

# Ep 83 transcript

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## SPEAKERS

Joe Biden, Danny Sjursen, Chris 'Henri' Henrikson, Dr. Barbara Ransby, Danny Glover



Danny Sjursen 00:00

Alright listeners, this is Friday, before the election, that we're recording this to give everyone an idea of what was happening that day, how close you are to the election, we all know that news stories break every day. So we're going to push this thing out faster than ever. And yet there will probably be breaking stories for them. So this is Friday, about midday, early afternoon eastern time that we're recording. And we've been talking about doing a kind of Joe Biden analysis, overall take on his record, as well as his foreign policy in particular, but also some domestic stuff, and then give some thoughts on the election. This is a highly polarizing topic, when we did something similar on Bernie, that was during the primary and that was polarizing. I mean, the fact that we critiqued him at all was really upsetting to some of the some of the Bernie bros, which I hate that phrase, but some of the people who really loyalists to Bernie, and then when we overall had a very positive take, which, you know, I think that Henry and I make pretty clear how we feel about Bernie and it's relatively positive, it's quite positive. You know, obviously, the people on the right, have had the feeling that, you know, we are, you know, utter socialists probably hate America and sleep on volume of Marx, and or Lenin, and I would always make sure that I let our listeners know, and our critics Listen, I am not the kind of person and Henri, I don't know where you're at, I am not the kind of person who would sleep on an old dusty volume of Lenin. It's Trotsky that I sleep on. Okay, so get that right next time, I think it's important. Anyway, I think the Biden episode that we're doing here is probably going to be a little more polarized for a number of reasons. There is a civil war that has been ongoing, since the primaries, but particularly in the recent months leading up to the

election. And it's a civil war within the left, which is typical, because this is like the 17th Civil War Within the vague left, you know, probably since 911. And there's probably been about 300. Since the 20th century began because the left eats its own. Right, the left is particularly divided. It is very, very much the canceled culture and the left has existed long before that word was termed. And it's I think, partly because there is a sense of litmus tests and purity tests. And there's a lot of really strongly held principle people, and I'm sure there are in the right to even though I'm a little less familiar with some of the intricacies of that division. But, you know, the left does this. What you have today is a situation in many circles, and in all establishment media, all every ounce of it, where there is a very narrow band of permissible discussion surrounding Biden and his record. And so what if you criticize by it in telling the truth, playing the video, we're gonna play about 10. Today, you obviously, secretly have a mogga hat that you wear in the mirror and take selfies with. And that's just really dangerous talk. Partly because it sets up the duopoly it sets up lesser than evil voting into eternity, which we've essentially always had, I mean, very rare that people are excited about a candidate in the Democratic Party, very rare that the base is excited about him when they are in the case of George McGovern in 1972. You know, he gets blown out, and then all the lessons that are taken from that just reinforce, that we can't have anyone that we're excited about, we have to go back to our corner and think about what we've done and put an adult in the room in charge that we don't really like, but we need a responsible person, right? This is what we're told, we can't be trusted in the base to pick a candidate. I think that's dangerous. I don't think the second thing is dangerous is on Inauguration Day, assuming that Biden wins. And the same was true of Obama. And the same is true of Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter before that. It is very important to hold this individual's feet to the fire. So if you are a Biden supporter, because you think Trump is a monster, and he is And do you think that that's the best option, and maybe you even think that we can't afford four more years of Trump, which Chomsky has said that Tom Engelhart said to me on the phone yesterday and a whole lot of people including Cornel West, so there's a lot of people who believe that and there's some serious arguments in that favor, but even if you are that person, I think it's dangerous to suppress truth, to suppress records or suppress even current policy statements and positions, simply because someone is worse. And so I think that what we're setting up here is probably likely to be a, an episode that's going to upset some folks. And that's, that's okay. I mean, that's okay. But at the same time, I think we are probably going to upset some folks who are on maybe the alt left consensus to the extent that one even exists. And what I mean is, you will probably hear things from both Henri and I, that are if not laudatory of Biden are admitting that there are areas where he has been better than many write better than many within the establishment wing of his party on certain issues. And I think that, in some cases, that was particularly true during the Obama administration, not to say that his positions were, you know, exactly what we might have liked, but that there was a softening role that Biden played. And so I think we're going to try to give them a fair

shake. To the extent that that's ever possible. I mean, not to go straight, post modern, but the you know, objectivity is a is a difficult, difficult thing, but we're going to try and, you know, the the thing about that first point that I made about suppressing truth does involve this group, Glenn Greenwald story, I think, okay, so so Glenn Greenwald resigns, believe it was yesterday. So Thursday, from which is the 29th of October from the intercept, which he founded. Right. And that is disturbing to begin with. But there was one quote from Matt Taibbi who we love and Matt, come on the show. You're not listening, but we're gonna get you. Okay. I'm coming for you. We have been a fan for a long, long time. And we all have, and he wrote a piece about the Glenn Greenwald resignation. And I just want to read this very short two sentence paragraph and he says that the first hint of trouble came when Betsy Reed, who's a senior editor over the intercept suggested that yes, this story that Glenn Greenwald wanted to publish about the New York Post commentary on Biden's family connections to a variety of foreign, you know, corporations, economic interest. So the first hint of trouble came in Betsy Reid suggested that, yes, it might be a story, if proven correct. But quote, even if it did represent something untoward about Biden, that would, quote, represent a tiny fraction of the sleaze and lies Trump and his cronies are losing in every day. I want to deconstruct that I'm not going to spend a whole episode on it, we could. But think about what she's saying there. She's saying that now, permissible truth, right, permissible, accurate stories, if that is, in fact, what they are proven to be, are not really are based on how they relate to how bad someone else's. In other words, that's a terrible way I just put it, it is only permissible to tell a story. If Trump or some other monster isn't worse, because we can't say on toward things about Biden or anybody else, insert Hillary insert Obama insert the next one, right? That we're told we have to vote for. Because if it only represents a fraction of the sleeves and lives of somebody else, Trump or whatever the heck comes after him. When we cut the head off the Trump snake and we get the ISIS version of Trump, although he may already be ISIS, but whatever. If they're losing just as much, I'm sorry, they're losing much more sleaze and lies then we know we really we really shouldn't focus on that story. I think that's extremely dangerous. It proves that the media, military industrial consulting complex is creating truth, crafting truth and they don't always do it. They don't even need to do it through straight up Orwellian means it doesn't have to be state suppression. It can be a different kind of discipline, a different kind of narrowing of the bounds of permissible debate by controlling access, access to who gets invited on the shows access to which stories are available and get published. And so it's sort of a more creative way that's a little less overtly Orwellian of manufacturing, truth and consent. As Chomsky said, and I think that's dangerous, so long intro to say that that's kind of what we're trying to do here. Overall, in a very brief blurb for me, I think that Biden's record, particularly on foreign policy, but also on race, crime, and social justice, has been a nightmare. A nightmare. As a Senator, I think that with a few exceptions, which will must be noted, and we will, he has been a center right, Republican in the 80s. Maybe even a relatively hard right one, earlier on. So I think that what I'm

saying is most of Biden's positions would have been considered far to the right of Dwight Eisenhower Republicans. Right. They weren't even that far off of Reagan Republicans. And I think that Biden has proven time and again, that he in many cases is the poster boy for the democrat dilemma. And the democrat dilemma is that they are afraid to look soft, weak wishes on foreign policy, and so they overcompensate their insecurity by always tacking right. And what happens is, the republicans attack them anyway. And so that's what I think about his record. And I think that we would be remiss if we don't mention it. That being said, in some cases, he has improved in certain areas, as he's grown older, and particularly in his position as Vice President, which in many cases is like an advisory role, right? If it has a role at all, and he did have a pretty big foreign policy portfolio in the Obama administration, he was picked because he was a safe choice. He was picked by Obama, despite only polling at maybe 2% in that primary, not because he was the second or third most popular Democratic candidate in 2008. But because he was considered strong on foreign policy, which was considered a blind spot and a weakness for Obama. But in that role, he was given a pretty large portfolio that may, you know, that was aligned with why he was chosen. In some cases, he was better than the Hillary hawks in the administration. And I think that we are going to demonstrate that in some cases, he was better. So the guy has a mixed record. I think that overall it's been negative. And the question becomes, who will Biden be on January 21, the signals in his record are negative, some of the signals from his recent statements are negative. However, he does have a fired up base of progressives who are moving left, and it will be interesting to see the degree to which it is permitted to hold his feet to the fire and hopefully, tack him left the way some of the optimistic statements from say Ilan Omar or Elizabeth Warren, have hoped he will. So that's my initial take, we'll get into a lot more detail. Henry, if you want to give us something similar, my guess is less verbose. And then after that, we'll jump into clips before closing out the show by giving our final, you know, you'll probably listen to this on, say, Sunday or Monday, our final thoughts before the election, and standby for that it should be interesting.



### Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 13:27

So like the episode we did about Bernie, this is not certainly shouldn't be as something empirical. We're certainly going to focus on foreign foreign policy, especially the stuff that really stands out to us. There isn't a ton on Biden's domestic policy, although that is much more well known than things we're going to talk about today. But we do have a couple clips on some different things for his domestic policy. And as Danny said, you know, it's it's very clear what the the overall you know, looking at it one, one shot that he has a long, long way to go and probably won't, is certainly not to our anymore expectations, whatever get there. But just because we don't like the we don't like the reality that something presents and where we are in the election, which again, is five days away. We

still need to talk about these things. We can't pretend that they're that they're not important that they don't show Joe Biden in all of his completeness as a politician. I'm going to take some time today a little bit later and talk about to Biden sunbow. And his time in the military and his ultimate death. Because I think it's very instructive about what we may end up seeing as far as big moves towards additional wars going to invade somebody else. And the other thing I wanted to mention Danny, connected to the Glenn Greenwald story who I would so love for us to have on the podcast sometimes, sometime, um, Glenn briefly but very powerfully mentioned reality winner as a part of his letter that he shared with everybody. There has been a good amount of evidence over time, both in the news and from anywhere people I trust that there are serious serious messed up questions about how the intercept handled reality winner and everything that happened with her becoming a whistleblower. Almost arguably, to the extent that they burned her, in addition to many other mistakes and glaring errors for an organization that was ostensibly started to be a leftist answer to those kinds of stories to be a bastion for whistleblowers, which is not. So standby for more on that, I'm definitely going to cover that in a future episode. And I think that's all I got for the moment.

D

Danny Sjursen 16:20

Yeah, so let's, let's jump into clips. And to kind of give an idea to listeners, what we're going to do is, we're going to play some clips from a variety of topics, throughout Biden's career really, really running the gamut from from the 80s, right? If not before, we're going to start with foreign policy and start with a rock a clip of before the war. And then just after the war, demonstrating Biden's not only complicity, but early cheerleading, before he turned against the war. And the reason we're front loading Iraq is because and doing three short clips from Iraq, is because we believe, as I think, honestly, any rational sentient being ought to that the greatest disaster in 21st century and arguably, since Vietnam, American foreign policy disaster was the decision to invade Iraq. And so I think that it would be a total, a total instance of being remiss not to focus on that, particularly because Trump played so strongly. And Ghana garnered support by his own kind of miss, you know, misleading sense that he'd always been against the war. But nevertheless, it resonated. It helped him get elected in some of the counties and swing states where the most casualties in that war had occurred. So I think this is important. So yeah, Henry, let's, let's start off with the first clip. And then if you want to give you know, we'll have you'll give the first thoughts on it on each clip, and then and then I'll kind of bring down the house, we'll move to the next one.

C

Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 18:10

Sounds good. Sounds good. Um, just a quick note for this first clip, it is from a video that

was produced by the Real News Network called worth the price. And we did we're only playing a very short portion of it here, but it includes 30 Wilkerson and Matt Hoh, and it's narrated by the great Danny Glover. It will be linked in the show notes. And there are more clips of Biden in that one video that we're not covering in this so it's a good additional background if you'd like to take a look at it. So when it when the episode drops. All right here is clip number one.



Joe Biden 18:50

In my judgment, President Bush's right to be concerned about Saddam Hussein's relentless pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, and the possibility that he may use them or share them with terrorist. Other regimes hostile to the United States and our allies already have or seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction.



Danny Glover 19:13

This was Joe Biden, in 2002. Speaking as chair of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. A few months later, when the Senate was debating whether to give President George W. Bush the authority to start a war with Iraq, Biden argue strongly in favor of granting this authority.



Joe Biden 19:33

The objective is to compel Iraq to destroy its illegal weapons of mass destruction and its program to develop and produce missiles and more of those weapons. saddam is dangerous, the world would be a better place without him. But the reason he poses a growing danger to the United States and its allies is that he possesses chemical and biological weapons and is seeking nuclear weapons. Unlike my, my colleague from West Virginia and Maryland, I do not believe this is a rush to war. I believe it's a march to peace and security. I believe that failure to overwhelmingly support this resolution is likely to enhance the prospects that war will occur.



Dr. Barbara Ransby 20:19

Joe Biden did so much more than vote for the war. He was the chair of the powerful Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. And he really used his control over that committee to make sure that a majority of the US Senate voted to authorize the war. And that's a very serious thing. It's questionable whether the the authorization to start the war could have even passed Congress well, without all that Biden did to get it approved. So he really did play a major role in bringing us into the Iraq War, terrible, terrible war. And this

was much more responsibility. He bears much more responsibility than many other senators who simply voted for, of course, the statement about chemical, biological and nuclear weapons were false. And many experts already concluded this at the time of the senate hearings, but Biden didn't allow these experts to testify. That's really significant. As chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, Biden was able to control the senate debate on the war. And therefore, much of the information that most senators received, and that major media outlets have reported was was really distorted.

D

Danny Glover 21:26

There weren't the Democrats in the Senate who wanted to put limits on Bush's ability to start a war in Iraq. For example, if there was no imminent threat to the United States, and the United Nations did not authorize the war, then when President Bush would have to come back to Congress for another resolution, but button, shut this down. So

J

Joe Biden 21:48

the reason why I oppose the amendment of my friend from Michigan, is because the basic premise upon which I begin, is consistent with where my friend from from Connecticut begins, and that is that the threat need not be imminent, for us to take action. That's authority we're about to delegate to the President.

C

Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 22:11

During the initial lead up to the beginning of the war in Iraq, there were a few very key people that made it possible. President Bush, obviously, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz, military leaders like Tommy Franks. But Joe Biden's actions, demonstrated in this clip show that, from the very beginning, he was Manufacturing Consent to make it happen. The most gratuitous of which was his refusal to allow ostensibly anti war voices to be a part of the hearings that he held. scott ritter was one of those people. And there were even Republican senators on Sky excuse me, scott ritter, the former UN weapons instructor, Inspector, from the clinton era.

D

Danny Sjursen 23:12

You know, I think that Danny Glover's voice and, and some of the other others, like commenting in the video are so important. We have to remember that Joe Biden has long been far more interested, you know, made foreign policy, a much bigger aspect of his senate career than most I mean, he was in and out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including chairing and in many cases, and so his campaign pronouncements,

you know, way and then especially in 16, in 2020, I should say this year, that he was opposed, essentially from the start, right, or at least once the war kicked off, is, is really, really nefarious. I mean, it's it's a blatant lie, because not only is he wrong, in the way that many other folks like Hillary and John Kerry, who voted for it had been wrong to kind of position themselves as having, you know, been opposed before they were but he's not only blatantly lying about that, but he's understating his actual role, which was as Shepherd or of this war, the one who made it palatable, who forced it down the throats of many cases of his fellow Democrats, which was a decisive move, and also that he was a cheerleader for the war even after, as we'll see in the next level, even after it begins. And it's important to note that there were other voices within the democratic party who were opposed to the war, some of whom I think 22, who actually voted against it, regarding the pressure coming from Biden, but this was a classic case of that Democrats dilemma wanting to look tough. And I think that one of the great heroes of the run up to the Iraq War was a guy named Robert Byrd who was a hold school problematic past I believe he was a member of the Klan in West Virginia early in his life briefly. But he gave a speech to a basically empty chamber, right and an empty senate floor. When he said on the basically, when they were getting ready to vote in October of 2002, to give a blank check, really, to President Bush to invade Iraq, he said, that they're, you know, this chamber, right, this chamber is for the most part, silent, ominously, dreadfully silent. There is no debate, no discussion, no attempt to lay out for the nation, the pros and cons of this particular war. We stand passively mute in the United States Senate, paralyzed by our own uncertainty, seemingly stunned by the sheer turmoil of events and this is no small conflagration we contemplate this is no simple attempt to defang a villain know this coming battle, if it materializes, represents a turning point in US foreign policy. That sounds like something I would write. today. 18 years later, if I was writing historical fiction about the Iraq War lead up, and I needed a heroic character to predict what was going to happen. I would write that, but that's what he actually said, and no one really noticed. And so the point is, there were alternative voices to Biden, there were folks in the democratic party who took a courageous stand, and who believed something incredibly different and chose not to fall into the democratic dilemma and, and chose to take a stand and even predicted that this wouldn't be a small thing. This wouldn't be a small defending regime change of a villain. In fact, it would be a turning point US foreign policy. And of course it was, we live in a post Iraq invasion world we live in the world that the Iraq invasion created. And it is a world of regional chaos from West Africa, from Morocco to Pakistan, to Central and South Asia. And we cannot forget the apology that America deserves from Biden, which we really have yet to get, as far as I can tell.



Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 27:46

Alright, here's the next clip.

D

Danny Sjursen 27:50

So this clip, everybody is from July, late July of 2003. So now we're talking four months after the ground invasion, when the insurgency particularly in Baghdad, and Anbar has begun to kick off I mean, it's it's it's it's going on, it is clear, this is a mess, and that Americans are dying by ones twos and threes, like on the daily. And so this is going to undercut his argument that once the war started, he turned against it right away. So remember, this is July of oh three at the Brookings Institution, one of the polite imperialist think tanks.

J

Joe Biden 28:28

For has yet to dawn, we are still at war, American soldiers are still being killed one, two and three at a time, a rack is still not secure. Still, no one holds our troops. To the at this point, no one has told our troops that what we have always known, we've known from this time last year, that they would have to stay there in large numbers for a long period of time. And that they're going to have to tough it out. Most Americans still don't realize that is costing us a billion dollars a week just to keep our troops in Iraq, and billions more in reconstruction will be needed. And that the revenue from Iraqi oil will not come close, will not come close to meeting those needs in the next three to five years.

D

Danny Sjursen 29:29

What I think is so interesting about a lot of this is what Biden's critique because this speech, you know, as we'll see as we go along is somewhat critical of Bush, but only in the Vegas way. So what he's saying is I wish the President would be more honest with the American people about what we're really in for. So Biden, remember, just five months before saying that, essentially, that this is you know, he's agreeing to some extent with the neo cons but this can be done relative really easily. I mean, he certainly doesn't think it's going to go as bad as it already had by July of oh three, which was not even the half of it. Of course, by the time you know, like I arrived in late 2006 when the place was among monstrosity. 70 soldiers died in Baghdad alone, sometimes in a month. It wasn't even that bad. But it was a mess by July of oh three, it was clear the writing's on the wall. And what Joe's saying is he thinks he's this like voice of like, sobering realism. And he buddy, his position is not that we should now leave based on the facts and around but that we need to settle in. For a tough long fight. He's kind of like rallying the troops, but in the most unmotivated way, saying, Now we need to almost double down, we need to settle in for the long haul. And, you know, they're going to have to quote, tough it out, the troops are going to have to tough it out. It's like, Joe, you made this happen. You you you collaborated with the neo cons to make this happen. And now you're telling us we have to settle in for billions of dollars turned out to be trillions for billions of dollars and you know,

enough blood to fill a stadium, American blood and forget about the rocky blood that can fill a small city, that that there's really something just grotesque about this speech. And I think that what makes it particularly bad is that he's misrepresented time and again, ever since. And especially in the 2019 20 primary and general election campaigns that were commenting on now. It's really it's a terrible, terrible clip. And it does make me question his judgment. And it raises questions about what he will do in a similar situation future, but I would like to think that he, like many Americans, actually learned some lessons from what ended up happening in Iraq and some of his positions afterwards, where he did start to oppose, say the surge and talk about partitioning Iraq, which is a whole other thing to get into, and its own flaws. But you know, in the short term, he definitely did pivot soon after this, okay. But remember that even when it became clear that American boys and girls were being, you know, killed on the daily, and it was clear that this was gonna be a real, real quagmire, or at least a real malstrom that he you know, even at that point, he wasn't ready to back out, and we'll see what his justification for that was, which is really obscene In this next clip.

C

Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 32:35

The tough it out. Line is is very, very insulting to me. And I wonder if he were showing this clip today, following the passing of his son, would he still use such insulting language about the troops having to tough it out? Because then he is, you know, and I know that toughing it out is the entirety of being in the military. It point to the tough part. You can't it's all tough. It's all hard. It's all weighing down on you, whether you're deployed or back home, because we bring the home the war home with us. But I would hope that he would be less presumptive today, after seeing what his son went through, and knowing that it was very much probably connected to his service.

D

Danny Sjursen 33:33

Yeah, that's the that's the big question before we start here, and I want to keep it in mind, you know, we're not just trying to tear down by the big question is, how much he learned, and how he would respond in the future. And all we can do is speculate, but as as, as really disturbing as this is, and I think we are doing the right thing by reminding folks, that is to say that if you believe that Biden is a better choice than Trump, and I mean, to some extent, I'm, I admit that I'm even I'm inclined to believe that given some of this monstrosity of Trump, especially at home, but also abroad, if you're inclined to believe the trot debate is a better option. I just think that the key thing is like don't like Cornel West said, don't tell lies about him. Like Like, he says, vote for obama don't tell lies about him. Well, I think if you don't have this video in your head on January 20 21st, then then you know, you're in a bad situation. So let's hear what he has to say his justification for why we have to talk it

out.



Joe Biden 34:32

And specifically, that securing Iraq will cost billions of American dollars, required 10s of thousands of American troops for an extended period of time. And that it's worth it, that it is worth it. And most importantly, that it's on a national interest stay the course of view that I strongly hold. Some of my own party have said that it was a mistake to go to Iraq, and the First place, and believe that is not worth the cost, whatever benefit may flow from our engagement interact. But the cost of not acting against Saddam, I think would have been much greater. And so is the cost, and so will be the cost of not finishing this job. The president United States is a ball leader and he is popular.



The stakes



Joe Biden 35:27

are high. And the need for leadership is great.



Danny Sjursen 35:32

So the troops have to tough it out. Sorry, guys, you might have to get yourself killed the 7000 miles from home for war, that was a lie, and that is falling apart. But that the justification is twofold. One is ideological, or at least what he pretends is what he believes, which is that the cost is worth it. That is a bold statement. And the second thing he says, and it really turns my stomach and honestly, no, Matt Biden could go into office and have the best eight years, if he lives that long, ever. Right? He could surprise me on every turn. And I'll be glad. And I'll say so. I don't know that I'll ever be able to forget that clip. You know, this forgive and forget. So maybe I'd forgive at that point. Maybe. Could I ever forget those words? President Bush is a bold leader pause. And he is popular. I mean, the inflection, the emphasis there? What is he telling us? the subtext isn't even really subtext. It's pretty overt and in your face. The President is popular. Therefore, we Democrats, because he's speaking to his fellow senators later in the speech, he says, you know, some of my fellow senators say we shouldn't do this. But I disagree. Because the President's popular, which means, guys, we're Democrats, we live in a dilemma. We've got to be a holier and more Catholic than the Pope. We got to be more militarist than the neo cons. If we don't bill Swift Boat us. Well, of course. No, they Swift Boat carry Anyway, when he

refused to meet with the Iraq veterans against the war, which had modeled themselves on the Vietnam Veterans against the war of which she was a champion in the winter soldier hearings, right. So I'm jumping to carry but to give you the idea that don't try to please the republicans or the right. So that thinking that they won't attack you, they're gonna attack you, anyway. I mean, you could bomb a new country. And they'd be like, Oh, you didn't bomb enough? You're worse. Let me tell. Let me tell the American people that you are. So yeah, I don't know that I'll ever forget that video, no matter what happens, but I think it's an important one. And it demonstrates the hardest sin insider compromises that Biden has made since he entered the senate as a centrist read sort of reactionary democrat to the liberal turn of the 1960s, the late 1960s. And so it really defined his career up till he jumped into the vice presidency. So what we're jumping to now is, yeah, fast forward 16 years, right. To this this, you know, this past winter, when we, the Trump administration, assassinated a very dubious legality and ethics and strategy. The, you know, one of the most powerful, maybe the third most powerful person in their government, definitely their most popular national figure in many cases, and their top general, the leader of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps. Qasim soleimani. And the reason that this relates to Iraq is because the outcome, the predictable outcome of invading Iraq was that it did in fact, empower Ron providing a justification for a new Cold and who knows sort of hot future and also hot when we are assassinating generals. This is by talking about the Solomonic assassination, but keep in mind, it's not talked about enough where was Solomonic assassinated, not in Tehran, not even in Lebanon, visiting with Hezbollah in Baghdad, which draws that direct line between the invasion of March 2003. And the world we live in today. Again, we live in a world shaped by the Iraq invasion so much that anecdotally that in what is actually happening, we are now in a situation will be assassinate Iranian top leaders in bag debt. Okay, so this connection so let's see what he had to say about the solomani assassination.



I hope the administration I pray the administration has thought through the second and third order consequences of what they have chosen Let's be clear. So Amani in General soleimani was the architect of behind the slaughter of countless lives in the region. The deaths of US troops are on his hands, and no American mourn his passing. He deserves to be brought to justice, he deserved to be brought to justice for his crimes. But no matter how rightly reviled he was, in the West, he was a senior figure in the Iranian government. And there's no doubt that Iran will, in fact, respond. Unfortunately, nothing we have seen from this administration, over the past three years, suggests that they're prepared to deal with the very real risk



we now confront.



