

## [Transcript] The Realignment / Realignment Supercast AMA Teaser | John Lovell Interview Critiques, Government Role in NCAA Realignments, Robert Caro's Legacy, Adversity Scores in College Admissions, and More...

Marshall and Sagar here. Welcome back to the Supercast AMA edition of the Realignment podcast. Sorry for no episode last week, kind of shifting the schedule around. Sagar and I are both in the middle, both of that weird sort of vacation period, but also intensive wedding planning. This will be over after late August, early September, not that I'm not pumped for the wedding. This is just definitely the most difficult part of the schedule and period. So I appreciate everyone's understanding and chillness with that. You guys know a deal. If you'd like to listen to the full version of this episode, you can go to [realignment.supercast.com](http://realignment.supercast.com) or click the link at the top of the show notes. We offer a bit of free content and then actually get into the paywall section where I will reiterate the way you get access to the full huge thank you to everyone who is supporting. So first question, sorry you were not on this interview, so this is entirely for me. I did an interview with John Lovell. He's a kind of describe it like YouTuber, former Army Ranger. He runs something called the Warrior Poet Society into like gun training, like all those different things. And this has definitely been the poorest received episode I've ever conducted on any podcast I've ever done. I've done over 400 episodes of the realignment and then over 100 more of the Hudson and on deck one. So this is the worst one ever. I actually got my first ever. This was so bad. I'm canceling my subscription email. That's always kind of a fascinating category of email to me. But no, so here's the deal. The interview, here's what my initial thought was. So John is obviously conservative. He's a part of that, you know, former special forces enlisted person category that's got really big on YouTube. So you've noticed soccer, all these big conversations about masculinity and the crisis of American men.

And when I got the pitch for the book, I was most interested in kind of taking this crisis of American masculinity discourse, which you're seeing in the Washington Post. Richard Reeves is doing it and actually having a discourse on that topic with someone who actually puts out content that's aimed at young men in the first place, because like Christine Mba's article in the post was like really great. But like obviously, like that's an example of someone who's coming from a more mainstream establishment world in engaging with a topic after it got big. So the objective was I would have that conversation with someone who's coming from that space already. However, the problem is that at the end of the day, like the realignment and even breaking points are at their best when they're doing of people who are directly in policy and politics. And because John is a person who doesn't see himself as political, I don't think he was able to engage with the questions like in a kind of straightforward way. So when I'm like, Hey, like parting words for like people are trying to like struggle through these things. And he's like, Hey, like, find Jesus. Or, you know, he's talking about wokeness and just ways that like, okay, maybe that's fair for like the first answer where that really shouldn't be the third or fourth or fifth answer. He's talking about how like he doesn't want to pay taxes, like, et cetera, et cetera. So it just kind of fell into the category of just kind of unhelpfulness. So I don't regret the episode, because I think it's always great to experiment kind of try something different. But this has been a good kind of example of Hey, like this show is at its best when it's focused on a very specific type of guest across the ideological spectrum. And it's not just like enough for me to find someone who I may disagree if they have to be like in the right category of disagreement. So if I want to talk with

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a conservative about the masculinity crisis topic, I should find a conservative is coming from the word of policy and politics, not someone who's just kind of adjacent to it. But I'm sure you've run into I'm sure you run into this in the breaking points context, you have people who like are kind of political, but like, they're not actually rooted in politics. So things go off the rails. Yeah, I totally understand where you mean and where you're coming from in terms of like people who don't get the format and stuff. So everyone out there calm the fuck down, spend 400 episodes, you know, you don't have to cancel off for a single one. Anyway, yeah, no, I mean, you've definitely you've experienced the RFK junior and crystal kind of version of this. That's it. That's a bigger, bigger, bigger scale. We do kind of have a fun question that comes over this. I'm curious what you think about this. So John spent a lot of time talking about the nature of objective truth and how it exists and how a lot of our problems stem from not recognizing truth. So a listener wants to know in the recent John level interview, level asserted that we must agree on some objective truth for society to function.

I agree with this. So I ask each of you, which Starbucks menu item is objectively the best I'm asking this because I don't really go to Starbucks anymore. I think Starbucks has had a pretty significant fall off in terms of quality. Definitely the in store experience isn't great. But yeah, what's your take on this? I'm not the right guy to ask. I don't drink milk with my coffee. So like, for example, 80%, I did, I did something about this a while back about 80% of customers at Starbucks put milk or order something that's not black coffee, only 20% of customers at the actual chain drink black coffee, I only drink black coffee. So if you were to ask me, it would be like a grande blonde, I don't really like pike pike place Starbucks roast. I think it's too burnt. It's actually basically designed so you have to like nuke it with cream and sugar, their blonde veranda roast is not bad. So that's the only one I've really, but I know that that's not what most people would want. So my answer is not the right one. My answer is not what you're looking for. Yeah, no, it's kind of funny because now that I'm thinking about it, your answer totally makes sense because I actually, thanks to you, fun factor everybody at my personality trait used to be that I would pour gallons of milk, cream and sugar and somewhere around, I think 2012, 2013, you finally just said stop. And effectively shamed me until I stopped doing that. But that makes Starbucks a problem because to your point, Starbucks is black coffee is not particularly good. I do like the pops though, I will defend the pops, the pops are pretty good. I don't mind if I'm on the road, actually it's not bad road trip food. You want something like ish healthy, those egg bites, the egg white bites, they're pretty good. Okay, so very expensive though. So that's the other issue. Yeah, that's the, we're running kind of into the dilemma here. So last free open question, Robert Gottlieb slash Robert Karo. Robert Gottlieb, the long-time editor of all of Robert Karo's books passed away recently at 92. I'm saddened that he will not be around to finish editing the final installment of Karo's series on LBJ. These books have been mentioned many times on the show and they are masterclass on politics and power. Be grateful if you can elaborate on the impact of Gottlieb and Karo's partnership. These books has had in your own understanding of politics power, what lessons can be gleaned for them in today's politics. Thank you both for your perspective and invaluable input you add to today's political ecosystem. You introduced me to Robert Karo. So this is a, you're the first one to go here first. I love the Robert Karo books.

