



# ★ FORTRESS ON A HILL

## Ep 68 transcript

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### **SPEAKERS**

Danny Sjursen, Chris 'Henri' Henrikson, Keagan Miller

#### **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

Good morning listeners. Welcome to Fortress On A Hill we are going to take today to discuss the events of the last few weeks the brutal murder of the death of of excuse me of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police and the heavily, heavily militarized police response that we have all seen since it began. Um, so just off the top I and I, you know, I haven't been actively involved in a law enforcement job in five or six years now. And I have to say, watching the news over the last week, I am so, so ashamed of the profession of law enforcement. You know, I when I first learned and understood about police brutality and the many layers of it, I there was a layer there for me because I...I would have resigned I would have resigned years ago over events like this. And I don't know how anyone who has a mindset of and I'm just going to use the LAPD slogan here but it is what people need to focus on is protect and serve police officers are supposed to do a service to the community. Using brutal violence on protesters, mostly peaceful protesters does not fill that mission. In fact, the the the one moment that struck me the most insult began was the violent assault of an elderly protester in Buffalo that he was just knocked flat on his ass and you could see he was bleeding from the ear. And I wish I could say that the net what happened next after the other officers passed them. I wish I could say this next thing gave me a little bit of hope. But it's just kind of how they're trained. The first individuals to stop and render aid to this gentleman...I apologize they don't remember what his name was at the moment. I know he's a prominent anti war activist and was involved with the Kings Ploughshares seven group. The first people to stop and help him and attempt to ascertain if he's okay or soldiers, I assume to National Guard. I don't know if they're medics. I don't know if they're MPs. I don't really know. But they did. One of them took a knee next to him as the camera panned away and tried to help him. And those are the kind of things I'm talking about. So So how how anyone can remain a part of a law enforcement

organization right now is beyond me. Yeah, I'm just I'm just, I am and I, I think to myself about the life that I would have would have probably led had my health not gotten really bad, which was the life of an agent at a three letter agency somewhere. But anyway, I think I think about covered it for this. Yeah, me.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Right. So yeah, the first thing we're doing here is just kind of responding, I think, to all this happens from our three perspectives and also those that we've kind of been around and diagnosing this moment is almost impossible. But responding to it, I think is, you know, vital. And, you know, Henri, you mentioned what I thought was just a terribly indecent moment, where the 75 year old man buffalo was shoved to the ground. And I think that the the piece, you know, you mentioned how they walk right by him and, and the moment in the video that most struck me in a personal way, was when, immediately one of the officers did slow down, look, and appeared to want to render aid and his buddy or maybe superior, I don't know...grabs them and like pulls him away. And I just thought that that was like the ultimate moment of indecency and an explanation of the group think and the price of loyalty that sort of occurs in any paramilitary organization. And, of course, what we now know is just two hours ago, Trump tweeted about that man, Martin Gugino from Buffalo, the 75 year old man and he said the following, quote, Buffalo protesters shoved by police could be an an Tifa, provocateur. Now, you know, we're going to talk more about Trump's response and you know, our kind of third go round in this Roundtable. But let us be clear that in every single war, America has waged at home and abroad against an idea whether that idea Was fascism communism and now terror. Anyone who becomes a dissident in any way even peacefully, which he clearly was this man will be will be not maybe will be labeled as fascist Communist or now terrorists. And antifa is sort of like a new buzzword for terrorism. So we must always reject this and be skeptical of it. So my general take on the moment is Okay, first of all, I think it's important to kind of explain, at least from my perspective, why this is happening. And I think that in some sense, this is a perfect storm for unrest. And it's sad that it came to this, but I'm personally very proud to be a small part of it. And I'm very proud of sort of just the American people for keeping the fire up. I mean, think about what is the backdrop to this, and I'm going to come back to George Floyd and A human element that can never be forgotten, we must always say his and other names. But the fact that it's continued even after these officers were arrested, and of course, whether there'll be convicted is a whole other story. And the stats are not strong on this. But why is it that the debate now and the movement now is so systemic in its critique, which I think is very powerful? Well, this is all happening on the back of or amidst the COVID epidemic and Courtine. A massive depression probably the greatest since the Great Depression and economic crash that really is symptomatic of an economy that has worked for the few for many years now, at least since reagan, and really longer. We have these endless boomeranging wars, Imperial wars that are coming home to roost. We have the tribal politics of the Trump age which really one could say since the Reagan and definitely George W. Bush age, this division of of America. And we have now this widespread loss of faith in the mainstream media narrative, which I think is important because thereby, everyone becomes journalist who has a camera or a pen or just eyes and throw onto that kindling. And it's pretty significant playing this particularly obscene videoed murder of George Floyd, which is, just, in many ways, the straw that broke the camel's back. So I think that a lot of discussions of what's happening in the streets, and I'm not a leader of this far flung and widespread and largely organic movement. But just from a historical and

analytical perspective, my position is that these factors created the moment and they're very sad and the serving factors, but I think that they're important and they're they're usually not included in the mainstream narrative, which is almost always very binary peace or violence, right, right or wrong. What the police did where the reality is, it's more than that. So finally, you know, all of this makes me hopeful, if not optimistic, although maybe I'll go so far as to say cautiously optimistic about what comes from this. But I, you know, anyone who follows my social media or my articles knows that I've been, you know, in the streets, six out of nine of the last night in Kansas City, mostly in just around other cities in Kansas, mostly in Kansas City. And, you know, I'm a small number of abroad multifaceted movement, but I think it's needed for us to be out in the streets for mainly two reasons. And that is to quote you know, say his name. To say that enough is enough, and human decency must rain. And what happened to George Floyd was a modern day lynching and urban lynching on a street corner, just like the Eric Garner lynching on an urban street corner over cigarettes and not a counterfeit supposedly write extensively \$20 bill that was a lynching. And that was a aggravation and a violation of human decency. And we have to say enough is enough. And the second reason I think we need to be in the streets is to expose and protest, the systemic militarization of American life. Not just policing, but life that created the Eric Garner's which is what first got me in the streets in 2014. And the George Floyd's Six years later of the world so you know, that's why I think we need to be out there and I I feel like we're really living history right now. And people say that all the time and we all trade and paddling platitude, but I saw a post on one of my Lieutenant one of my old cadets, a brilliant young female student, one of my favorites so she's a lieutenant now she's an armor officer right I mean, she's she's living the Combat Arms dream right that women couldn't do for the longest time and you know, she posted something or repost something on Social media that said like, Did you ever wonder, you know how you would have responded if you live through the Holocaust or World War Two or the Great Depression? And then it said like, well, what you're doing now is what you would have done. And I thought that was pretty powerful. Because this is this is a this is a pivotal moment. So yeah, that's a lot. But that's all I'd say for right now on this.

### **Keagan Miller**

That's great. I feel like it's not. I mean, as with as much stuff as Trump says, every single day, every single minute of every single day, like, I feel like we can't lose sight of what you mentioned, the fact that he is actively peddling conspiracy theories from fucking OAN which is clearly just the most it's like fox news on steroids if you guys have ever seen it, it's ridiculous. Oh, yes, it's, it's insane. It's I mean, the stuff that they say it's just like, How can any rational person think that this is true? What Regardless, like so he's peddling this stuff. And it's like, like we can't. We can't forget that like, Yes, he's a he's a buffoon. He's foolish. She's ridiculous, but like, he's still the president united states. And he still has millions of followers on Twitter that like, hang on his every word. And it's just so annoying that, you know, mainstream media especially isn't taking him to task on specific things that he says beyond just the outrage he, oh my god, can you believe he said this? And I think that that is like, they're doing a real real disservice to everybody who cares about this, to not push back and I feel like it's been interesting to see like, lately MSN, NBC and CNN whenever Trump says something or like one of its proxies. If you look at like the banner on the, the screen, and sometimes it'll say like, really harsh things like Trump lies about blah, blah, blah. And I'm like, Fuck yeah, like they need to be doing that more. Every time he talks every time pompeyo talks or Kaylee make enemy, you know, any of the like mouthpieces for the

administration. Like that's the only way that people are going to get it is if we see that if we can, like and the the big organizations that, you know, make up society, I guess those they're the ones that need to be taken care of.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Absolutely, yeah, absolutely. This is really important what you're saying. You know, it's where where an individual, I don't know, Keagan, I don't know if this is what you're driving at at all. But as I was listening to you, I couldn't help but think that were an individual or where an organization of any sort any public organization falls on this issue. In this moment has become a competence and an ethical litmus test. Are you sensing? Are you sensing that?