And there's no doubt the risk are greater today, because of the actions Donald Trump has taken. Walking away from diplomacy, walking away from international agreements, relying on threats of force. We don't have the kind of risk and provocation cycle when the nuclear deal was still in place, but does exist now. Our administration said, the goal, the goal of maximum pressure, was to deter regional aggression, negotiate a better nuclear deal. Thus far, they're better badly failed on both accounts. Now, the administration has said the goal of killing soleimani was to deter future attacks by Iran.



But the action almost certainly will have the opposite impact.



Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 41:49

When the news came down, that soleimani was, was assassinated. The immediate first thought that came into my mind was after knowing that the location which was at the Baghdad airport near the green zone, where our embassy is and where some of our remaining military assets there are stationed, if not, they're nearby. I was terrified at the thought that not only could American troops have been put in danger by this action, but also Iraqi troops. And that led me to how little and then not specifically Donald Trump, but it Donald Trump to how little we care for Iraqi sovereignty, that we involve them? I don't think any of it, or if we did, we haven't heard about it in the news. What does that really say about how we feel about the Rockies? And how how they're just pawns? I mean, we look past all the bluster. And that's one one conclusion that you can definitely arrive at.



Danny Sjursen 43:08

Well, definitely. So I think overall, look, some of the stuff that Biden says there is rational, I mean, about understanding second and third order effects, understanding that this is unlikely to improve the situation probably will have blowback and consequences, recognizing that it might would not have been necessary. I don't think it was necessary in any case, but that the framework within which this assassination occurred might, you

know, it may not have been possible or may not have been as likely, without Trump pulling out of a nuclear deal with Iran, the JCPOA that was working. And so I think, you know, he, he has, it seems, in this clip, you know, at least taken the relatively positive establishment critique of the Iraq war and showing a little more caution. Now, we make some dubious assertions in there. I think he is not necessarily clear about what it means to bring someone to justice, about whether the United States should be in the assassination of foreign governmental figures that we're not at war with business, whether we should be in that business. There's a lot of things he doesn't raise, there's a lot of assumptions that he makes. And I also think it's more it's not just what about isn't to say, Well listen, complaining about solomani having blood on his hands when in the situation where it was opportunistic or necessary, as we saw it for us to get out of Iraq or to make the quote, surge work. You know, we were quite happy to align ourselves with Sunni tribes which included Syria. Resistance Fighters and insurgents who had also large amounts of blood on their hands, it just that those Americans were killed in West Baghdad rather than East Baghdad and they were killed in, you know, Ambar rather than the job in Karbala, because that's where the Sunni tribes lived. And so I just think there's a lot of things he doesn't raise there. Overall, I think his assessment, we have to be fair and say, look at, he's not wrong on all the merits. But what you're pointing out here that, you know, I think is important is that the unspoken and suppressed figure, or figures, millions of them 20 million of them that are erased, that have no agency are the Iraqi people and even the Iraqi government? because keep in mind, you know, they're not. And they were they were given a little notice, I believe, and only some of them and basically, when it was happening, they were not involved. We did not think it important to involve the sovereign government of the sovereign state in which we were going to do a third party assassination. That wasn't a priority for us. Right. And we'll say it's because we don't trust them not to leak it, right. But I reject that in principle on a number of levels. But also, the Iraqi Government responded to this by saying please leave by a democratic vote. Remember, we were all we're all about Parliament's we love Parliament's we, you know, we'd prefer a senate and a house. But listen, we'll take Representative dymocks wherever we can get, in fact, we're going to put Jeffersonian democracy right there on the Tigris. That's the plan. That's the mission. That's what we were told, right, because there was no w MDS. And it turned out the al Qaeda connection was real. So we needed an admission. So look, the real reason we're in Iraq is to create democracy. Well, we did a flawed one like ours. And when their parliament voted, and said, Please leave, we would like American troops to leave we said, Now, no, not really, like, Yeah, I know, you're upset that we did this, like utterly sovereign violating assassination, that you're going to feel the blowback from a Rockies in a rocky government as much as we are, because you have to live there. But nevertheless, we are going to not leave when you're angry about that. And so it just shows that occasionally, American imperialism kicks it pretty old school. Right? So we're pretty good at veiling it especially in like Obama type administrations, we will

veil it, we have our polite imperialism or polite Empire and applied our Emperor to lead it. But occasionally, with some regularity, we will kick it old school because that is old school imperialism, to say that the natives, their parliament is like substandard, just like they're raised, in fact, and their religion. And so, now we've got national interest there. So sorry, guys, like democracy has its limits. And where those limits stop is when we don't like the outcomes. So yeah, I think that that's an important point. But, you know, overall, I think if there is one area, one foreign policy area where I feel more confident, like strongly more confident, then on Biden than on Trump is with respect to Iran, because I hope that he will decrease some of the pressure there, try to lead back towards something similar to the JCPOA, which is going to be hard to do, because Iran no longer trusts us as a fair bargaining or negotiating partner. But nevertheless, I think that of all the areas, you know, Venezuela, China and Russia, he's just as hard and hawkish, as Trump has done, he tries to go to the right of him, but on Iran, I hope that he has some more modest rational, realistic goals. And I think that overall his position on solomani there was was a reflection of that so well, Henry, this is this is one that was really big to you, and and to me, as well, of course, about hunt, I'm sorry, Joe Biden, and his service and the burn pits and all that. So let's jump into the cost of the wars that by unhealed cheerlead, and that have been the blowback the sub wars of the broader iraq war started in March of oh three.



I think they play a significant role. sciences recognize there are certain carcinogens and when there were people are exposed to them. Depending on the quantities the mountain the water, the air can have a carcinogenic impact on the body. There's a book written called burn pits. And I was stunned when I read it. It was a lot of hype. It was advertised and lows selling. And there's a whole chapter on my son Boeing stunned me I didn't know that. And this guy went back and looked at both tenure as a civilian with the US Attorney's Office trying to set up a criminal justice justice system in Kosovo during the Kosovo War. And then his year in Iraq and he was co located in both times, near these burn pits and these burn pits are we take everything from fuel oil, the plastic furniture, to All the waste and put them in a great big pits and we burned them. And just like we know now, you don't want to live underneath the smokestack, where where carcinogens are coming out of it, we've say you got to put a scrubber on, you can't you can't let this stuff get in the air. But there is yet to be that I'm aware of any direct scientific evidence that a particular person came back with higher incidence, there's a lot higher incidence of cancer coming from Iraq now and Afghanistan then and other wars. There's been no direct scientific evidence and I'm aware of you have a lot of work being done.



## Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 50:43

So the burn pits is a difficult subject for me. I believe that with some evidence, but not certainly not empirically proven that many of my injuries are connected to my exposure to the burn pits. And I think that at this point, it's important and instructive in terms of Biden's foreign policy, to understand a little bit about the path that Beau took from returning from Iraq and ultimately die. And so I first I want to I wanted to make I made a few notes just about what I would perceive was the the closeness between Joe Biden and Joe Biden, just just to mention it that Bo's real first name is Joseph, he is an Joe Biden, of course, is actually Joe Biden, Jr. So Bo would be Joseph the third if that was the name that he went by. But just a little note there. Both of them attended the same high school, they attended the same college, and they attended the same law school. Before Bo joined the military, he helped create a new criminal court system in Kosovo, helping to train judges and prosecutors there. He joined the army. I think it was oh five or oh six for I can't remember the date. But he joined the army as a jag officer, Judge Advocate General, a lawyer in the military. And it just so happened that his pre deployment period to Iraq coincided with the 2008 Obama campaign. And during his one vice president presidential debate that year, Joe said I don't want them going. But I'll tell you what, I don't want my grandson or my granddaughters to have to go back in 15 years. And so how we leave makes a big difference. Bo at the time of his deployment, he was working as the the Attorney General of Delaware. He remained Attorney General while he was on deployment, leaving most tasks to his deputies. He got to see his father twice during his deployment, not including any leave time that he was granted. He attended the O nine inauguration. And he also got a visit from his dad in Baghdad later in his deployment. Now, I mentioned that because getting any kind of extra trip home outside of leave on a deployment is exceptionally rare. I came home, I got to come home three times on my second tour, but two of them were to testify in a court martial. I had never ended up actually testifying. And I you know, I didn't have any choice to the coming or going but I did get to spend some time with my family that other guys didn't. And I think that that's, that's worth noting, but became ill within eight months of his return from Iraq. And he died five years to the month from his return from Iraq. Now my own injuries, which I've discussed a little bit, you know what they entail on the podcast, they, they didn't develop nearly that quickly. And fortunately, I've never been diagnosed with any kind of cancer and I've been out of the army for over 12 years now. I'm still here. But Beau Biden Can't he can't say that. It's believed that the the biggest culprit one of one of the biggest culprits of contamination that troops have to endure relating to the burn pits is titanium dust, that it becomes because of the process of being burned and as as Joe mentioned in the clip, The burn pits, everything ended up in their old tires, old batteries, garbage of all different kinds. And it was either diesel or jet fuel was used to burn it. When on my second tour, I helped burning some some stuff, we had a very small burn pit near our little spot in the camp. And the guys and I would sometimes stand out there like we were at a bonfire and

