're going to de police. Let's not do armed traffic stops. Let's let's expand mental health services. We now have a national phone number to dial instead of 911 for a mental health crisis, right? And so that was not true the day George Floyd was killed. And so you see these massive things all happen at once. What is also true is there have been places that have piloted and played around with things that we can pick whatever lingo or rhetoric we want to, right? Things that could that in spirit, you would argue are defunding that others might use the term de policing, right?

But there are places that have explored that and we know unfortunately there will be another George Floyd moment. There will be another video. And so part of the question becomes and we don't know the answer till it plays out and I'm not of the belief that it's necessarily all going to go in one direct, but the question becomes did the rhetoric around defund abolition, any event, did it open a large enough window for enough people to do work in that spirit that by the time we hit the next moment those are some of the solutions being taken off the shelf and applied more broadly. And if so, I think retroactively there might be an argument that well actually that's exactly what was needed. It put the tools in the toolbox for the next step. And I think that that is part of the kind of non-littier equation of this, right? That on issues that are so entrenched and that are so controversial and frankly that are so embedded in our society and its structures, it's not going to be that like all right and each there we're going to pass 18 things in a row and they're all going to cut in the same direction and then we're going to fix racism and then by February it's not some first hundred days planned to get rid of, right? Like that the reality is in a civil rights context there's an understanding of a longness and length of struggle that I think that again I think there's an argument. I'm not arguing that it was politically salient. I'm not arguing that there was not backlash or blowback to it and I'm not arguing that it is inevitable that it will end up having paid off. What I would say is I think we're a reckoning or two from knowing the answer to it. What's a reckoning? Define a reckoning. I think it's a moment where we, I don't love the word but it gets adapted to the media so we'll use it, right? I think it's a moment where every one of us, I guess I'm not included in the us in this, in which the people in our country whose professions and livelihoods do not involve paying attention to an issue or forced to pay attention to that issue. Okay, right? That that 2014 or an Eric Gardner Ferguson to me writes creates such a moment, right? Where it's a thing the populace at large is just talking about and agitating for something. George Floyd, 2020, George Floyd Breonna Taylor, right? That there are these moments where suddenly there is collective appetite to try to address collective problem and then they dissipate, right? Because there are people in between

who are actively trying to address all the problems. It's their job to, they care about them, right? It's that everyone else is too busy off dealing with whatever else. There are plenty of people who are very concerned about pandemics before coronavirus working very hard trying to do all these, right? Suddenly there's a moment around health pandemics where there's a collective appetite for collective action around, you know. So what I would imagine is, so again, I would, we've got the kind of 2014 to 2016 moment, then we're a little more dormant in this space. Again, not that people are not doing work and are not active, but it's, it's just a different space. Then we hit this 2020 moment where we see a lot of stuff happening. I would argue, I think we're in one of those lulls afterwards and we could, we could log off this conversation, open our phones and see a video and we could be back in another moment. Yeah. And in the same way that the day before the George Floyd video, we wouldn't have been able to predict the extent and the broadness of the response to it. Not saying that I don't, I don't, that I don't have critiques of that response or that I think all of it was, but we couldn't have seen the extent to which there would be a response. That video we haven't seen yet that might publish tonight or publish tomorrow, publisher, it's impossible for us to conceive of what might come from it. You know, you just gave me an idea that kind of brought together a bunch of different things I've been covering on the show. It seems like something early 21st century America is particularly bad at is not letting public issues require reckoning points to have them be addressed. So an example, for example, all the things that led to the war in Ukraine, you know, there was this like 30 year period where most people just didn't pay any attention to it until, you know, Russia's three days outside of Kiev. You have these low periods where we're not focusing on policing, crime, racial issues, etc, etc, etc. And then all of a sudden something will happen and we'll be in a reckoning situation. And it seems like especially when you're looking at the type of people who tend to control institutions where once again, I'm sort of dispositionally focused towards center left to center right people, they themselves are not particularly talented at managing reckonings. I think this goes in both directions.

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I think, you know, I'm doing this from like Austin, Texas, I think a lot of, you know, it's kind of funny. I think a lot of the BLM post 2020 backlash, if you actually talk to quote unquote normal people don't focus on these issues, are people are reacting to center left to center right people, mostly center left in urban regions who found themselves in the reckoning moments kind of lost their shit and didn't think it through. So for example, in Austin, an example would be the Austin City Council kind of panicked and canceled like the next two classes of incoming police, which led to downline down the line, some issues there. So now the kind of rhetoric on the street is, hey, like all this woke shit got out of control. And because of BLM, we don't have cops on the street. Now the state of Texas has to come in, bloody, bloody, bloody blast. So I guess my question for you is, how do you advise any just sort of, and once again, in this topic area, we're basically talking about center left people, how can they actually be ready for reckoning moments if we know they're coming and also this is a ramp, but I'll just give the last part of it. The key thing is because we're in a hyper polarized moment, reckonings are required to force through change. So it's not as if you can just show up in Congress and let's say what 20, let's say 2011 and be like, hey, you know what, I'm going to be the guy who focuses on militarization of police or, hey, do you guys notice how we're drawing down in Iraq? Where are those MRAPs going? Are they going to police forces? Like, maybe we talk about that. That system isn't going to happen in a polarized country. So I just threw a lot of stuff in your reaction, how you think we should navigate it. Sure. I mean, I think it's really astute to observe that two things. One, I agree completely with your observation that we do a very poor job. But look, fundamentally, protest, public discontent, public debate stems from places where our ruling institutions are not needing an expectation, a need, a desire of their people. Because otherwise, we would just call our congressmen and say, hey, do this and they would do it and then we wouldn't have to do any other stuff. Or we would vote someone out or vote them in. And I think that there is, it's actually unsurprising to me that very often we see ideological movements grow at times when their theoretical political allies are in power. That the BLM starts during the Obama administration. Not during the Bush years, not during