### **Keagan Miller**

Oh, totally. Yeah, like we're seeing, you know, I like something that we said, or that I heard a lot last night, and like I've been hearing lately is just, you know, Whose side are you on? And while while I am loath to take the, like, binary position like that, I do think that this is a time to make a stand. No, we have to be we have to not be afraid of like pissing people off, because that's the only way that stuff gets actually, you know, in history, like we just look at history and look at what, you know, forces things to change. It's not people being nice, and you know, saying, Oh, hey, come, come be a part of our thing and like, help us do this. I mean, yes, that's part of it. But it's also like, you have to push it in their face, and and force people to acknowledge what is like what's going on and I'm loving seeing a lot of my white friends, you know, posting these things about like, Oh, I learned this today, or like, I didn't think about this until now. We're just like, there's a real shift happening. And in our collective consciousness in America, and and I feel like when it's moments like this, you know, we have to take a stance, and we have to either say like, Are we going to be with the people that are trying to have the real freedom and equality for everyone I in or are we going to be with the state and with the people that are just saying, oh, everything's fine. Don't worry about it. And I mean, like, he's, like you said earlier, like, we're at the culmination of these three things. We've been in this war of terror for 20 fucking years almost now, which is just insane. But we're, like, we're really at this point where people are are saying, you know, we've we've been saying enough is enough for a while, but now like, actually meaning and the companies and person important structures of power are actually like examining this in a real way that we've never seen.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Yeah, definitely, I've made a brief career out of like arguing against, you know, any sort of managing or binary divisions when it comes to war. But I will caveat that by saying that there are particularly rare and I think this is one of the moments in history where you do have to take sides, you do have to choose and, you know, in the Spanish Civil War, when there was like a fascist overtaking of Spain in the 1930s, which was kind of the lead up to World War Two, it was the rumblings it was the preview, that wasn't even their own country, but where an intellectual for example, a writer, a public intellectual fell on that issue. Did in many cases determine sort of the like ethical path of the rest of their career. Which is why folks like Hemingway and for well and, and lots of nameless folks from the, you know, Lee Abraham Lincoln brigades in America or many other like expatriates went there to fight because they said no

more Enough is enough. We're not going to let fascism rise, they failed. But they ended up being sort of the vanguard of the anti fascist movement later. And so

### **Keagan Miller**

yeah, I think this is and look at who the people were that were that were supporting Germany, you, don't you like you look at the companies. You look at Henry Ford. You look at the people who like, you know, from JP Morgan, and from standard and like, I will they were broken up. But you know, like the bigger companies like they were in support of Mussolini, of fucking Andrew Mellon, like we can't forget that Andrew Mellon was the secretary of treasury for 11 years use the position to enrich himself immensely. And like, he was a huge supporter of Mussolini and fascism because he saw how the state was able to make Economics grow for the rich. And so he was and so he was like, Oh, yeah, of course, of course this is gonna work. And it's just it's so fucked, like for us looking at it now with historical perspective and seeing how terrible it was, but like, we can't forget how people were acting before we knew about Nazi ism and fascism, like and we're in that same moment now. I think like we're, we have people that are defending the state. They're defending these authoritarian views because for some reason, they think that the people who are out in the streets are just there to cause trouble or whatever. And not actually caring about making things better. But it's that's that's a narrative as being spun. And it's the same one that has always been fun when, when authoritarian regimes are in power.

### **Danny Sjursen**

You Yeah, Martin Luther King was very unpopular in public opinion polls for He died. Yeah, there's only he was only canonized later. And I do think that like, the positions people took publicly what they wrote what they said that's like forever because it's in the internet is going to come back and by folks later like this is going to become that litmus test so, so as we sort of transition just because, you know, maybe I should have set it up front, like, what we're going to do is, you know, Henry's gonna jump in Now, again, because he's got some really interesting thoughts, especially given his own experience and research on police militarization. So we're going to go around the horn on on the police factor and how they've been militarized in many ways. And then and then we're going to kind of transition more specifically to the actual military and American streets, which is a extraordinarily discomfoting thing. And, and then finally, we're going to sort of go back around one last time and talk about the dissent that we're starting to see in a remarkable fashion, more so than since at least the end of the Vietnam More of soldiers and veterans against the state and against the orders to deploy. And and that's kind of where we're going to finish up. So, yeah, Henri, if you can lead off with some of the great stuff that you know about police militarization, and we'll kick it off from there.

### **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

So I wanted to talk for a minute about Washington D.C. as a city, what it what it's like, and especially what the police situation is there for citizens of the city. I'm sure, listeners that you've seen in the news, the unmarked Riot squads, right? teams that have been utilized at times in Washington DC, during this horrible period. I think that those those guys were specifically from the Federal Bureau of Prisons if anybody wants the actual answer, but the point I'm trying to make is that The President and his all of his cabinet members and other people that lead LEO agencies, especially including the Attorney General, they are able to pull massive, massive amounts of manpower and firepower immediately from

all these different federal agencies. And if you're on vacation, if you're walking in Washington, DC, walking past a variety of government buildings, you find out that almost every agency has its own police force. And a lot of those agencies, even ones that aren't involved in going after criminals in any way have their own SWAT teams like the Department of Education. I don't I don't fucking know why, but the Department of Education has its own SWAT team. But it

### **Danny Sjursen**

Real quick Henri, is it safe to assume that the education secretary Betsy DeVos his brother Eric Prince is probably like the CEO of that.

### **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

I think so.

### **Danny Sjursen**

I'm sorry I couldn't help myself you know, the the he's the mercenary-in-chief. They're gonna make a new cabinet position called mercenary secretary and I think Erik Prince already has it. Sorry.

### **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

Um, so the president in his in his other people in his cabinet, other other members of the state, other members of the government can call in these massive amount of police officers and there's no, there's no real checks and balances on what they're used for. This also includes the joint counter terrorism task force, which according to recent reports that I've seen, aside from being previously used against political dissidents, or activists of different stripes, mostly leftists, that they're trying to use the authority of the task force to go after some activists now and refer to them as terrorists. So it's important to understand This this citadel of washington dc in terms of I, I wrote down here, I'm calling it an American police fortress because that's really what it is. And this huge army of officers is exactly that. It is a literal army that the President and others can call in to be used for any given situation. here's a here's a really good example of something that has changed recently that the DEA got a special exemption, a temporary exemption to be able to do surveillance on protesters, which is not at all part of their mandate, but because the they're calling you know, it's an emergency that there's rioters that there's agitators, Danny, right. You know, all their various synonyms for that. They are able to push the panic button and bring in all these different law enforcement agencies and it even moves out from there from Washington, DC. The CIA has their own cops. There are no and I've mentioned both in social media. And when we spoke to Larry Wilkerson that I've already seen military police, I don't know if they're active duty or National Guard, but out there on the frontlines, right alongside alongside regular cops, and right here, and I don't think that's a good thing. I think that that is a very much a slippery slope to walking into even further layers of militarization. Why doesn't the DC Mayor have control of the National Guard in Washington DC? That's a question I've been asking myself a lot recently because the President was able to call it the DC National Guard and use them in whatever way he wants to with his authority. But the mayor, the actual sovereign leader of Washington, DC, who makes decisions about DC should have that authority. But she doesn't. And I know that DC I mean, it's it's essentially Kind of the I wouldn't say the President's play place, but it's definitely the government's play place. I don't know. I wanted to mention to you guys a specific moment, there was a