then shoot the shit and such. But it's a it's a very disgusting and very damaging thing to have to Endor. It's terribly uncommon these days for politicians to have kids in the military. Only a fifth of us politicians have military experience. And fewer than 1% have kids that are in the military. The fact that both chose to serve, chose to be in the military and probably died from diseases resulting from that time in the military puts Joe Biden in an exceptionally small minority within our political system. There's one more clip that we'll play here in a minute that goes to that a little bit more. But there are lots of other people, lots of other names that we could mentioned, who are responsible by and large for getting us into a rock and keeping us in a rock. And Joe Biden is one of those people. But he also had real loss connected to his decisions to support the war. And that's regarding a man who has had a huge amount of loss in his life. I'm not condoning or defending his choice to push for the Iraq war. But how many politicians? Can we say lost a child in a war that they voted for? And given the closeness between Joe and Bo? It seems like a very deeply held loss.

D

Danny Sjursen 57:07

Yeah. And I, I think here, it's important to be fair, to Joe Biden, I don't know maybe I'm being naive. But I think for all his politicking, and for all the things that are unforgivable, he does seem to feel things right. And I know that that's like, a nebulous and hard to quantify, sort of, sort of thing. But I think that his personal relationships that he develops, are, are real, right? They're genuine, particularly in the case of your children. And it is my hope, that although he has sometimes really angered me by using Bo as a way of saying that he shouldn't have to answer for the Iraq War, because, you know, he knows the cost to get us on there, which I really don't, except, I do think that it, it had this real effect on him, and that he needs to be taken seriously. And we have to really consider that. If he learned something from his championing of the Iraq war. It is likely that what drives that he's an emotional guy, right? He's He's an emotional, he's not unlike Bush, he's, he's a gut player. And from everything I can tell, in his record, and that has its real limits, but occasionally, there can be some real silver linings about that. And I think in this case, that is that perhaps, though, that loss, and what was probably behind it largely, gives him an idea of the cause of war. And even if he won't say it, even if he is a stubborn mule, on the trail, that that may be something was internalized that that helps him take a real serious look before committing US troops to another war and putting them in a situation where there's gonna be second third order effects in people's personal lives. Right. And Henry, you know a lot about that. I know something about that. And I hope that Joe's really learned it.

C

Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 59:27

Absolutely. So we got one more, one more clip on Joe Biden's foreign policy. And he was, he was approached at a, I believe is at a restaurant sometime during the campaign. And I don't I don't know specifically who the person was, who's talking to him here in this clip. But I want to say that they're, they're anti war and that they you know, feel as strongly as it as as an of us about this topic, and it's the most direct confrontation I think he's had about the war to date.



to happen.



Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 1:01:37

You go ahead, Danny.



Danny Sjursen 1:01:42

You know, this is the top clip, this is another one of the ones that I can't really forget when I when I see Biden and so it's kind of hard to hear in the clip, because there's a lot of background noise and people yelling at the rally, but essentially, this veteran, I believe, is a has a link to About Face veterans against the war, which is the old Iraq war basically confronts him as he's like, walking out of an event says, you know, listen, you know, you're disqualified because of your championing of the Iraq war, and, you know, their blood not only of the American soldiers, but this vet is very careful and really emphasizes the million. Rocky's May, you know, we don't know the exact number it's in, it's in the million range, who have also been killed far more than the 5000 ish soldiers, American soldiers have died there. And, you know, asked him to account for his record, and Joe's just not have enough, he does not like to be confronted, he becomes kind of a Scranton school yard kid pray, or plays that up, gets back real up, and immediately pivots to listen, my son died there, too. In other words, like, Don't question me on this. And, I mean, there's so many logical fallacies at the root of that, because the implication that because of that, you're not to be held accountable is strange. And we would think the opposite might be the case. And then also, Biden's dismissal of this anti war veteran, I just think was exactly unaligned right out of line with the whole support the troops no matter what put them on a pedestal, my son, sir, than all soldiers are heroes, just like he was, you know, until they disagree with me, right until they call out something that's factual in my record my own responsibility, co responsibility and serious responsibility for this Iraq disaster that that killed this veterans friends, as he mentioned, and then also even says, you know, millions are dead. And I think he means a Rocky's, of course in that situation. So this was tough, and Joe does not

handle those situations. Well, it concerns me, this is the bad side of being a gut instinctual player, that he does not really like to be challenged. And so we have to hope that one of the two Bidens comes out when it's time to make a call about war. Is it the Biden who doesn't want to take responsibility? And the Biden who, you know, is often complicit throughout his career and creating these disasters and sanctioning them for political gain or, or because he thinks it'll be a political loss if he does not? Or is it the Biden who does seem has some serious thoughts and conclusions that have come to him as partly a result of his son's death afterwards, you know, probably involved. So this is really this is tough. I mean, this is a rough thing and reminds To me that there like are no adults running the store. And that my theory that no one ever becomes an adult, and that we're all, you know, not secretly 17 years old forever, is true. And that has disturbing implications for the human condition and any political leadership. But Biden's response there is just utterly immature, and dismissive, and really raises serious doubts. And so I think, like I said, the question is, which Biden comes out in any given day, and I don't feel great about it in every situation, but Biden's bringing up his son isn't necessarily wrong, had he used that, you know, kind of that image of his son's loss and the fact that his son served in a different way, right, rather than, than I was a way to evade responsibility of aid even discussing things with this, this other veteran who may well have seen far more combat than his son, right? If his friends died in combat, right, given given the different MLS is in different jobs within the army. And, you know, he just used it in a lot of in all the wrong ways. And it was, it's really hard to watch. For me, it's a lot like nails on the chalkboard, you know, Captain, you know, Quint in Jaws, and it's, it's really rough, and it raises some serious questions. And again, I hope that the better, quote, unquote, version of Biden comes out when he's in his quiet moments, pondering a future wars, and then he wins.

C

Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 1:06:36

There's a short short segment in there where the veteran mentions, Joe Biden being the person that gave George W. Bush the Liberty medal, back in, I think it was the end of 2018. And it, I feel like that was an additional, very much could be seen as an additional betrayal. on his part, from the point of view, from our point of view, that even after all these years, even after losing his son, he still goes and presents this metal to bush. While outside, there were members of About Face protesting. reminding him there's even you actually can hear them on some of the videos that have come out from the, from that night when that happened. But I'll try to make sure that the the whole clip is annotated in text so everybody can hear the whole thing because the quality wasn't so great. But I just wanted to point that out.

D

Danny Sjursen 1:07:57

Yeah, and that's important point. I mean, in one way, it shouldn't surprise us that Biden gave that metal blade on Philadelphia, to to George W. Bush, because this is the same guy who you know, in July of 2003, as we heard, said that he is a bold president, and he is popular, right. And one of the things that we have seen in so many funny means, right? That are not funny. They're darkly funny, they're tragic comic is, you know, when Michelle Obama and Joe Biden and Barack Obama and like Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton, you know, they're like, they're all in the same clan, they may be on the left the red and the blue team, but they, they they kind of consort and laugh and enjoy the company of people like George W. Bush, who was the worst president, in recent memory, by all the merits, right, by all the metrics, I should say, of death, death, global death, and American death of soldiers. The last time an American president had that much blood on his hands was Richard Nixon, right at the end, and when he prolong the Vietnam War, and bush getting a pass, because he's more polite in his language, then Donald Trump disturbs me and so what it tells me is that these people really are click, if not a cabal. And that tells me that even Biden's learning and improvements to the extent that he's had them, and I think to some extent he does, but they are in the box, they stay within a certain framework, and they're not. He is not going to cut ties with establishment Republicans. And we see that because report after report is showing us that he is seriously considering a number of Republicans for his potential administration after Tuesday, if he went and yeah, so you have a progressive base. That's more fire And more progressive than ever, and you're sidelining the war. And in the end, the end is in the Sanders faction and, and you're and you're probably going to load up more damage more republicans of that establishment Lincoln brand, right Lincoln Republican. So you're going to, you're going to put I will, my prediction is you'll see more Lincoln style republicans in a bind administration, then genuine progressives from the base that puts Biden there. And that tells us all we need to know about the duopoly and I think that some of the aspects that you're bringing up about speech are just that. So the Philadelphia Medal Award ceremony was, was a truly obscene pageantry of imperialism. And, and it should be considered that and never forgotten. As we transition now to apartheid, something near and dear to my heart, I love me some Southern Africa, one of my little side interests, and Joe has an interesting record there. It is important to remember that a particularly the Democrats, but also many Republicans, especially turned on Reagan, they were late comers to the game after we supported apartheid South Africa in their utterly, utterly racialized, hyper racialized state, murder state, Death Squad, collusion, state of white apartheid, Afrikaner apartheid in South Africa, the United States was one of the great complicit external actors that protected South Africa, much like we protect Israel now. Until we didn't, until a certain tipping point was reached. And that tipping point came in the mid 1980s. And it was largely democratic party that pushed for the sanctions that were were pretty significant, symbolic, but also real economically, but mostly a very important symbolic move that that helped, not as much as the Cuban army, by the way, read my article, but helped bring

down apartheid. And so it was the Democratic establishment that that eventually turned and then took almost the republicans with them. Joe would see that as one of the great victories of bipartisanship that he has championed for so long. But Joe has an interesting record on apartheid. And, and it's not all bad. And I think we're gonna listen to a clip and then talk about where he's been on that. And maybe it'll illustrate some things about his broader foreign policy.