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the Trump years, right? Now, again, some of that's a confluence of technology and cameras and all that. A non-explicit part of it, right? But it's unsurprising to me that you have- I know the Civil Rights Movement, JFK, LBJ, same dynamic there. Correct. Because these movements rise to push their ideological allies further towards what they believe to be the virtuous or just way of operating. That it's tactically completely different when you don't control the levels of power. When you do control the levels of power, it becomes even incompetence or inaction becomes even more unacceptable. And so it's like, no, no, why aren't we fixing this? Why aren't we? Then it's unsurprising that after a Democratic president, an outsider Democratic president, Barack Obama is elected and then bails out the banks, that we see the rise of Occupy Wall Street. Why? Because people from his own coalition were upset with- and again, that's not actually an argument against him having done that. That's not to say it even is a fair one-to-one. But in these moments where people feel as if their leadership, the leadership they ally with is failing them, you see these rises. Secondly, I think that it builds to because of the polarization and because our institutions are made up largely of that moderate middle. It creates an inability to function. I actually think at times there can be- and I'm sure there's a body of research on this- I think there can be a pragmatic paralysis in that what is difficult is- I was just talking to a writer friend about this over the weekend- that leadership often requires doing both difficult and unpopular things. And the right things are very often unpopular, whatever they are. And I think that in a world in which we, both in our polarized society, but also in which the people running most of our institutions come from that middle set, where they see themselves as drawing their own support from a world of people who straddle both sides of these things, where they care a lot about where the 50 plus 1 percent is and the polling, I think that can be a set of handcuffs against doing things that are unquestionably the right thing to do and what people sent you to and placed you in a position of leadership to do. You think about many of the- look, I'm a black man, but I'm biracial. My father's black, my mom's white. I'm very glad that interracial marriage didn't rely on a popular vote to become legalized, because it

probably still wouldn't be, right? Like it's just- the much of what happens, it would be if we voted today, right? But the polling we see today comes because people have lived in a world where it was made legal, right? That sometimes you do the thing and then it becomes popular. That no one likes the Affordable Care Act until everyone's on it and then they're like, do not take this away. Yeah. Now, it's so again, it speaks to a limitation of seeing the world purely through cyclical partisan politics. Sometimes you gotta take a vote for the right thing that's gonna cost you your seat, right? But beyond that, what I would suggest is, and I don't even mean this in a partisan way, what I would also suggest is that the vast majority of difficult issues require, if not unpopular solutions, solutions that are- that create some level of political vulnerability. That's not to say that we figured the whole world out, but we have problems in our society where we have pretty clear bodies of evidence of ways we could go about addressing them. And so the question becomes, why haven't our institutions addressed them? And it's because we've built a system that incentivizes them never doing anything. It's like that incentivizes, look, we know how guns is an adjacent issue where we know any number of very specific ways to limit gun deaths and reduce gun deaths. But our political world incentivizes bad faith discussion of these things, people not to acknowledge that body of research. And then when there finally is a moment to pass legislation that objectively will not solve the problem, right? That even in the moment, you know, we- to go back to my actual area of expertise, the George Floyd Justice and Policing Act, supported by George Floyd's family, who I know, and many his activists, and not to weigh in on whether the legislation itself should be passed or not, but I think it is noteworthy that there's nothing in that legislation that would have prevented George Floyd from dying. So even the- Explain that, like what, so what, yeah, so I'll understand that. So a ban on, a federal ban on chokeholds would not have saved George Floyd's life. The requirement, the creation of a officer misconduct database would not have changed, would not have saved George Floyd's life. Qualified immunity, which was the thing that they ended up fighting about and taking out, but even if included, would not- it's a bank shot. Theoretically, if Derek Chauvin