picture of National Guard troops in riot gear standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. That made me really, really angry, although it is very precious for our time, given the connections to police brutality and pushing down Black Lives Matter. Now, I wanted to talk a little bit about the weapons that are being used by police against protesters. We've discussed in the past different ways that that military weapons of war can hurt people, even if they're not being used defensively. A good example would be the tiny concussions that a soldier can get from using machine gun. But we're going to talk about how this is affecting the the approach testers. So first is his tear gas. Now, tear gas also called CS and cn. I can't remember what those designations mean at the moment, but it is banned as a weapon of war in the Chemical Weapons Convention that our country signed, it is not authorized to be used as a weapon of war. However, it is given a specific special exemption to be used as a domestic riot control agent and I put the words riot control in parentheses. That term I've seen it so many times this last week, and it's written in the way that it implies that whatever device it's attached to, if it's tear gas, if it's a projectile launcher, pepper balls, that it's only acceptable uses on riots and rioters, therefore, it's not used at other times. So there if it's getting used, then the word presumption must be that its target must be protesters as thought that was funny and morbid. I found a 2014 study conducted by the army that determined that's CS gas, which is something that all new soldiers and officers get exposed to at one time or another. that it does cause actual damage to the lungs make you one much more susceptible to getting upper respiratory infections, which is a major problem for basic training troops. The study itself led to a decrease in the severity of CS gas used in basic training, trying to minimize transmission of illness and minimize any damage to people's lungs. During the coronavirus epidemic, the use of CS not only becomes a concern for any individual who has to breathe it in. But an additional transmission chance for the virus. CS causes people to cough uncontrollably, trying to get it out of their system, meaning that anybody who carries a virus Even if they're asymptomatic at the moment they're gassed, they would now be coughing up millions more droplets of the virus than they would have been otherwise. Then there's rubber bullets and rubber bullets is another misnomer because they're rubber coated bullets or riot rounds, however you want to see them some of them are made of wood. Some of them are made of a hard composite plastic and some of them are made of metal. One study that I found it documented a total of over 1900 injuries from rubber bullets. 15% of those injuries resulted in permanent disability. Three of them result 3% resulted in death. When the injuries were to the eyes, they overwhelmingly resulted in blindness. There's been numerous reports I think I can think of three right now where specifically reporters but other protesters have been hit in or near their eyes and have lost them. Try that I've seen that at least three times. And I'm sure there's probably more that I didn't notice through the news, but the most important thing about the rubber bullets is to get around cops euphemistically referring to them as rubber bullets which they are not. They can be different sizes, they can be shot out of a 40 millimeter grenade launcher, the kind that Danny and I and our troops used to carry in war zones. Then we move on to flashbangs flashbangs are just dangerous in general, being near a flashbang. detonation for any reason is a very dangerous thing. I'm sure many of our listeners are familiar with that. Little boy that got hurt in a raid I want to say it was 2015 or 2016. And a flashbang went off right next to his chest. And he had to have extensive surgery. I don't I don't know what the status of his health is today, but I know that he was he was hurt very, very badly because he was close to it. You can get burns, you can get small amounts of shrapnel wounds, your vision. It does. It's supposed to be temporary but people have had long standing vision issues from it. And of course hearing damage, there's also the chance of losing your fingers or other appendages if the thing goes off

that close to you. This was something that I carried as a soldier I carried a flashbang with the on on patrols. And it's very, very destructive, but it's being treated right now as a common easily used easily needed weapon against against the protesters. We come then to pepper spray, pepper spray has a whole bunch of different ways to deploy it. There's the small handheld canister that most patrolmen carry, then you get up to a fogger type device that is more like the shape of a fire extinguisher. And the newest one that I'm still trying to learn more about is when pepper spray or a former pepper spray is put into paintballs that can then be shot at writers at random. Now this this combines two different parts of this one is the pepper spray which is very painful, although it's its effects overall are a bit diminished from CES it's still can be damaging, but generally speaking isn't as damaging. But with the pepper balls, you get pepper spray all the hell over you and then you also get the impact injuries from the paintballs and I used to play paintball as a kid. You get giant welts you again could lose an eye if somebody shot you in the eye. Yeah, it's it. The injuries can be horrific, but but it's made to seem like this is a less a less lethal, less damaging way to deal with a protester. Then we come to a little more unusual stuff like sound cannons. I found a an article talking about there's a lawsuit going on Supreme Court recently said that it can allow to go forward involving the use of a sound cannon in 2014. Eric Garner protests in Staten Island. So I might be something for you to check out there Danny's in terms of the longevity of it, the kind of questions they're asking for the case. And lastly, but certainly not least, is impact weapons. And with impact weapons again, it's another euphemism. We're talking about batons, we're talking about collapsible batons, tasers, riot shields. All kinds of things that can just be used to walk the shit out of people. You know, there's some, I don't want to speak to how specific departments have used their tactics because there's a lot of variants. It's all very violent, but it's, you know, I haven't noticed anybody who's actually had any restraint yet. here in Portland. We've been dealing with long, horrible actions against peaceful protesters. Keagan I was so happy to hear from you when we discussed this before we started that your march was your long march was peaceful only saw one cop which is great. I'm also super jealous of you being able to be out marching because I it's it's not something I really can do. But I'm very proud that you guys are out there trying to to get these opinions and and trying to change this horrific, horrific place we are in in America. Now, having settled out about all that different kind of gear, there are very few national regulations on riot control weapons saying when they can and can't be used. It's usually comes down to if there is some kind of rule that comes in says we can't use them in this specific way. It's like an appeals court decision. It's not anyone actually sat down and regulated it A good example. Along with that would be the use the, the riot squad I mentioned earlier that was, I think is part of the Bureau of Prisons. There's I think there should be federal law that if you are a federal law enforcement officer, you your uniform has to be labeled as such at all times. And you can't take that shit off as to hide your identity when using this kind of violence. Um, yep, I think that's, that's all I got to say about that for the moment.

### **Danny Sjurson**

That's all incredibly great stuff. And I'm so thankful that you went through the individual weapons of war. Right, because that's what they are. these are these are these are weapons of war that are utilized against the American people the war on dissent, the war on protest. So the vast, vast majority of which is peaceful, right. And that's not me taking a position on peaceful versus not peaceful. I think that it, we must understand the roots of the limited violence that we've seen, especially in the last week where it's really calmed down. But at the same time, just on a personal level, yeah, I'm something close to a