Joe Biden 1:12:28

what disturbs me more than the policy that you call a policies, the rationale for the policy, the rationale for the policy, you set out four principles that you that you adhere to, and then you and I will go over them in a moment. Then you say on page 14, we must not become part of South Africa's problem, we must remain part of our solution. We must not aim to impose ourselves our solutions, our favorites in South Africa, dammit, we have favorites in South Africa. The favorites in South Africa are the people who are being repressed by that ugly white regime we have favourites. Our loyalty is not to South Africa is to South Africans in the South Africans are majority black, and they are being excoriated. It is not to some stupid puppet government over there. It is not to the Afrikaners regime, we have no loyalty to them. We have no loyalty to South Africa to South Africans. And the fact of the matter is we I mean, I listen to this rationale. First of all, it is the leaders of South African there are people black and white, who have the majority of responsibility, they must rise to it. Well, they are rising to it, their rising to the only thing left available to the world that repulsive, repugnant regime of Afrikaners there, and it's the only way they have they tried everything for the last 20 years. They big they borrowed, they crawled, and now they're taken up arms. The second thing progress toward peace requires a timetable, timetable emulation of apart, what's our timetable? What do we say into that repugnant regime? Are we saying you've got 20 days, 20 months, 20 years? We asked them to put up a timetable. What's our timetable? These people are being crushed. And we're sitting here with the same kind of rhetoric, the same thing we heard. We heard go slow. We heard we have to take care of the problem afterward. You heard you are



totally misconstruing



testimony that I gave

 Joe Biden 1:14:30  
read. Furthermore, Senator, let

 Danny Glover 1:14:31  
me say that I hate to hear

 Joe Biden 1:14:35  
a senator of the United States calling for violence. I'm not calling for violence. Sure. Do. I hate to hear? I hate to hear and administration and the Secretary of State refusing to act on a morally abhorrent point. I hate to hear this country I'm ashamed that this country puts out a policy like this that says nothing, nothing.

 Danny Sjursen 1:14:56  
Okay, I just want to start on this. That. Look, I know enough about this issue that I can go into a long diatribe about the backstory of the democrats and potentially even Joe Biden that could easily undercut some of what he's saying and show that they waffled to until they didn't do all that. But you know, I do you think that sometimes while I will not erase that history, and I'm comfortable talking about it, and it's important, there are rare moments where that's, that's, that's Joe Biden, that is fine. Right? It is. There's a passion to it, there is an earthiness, there is a anybody can understand what he's saying there. He says he's ashamed of his country, and the administration for their policy in South Africa refers to it as an evil state, basically, this this and it was,



and he refuses to accept the justifications of go slow.

 Danny Sjursen 1:15:57  
He I know he's applied that to African Americans within our own brand of apartheid. But I won't dismiss that. I mean, if I want to feel good about Biden in the morning, if I want to feel hopeful of what he is capable of, I play that clip to myself, call me a romantic but I would. That's a hell of a speech. That's a hell of a floor speech about a moral issue, that also had strategic issues. There's a lot of blowback to us, just like there is with our support for Israel. Got it. super important. This was an ethical issue. First and foremost, and some things are, and some things are and Biden was dead on that day. And he refused to back

down. He was fairly systemic and his critique of American policy toward South Africa, he rejected the idea that we have to go slow. He said, we need to put some sort of timeline on this. We can't accept this any longer. And then when he's called out for inciting violence, because, you know, there was an armed wing of the African National Congress, and they did commit violence, but it pales in comparison to state violence to state terror. And he refused to back down he refused to fall into the democrat dilemma of Oh, we, you know, we were going to be looked at as you know, we were either too soft or where we're supporting communist violence, right, or violence of the wrong side, because that's, of course, they called the South Africans and Reagan and such they referred to them as you know, communists, right? Because they did a lot of themselves and receive with the Cubans, and I received a significant help from the Soviet Union. But uh, you know, you take help where you can get it when you live under the heel of an authoritarian, racist regime. I mean, that's what you do. There wasn't any arms coming. There were any soldiers coming from Uncle Sam, the beacon of democracy, they were coming from Havana. Cubans lost thousands of soldiers fighting apartheid. And so, you know, he refused to back down, though by and he said, like, No, I'm not inciting violence. But I'm not even going to accept your argument that by criticizing this model of Horan, see of a part tied white regime and he calls it like, he says white, right, like he calls it out for its whiteness, its dedication to political whiteness, I mean, that's, that's, that's, that's Biden, in his finest form, and if we got 10% of that, if if he was that guy, 10% of the time in his career, or today. I'll go for that guy. Right. And of course, there's a complicated epilogue to that or Kota. But anyway, Henry, am I being to have lighting romantic and positive on Biden? I'm sure I'll hear some hate from from, you know, the the left on this one or the far left, I guess if there's such a thing?



Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 1:19:07

No, I I think you have it right. As you said, I wish that shows. Passion, and the tenacity that he makes this speech could have been, as you said, applied to African Americans. I wish he could have been applied to debt and move to the Rockies. Didn't wounded Yemenis? So that was something that began at the tail end of the Obama administration. I wish that this glimmer and it's very real, but it's it's a glimmer was a bigger part of his overall policies. And as you said, you know, if we could get 10% that would be something That would be you know, and because he is you know that you know, shoot from the hip kind of guy. There may be some moments that we'll get to see this, there may be some moments where Uncle Joe really pushes back. I'm not expecting it. I'm not counting on it. But we may see some of it because this came from somewhere. The you know that that? I he didn't he wasn't reading off a teleprompter there. That was Joe Biden on unchecked. And I hope that we see more of it. I really do.

D

Danny Sjursen 1:20:41

And if you could just, if you could just keep his mouth shut, and quit telling lies. You know, he has a pathological streak of lying right from his law school. Oh, yes, days where we can get into all of it. If we could do a whole show on Biden wise. And some people say, Well, what about Trump's lies like, Trump's lies are worse, or they're at least there's more, right? I don't even know what worse is when they're both pathological. But Trump's lies have generally been in the interest of more evil mode, mostly, although that's hard to even say, you know what, I take that back because Trump doesn't have an Iraq on his conscience. But Trump's of friggin is a ghoul. I mean, he's a disease. He's a symptom of a disease. But, you know, I don't think that we should not talk about his lies. But we're not going to do a Biden just a Biden line show that we talk a lot about. But Biden, of course, you know, several times in his career and even recently says he just has a frank lie that's that's been disputed by the ambassador on the ground who was supposedly involved these that I went to Robben Island, and I visited Mandela when he was in prison, and this whole yarn of, you know, like getting arrested trying to do it, or he tried to do and he got arrested. It's like, none of that happened. None of that happened. Joe, you could have just ran on that speech. Like in other words, if you wanted to talk about Africa, South Africa, bro to burnish your racial credentials, which are weak as hell is we're gonna see in a second. Why did you have to fabricate something that becomes the story? I'll ask you this. How many Americans have heard that speech? That was really a great glimmer? glimmer? Indeed. But a great one, I think, versus how many Americans have heard that, you know, Biden fabricated a ludicrous lie about getting arrested trying to seem as though it's a staggering disparity, almost no American knows that speech that you played, and I'm glad we did. And I stand by really, we've gone even hard on him, right? So I stand by the US. That's what happens, right? You The, the substance gets lost in the ludicrous lie, which is wrong and is instructive. And I mean, I'm not minimizing the lie. But yeah, very few people have heard it. And then what you've mentioned, and we're going to see in the next clip, is that he didn't necessarily apply that to what he was saying the justice for the South African African blacks. He didn't apply that to American, American African Americans. And he's, he's really had a rough record there. And we're gonna see two quick clips on that, but also on brown and black victims of American imperialism, elsewhere. And so that's the rough patch. And it's a big one. It's in fact, like you kind of mentioned and you could argue the anomaly is the speech that we like so much, you know, that I'm so inclined towards there really does give me a little bit of a chill, I'm not gonna lie, right? I like speech. I like rhetoric, when it's good when it's effective. But that is the exception, unfortunately. And we're gonna see that Empire comes home, in the form of racialized policing, treating communities of color and marginalized communities of other sorts as occupied territory, in the militarization of the police and the George Floyd protests that have, you know, capture the national attention mid COVID and polarized everybody and really put our country in a very dangerous and precarious situation with the militias and the