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believed he might have been able to be held civilly liable, would he have behaved differently? There's no guarantee that changes anything about what happens that day, right? That the actual pass- the ability of the Justice Department to remove some of its funding from local police departments that don't comply with training standards would not necessarily have- the Minneapolis Police Department is one of the best trained in the country before this happens, right? So what we end up seeing are the applications of solutions that come from a list of things that activists in the area would say are good, and I'm not even suggesting that they shouldn't do those things or pass those things, right? But that fundamentally stops short of solving the underlying problem of preventing another George Floyd, right? That we- a different- There's an obvious question though. What would quote, and let's say we're getting into like a difficult solutionism discussion, right? The obvious question is what law, regulation, practice, et cetera would have saved George Floyd's life or future George Floyd? Well, I think there are a few things. I think that there are- and I won't necessarily say that these things guaranteed would have, but they're the types of questions we have to grapple with who come to such solutions, right? Is that we have to grapple with the question of does it make sense for us to police our country with 18,000 individualized local militias as opposed to say one more centrally located standardized policing force, right? Does it make sense that your policing experience might change so drastically when you cross a municipal boundary in one direction or the other? And that's not an application for say one, you know, now many democracies would- would you operate with a singular nationalized police force? You could see a world where perhaps you had state-level police forces that have to have some, but right, but like there's a major, why can't we fix this problem? Well, part of it is that we have to fix whatever the problem is in 18,000 individualized places. We can't fix it once because there's no nationalized, federalized oversight or standards, right? There are little bits of it, but not in any functional way, right? A conversation like- so that might suggest that one thing the federal government could do is it could grant itself additional oversight or additional review ability,

right? We currently see police departments that undergo these- they call patterns and practices reviews by the Department of Justice where they come in and turn over all the rocks and as- as it turns out this institution is really bad at doing the things it's supposed to do and perpetuates all these racial inequities. Well, that power was granted, Congress granted the power to conduct these investigations in 1994 following Rodney King. That didn't exist prior to that, right? And so you could see a world where federal government granted itself additional oversight, additional capacity to oversight. Questions about de-policing. So again, things I think we are seeing in some local municipalities, right? But okay, well, one way to have government agents kill fewer people is to dispatch fewer armed government agents to a variety of different types of things. That okay, we probably want armed officers going to the- to the bank robbery. Do we need armed officers getting your cat out of the tree or to the call about a drunk guy outside or to a call about your teenage brother having a mental health crisis, right? And so what we have seen at a local and state level have been many steps towards the pursuit of the type of scenario in which someone maybe on drugs, maybe passing a counterfeit bill, isn't responded to by 10 guys with guns and badges and the right to kill you if they get upset. That is what happens in George Floyd's case, right? I think this is where this gets difficult though because I- and this is why policing is so complicated. There's a million different policy areas and areas of concern, but on the one hand, I see a federal system when it comes to training standards makes a lot of sense. But when you're discussing the doesn't make sense to have the person who's getting the cat of the tree have a gun or not, that seems to me to be a case of well, you know what, maybe like Austin is going to have a different answer on that than San Antonio or a different than Washington to see a different answer than San Francisco. So I'd like to hear your understanding of how we should- and also from a democracy question because that's what we're talking towards. Yes. Is it inherently more democratic to let localities decide this versus Donald Trump's DOJ? You know what I mean? Because that would be federal if there was unitary control in 2017. So how should we understand the federal- because the federalism question goes a

budgetive direction here. Yeah, so when I- and I truly I do think at its heart, this is a federalism question, right? And I think that there are a lot of ways and so the question I actually think is how should the scales be balanced on something like, again, state agents who are empowered to take lives, what is the balance between how much of that is federalized versus how much of that is local and what's the interplay between those things, right? That's the central question. I think that's yes, right? Secondly, I think that's a central question to policing. Secondly, one B is what do you do with an armed populace? That the answers to these questions are a lot easier for Britain, right? Like it's like night and day difference. It's one of the reasons we can't do- we try to do these comparisons while the UK police is in this way and they don't have any guns. It's a totally different scenario, right? And so at the heart of understanding our possible remedies as well as thinking about what- it's very hard to divorce the conversation about firearms from the conversation about the people charged with ensuring public safety because they expect their encountering people with firearms even when they are not, but that expectation is not unreasonable for them, right? And so, and so, but so again, I think first you got that federalism issue, which again, I think is a fascinating- because there's any number of different ways you could try to do it, right? Do you say, all right, we have a certain accreditation process, like that it's run locally, but you have to pass a certain federal accreditation. And so federally we can ding you on X, Y and Z, but on these questions these are your local municipalities, right? And again, one might note, an ability for a suburb that deals with no gun violence to operate with no armed officers might look different than a place that is awash with weapons, right? And they might want to have that flexibility and the ability to do different things, right? It cuts at all types of different ways and so I do think that there's a- you have that on the one hand. The problem is you also have equal protection though, right? So my- so what happens if in one state my right to not- to not be unreasonably searched and seized means one thing or not face discriminatory traffic stops means one thing and then I cross into Missouri and suddenly it's a different, well, shouldn't my right in one state be- and we see there's any number of issues here