pacifist out on those streets. So while I'm not judging every aspect of what's going on out there, personally, I'm glad to see the peaceful stuff and I was glad to get that report from you Keagan. And I've seen most of that in Kansas City. So I have a few comments on some of those three of those weapons. I'll went on anecdotal which I will be to some extent and personal. Remember that I'm speaking through my narrow soda straw aperture here in mid sized Kansas City, but Kansas City is you know, like the largest metropolitan area and like maybe a two or 300 mile radius here in the middle of the Midwest, the Great Plains. So let's start with like the pepper spray. folks to my left and right directly Were pepper sprayed on Saturday, last the first Saturday and Sunday. And you know, I got some back spray, but I was pretty lucky. It is painful. They were using the Kansas City Police when they were really ride it up right here and up on Saturday and Sunday of the first day of protest, they were definitely more aggressive and they had those kind of larger canisters that look almost like small fire extinguishers. And what I'll say is there's there's a personal side to this, there's a character function here. And what I mean is what I witnessed was variation among individual police officers in their willingness to use right, the threshold at which they use things like pepper spray. And so there were a few cops that I kept an eye on and took videos of pictures that some people have seen throughout the week, but especially those first few days. And though all three of us and many of our listeners who've been in the military know that there's always a handful of folks in every unit that, you know, they like their job a little too much. And there was this one police officer in Kansas City, African American, very muscular Look, the part kind of police officer and he enjoyed his job a lot. And he was extraordinarily aggressive and physical with always peaceful protesters in terms of what I saw on the ground. And you know, she was really big on and he wasn't a sergeant or anything, either. What I can tell, although they're very, they weren't as good about marking their uniforms with names and rank as I wish they all would have been. There was very little standard that just really wouldn't have passed muster. Even in like a line army unit were the same. But you know, I mean, he was criminalizing space in a very arbitrary way. So we're other officers and some of their leaders where we'd be allowed to stand on one, you know, curb one minute and then like, literally 90 seconds later they say, No, no, now you can't stay in there anymore. We've decided it's illegal if you're breaking the law, we're gonna rescue and, you know, when when a woman very peaceful and relatively diminutive woman was just like, stood her ground, you know, she's pepper spray right in the eyes. And obviously, it's a video that that, you know, got some attention on Twitter. There's a paradox here with any power military organization or any organization that executes and manages force and violence. And that is, to quote Kurt Vonnegut on a macro scale. Vonnegut says, and he's so funny and always right. He says, there's one fatal flaw in our Constitution. I'm paraphrasing, and I don't know what to do to change it. And he says, and that is that only crazy people want to be president. And of course, it's funny, right? Because it's true. Like even someone like Obama like to think that you you should be in charge of the like the quote, free world. insane, right? Well, you could say the same thing about police and soldiers, right? In many ways, the only people you want, especially in like domestic community policing, the only folks that you want to do that job are folks who don't really want to do that job. Right people who don't take a lot of relish in it, and and that paradox is difficult to break. And so I saw that with individual officers, which been moving on to tear gas that I was gassed more than once and you know, and did suffer some of the, you know, discomfort and side effects of that right, you know, fluid coming out of orifices and all this I witnessed, on Saturday evening, still daylight in particular, Kansas City Police unleash tear gas on us in the park at the JC Nichols fountain down by the plaza, which was where they told us we had a stay. And because some folks stayed in the street and

and sort of held their ground, their response was to you know, tear down The entire park that they had told us we had to stay in criminalizing peaceful protests. They have been better since. And they've really been militarized, which I'll get to but you know, this was profound. I mean, it there is something as I wrote sort of paradigm shifting and changing, altering the way you look at your government when you watch strangers, frantically, helping other strangers pick up their multiple children to run from tear gas because they were still kids in the crowd. You talked about the effects of tear gas and how it's used on you know, CSX is used on soldiers in basic training. Of course, you know, the first time that I had been exposed to CES was in you know, the gas chamber cadet basic training and July, late July of 2001. And this is my privilege talking as a white man and a veteran. I truly even a year ago would have thought it unlikely that I would be tear gas by my own governor, but of course now we are Through the Looking Glass and that's Something that happened to me and I didn't never I've grown so much is thrown an empty water bottle right so but yet and either had the people next week by and large but yeah we were gassed finally on the rubber bullets have not been hit with a rubber bullet thankfully, folks we're on a limited admittedly limited basis in Kansas City much more in other cities, it's correct to note that rubber bullet is euphemism for real bullets, steel bullets that are just in case than rubber when I think of rubber bullets, based on my own sort of like historical interest and then like my family, which was like vaguely supportive of Irish independence in the Irish Republican Army, and I was kind of raised on that and watched all those movies and read all those books as even as a kid. I always associated rebels with like Northern Ireland. Right. Of course they're used elsewhere. They're widely used in Kashmir, which is the largest military domestic occupation in the world is half a million Indian troops there right. Maintaining Indian control against the Population doesn't want to be part of India. But the idea of it being used widely in American streets is disturbing. And maybe it shouldn't have been because it has been used in the past. But I think through a lot of our privilege, those of us who don't live in these marginalized communities of color, the idea of rubber bullets being fired willy nilly into American crowds was almost unthinkable. And now, of course, we're seeing it exposed. You know, final point on the police militarization. I was, you know, I wear like my veterans up shirts and all that I kind of wear my colors and identify myself in solidarity. But you know, because of that I'm a relatively clean looking white shirt. I've had some local media approached me and he's protests and kind of interview me on the spot and I an NPR reporter, come up to me on Tuesday night, which was quiet, very quiet night and they were still riot police. That was the last night that I saw riot police in mass out against the streets and he asked me why I was there. And I talked about police militarization and you play devil's advocate immediately. sat down. Well, why are you so upset basically about like the drones and the sniper teams above us, you know, on these buildings? Don't you want them there in case some crazy person rolls up with an AR 15, you know, and starts shooting at the crowd. And of course, I thought this was a little bit of hyperbole and sort of obfuscation, but I answered it. And I said, Well, yes, I mean, in a broad sense, the police should protect peaceful protesters. However, you know, I think that it would be a mistake to focus just on that narrow Devil's advocacy without noting that what we're really here to protest is the systemic militarization of the mandate and the culture within the police that led us to this point in the first place. And so, you know, it's really easy to say, oh, they're just bad apples or Oh, there's lots of good cops or they're actually here to protect us without mentioning what I think finally are the two main points number one, militarized police got us here in the first place. They created the George Woods the world and number two, the thing that the NPR reporter didn't point out and I made sure to was, hey, if someone does roll up here with an AR 15 and shoot up this crowd, make no

mistake. He was almost definitely influenced by Trump's Twitter calls for the maga goons to come out and sort of, you know, undertake vigilante justice against peaceful protests. And so let's not let the president off the hook. Let's not let the system off the hook. And yeah, Henry, thanks for bringing that all up. And I think police militarization is a topic we have to keep an eye on.

### **Keagan Miller**

I would add on top of what you said just the fact that like if anybody doesn't see how militarized militarized The police have become after everything that's going on right now. They're just being willfully ignorant because everything that's going on, you know, we can say okay, Minnesota, like that's the focal point for you know, the beginning anyways, that's where a lot of people were Like focusing their attention, but the fact that we're seeing this across multiple states, multiple cities, you know, it's not like like Henry said, there isn't a lot of national like guidelines on how to use this. So it just shows like, these are the tactics that are put in place that have been put in place, because they're in this bubble of, you know, police, you know, ask de escalation tactics or whatever the fuck they call it, like to make it look pretty, but it's not what it is. And it's just frustrating that we have people that are that are, you know, like, I was talking to my aunt about police and she's very like, on the side of them, and I was she was just I put I posted the NPR article about, do we need the police right now? Or do we need them at all? And she was like, I actually agree with a lot of this, like police aren't social workers and they're not counselors. You know, they're designed to end the threat as quickly As long as well and they're like, that's the problem. When you look at everything as a threat, you are considering yourself to always be on the defensive always be, you know, getting ready to like, defend yourself. And that's what the fuck is that that's not policing. That's war. And I love that quote in the wire. And again, this was a long time ago. It's it's so true now is, you know, when that commander is sitting down with his cop, and he says, The thing about calling, he was talking about the drug war, but he says, The thing about calling something a war is that everybody starts to think of themselves as warriors. And I like that has never been more true than right now. Because you have people that are trying to do what they are lawfully allowed to do and then you have this other organization that doesn't really give a shit about that or if they do like their tactics and policies are not showing that they give a shit and We can go round and round and talk about bad cops versus good cops. But like you said, it's like the policies that need to change and the tactics and and we'll be on that like something that we were talking about last night, generally, on the march was just the idea of defunding the police because here in Portland, literally a couple hours before the march started the police chief, she sat down, she hadn't been police. She's very long, but she felt like she needed to do that. Which, you know, okay, that's great. That's great that she made that decision on in place of an African American man who seems a little more amenable, but again, like, it's not individual people, and I love that. That was the first thing everybody said, it's not one person. It's not, oh, let's change the face. You know, it's the fact that like this system, this institution is thoroughly broken, and we need to come up with something new. And there are people who have been creating systems Like this, of community policing, where it's your neighbor, it's the people that are actual volunteers to go and help you and help the community. And that's, I think that's where we're going. It's gonna take a while to get there because the police unions are strong. But it's nice that we are seeing this big sea change of people being like, we can do better, we can do better than the current system we have. And instead of reforming it, let's just start from scratch.