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I think they're some of the most important and best biographies ever written. One of my favorite quotes by Karo is that the LBJ books are about the years of Lyndon Johnson. They're not a biography of Lyndon Johnson. So there's a biography of Johnson within kind of a chronicling of his times, which is why I think they're fantastic. That's what any great biography really strives to do. It tells the period of the time through the lens and the view of one man. Gottlieb in particular, I recommend everybody go watch the documentary about the two of them, which was made by Gottlieb's daughter. Really, really good documentary. It's very poignant. I have some bad news though. I have made my piece with the fact that I will never read the fifth book. Wow. And I think it is poetic that we won't. And I think I'm okay with it. I'm fine with it. And actually, the more I've thought about it, Karo's gift to all of us was telling us the story of Johnson that nobody knew. And passage of power book four ends in 1964. And the truth is, is that 64 to the end of LBJ's life is the most visible in the historical record. So I'm not saying that he wouldn't be able to give us like a unique take and he wouldn't be able to uncover things. But you know, the transcripts of meetings with McGeorge Bundy and all, like you can read all of that. You can read the smartest guys in the room or the brightest, the best and the brightest by David Halberstam on Vietnam. What's his name? I forget the guy. Dalek has an entire series on LBJ. The decision makings around Vietnam and all that, like it's all there. It's already, it already exists. And so the only sad part is that we won't get the downfall because everything so far throughout the Karo years is kind of the rise of Lyndon Johnson. But I think it's okay. As sad as I am that we probably won't. And the reason why I'm convinced we absolutely won't read it as I was just reading the other day that Perot was like writing and had spent an entire year writing and rewriting a single chapter of the book. And I was like, all right, this is not gonna happen. It's just not possible. I've read and also COVID really screwed it because he's at 85. I think he might be 86 at this point. He had planned to go and live in Vietnam for a year to go and chronicle. I mean, you know, what's not going to happen? And also, and no offense to him, he's got a little bit of a George RR Martin thing going on, where all of a sudden he's making documentaries, working, that book he wrote a few years ago, working, which, you know, for being honest, like didn't have to be done. But I think it's very clear that he did that because he thinks he's going to die. And he wanted like the legacy of his research. I just read that he's donating his papers and working with the New York Historical Society. These are all not things that you do whenever you're like singularly focused on publishing the book. So I just think we're never going to read the book. And he's also said he doesn't want anyone to do the William Manchester. He doesn't want anyone to finish his last book. So if it does, if he dies before it's done, it's just not going to happen. And I'm pretty much, I have made my piece a long time ago, like we're never going to read it. Yeah, a couple things there. So a, I'd actually love to hear this from you. So when you're referencing William Manchester, people might not be this deep in the reads, but we don't publish the videos of these episodes. But if you watch a normal realign episode, you can look to the top, I guess, what would be my right. If you're watching it, I've got the Last Lion series, which is by William Manchester. You have what is it? Visions of glory, which is 1874 to 1932 alone, 1932 to 1940. And then Defender of the Realm, 1940 to 1965. This is

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obviously the full telling of Winston Churchill's story. However, William Manchester in the late 90s, as he's finishing the trilogy, he wrote lots and lots and lots and lots of different books, including a very good Douglas MacArthur biography, if you guys would like, that's also back here. If you guys would like to get into that. But the key thing is, he knew he wasn't going to be able to finish the book. So he found a friend, Paul Reed, who was a features writer in Florida. And Sagar, you've actually, you have all three books on your Audible account. What is, do you think that, so basically he then let Paul Reed finish the book after he was incapacitated, passed away.

What was your take on giving it to the person that finished the trilogy?

Huge mistake for the same reason. It wasn't good. It wasn't right. I like Manchester's books a lot. And it's the same thing where, look, like, let's be honest, the most chronicle period of Churchill's life is PM and leader of the realm, like during World War Two. There's a million books out there. We didn't need it, actually, to come from him. In fact, the most valuable book of the Last Lion series is the first part, because the first part is the again, like the most the best thing that these guys do, the multi biography, multi volume people is go extremely deep in the very early years. I'm also thinking of Morris's Rise of Theodore Roosevelt. Like, it's basically acknowledged that volume two is just like not that good during the presidency. Theodore Rex. I blew through Rise of Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore Rex took me an actual year to finish. Rex is applauding.