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this on abortion, on guns, right? There is a- now with policing there's not quite a commerce clause claim here, right? Yeah. But like, so it's this question of, well, if in New York City and Boston the judge says that stop and frisk, stop question and frisk in its application is clearly racially discriminatory, why is it okay for me to now experience that when I cross the state lines into Missouri, right? They actually do think there's an interesting from like a legal federal constitutional perspective this sense of what- because police by their nature are people empowered to deny people their rights, even just by handcuffing them, by stopping them, by detaining someone, you are denying them their freedom and their liberty. I don't mean that like a traumatic way, I just mean like literally that's what it is, right? It's good to- it's good to actually- I also by the way, I like- I liked your use earlier of you know, state empowered agents. It's actually helpful to describe what's actually happening here and not to engage in euphemism. Yeah, like it's the government, like the- the people who the gov- who the government employs and gives guns and says, keep everyone safe, do basically what you want to do, right? Like it's this question of how- what role does the federal government play in ensuring that there is some level of equality and equity to how that's meted out across 50 states, right? And obviously people with different politics are going to draw that line in different places, but I think everyone would agree there is a line to be drawn, right? That there's some role- there's some role for federal oversight. And I think that one thing that's a question of our democracy, just by the nature of our history, is we're a system where much of our bureaucracy was built from the ground up. It was localized and then state- and then right? And so what happens at what- and so the question for a lot of our institutions, from schools to hospitals and- and access to medical care to policing to is- to the media, at what point as a massive functioning democracy do some things get ascended up to a federal level? And where are those lines and how does it operate, right? At what point does the- the union have an obligation to guarantee a certain- a certain floor of the quality of rights of experience and what happens as over time that floor shifts and changes and rises, hopefully, right? Like that- and I- and again, I think on any number of issues from minimum wage to how

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we handle unhoused people and homelessness to mental health services, there's a big tension between people who would say that to be the richest nation in the history of the world, our floor is just way too low in too many places. And- but that but to require- to fix that fundamentally would require some type of collective decision to raise that floor. And at some point, you've got to overrule someone to do that. I think this gets to the difficulty of the reckoning reality we discussed earlier, just because if you're thinking about why does the federal system look the way it looks like, why does the defense department look the way it looks? Well, because World War II happened. That's the- that's the definition of a reckoning period. You know, the early Cold War happens, you know, the National Security Council, etc, etc, etc. 9-11 happens when we get DHS, right? Exactly. We have a system that's not- this is for, you know, younger people who are listening. A real generational task, it seems across all of these categories, is finding a way to do things without requiring things to be pushed to the limit. Another- as we're nearing the end here, I want to get to this big topic because this is where I'm very curious about and I'm very, very concerned when I'm speaking to folks who are more in the activism part of the direction. I'm interested in your usage of the term multiracial democracy because- I don't want to say obviously because this is just not true, but I think most people- actually, you know, the broad, broad, broad majority of the country, except a couple weirdos, would say at a superficial level, obviously we're in favor of like a multiracial democracy, like status quo. You are alleging by the nature and framing of this book that there is, you know, backlash towards efforts to make us a fully functioning multiracial democracy. So here's what I'd like to understand. On the one hand, I understand there are like voting rights controversies where a bunch of folks up to the right of me would say like, no, like the federal government's gone too far, this isn't fair, but I would just say like that from- even for debating, I can really see voting rights as being like, no, like that's a part of that issue. I'm concerned though that debates around reparations and specific policing orientations have transcended away from- are actually policy debates and they're not values debates. And I wouldn't want to have a situation because I've seen it happen where someone who doesn't support reparations, which is super complicated on

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50 different levels, is categorized as opposing taking America to its most multiracial democratic extent, because I can obviously see how if you're an activist, you could argue, actually, no, like people have to be made whole, if they're not made whole, they're not fully participating members in democratic. So I can understand how an activist gets there, but I think for me, how do we solve policy questions perspective? Voting rights is in a different category than reparations. So how do you understand the taking us to our most multiracial democratic context when using the term? How do you think of this?

Sure. I think that's a really thoughtful question too. And I have to think about it as I initially think about it. I don't think I'm someone who would put support for reparations, say, in that bucket, right? As if you do not support, then therefore you are oppositional to X, Y, and Z, right? But what I will say is, so I think a few things, right? And I agree with you that the vast majority of our country supports in polling, and I think actually in sincerely held belief, would purport to support multiracial democracy. Yeah, right. Now granted, there's space very often with what people say their values are and what their lived values are, right? And so just because you say you support a thing or want to believe you support a thing does not necessarily actually mean that in function you do, right? I think that if you are, if you are someone who supports state legislators, who purposely draw maps to delude the power of minority voters in your state, I think it's very hard then to argue that you are a full proponent of multiracial democracy. You are supporting actions to create an inequitable voting system. And that's why I put voting in its own bucket, because like the way you just articulated it, like the reason my voting is so interesting and bad for people, obviously in this case is it's actually, you can kind of get empirical with it, right? In a way, like once you agree to the whole thing like, hey, dude, are we one person, one vote in this country? It's pretty straightforward to your point about like we know certain answers to certain questions, to like catalog, okay, well, this person cannot exercise their rights in the same way. It gets screwy when you get into releasing reparations, educational debates, but yeah, sorry, go on. I think it's important. Of course. Well, but even a build off of that point though. So have we achieved our multiracial democracy? Have we achieved our