### **Danny Sjursen**

I'm so glad that you brought up the wire because like any good, guilty liberal, I think wire was the greatest trauma in TV history. I use that quote Keagan as the epigraph to one of my chapters in my first book, and I wrote that in 2014. So the point that I think you're raising is that this is this is old, and I'm going to read briefly what you paraphrase because I think that you're right there. is what we need to talk about and its culture as much as it is the cosmetic equipment. You know, he said to his Sergeant who was just like kind of, you know, arresting low level of drug dealers and calling that a victory. He said this drug thing, this ain't police work. I mean, I can send any fool with a badge and a gun up on them corners and jack accrue and grab some files, but policing. I mean, you call something a war, and pretty soon everybody going to be running around acting like warriors. Why aren't we seeing that now? They're going to be running around on a damn Crusade, storming corners, slapping on cuffs, racking up body counts, and pretty soon damn near everybody on every corner is your fucking enemy. And soon the neighborhood that you're supposed to be policing, well, that's just occupied territory, which I think transitions for Henry to jump back in to the use of actual troops because This is occupied territory. We are seeing what I called the Empire and the foreign counterinsurgency ease boomeranging back home.

### **Keagan Miller**

Oh, I just wanted to say one more thing about, you know, Henry, I appreciate the fact that you that you called out the fact that Danny and I are going on. I, I want to say like we shouldn't feel bad about people that can't physically be there. Like, there's a lot of reasons why people can't physically be there. And that's fine. You know, it's just like the the people who want to support then donate money to bail funds, donate money to the ACLU, donate money to, you know, the people that are the groups that are organizing the events, you know, like there's plenty of ways for people to get involved without actually physically being there.

### **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

I appreciate that, brother. Thank you. And you're right is that even if you can't March even if you can't, you know, beyond Social media a whole bunch there are steps that people can take and please take them please find an organization that supports black lives matter that supports the fight against police brutality and talk to people there donate money to them. It's it's, you know, that they're we're finally starting to see the cracks in the system here a little bit. But he said this, this is a moment to keep fighting and keep pushing. So, um, I had one thought that I wanted to cover real quick and it had to do with a little bit what you were saying, Danny, about that there's a there's certainly a strong always has been a strong presence on the right in terms of supporting police brutality, calling and other things. But it's important that we call out the the weakness, the apathy of ordinary mainstream liberals. I think This morning and note I added just before we started, that there was a leak 2015 memo written by senior House Democrats who advise their party members not to show public supports for Black Lives Matter. This was in 2015, during Barack Obama's time in office, why was it that the first black man in office really did nothing for black Americans, especially regarding police brutality? So we have to look in two directions. One is we have violent people who believe protests need to be put down and on the other side, we have hapless politicians who have no issue or have no compunction about not sticking their neck out for the people they actually represent.

## **Danny Sjursen**

Sorry, yeah, that's good. And that's that's that's an important point. I mean, Malcolm X, talked about the threat of white liberals, you know, he said like, you know, there are many whites, I'm quoting me, there are many whites who are trying to solve the problem, but you know, but you never see them going onto the label of liberals, you know, in other words, you know, he sees them as dangerous and that the true like accompanying allied whites, you know, go beyond polite, liberal democratic party politics. And, you know, he said the white liberal differs from the white conservative in one way, the liberal is more deceitful and hypocritical than the conservatives both one power but the white liberal has perfected the art of posing as what he called the Negroes friend and benefactor and using them as sort of political pawns. He called them a political football, you know, and that white liberals control the ball through tricks, tokenism and false promises of integration. You mentioned Obama and obviously he would be preferable to Trump when it comes to de escalating the situation and maybe even attempting to unify America, let's not forget, like, you know, Obama's response to garner and like race relations and police brutality in the cities was largely, you know, rhetorical and then like having a beer session between like the black professor who had the cops called on him or whatever. I mean, it was just so like such a veneer of like politeness rather than tangible action. And of course, he would argue and so with his like, favorite defenders on pod, save America, you know, whatever, whoever won just loves, but like they would all defend them and say, well, you don't understand the political constraints he was under we couldn't alienate white America with the first black president. And there's always like, there's always like ethical hedges and excuses and justifications you come up with, but ya know, I think you bring up an important point. So how do you what are your thoughts on the general actual militarization of the conflict and the crisis through you know, the goal And some of the other stuff we've seen.

## **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

Um, I, it seems way too, too much of a reflexive action on the part of us to, for certain governors to be willing for their National Guard troops to go where they're requested. There I can't think of the states off the top of my head right now, but there have been a few states that did declined to send troops to Washington DC but the vast majority of them did, including states that surround DC, Maryland, West Virginia, a couple other places. What process exists at any state government to discuss how its national guard is being used? You know, the governor like we what we've seen with what's happened with the coronavirus is that the governor gets sometimes gets added into the actual chain of command because the governor commands. Its National Guard. And so like the point I made earlier about the DC National Guard, there seems to be well, why is the DC National Guard not just considered active duty? I mean, it was not not active duty in the time, time they work with federal lights, why aren't they are always federalized troops if the President can snap his fingers and say, these troops are going to be here in DC? It's not a military operation. There's no you know, I mean, they did Trump my call out enemies but legally speaking, there's there, they can't do that kind of stuff. So why is it is it such a push the button response and I know the answer, it's just that we, like I talked about with Fortress washington dc earlier, that when somebody pushes the panic button as Trump likes to whether it whether it's necessary or not, that other states, other governors, other leaders respond and they they want to help, but in this particular instance, and again, I haven't seen any videos Have National Guard guys or military guys really getting into it with protesters there probably is some just because of their large numbers and how bad the last week last 10 days have been in terms of the kind of violence they've been causing. I do

think it's important we talk about what happened in Lafayette Park and about seeing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his battle duty uniform, walking with law enforcement and other professionals because and Danny please chime in on this anywhere. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is the senior military Advisor to the President. They do not exist in the chain of command. So when all this stuff started, Trump immediately said he wanted general Milley to be in charge of the response he wanted him to take over. Obvious militarism push for Trump but the problem is is that Milley is not part of the actual military chain of command right? Now, however, that didn't fucking stop him from going with in this part to being out in his you know, and the comments that he's made, along with espers comments about the battles, excuse me battlespace, which is just a misnomer for area where we're going to go try to kill people but that's you know that if everything's looks like a nail, you're going to use your hammer and that's exactly what what's happening with all this. Of course, after the horrible treatment of the peaceful protesters in Lafayette Park, both of them immediately backspin away from all of this not taking any responsibility for their part, except to say they won't go testify to the House Armed Services Committee about their role in that violence. totally happy to do it. But they won't talk about it in in in a in a congressional hearing atmosphere to let the American people actually get some information about what actually happen. So we're seeing huge amounts of military power of military, you know, foot power foot soldiers and demonstrations, you know, shows a force Danny, you know how much the army fucking loves that phrase show force. Those guys standing on the the Lincoln Memorial, you know, this whole, you know, almost that's fortress Washington. When I say that I think that image and that's the reality. That's how it was when I was there. I lived there for five months in 2003. I literally worked at the Pentagon and checked IDs and I was very much part of that law enforcement apparatus that was there in DC. And it's terrifying to think about now. But I'm uplifted to hear that most of the National Guard troops in the DC area are going back to their states. I need to do a little more digging on that because I want to confirm outside the mainstream media. But yeah, I'm abhorred with the leadership choices with calling or the threat of active duty troops from the president, when it hadn't even been that long, and the threat to send the American military to violate their state sovereignty and their choices to deal with the protesters in the way they see fit. I'm not saying they should use violence or not. But I am saying that state versus federal authorities should have a solid wall between it.