militarization of the citizenry, and the collusion with the security forces, which has Northern Ireland and South Africa level feels okay. local law enforcement is very inclined in many cases to support and even champion the militias and see them as allies vague allies problematic ones uncomfortable and sometimes but they're clearly more I mean, just look at that video of the water bottles being thrown in Kenosha, right for to Kyle Rittenhouse before he goes shoots up a bunch of folks. This is scary stuff and we just have to remember that it Biden's not a champion on race at home. And so, you know, let's jump quickly into his talk about busing and clan inflected segregation as art segregationist senators in the south. And then after that a bit on his, again championing shepherding of the 94 I believe crime bill under the Clinton administration, which set the stage set the stage set the plate for the modern debate. I mean, slavery set up, but the modern stage has been set for the protests in the street against systemic racism and police brutality, and police militarization. Bye, bye. Okay. So while certainly Trump is the the arch enemy, in many cases, of all things that aren't white, you know, that we have to remember that Biden's record did not follow the rhetoric of South Africa, in the United States.



Well, I made the most troubling point, from my point of view. And this is a point that most of the mainstream media has completely dodged or missed, is that, you know, Joe Biden didn't simply reach out in consensus, some kind of civility to these Southern racist senators. It wasn't hard for him to reach out because he shared their views in the first place. He didn't just support legislation introduced by James eastland. Jesse Helms, he thanked them for supporting his legislation and his own anti busing legislation. He called busing asinine, and, you know, more than and worse than that, at one point, he even he even came to the point of saying, want to get his words exactly. saying, I've gotten to the point where I think our only recourse to eliminate busing is a constitutional amendment. just stunning words, last week, he said, he has no apologies. And the media in as quoted him repeatedly saying, you know, I've been involved with civil rights, my whole career. But this is simply i don't i don't know how to word this politely. But this is simply not the truth. To the extent that he's been involved in civil rights. It hasn't been as an an advocate. It's been as an opponent.



Danny Sjursen 1:27:59

Well, I mean, that's the whole point. Right? That. So often, Joe Biden talks about kind of launching his career from within the black church. Talking about some marches, he was on that he wasn't in Delaware. Remember, Delaware is the most is like, they say this about the city of Louisville. But I think Delaware actually takes the cake geographically, like, in some ways, Delaware is the most northern southern state and also the most southern

northern state, right. It's a hybrid state, that Delaware was among the last group of states that got rid of slavery, slavery was legal in Delaware after it was de facto legal in Georgia, right, because the border states that stuck with the union were not affected by the Emancipation Proclamation. So there was slavery in Delaware, there was segregation in Delaware. Biden is elected in I believe, '72. You know, as a as a reaction candidate, a New Democrat, the early wave of the New Democrats that would eventually put Clinton in power. These were folks who were they rejected bossing, they rejected liberal social engineering, as it was called that time. And they were sort of reaction to if not a rejection, a reaction to be attacking towards the center or towards the right, actually, on race. Okay, in the in the wake of the civil rights movement. So, you know, Joe has been a liar about this. Right? And, and he worked happily, he loves personal relationships. He'll make them with anybody that's nice to him. And then he kind of jives with in a social way. And then they'll work together politically, and that has included people like Strom Thurmond and Jesse Helms. And I mean, these are these these are the these are the most important senators in modern American history. And remember what I said about the Cabal the click the polite establishment that they won't reject, they won't cancel them. There's no cancel culture for that right. George W. Bush doesn't get canceled culture interesting. The Kamala Harris pick for vice president is instructive in that way. Because when Kamala Harris sought to make a name for herself when she wasn't pulling all that well, right, in the Democratic primaries, she thought, and it was correct of her to do. But she thought that there was a lot to be gained by attacking Biden on busing. And she said I was that little girl who was bused? Yes, yes, yes, of course, we can always talk about Kamala Harris's record as a prosecutor and how she was a great enemy to people of color. But nevertheless, this was the move she made, and she wasn't wrong and what she said, and Biden didn't like it, and they had a nice little like, a testy back and forth. And it made waves for a few days in the media. And then Biden selects her, her who attacked him mightily, and she accepted. She had essentially called him a racist. Right? In the primary debates, and he selects her and she accepts, because they're part of the same team. They're part of the same team, they will go work for the same thing tanks when it's all over. They will go through the same revolving door. There'll be a doorman there saying, Oh, Hello, Mr. Biden. Hello, Miss Harris, please come right through, you get to come in, not the people on Main Street that you say you champion. Right. So this is this is an instructive point. And has Biden evolved, as Obama would say about his positions on like gay marriage probably has evolved. One 10th as much as he needs to, is he the future of racial reconciliation, which is a problematic word is the future of racial justice? Is he going to be the champion for that the way he was champion for the Iraq war? Certainly not, certainly not. And the evisceration of busing as a program and a concept. ensured that there would never be real integration. Now, busing was used very effectively, even by the liberals champion, right. They didn't actually want their kids, the deep suburbs, the wealthy suburbs to be interacting and mixing. They didn't want real busing, that would really mix

class as well as race. And so part of the reason is blowback for busing in 1970s, in Boston, where it was most famous, if you ever want to go and see the most angry, extreme version of street, white people, you don't need to go to Alabama go to Philadelphia or Boston. Okay. Anybody who's been here tell you that. So what do they do, they take poor kids from southie, who are white, and they interact with black poor kids from Roxbury and then they fight and then the white parents try to impale an African American man with an American flag in a very famous photo. But the reason that happened, this is not a excusing the behavior of the white poor, is because it was a poor people's busing and inner and an integration. With a few exceptions. Charlotte did a pretty good job for a while. Actually, the southern cities did better with busing than the northern cities. Interesting point. But, you know, I mean, just the point here is busing was ineffective in its application, but the concept was necessity. necessity, there's gonna be discomfort. If you want true integration, if you want to truly destroy apartheid, both in its the shorin is the fact that ways then you must have some sort of busing, and Joe Biden was one of the key people making sure, mischaracterizing it is asinine. Throwing the baby of busing out with the bathwater of the improper early implementation, that ignored class and pitted poor whites against poor blacks the same way that we were that the Confederacy and the North maintain the loyalty of white poor people, by scaring them up and making them into you know, making them compete with poor black people for jobs, my family, is that kind of racist to the extent that they're racist. My family is that kind of right wing populist, they're the kind that says, oh, like, why do we have to compete with these people for resources? Why is the government backing them? Well, Biden helped create that narrative. And he wrote that thing straight to the Senate. And he wrote that thing to important committee assignments because this is a very anachronistic seniority based US Senate. That is not very democratic, once people get to the Senate, and if you want to rise in the seniority system, you had better make friends with eastland and Thurmond and Jesse Helms, because in the solid south where there is no Republican Party until the 1970s. There was no competitive election. So those senators stayed in power for 30 4050 years, they never even really had opponents most of the time. They ran on contested and so if it's a seniority based system, there's going to be More of a southern democrat dominance in the committee assignments. And if you're an up and coming Joe Biden from the most northern southern state and the most southern northern state named Delaware, that's the fastest way to leadership if you have aspirations. So, yeah, we got to keep that in mind that if Biden is going to be a champion of racial justice, he's not. But if he's going to improve and evolve, then he's going to have to reject a lot of his own record and positions on all of this. I don't know that he will.



Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 1:35:38

All right. Last last clip for today on on the 94. Crime bill.



Joe Biden 1:35:48

Let me tell you what is in the bill. And I'll let you all decide whether or not this is weak, we get down here a compendium of the things that are in the bill. One, the death penalty. It provides 53 death penalty offenses week is can be you know, we do everything but hang people for jaywalking, in this bill. That's weak stuff.