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multiracial democracy? If our institutions are still structured in ways that counteract one person, one vote, is it possible for America to have a truly equal, when I'm asking the question, because I don't even know exactly how to answer it, if you asked me, right? In a world where me sitting here in Washington DC, do you have no say in the United States Senate? In a majority black city in the South, where slaves are once held, right, where my vote is literally not the same as yours in Texas, right, is that, and that's not exclusively racialized, although there are, this is a, you know, there's a plurality black city in, you know, in the South, right, is what happens when a black person's vote in Los Angeles or New York City functionally counts for less than a white person's vote in Wyoming or Idaho, right? That we've, by the nature of the system we have set up, we have embedded things that in some cases were explicitly intended to, but not all of them, not all of them. DC's one of those like, it didn't, yeah, like DC's actually the perfect example of what you're getting at. Yeah, you know, but there are some, so there are cases where, this kind of played out this way, there are other cases where when they wrote it at the time, they were like, and this is to keep the black people from being like, I mean, yeah, more of them than I think sometimes we're comfortable grappling with, where it's like, where did this come from, and even pull the string far enough, it's someone saying something abhorrent, right? Like, but the, but what happens, like, how do we, what does it look like for us to pursue a fully fledged multiracial democracy if what we believe that means is that no matter your race, you have an equal, you have an equal claim to the promises of American freedom, right? And I think that so one, I think that's one whole bucket where I think there is actual that like, to create a multiracial democracy in its ideal, you would never create the system as it exists currently. You would never say, all right, we've got this country of X hundred million people, these are the broad racial and ethnic breakdowns, let's cluster these people here, give them access to these things, make their system of petitioning that we would never create America as it exists right now. Well, actually, to build one on your point, it's not even a question of would we cluster black people in DC, you would say there are always black people who live in DC, would we not give that a Senate seat? Correct. Would the people who live here have no say in the Supreme Court? No, we would never create it

that way. You wouldn't do that, right? But then beyond that, though, you have a beyond that, though, you have this question of, as the country shifts and changes in the demographics of the people who occupy it, what does it look like? How are the people who are arriving being treated? And how are they, are they being given the full benefits of the promises of our founding documents or not? Right. And so, so for example, and I think this is an interesting one, right, where I think you could probably argue it either way. I mean, I've got a sense, but you know, but you know, Ron DeSantis, the governor of Florida came out a few weeks ago and said that he, if he was elected president, he would get rid of birthright citizenship. Which, first of all, it's worth noting, he could not do as president, that would require a constitutional amendment, right? So let's be clear, this is someone who is choosing to campaign on political rhetoric that is in no way possible to play to something, right? The constituency of people who, and I think that's where we have to start trying to figure out is this a values issue or is this a policy debate, right? There's a world in which one could argue having reviewed the numbers this moment in time, the policy of birthright citizenship no longer serves our democracy for x, y, and z reasons and this is why I would propose doing it and x, y and z. And this is how we would functionally change it and this is what we should do. And it's something much different at a time when historically unprecedented in our country, immigration from Central and South America is changing the ethnic demographics of the country to come out and declare people who arrive here tomorrow will not receive the same rights as the people who arrived here when my grandparents got here, right? That there is a fundamentally racialized component to it because reality is racialized. We're not having a conversation in an academic debate club and you're saying this not in a policy context, in a political context. You're making this claim not because you are making some staid policy argument for what's best for us, you're saying it because you believe it will motivate people to vote for you, right? Because you couldn't even do it. And so that's where, to me, a world, someone who would deny an immigrant who arrives in the United States tomorrow, who happens to be a person of color, who's more likely to be a person of color than at previous points in history, would deny them the same constitutional rights as my white mother's grandparents had

when they arrived from England. I think there's a real argument there about whether or not this is someone who supports, who is attempting to push back on multiracial democracy, right? That's all on top of the voting right stuff, right? That's all on top of all that, that which all exist, right? It's this question of who is really and truly American because a multiracial democracy is one in which there is a true equality under the law, equity of opportunity and there's debates about equity and what it means and how you apply it and there's a ton to that, right? But in our ideal, the world is at base that no matter what our history has been, anyone born tomorrow has a relatively level playing field, right? It's relatively similar access to opportunity, you know, and so what does it mean for us? What does that mean and what does that look like? And there are policy debates about things that functionally create, make that not be the case, but then secondarily, and this is a lot where we're talking on the book, is there is political rhetoric that whether you take it literally or not, literally or seriously, is not the rhetoric of someone who takes multiracial democracy seriously, right? And I think that, I think we encountered that. I mean, the last thing I'll notice is that, you know, there are any number of reasons to contribute to the election of someone like Donald Trump with the rise of his movement, but even with just a little bit of hindsight, we look back and it's like, look, a black man was elected president, and someone was be able to become such a powerful political figure that they were the next personal elected president on a platform that was largely at their political rise, that black guy is not really one of us. Yeah, and quick thing, I think that's a, this is actually why you and I are the same age, so you rooting the book in back when we were in high school in, you know, 2008 with Obama's election is really key because I think it's actually most helpful to judge Donald Trump not by 2015, not even by like build the wall, but like by 2011, because once again, and this is why I guess, and this is, I love your point about like values versus policy debate, like end of the day, like there is an entirely good faith construction of getting to like build the wall, like there just is, like that's a debate about how, like Stephen Miller, I think this is actually useful, like debating tactic, but he just says, okay, I'm a, you know, I'm a Lazarus, like let people in, like what's the number?