### **Danny Sjursen**

I think I think that's it. I'm so glad you brought up Mattis and Esper who should both immediately resign? Not only...Milley, I'm sorry, Mattis...he should have resigned over Yemen. But anyway, he didn't. You know, he resigned. Because, you know, Trump even hinted at pulling out of Afghanistan in Syria, but I digress from St. Mattis's character anyway, I am glad that he spoke out by the way, Milley and Esper should immediately resign Esper simply because I hate him now. I'm just kidding. thought that I do but because of his look to the language as Christopher Hitchens said, right? Look to the language, he used the term battlespace to describe and dominating the battlespace. He used these military buzzwords that we all know because that's the language of the institution he runs and that he was sort of raised then before he became a lobbyist for that same industry on the corporate side. So when you go to the military, don't be surprised, right. And when that's the way they talk, and the way they think, and, and it was utterly inappropriate, he should have never really been involved in the conversation in the first place. But he also still resigned for well over a million reasons. Conflicts of interest, with Raytheon being one of them. Milley should resign, because allowing himself to walk the grounds with law

enforcement and become what I would consider literal fuel on the fire. I mean, a walking accelerant for a raging fire. Send job that was a government are sent not a protest. There are some really just it calls so much into question about his character and morals that like I couldn't even look that guy in the eye. I already didn't like him. But I mean, it's insane what he let himself become a tool of and I don't accept his apology and I don't accept his pivot he needs to go. He was promoted beyond his level of competency as a walking Peter Principle. And he doesn't he I mean, Trump doesn't understand statute law, which makes him incompetent to be president, but we already knew that. But mill you ought to know better. He ought to know and advise which is his primary role under the Goldwater Nichols, Pentagon re organization act of 1986. That, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he knows not only does he not have a position in the chain of command and control actually commands nothing, but his role is to provide Sound military and in some sense, constitutional advice to the President. And he should have known like, Listen, putting me out on the street, or even saying publicly Do you want me to leave the responses like utterly inappropriate and if you continue to do it, I'm gonna have to resign, you know, but he's a company man. He's a company man. He's a mid level manager masquerading as a strategic leader. And that's what we usually get at the top is those the folks we promote our company men, not principled men. So this was really really dangerous. You mentioned fortress DC, what we're seeing exposed on a rather tangential but I think also important level is that like DC is a is a federal, military occupied state to begin with, I mean, the the nature of the way it's organized in our Constitution with like taxation without representation and stuff. You were seeing a lot of that exposed. I mean, DC is is kind of a federal mandate. And it's very unquestionable where it fits into our supposedly federalist system, right? So DC is always been problematic and it's no It's no accident that that's where we saw a lot of this nonsense and some of the most militarization on the behalf of the federal government. And yeah, my final point on this is a Trump bashing is so easy that it's lost a lot of it's fun for me. But also, it's lost a lot of like its value. Jimmy Dore talks all the time about how it's beating up on the use, you know, the village idiot. But there are moments when leadership, even executive leadership is vital. And Trump's on fitness, from a character and competence perspective is on display perhaps more than it's ever been as if we needed more evidence. You guys know even as NCOs. We were always told and officers to of course, to be careful what you say around your soldiers because you're setting an example and a precedent whether you mean to or not, just by dint of your sort of ranking position, however modest, and this is the leader of the federal government and the commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and he has proved to be nothing less than, again, a catalyst for violence, a side taker, the wrong side, an escalator of violence through his leadership by tweet, which is sort of a wonderful hybrid of like the Orwellian and Huxley not dystopia that we're living in. What I think I'll finish on is that something that I think the generals have, and we'll talk about that next but something I think the generals of the retired generals have pointed out correctly, even though I'm a little bit skeptical the messenger is that Trump is reflexively militaristic and heavy handed and doesn't understand again statute law, in the sense that he has set such a low threshold for what constitutes an insurrection. The insurrection act of 1807, which is what he would presumably used to pull out potentially active duty troops, which he reportedly seriously considered on a number of occasions and offered publicly. You know, that that that law was written vaguely, you know, on purpose. But most presidents have shown some sort of caution right with it. And he has set the threshold so low for what constitutes an actual insurrection that it's obscene, just as a point of historical comparison and not what about ism but genuine historical comparison. More folks, more people, including at least one police officer were killed in four days of rioting in Newark, in 1967.

One city one Riot four days, then have died in the national protest for two weeks now. If this constitutes an insurrection, than anything constitutes an insurrection and the precedent that set is one of these Genuine paramilitary or actual military police state, so, you know, a final thing so that already But Trump is informed and motivated, it seems clear primarily by his deep, masculine insecurity, and, and those masculine, patriarchal, whatever you want to call them insecurities at the root of his character having formed his tough guy posture throughout his life. And when all that meant was and it was still bad, but when a when all that meant was that a billionaire had enough money to buy out the entire page in the New York Times in the late 80s. To call for the execution immediately without trial, essentially, of the innocent Central Park five, then you could almost say, well, it's just a private citizen doing it but when he's president of the United States and a sensible leader of the free world, we truly are in a truly dangerous or well in and fascist moment. I've I've withheld the F word until now, but uh, but I think that we're there. And that's my general thoughts on the the military involvement and Trump's leadership role.

### **Keagan Miller**

I like that you brought up Mattis is sort of statement. I feel like we'd be remiss if we didn't mention it and talk about it a little bit. Just because, um, you know, for a lot of my family that was, like, acquaintances who were Trump support or try Yeah, supporting Trump. They were, you know, really into madness in the beginning. You know, they bought into his whole warrior monk friggin persona that he portrayed and stuff. But I think like my favorite part of the of the statement is where he says Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite American people. He does not even pretend to try. Instead he just tries to divide us. We are witnessing the consequences of three years of this deliberate effort. We are witnessing the consequences of 3 years without mature leadership, we can unite without him drawing on the strengths inherent in our civil society. This will not be easy, but as the past few days have shown, but we owe it to our fellow citizens to past generations that bled to defend our promise. And to our children. We can come through this trying time stronger within a renewed sense of purpose and respect for one another. And, I mean, yeah, that's some nice flowery language. But like that first part where he's talking about Donald Trump, like that is some serious line drawing. And I am really interested to see how a lot of Trump supporters who are big fans of madness like how they try to wrap their heads around and try to contort this like into whatever it is that what they think it is. So what I think it's great that he, he felt like now was the time to make a statement. And so I mean, whether or not that does anything, we is remains to be seen, but it is nice to say that he actually You know, he felt like he needed to say something.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Yeah, I think it's important and now we're dipping into our kind of and it's okay, it's good that we're kind of dipping into our last go round on the military descent. And part of that most of the most, I think the most important part is the rank and file descent, which we'll get to, but from the generals using Mattis as an instructive example. I think it is remarkable the United Front, that at least anti Trump front, which is dangerous to make Trump with the, you know, the remarkable united front of the retired generals, even guys like Dempsey, who have like spoken out in the past and said, you know, you shouldn't speak out as a retired general even he thought he had to so like everybody, even Colin Powell, who was like the perennial late comer to the game have jumped in. But yeah, we have to cost. Take caution Take heed

before we canonize and sanctify these folks. Madness is problematic on a number of levels. He's right about what he wrote. In some ways, much of what he wrote, if it had a different author I would have just reflexively agreed with. I think he's overestimating Trump's unique nature. I think Trump is unique and is uniquely bad, but he's not the first guy. They're not trying to unite us.