Danny Sjursen 1:36:24

I mean, I know what he's trying to do there, in terms of like, literary and rhetorical tools, you know, that's the kind of speeches he likes to give biting a little bit sarcastic, you know, it's effective. I use it, except he is on the wrong side of an issue. And he's bragging about how tough he is. And what I'm trying to say is that the democrats dilemma of toughness applies at home as much as it does abroad. And so the war in our streets, the war on people of color, right, which has been manifested in the war on drugs, which is a war on people of color, was a class war as well, especially a racial war, though, if you look at the disparity in sentencing between cocaine and crack. But that war at home also has its own democratic dilemma where the democrats have to look out for and again, be they gotta be more racist and strong, right, they got to be more Catholic than the Pope. And, you know, Biden is playing again, as the reaction candidate because the democrats had been losing election after election. Because the American people, the American, white, middle and lower class, I had turned against civil rights. And so it was a it was a toxic issue. And so the Democrats, they they ditch their principles to the extent they were had them, they ditched that that leftward turn that did occur in the late 60s, and they reacted against civil rights. And so they couldn't say that were against civil rights or civil rights act, but they, you know, came up with these other ways to basically put African Americans back in their box, and it's a box of poverty and ghettoization and apartheid. And so one of the ways that was done was through criminalizing black behaviors, basically not not dissimilar to the slave codes that cropped up after slavery was made illegal in the 1860s and 70s. reconstruction south, right, so we can't make you be a slave, but we can make convict labor, which is slavery across, you know, a punishment for even the lowest crime, including jaywalking, Joe, right. Being out after dark, gathering with more than three people loitering, right, these are the kind of things that slave goes, this was a modern, some modern slave code, the crime bill was the war on drugs was, and we have to keep that in mind. And so what shows here is he is manifesting the demographic dilemma and the democrat dilemma is the reason that I am very skeptical of lesser evil voting, it doesn't mean that I reject people who do it and doesn't mean that I think it's wrong necessarily. In this case, what it means is that when you have this profound conceptual philosophical democrat dilemma, I have to wonder if what we're not voting for is somebody who's going to feel through their insecurity, that they have to, you know, outrace, this the, you know, the strong arms or you know, out tough, the Hawks. And so, this is a pretty disturbing stuff.

And it is involved with Hillary Clinton, who referred to a young, teenage, mostly adolescent, actually, in many cases, 1314 years old, African American boys as Super predators, based on an academic article that was found to be largely rejected by the consensus and just wrong on all the merits. that drove a lot of this. And so in many cases, it was the democrats who were pushing for a harder crime bill and bragging about how hard it was. I mean, if I had to encapsulate the democrats dilemma on domestic policy, I guess it would have to be that Biden speech where he's bragging sarcastically About how tough it is. And this is not long after governor Clinton bill put the guy put to death, a mentally challenged beyond even the most. I mean, seriously seriously, mentally challenged and disturbed man, Ricky Rector, who was a murderer, or convicted one to death during he flew home to Arkansas to oversee the execution as if he was the one putting the deal in the army had to be there. It was symbolic. It was cosmetic, it was a statement, but I'm tough on crime. To me, that was actually the main point where you should know that Bill Clinton is a monster. Right. But that was the very end. Christopher Hitchens wrote a lot about that at the time, and nobody wants to listen. But yeah, so I think this is Joe, in line with both the Clintons and much of the democrat establishment and trying to be tougher on crime, and therefore tougher in the backlash against civil rights and the Republicans. And let's just pray that we're not voting for another walking democrat dilemma. And that he has evolved on these issues. Now, I'm not going to put my hope in that I'm going to put my hope in the people in the streets, the rank and file Americans who are increasingly inclined to agree with us on these issues and oppose what Joe said for most of his career, that they are gonna be the ones that hold him accountable and force him some degree to evolve the left, I'm not going to just put my hope in his good graces. But I hope he has those two. Anyway, that's my thoughts on that.



Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 1:41:40

It's a it's a hard place to be and I think voting for any president, because it ultimately comes down to deciding, ostensibly, who's the lesser of two evils. And well, it depends on what your goals are most important to people as a person, you know, it's not. I don't know that it's inherently political. But looking at the State of America, today, as it is, after four years of Donald Trump, the I think that the the distance between the lesser of these two evils is is more stark than it usually is.



And

C

Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 1:42:33

I know as a, as a white guy, I, I cannot always take my lived experiences as the lived experiences of everyone else. That being said, voting is inherently personal. So I think I think it's pretty clear who Danny and I will probably be voting for. But that's not it's not a vote of hopefulness as it might have been for somebody like Bernie is a dyed in the wool vote for the lesser of two evils. And we want to hear about it, we want to hear from you guys on on. You know what you thought about, you know, this, this is a very polarizing episode. But I'm certain that there are things that we brought up that if you if you didn't know about them, you probably didn't know as much. And he needs, we have to keep our leaders feet to the fire. So if, in the next week, we find out that Joe Biden will be the next president. That means the left has to be on as critical of him as the left has been Donald Trump. Because they're, they're not that far apart. You know, that. What happened with Glenn Greenwald, in the intercept is very informative of the time we're living in. And we need to keep that in mind that a canceled culture shouldn't be for things that we just find unpleasant or disagreeable, because in a variety different ways, we just leave the central ship. So yeah, what do you got?

D

Danny Sjursen 1:44:36

Yeah, I mean, I think we've said, we've said enough we've we've said a lot on this and I agree with you. You know, I my decision not to come out and like straight up endorse a candidate is driven by the fact that I don't think that that's my platform, and also that I don't feel that it's my place, but I agree That the problem with lesser of two evils is that sometimes there really is a serious disparity. Sometimes the one evil really is that much worse. And this might be one of those cases, and I very much want to reject by and wholesale. And I'm not certain that I can probably do that I'm not going to endorse him, no one cares what I endorse anyway. And nor should they. But I will say this, I would really like to see a little of the left to the progressives do two things, I would like to see them come together to demand with their feet and their bodies. That that Biden become more progressive, that he takes better stance on domestic policies, and especially more policy, and I would like them to not cancel one another. Okay, there is a time for purity test. They're rare. apartheid would be one, but the but the for the most part, they can be really toxic. And I think that this is such a polarizing thing. And this is such a hard call. This is really hard call. And not necessarily about whether Biden or Trump is worse. I think that's clear. But it's a tough thing, because we've been asked to do this less than evil, so many times. So what I'm saying is I, I'm not going to disown somebody on the left, who is in the tank, look, we got to do Biden, and I'm not going to disown anybody who says, Look, I just can't do it. I just can't vote for Biden. And, you know, there's, there's that speech that was like kind of cliché ridden, and all that has been has been, you know, attacked a lot of times by the left and the right by Obama when he was talking about his Jeremiah, right

that like preacher of his who said some radical things. And he said, I can no more disown him than I can disown the black community, and I can no more disown him than I can my white grandmother, right who helped raise me it was a little bit racist. Right? Now there's problems in that speech, but it was also considered one of his better ones. And I feel that way about pull people on both sides of this issue within the left at the ground level for personal friends. And then also some people that I've grown to be close with professionally, in some sense, friends, in the the more prominent intellectual left. And so what I'm saying is, if you think this is a hard and shut case, remember that, you know, Chris Hedges is on the opposite side of Cornell West, his dear friend, and Chomsky, who he has like, looked up to and and respected and been on the same side of the issue with so many times, look, this is a real division, there are some tough choices to be made. I will where I'll go is I will say, I don't want Donald Trump to be president on January 20. And I don't want him to be president ever. And I didn't want Joe Biden. And I hope that with a President Joe Biden, that he is more movable, and less violent than a President Donald Trump, that he is more moveable by feet in the street. To do better, I don't think he's ever gonna be the leader we need for the moment. But he can do better maybe, than a Trump and he is less likely to call out his goons and his guns are less likely to have guns, rifles. And so that's my position on it. But I'm not going to diss on somebody who says they can't vote for Biden, and I'm not going to disown somebody who for principled reason says that we absolutely have to. This battle is going to happen on Tuesday, and the battle may go into the streets if it's contested. But if it doesn't, this battle really kind of needs to end inside the left, at least needs to come together in a feet to the fire, beat the street do something about it. When Biden gets elected, we can't lose the energy. That's the worst thing we can do. Because if we do that we sanction lesser evil voting for the end of time. And we sanction the duopoly until the end of time you sanction the status quo. And so tough episode, tough issue. Don't forget that people that you respect on the left are on opposite sides of this issue. And you can't diss on them. We're going to need each other maybe in the streets after this election, and we're definitely gonna need each other in late January. So definitely weigh in, send us notes. I get enough hate mail. Sure. And he does do that. We can take it but send us you know, send us collegial notes and disagree with us. And let's continue the conversation. And maybe we do a follow on episode where we answer some mail, from social media and from email of listeners where we can do an a post election take on this this episode we did here and what we do now and answer some of your questions. So tough times ahead. Stay strong and take care of yourselves out there. And a lot more to fall from us great guests and more commentary. Thanks.



Chris 'Henri' Henrikson 1:49:47

Thanks, guys.