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Like, probably whatever the point is, we don't actually know the number, therefore it's a policy debate. But birtherism is actually just pure racialized hatred. There's no debate there. That is the way to understand that rooting there.

Well, it's that, it's, and then you have issues that sit in between that. So another one early from the Donald Trump playbook is the quote unquote, ground zero mass, which was not a mass, not based at ground zero. Right. And so you have a few, we're in the last few questions. If you please could texturize for people because this is, this is the long time ago, this is the most TBT thing you've said the entire, uh, yeah, it's a deep cut. And so, so when you, and it's actually, it's very interesting because Jeremy Peters of the New York times, right, to wrote a book a year or two ago, I'm not going to remember the title right now, but he looks. Oh, ins, insurgency. I had him on the show. Yes. Yeah. Yeah. But one of the things he notes in the polling and in the rise is how, how the quote unquote ground zero mass was an important turning point. Right. I think sometimes we forget it because it's because of what it was. And it feels like kind of a 9 11 stuff, all kind of feels bush era. And so then when we pivot to Obama, we kind of forget all of it. But like, but what happens with Obama doesn't all start the day Obama announces stuff. So, you know, so there was a, if I recall this fully correctly, and I'm sure, uh, folks will backtrack beyond it. There was a, a community center, an Islamic community center that had purchased space in New York City, not far from the site of the World Trade Center. Now, this is in the years following 9 11, the World Trade Center is currently going through its reconstruction, the creation of Memorial X, Y, and Z, but a few blocks away, if I recall correctly, some Muslims put together a community center. And in part, part of their initial rationale was that they thought it was important to show some kind of solidarity. It's like, but the point was this became something that was extensively demagogued in the conservative media and among right wing politicians. It was called the ground zero mosque. And were you to watch below Riley or Sean Hannity or listen to Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, you were under the impression that they were building a mosque at the site of the, of the deadliest Islamic act of terror in American

history. Well, you understand how that is a far more inflammatory framing where people of all types of background might have just some practical, is that wise, is it not? Back, right? But the problem was you could take something that might be a good faith, like, but that's not what it was. That's not actually what the underlying fact showed was happening, that it was all founded in a lie, that something was happening that was not happening, but that played to people's prejudice about Muslims and they're there. And I don't even mean prejudice in some like, because when we use prejudice, it's important always note, we all have prejudice, like we all have like prejudice is in not not in love itself a bad thing. It's the application of it and the living out of it. That is the bad thing, right? We all walk down the street and go, is that man, cute or is he ugly or that person seems friendly or scary? That's a prejudice. We don't know anything about them, right? It's based on our blood. And so people had a prejudice against people who are different than them, people who might be associated with someone who had done harm to the but cynically playing on it for these political purposes in ways that specifically riles an anxious group of people. One, like I said, I would argue in these racialized contexts, right? Clearly results in movements that you know, we're a country that we're trying to get to equal and get to even that this is energy in the other direction because it drives those wedges and creates that suspicion between people groups. But secondarily, what we know is it leads that type of dehumanization can lead to violence against people, right? And so I just say I like to say that we we see time and time again, this application of a cynical racialized politics as you noted, there's a we can have a border debate all we want about what the exact right policy way is to address. This came up, Sean Hannity and Gavin Newsom did an interview recently. And there's this moment where Hannity starts talking about the border wall and Gavin Newsom goes, I support reinforcing the structure and I'm a governor of a state with the border of Mexico and with one of the longest that that even as we talk about these issues and I think this is particularly hard for the media to navigate some time, we're very often not actually talking about the issue that it is. In fact, people overuse dog whistle or what I don't even need to get into the intent of

the speaker. The reality is the impact is not people vote based on vibes, not on facts, right? And so when you have a rhetoric or a set of proposed policies that cut in a specific direction in this way, it's very hard to unintertwine exactly where I said that values and policy cuts it and you and you can understand why people who have a very literal skin in the game for the future of multiracial democracy and is it safe for me to exist the way I exist? Don't always have the biggest like attention span for debates about exactly where the line is because, you know. So here's the last question and you kind of get this at the start of the book discussing how Italian Americans were considered different from a, you know, racial social construct perspective in the 19th century and early 20th century. To what degree do you see little, you know, green shoots of this entire racialized context changing? Listeners are going to know the kind of talking points on this one. Hispanic men, not overwhelmingly, but like, you know, we could see the future of a different style of politics move a little more towards Trump than you would have expected. Obviously, you have precedents in a state like Texas of like Hispanics gradually whitening or merging more into the white majority, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. If you and I are looking back as once again, we're the same age at an America of 2050, to what degrees our imagination hampered by us imagining this issue in context in the 1990s sense versus a, hey, like, we're going to totally or we could figure out this in a different context. I think that that's, I think that's all really good context. I think that there's a real question about the immigration of refugee groups and Hispanic American groups. And as we, as it relates to, to whiteness, however it's defined, right? I think, I think you're right in that there's definitely a, well, it cuts both ways because you had a, you had a kind of, again, I actually think the Obama years in media and in politics were a blinding and intoxicating exercise, at least at the very beginning, in like white liberal delusion, right? There was this deep desire for this to have meant that we weren't racist anymore. And we were the generation that fixed it and we solved everything and it's post-racial America and our friend Barack Obama's, the president, but now we're going to do a women woman, then we're going to do a gay guy, then we're going to like, and there was just this kind of like, and,