### **Keagan Miller**

Yeah, we can't focus on just him without seeing the system that gave us him.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Absolutely. And look, when Mattis is this sudden, you know, peaceful, this, this new peacenik that they're making him out to be when Mattis has said that it's a hell of a lot of fun to kill people publicly said that was quoted saying that George W. Bush was president in 2005. And I'm sorry, but if we are going to forgive the sense of bush and act like he was not a divider in chief himself, whether it was Katrina or the war in Iraq and calling all democrats essentially like unAmerican because they were against that war, which was, of course built on lies like that. I think we're remissed and I mean, Reagan did the same thing in Central America and on almost every issue in the early 80s, when he declared the first war on 1981 Right, exactly 30 years before this, or 20 years for a second one. So, yeah, I mean madness is a is a troubling figure. My final point on him is like, you know, my favorite movie, of course, as everyone has heard is, you know, Good Will Hunting it has been since I first saw da and I remember there's this great line in the beginning when he's kind of sparring intellectually with Robin Williams in a brilliant scene when he first goes into his office therapist, and he says, he's looking at all his books on the shelves, right? And he's judging them. And I do the same thing because because I'm an arrogant want to be intellectual. And he says, You fucking people baffle me says, like a soliloquy says, surround yourself with these books with all the wrong books, or all the wrong fucking books, you know. And my point is that madness has, in some ways, self cultivated, but it's really immediate creation. This image of the warrior monk we always hear about how he's never been married, how he doesn't sleep, how he reads so extensively and he has this library of thousands of books and And that all sounds great because I'm a library of thousands of books guy myself, but I would submit, I haven't seen his full library, although I've seen his reading lists his recommended reading list, and by and large is reading the wrong books. Okay, so just calling yourself a reader or an intellectual doesn't mean that you're actually going to understand what's really going on, because she has missed diagnose the system forever. And I will say this, I think that while I agree with much of what these generals said, and I'm glad they did speak out, because I think we all have to use our platform in a positive way when we can let's not forget that a they were late comers to the game, be they're not particularly vocal on any of the systemic stuff. They're more focused on Trump's individual discrete actions and see, I can guarantee you that I can almost guarantee you that none of these guys are out in the streets in any real solidarity. If anyone wants to say that's because they're too old. I'll point to the man in Buffalo Gugino who was 75 years old and shoved and bled from the head by Showing solidarity in Buffalo. So, you know, let's just be careful about the canonization let's not look to the top for solutions. Let's not look to the military even even you and I and Henry for the solutions let's let's let's go to the grassroots and remember that no major change for justice or rights, Liberty civil or civil were ever given. They were always taken. And that doesn't necessarily mean violence. It can be a Gandhi esque way. But it was always taken. And polite liberals or the government structure has only responded when they felt they had no other choice.

And they were under massive pressure from the streets, so to speak. So yeah, we got to be careful about the about about these generals and take what they say with some caution, I think.

### **Keagan Miller**

Well, and I mean, the people like you look at any revolution, rebellion, you know, when they're successful is that moment when the The instruments of power of force turn with them, like in the Philippines, before to Turkey and everything, but when they had, you know, this, it's it was that moment when the police and the military are like, we're not going to fire on these cop on these protesters, and they and then joined with them. And that's always that's always the moment that's the turning point is when the people who are used as the instruments of force by the state become part of the solution. And and I think, like yeah, like you said, it's it's going to take those every every one of those people who are activated to come to that realization of Wait a minute, like what the hell am I doing?

### **Danny Sjursen**

That that was the thesis of my columns morning on anti war calm, which I called alone and on afraid but I, you know, struck through on, you know, because they're alone and afraid and it's about the security elites and how, you know, like I said in the article in Kansas City and every other city We sort of like buck ourselves up as protesters out there by, you know, pronouncing over and over again vocally, you know, we are many they are few, right. And it's you know, by the merits strictly it's true but the elites, the oligarchs, the security officials in history, they have always counted on the foot soldiers in and that goes from security guards up to you know Delta Force running that gamut to do their bidding. And the moment the reason they're so scared of gi resistance historically and that's why it's been whitewashed from the tail end of the Vietnam history. The pivotal role that played is because their biggest fear is that they'll just become actually feel and not be able to count on those foot soldiers. And so I ended my article today by talking about the flat what's what's been labeled what's been actually titled The flowerpower picture, but it was repeated thousands of times even just in the Vietnam protests where by the peaceful protests are often a woman but not always takes like a daisy and walks right up to The National Guard with their bayonets, you know, gleaming in the sun and and puts the the daisy in the in the barrel and the National Guard chooses not to shoot, even though maybe they've said you're not supposed to come that close to them. And so in that moment, that's symbolic moment when the when the foot soldiers of the security state refused in some small way, then the veneer of power shrinks a little. And I think the last thing I want to say about this is it's important and that's why I ended my article with it is the fate of the photographer who famously took that one picture that's like just gone viral for half a century. He remembered and said later that he noticed that the National Guardsmen pictured in the photo were shaking, they were trembling because they knew what should I do here should I shoot I don't really want to shoot there was scared of this little woman, you know who's still alive and I spoken about it and I think the people that they protect today, from Trump all through the You know, military state, the warfare state are themselves trembling even more than those National Guardsmen. I mean, keep that in mind. That's what makes military descent and police descent. So very, very valuable.

### **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

I've been I've been really uplifted Danny to hear the number of different people that have been reaching out to you. And also the number of people that have been reaching out to other places like the GI rights

hotline, and the center on consciousness and war, asking about the coming of a conscientious objector or if not, at least understanding what their rights are, in terms of resisting this in one way or another. And I think that that's a, I think that's a really great sign for what this portends is it as it continues to grow is that if so many people who are currently in uniform are having issue with this, then There are others who are having the same issue but aren't speaking out. They just keep it to themselves because the military is insular in that way. So yeah, I've been so uplifted watching the the people go into protest, but especially our anti war veteran brothers and sisters, helping people organize, keeping, you know, checking on each other when when people go out to go on. Protests, make sure everybody got home safe. You know, ask questions about what you should do in this situation or that situation. That actually reminds me taken if you if you if you happen to be out and get arrested call me, man. I'll do whatever I can. I don't know exactly what that'll be at this moment. I do the same for you, Danny, but you're in Kansas City. So I could I could I could pay probably some money, I guess.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Oh, no worries. Don't worry. You won't have to bail me out because I have a feeling that I'll be quote, trying to escape that'll be that's that's a rare level of self importance, I just suppose but I think it's funny I still like it.

### **Keagan Miller**

It's such such a fucking outside agitator

### **Danny Sjursen**

still waiting on my Soros money and my and my motivational call from Fudan haven't got it either.