The worst thing a biography can do, which the Last Lion does, the Last Lion with Paul Reed, the defender of the realm, the worst thing is Wikipedia dump. Is like, then this happened, then this happened, then this happened, then this happened, and that's what Rex does too.

Rex is like, then this happened in his presidency and this happened in his presidency.

And it's like, man, like this is this is rough going. And like that's that's something you would read in a textbook. That's not what we're looking for in a good bio. So, you know, who does this actually the best and multidisciplinary turnout? That guy is like master the art of hitting all the high notes and thematically like wrapping things up. He did it with Grant, did it with Hamilton, did it with Washington. And before that, he did it with Rockefeller and with Morgan. So there's something to it's look, it's an art form, you know, and not everybody's all that good at it. Yeah, so I'll offer two recommendations then, because I don't want to just be bumming people out about Robert Carrister, though I'll add something on that for a second. So, Robert Carros first LBJ book, especially for younger listeners who I think would get a lot out of it. The path to power, which is his first LBJ book as he's, you know, rising up from just being a guy in the whole country of Texas and then eventually rising up to be a member of Congress, that's great. And then also the rise of Theodore Roosevelt by Edmund Morris both start with just incredible anecdotes. So the path to power starts with this kind of like, you know, it's young LBJ, he's a member of Congress, it's going into detail about how he's always like desperate for money. You know, LBJ was more of a decently, more of a decently corrupt, I will just add to I'm officially starting my position at UT with the Kerman Center next week. So I'm going to be doing some work with

the LBJ museum, obviously somebody speak very carefully when I say this LBJ had a complicated relationship with money and power and those different things people could take without what they will point is though, like it talks about how he's just desperate for money. He does all these sketchy things like he, what was so correct me if I'm wrong, but a person LBJ like offers a

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person, hey, here's a person you could like work with or could do something for you. And the person is like, okay, cool, nice. In the same way that I can be like, Hey, soccer, you need your lawn done, like I know a guy LBJ comes over the next day. And it's like, Hey, I need a cut of what you just made because I did that, which is insane. That's actually the way the book opens. Yeah, this is the book opens that way. But then the critical thing is, this person is hanging out LBJ and a very wealthy person, the very wealthy person offers LBJ kind of a cut into some oil money. And this person's expecting LBJ to like take the money. And LBJ says no, and the person's like, wait, what? My LBJ rejecting this money. And then the person in the LBJ says, I can't do it, because it would harm my political ambitions. And which once again, this is when he's just a, you know, Texas congressman, one of one of many. And then the person's doing the math, he's like, and once again, Carol's can telling this story, just so amazing. When he's like, person does the math, he's like, wait, like, if you wanted to be a senator from Texas, why would oil money be a problem? And if you want to be governor, why would there be a problem? Then he goes, Oh, if you want to be president, once again, the first Southern president since the civil war, that oil money would be a problem. Then the person saying that incident completely reframe the way I thought of LBJ. So once again, that's an amazing start to biography. That's exactly the definition saga you're making of like, how to not do a biography as Wikipedia jump, you don't need excerpt, you know, X, Y, and Z date LBJ is born, you have to start with that. And then secondly, Edmund Morris rise at Theodore Roosevelt is great because it starts with it. Obviously, the book is about his life up until McKinley dies, and he becomes president, but it actually starts with him like as president kind of catches him in his prime. It's New Year's Day during his second term. This is actually the tradition used to have is they used to open the White House to people on this was the last time it's ever happened. So in New Year's Day, thousands of thousands of people came into the White House and Theodore Roosevelt actually broke the record for most like handshakes. In an hour, there's a very aggressive receiving line, but it's described as like war, wind, day, all these things are happening. Then after all that, Theodore Roosevelt goes to bed and like literally just reads a book in one sitting. And it's just sort of an amazing anecdote. So that's one thing. And then the last thing I'll close this kind of rant with is just I felt bad about the caro book product getting finished, but I really appreciate your way you articulated that in the sense that we actually know in these four books, we know LBJ up until he kind of enters history for most of us. So you've got your AP US government version of LBJ. You know, you've got the failure Vietnam, you have like, you know, the passages of the Civil Rights Act, you have the 1968 election, his desire not to run again. Most people, especially people listed, so we're going to know that they're not going to know about how horrible the Kennedy presidency was for him. They're not going to know about his time in the Senate. When he was master of the Senate, they're not going to know about him and growing up in Texas. So that's that's like very well said. This isn't like Game of Thrones where if you still care about that story, it's actually just not finished. You don't actually know. Okay, so now we're going to go to the paid version of the podcast. If you'd like to get the full version, you can go to [realignment.supercast.com](http://realignment.supercast.com). Once again, that's [realignment.supercast.com](http://realignment.supercast.com) or click the link in the show notes.