and then it was all going to like everything was just going to keep getting like better from their perspective year over year and there wasn't going to be and, and, and demographics were going to be destiny, right? And so it's going to be this Obama multiracial coalition that the Democrats were going to be able to have this party with all these white people and the Hispanics and the black people and the, and that very quickly dissipated, right? For any number of reasons, right? One, because it has to be said Barack Obama's uniquely generationally talented politician, right? People can't founding very opposed that. Yeah, you know, but the, the two, what we know is that there's something about one is two, we know that people's views are malleable, right? And so for example, in conversations about to what extent did racial animus play into Trump's election, people would like to talk about Obama and Trump voters as if one could not vote for a black guy for a powerful position, then consume eight years of racist propaganda about them and not come out the other side, not so happy with him, right? Or that could not become, could not have a racial animus that's based and founded an immigration or an Islamic terror or any number of other things that might be racial animus that might not have prevented you from voting for a black guy and then voting for Donald Trump. But then three, there's the, there was this expectation that Hispanic Americans who came to this country would racial, would racialize themselves differently than every other immigrant group that has ever arrived in the United States of America, right? The in mass, that what we see is at best immigrant groups that arrive in the United States of America end up splitting about 50, 50 across the political spectrum, right? That you'd look at African immigrants and you will see conservative voters and you'll see hyper liberal voters. You look at Asian American immigrants, you can't, and that's such a broad category, but if you look at Filipino immigrants, you look at Vietnamese immigrants, you look at Korean immigrants, you're going to see a spectrum, right? If you look at, and then when you racialize that, when you look at groups of people who've arrived in the United States and have been racialized as non-white, to a group, what they have sought to do is assimilate into whiteness, to be seen as closer to whiteness than blackness, right? The Irish are now white, the Italians

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are now white, the Jews are primarily now white, the Jews are not a racial group, they're a racial ethnic group, but they were conceptualized as a racial group at the time, right? The Asian American groups that have arrived, you have the rise of this concept and this conceptualization of a model minority and how they are used, that's a crudgel between black appearing groups and white appearing groups, right? There has been no racialized group that has arrived and writ large said, yeah, we're with the black people. Well, why? Well, why would you do that? You arrive in a country where the plague field disadvantages one group and advantages the other, common sense is going to tell you what group you are incentivized to take common cause with, to assimilate into, to build yourself into, and so I think that- One quick pushback, I think the pushback would just be it's, I'm not sure it's that, like what, so you, you could tell us if you're listening, you know my last name, my last name is Kozloff, adopted Ukrainian Jewish family. If I'm imagining my adoptive great, great grandparents, you know, Ellis Island, early 1900s, it's not that they would say, ah man, like sucks that we're like with the blacks here, I think they would say that we are not part of the American norm, and the American norm is white. That's just like the, like little- Well, 100%, no, no, that's correct, right? It's an assimilation into whiteness, right? Now, among the ways that that is done in a group sense, not an individualized sense, can become the definition against, right? And against, this is interesting, you guys, and you know this in Texas, right? It's why immigrants and Hispanic Americans very often, among the reasons, why they very often support among the most punitive immigration policies, is that there is a, there's a line of political thinking around Hispanic Americans where part of their acceptance and their safety requires them to be defined against those other ones. No, no, no, we came here the right way, we do this this way, yeah, build a wall, yes, lock them up, because that's not us, that's them, right? That there's a creation of a definition and a separatism there, right? And so it, you know, I think it's a very, as we look forward though, to actually answer your question, I think that what happens to one, one, what happens when geopolitics changes who is showing up at our borders, right? That there's a belief that immigration and our refugee crises around the