### **Chris 'Henri' Henrikson**

But um I think that's about all I have to say for this I. I am both excited and terrified to see what it what it leads to next. But like I said, I think this portends to be a time of real change. And I hope that it does turn into that.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Let me just yeah, let me jump in on some of the things that you mentioned just provide some like some flesh, some empirical flesh to these important points you brought up. But that about face, which has really kind of like joined with other major Fancy war veteran organizations like veterans of peace, but not only them in a real show of solidarity, has put out this open letter stand down for black lives as of two days ago. We're recording right now on June 9, as of June 7, there were 881 veterans who have put their names publicly. And that's important because your name shows up on the letter when anyone else clicks on it. 881 people have signed it, that's a lot. Because it is, you know, it is scary to put your name, it's there forever, right? So I'm gonna take a screenshot of it, you know, even if they delete it, and it's risky on a anecdotal but I also think constructive level, which is clearly one of my favorite words. I've had, I got a count because I'm going to put it in an article soon, but uh, it's over 70 active duty, active duty military members have reached out to me personally, and that's in nine days or so. That's about as many as have reached out to me in the last two years, because I have gotten these notes about ethical quandary. And folks doubting the wars and thinking about resigning and all these different

things and and asking for advice, which again, I try not to give, because it's their risk. But um, but you try to talk to them and talk about options give solidarity. So my point is that I'm inundated with calls and I'm like a nobody. And and here I am getting over 70 folks who reached out to me now, probably half a dozen or 10 or so of them are former students, who obviously I won't name their active duty lieutenants. So I'm in Combat Arms, mostly Combat Arms, some deployed, who are having massive, massive identity crises about not only their unwillingness or just comfort in like suppressing their own people here at home, but also the wars in general and seeing them as a very like interconnected thing. So I think that and and so the other like 65 folks are strangers who just got my email, and I've never seen anything like that, obviously, in my 20 odd years connect to the military. Now. I'm Most, this is profound. The rumblings are real. the unity of the general speaking out. I mean, we're seeing something close to a military least moral revolt. And and I don't pretend to know how this ends either. But it's gonna be really interesting to see. And it certainly has not happened since the early 1970s. And the fact that it's happening with a volunteer military, which operates largely out of like an economic draft through bonuses paying off colleges and a poor economy is even more remarkable because the, the draft was gotten rid of and the volunteer force forms actually by Nixon in a very cynical way in order to eliminate veteran dissent in order to eliminate the protest movement of civilians because they wouldn't be worried about getting drafted in order to tamp down on some of the rumblings that were happening within the military itself because they were like in the early 70s. During the Vietnam War, there were these cafes and underground newspapers and there were entire platoons refusing the patrol and Then in 551 cases, just between 1971 they started counting, and 1972 actually only halfway through 1972 551 times soldiers rolled grenades, or in other words, frags was the phrase their officers or NCO's causing I think 86 that's it was a success effect. In order to have I don't support murder, but in order to avoid that in the future, they came up with this volunteer military. So to see 881 signature so far, it's probably close to 1000. Now, is pretty remarkable. And the last thing I'll say is about phase has nominated and asked me to serve as one of their kind of lead spokesman on this campaign. And, and there are a lot of other folks as are more qualified to do that, particularly folks of color in the organization and I'll just say that I was flattered and humbled by their choice to ask me, I think that it demonstrates some faith in me But more so the idea that we want to try to reach out to folks who might not otherwise agree with us and sometimes a relatively clean cut spokesperson might seem like a tactful way to achieve that. But I will say that regardless of whether that was any of the motivation, one of the things that stands out about about face until a large extent veterans piece, especially the younger generation of veterans peace is the intersectional nature of what we do. And it's about solidarity. It's about what the assassinated Archbishop and friend of the poor and El Salvador, Oscar Romero, who's recently been sainted by Pope Francis, what he called a company man, which is really just a willingness to stand beside not necessarily try to lead but try to be a good shepherd and also will sharp is a bad word, because that's kind of like leading but try to be a supporter of the marginalized and about face has done that repeatedly. And we're seeing it now. And it's why I was on my veteran ski route on the street because what I'm saying is no, I don't I'm not trying to make this into an anti war protest. But what I am trying to do is draw connections between what these things People are seeing on the ground or what I've seen overseas, but also to show that those of us who are involved in other seemingly discreet, but not actually movements, like anti war are here for you, we're with you. You know, we're not leading you. I'm not the white Messiah out there. I'm, I actually try to step step back as much as possible as I think we ought to in this moment and reflect on our own blind spots as white men, but, you know,

accompaniment and solidarity is important. And about face was it Standing Rock, like, let's not forget that about face. And this new young post 911 anti war veteran movement has been intersectional from the first. It's inspiring. It scares the powers that be and I will end my point here by saying something is afoot, folks. Within our military ranks, something profound is afoot. I don't know where it ends, but I am hopeful about this moment and the solidarity that's been shown And it does go beyond just the lefties, you know, it goes beyond those of us who read Trotsky. And it goes to the libertarians in movements, like bring our troops home who, you know, we don't agree about a lot of things. We may not even agree everything about the protest. But, you know, there is a wide range of veterans who are skeptical of the warfare state, and they they geographically span from the Mountain West where that libertarian organization bring our troops home is, you know, kind of situated all the way to, you know, the more far left organizations and I think we probably fall on the left side. So the point is, this is a broad movement geographically physically and cerebrally in a certain sense and I'm just proud to be the smallest part of it. And I think that the pot and and those of us are in the streets are doing our best to contribute. Yeah, that's my last thought on military descent. It's It's incredible. It's it's, it's I'm so proud. I'm just so I'm literally, sometimes I want to cry when I read stuff like post by Brittany or stuff from about faced

### **Keagan Miller**

It's great stuff. And I'm glad that you brought up the fact like, That's so cool. I'm so happy for you, dude. That's really great. Um, I feel like, you know, the three of us are sis straight white dudes. Right? And so we, I think we do a good job of acknowledging our privilege. And there's always more to learn. There's always more to acknowledge. And I, like my hope for humanity is that we just get into that space of, especially white people, like we just get into that space of wanting to learn and then being uncomfortable, like with with some of the things that we may hold, you know, and it's not like it's, I think it's wrong. If you learn about something and then are willing it willfully ignorant of it afterwards, if you are willing to just say, Oh, this is a problem, but I it's not it doesn't affect me. I'm not personally involved in this. So what doesn't matter and like that's, that's the attitude, that apathetic attitude that needs to change. And, and I feel like, we try our best here, you know, because we have this platform being veterans, you know, we we try our best to like speak out. And I know we talked about this all the time. I know that we really want to have a person of color on our pod, just because it would be nice to have a different perspective. So if there's anybody out there that wants to be like, you know, any female, any people of color, anybody who wants to be a part of our pod, like, please don't hesitate to reach out to us to ask like, we want to hear other people's voices. So yeah.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Yeah, I think, Henry Do you have anything before we close out

### **Keagan Miller**

Um, no, no, no, I think I'm I think I'm good.

### **Danny Sjursen**

Well, let me just, you know, be the insufferable and for mostly out here and just, you know, kind of close out by saying, you know, to quote the Great East Coast rapper And oh, by the way, rap was better before folks, I'm sorry, it stopped. It's not mattering in the late 90s and I'm just empirically correct about

that. You know, to quote NAS, you know, one love to our brothers and sisters who are out there in the anti war movement and then also in the non veteran community and in about face, those of us who are like particularly active daily are checking in, as you mentioned, every day on our threads and just showing support and a lot of folks are struggling with the symptomatic kind of flashback and PTSD aspect. You know, when you get tear gas by your own government, and you're walking around Kansas City or Washington, DC or Baltimore, and you know, Kansas Looks like Kandahar and Baltimore looks like Baghdad, it's bringing up you know, these people are sacrificing a lot of our brothers and sisters out there in the anti war movement who are showing solidarity or really sacrificing. Because it's very difficult. It brings up a lot of bad memories to be back in a war zone. And that's what it felt like, especially the first weekend. And I just want to say that we really do genuinely love you guys. And if you take nothing else out of this, just like take care of each other, check on each other and be kind like it's the simplest thing in the world. Like if I tell my kids that I don't care if you agree with me on everything, I mean, I would love you to be a little like, you know, Neo Marxist, but like, take care of one another and be kind. It's the simplest thing whether you ground it and religion and the New Testament or secular sainthood. Just be kind to one another man, these are tough times and we got to watch out and I'm just so proud of everybody. It's It's It's amazing. Thank you.

**Keagan Miller**

Thanks, guys.