country will work exactly the way they're working now. Well, what happens if there's another massive ground war in Europe that involves a bunch of countries and creates millions of people who would be socialized as white refugees? What happens if, what happens if the quote unquote browning of America, what if something happens in Asia that creates a massive demographic shift where now people from China or Japan are coming at the numbers that we're now seeing in Central South America, right? That what happens if something implodes in Brazil and suddenly we have a bunch of South Americans who are in appearance much more white than Central, than the may the Central and South Americans showing up currently, they start showing up, right? That that our understanding of what is to come and our projection of what is to come is so fatally limited by what's happening exactly right now and our complete inability to guess what will happen around the corner, what will happen tomorrow. I mean, this brings us full circle to what we are talking about with legacy of the fund and some of these other kind of moments of reckoning is that we are often so limited by a presentism, what's happening in this exact moment must continue to happen exactly the way that's happening forever. And what we've seen is that there are just too many inputs across the world. There could be a coup in a country we've never heard of tomorrow that fundamentally changes American history, right? And we don't know what that will look like and how it will operate there. Look, there could be an action by elected officials in the United States of America, right? We're a union of 50 states. What happens if that changes? It expands or contracts or and I don't want to get predictive about any of those things. I'm just going to say it. It could happen. You know, we don't know. And I think that and I think that because of that, it's I'm sure that there's plenty of stuff I'm saying right now that 2050, our kids are going to be doing a podcast together, talking about their dumb parents and what they all the wrong things that they said, because you know, because we are there's a there's a quote that historians are historical, that they write in the moment in which they are writing questions they ask are based on their preconceptions and the in the moment that in this moment, this is a smart question to ask, right? And and that there's something both revelatory and revealing about that, right? And so the fact

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that we are having these conversations right now says something about the moment we are in, whether or not anything we say is true or not.

100% true. Well, Wesley, this has been really fun, despite how like heady and serious the topic is. Could you just shout the name of the book out so folks who want to pick up where this conversation left off can go next?

Sure, it's American White Lash, changing nation and the cost of progress. It's available wherever you get your books.

And, you know, and I and I truly, you know, I love this conversation. This is really thoughtful. I think that there's not enough conversation at this level very often, in part because I think so much of our public dialogue is so partisan.

It's so in the like Republicans, Democrats framing that it gets it gets rid of our ability to have both values,

conversations and policy conversations, all we can have is political conversations. Yes. And and and so I say that

to say that anyone's listening who wants to, you know, email me and tell me I'm full of shit, I will read it and respond.

Like, you know, I enjoy the back and forth. I enjoy the sharpening of my thought process and ideas through feedback, right? Because I think as a journalist, it's my job to ask questions is my job to analyze evidence as it comes, right?

And it's my job to say what I think the evidence means, but not ever to be foreclosed on receiving new information and receiving new perspectives, if only so that I can be a more compelling communicator by anticipating what the robot will be. And so I say I'll have to say I love the conversation and, you know, happy to have similar ones with anyone who's listening.

And real quick, let me yes and that because you've you've given me a soapbox opportunity. I really appreciate what you

said about the, you know, Democrat, Republican politics, and they're like, I, there are definitely some listeners who

will want me to have turned this into a debate, but I was really, and this is what I was trying to get at with the start

of the episode, like I am interested in understanding your viewpoint, you're coming at this from a different perspective

than I am. And I think there's just like way, this isn't just the like dunking on the debate me bro and saying it's just

sort of like, I'm not interested when I'm talking to a guy like you. And like debating, which is really helpful to

understand how you're thinking about things. So thanks for being a great guest for that.

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Of course, and vice versa, right? Because I think that I steal that line from there's a media critic, James Fallows, who wrote that the partisan nature and the conflict nature of the media gets us away from discussion of common solutions to common problems. And I think about that so often as what is what should be the foundation of things functioning as a public square and as members of the media in so much as we help facilitate the public square, we're not gatekeepers, right, anyone can. But to the extent to which our job is to try to make it be a productive conversation, right, and informed conversation rounded and shared reality and facts, right, that is in so much as that is our desire, I feel like the point of our public square is to the point of debate, the point of dialogue is to find common solutions to common problems, right, that no matter what our politics is, none of us that that we all are lesser than even if just like a theoretical moral level, if we occupy a country that is in is in unequal, right, that we are all better off, I believe, for a country that is equal or that is better, that is better functioning that and so the reason we want to create such a world is is for all of us, right, and that and so therefore the places where we go to work that out, we've got to, you know, what does it look like to have a conversation that's less ends justify the means, I'm owning this person so that but and rather that is like no no no the point of us sitting here so that we can find a common solution to a common problem, which means I've got to understand where you're coming from, you've got to understand where I'm coming from, and as we all know from our interpersonal relationships, we can know someone very well and still say something to them and they take it totally differently than we intended it, right, my girlfriend would let me know that and my mother would my brothers, right, right, so now imagine someone who we don't know that well, whose politics are different, whose experiences are different, and we're like, all right, let's talk about the hardest things in the history of humanity in 42 seconds on cable TV, right, or in sentence fragments on the internet, like the more we can create space to actually interrogate, to ask those follow up questions, to be active and engage good faith listeners where we're not looking for the oh well you tripped up and said the thing so now I'm but we're actually trying to hear each other, it creates a space where

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look, I don't think we've solved any any of the world's great problems here, but I would speak to yourself, I think we've I think you've entirely solved policing federalism and but I would like to suggest that the amount of time we spent today is a step closer to it than a lot of ways we might have spent, you know, X number of minutes talking about these things. For sure. Well said, Wesley, thanks again for joining me on The Realignment. Of course, appreciate you. Hope you enjoyed this episode. If you learned something like the sort of mission or want to access our subscriber exclusive Q&A, bonus episodes and more, go to realignment.supercast.com and subscribe to our \$5 a month, \$50 a year or \$500 for a lifetime membership race. See you all next time.