

POL S 334 A - Lilliana Mason, Uncivil Agreement, interviewed by Russ Roberts on EconTalk

[00:00:00.00] c

[00:00:00.98] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[00:00:04.42] - Welcome to EconTalk, part of The Library of Economics and Liberty. I'm your host, Russ Roberts, at Stanford university's Hoover Institution. Our website is econtalk.org, where you can subscribe, comment on this podcast, and find links and other information related to today's conversation. You'll also find our archives, where you can listen to every episode we've ever done, going back to 2006. Our email address is mail@econtalk.org. We'd love to hear from you.

[00:00:34.11] Today is August 6, 2018, and my guest is Political Scientist Lilliana Mason of the University of Maryland. She is the author of *Uncivil Agreement-- How Politics Became our Identity*, which is our topic for today. Lilliana, welcome to EconTalk.

[00:00:49.05] - Thank you so much for having me.

[00:00:50.64] - In a recent EconTalk episode that we'll link to, I did a monologue on the tribal nature of politics and the decline in civility. And your book takes us, I think, quite a bit deeper into those ideas and really gives some insight into what's been changing, which I think is the biggest challenge. I think a lot of people understand that things seem a little bit different. The question is, why, and what has changed? And let's start with a story that you tell at the beginning of your book-- the Robbers Cave Experiment. Tell us what happened there.

[00:01:23.10] - Yeah, so this is a very old experiment done in 1954 by social psychologists. They recruited a bunch of fifth grade boys from Oklahoma City and tried to gather boys that were as similar socially to each other as possible. So they were all white. They were all Protestant. They all had sort of similar educational and social fitness.

[00:01:48.09] And they divided the boys into two different camps and put them in a summer camp in Robbers Cave State Park outside of Oklahoma City. And the idea was that they wanted to figure out what it looks like when two groups form, and then to what extent are they naturally inclined to engage in conflict between each other?

[00:02:14.46] And so they spent a week with the boys not knowing about the other team. They came up with their own names. They called themselves The Rattlers and The Eagles. And after a week, they were told about the other boys, and they immediately started competitions with the other team-- just baseball games, various different kinds of competitions.

[00:02:37.39] And very, very early on, they started calling each other names-- derogatory names. And then gradually, the conflict escalated beyond the competitions, and they started doing things like attacking each other's camps. And then by the end of the second week, the counselors-- who

were actually the social psychologists-- had to stop all the competition, because the boys were starting to engage in violent attacks on each other, like throwing rocks and that type of thing.

[00:03:12.79] So the idea was that it took very little for these two very similar groups of kids to engage in relatively high levels of conflict. Really all it took was separation and competition for that to happen.

[00:03:32.68] - Yeah, I'm a little bit skeptical of that experiment-- and actually of a whole bunch that were done in the 1950s that seem to have persisted. I wonder how much the experimenters tweaked the experience to get something dramatic. I wonder how, maybe if they'd done it 20 times, would it have happened every time?

[00:03:49.17] But putting that to the side, I want to read a quote from the book that I thought summed up the phenomenon quite well. You say, "Humans are hardwired to cling to social groups. There are a few good reasons for us to do so. First, without a sense of social cohesion, we would have had a hard time creating societies and civilizations.

[00:04:09.81] Second, and even more basic, humans have a need to categorize. It's how we understand the world. This includes categorizing people. Third, our social categories don't simply help us understand our social environment. They also help us understand ourselves and our place in the world.

[00:04:24.54] Once we are part of a group, we know how to identify ourselves in relation to the other people in our society, and we derive an emotional connection and a sense of well-being from being group members. These are powerful psychological motivations to form groups." And I think it's important to say, from the outset, that what I call tribalism in my essay and EconTalk episode, and what you call sorting or sorting various types of identity-- this is a very normal-- it's a human thing.

[00:04:53.95] There's nothing inherently bad about it. It doesn't have to lead to violence. There are many good things about it. So just comment about the human nature aspect of this-- human nature aspect.

[00:05:06.39] - Yeah, so this is a point that I try to make a few times in the book, because I think it's really important-- the idea that we are strongly identified with our groups is not an insult to say that we do that. We are all doing it at the same time. We are all really deeply motivated to behave in this way.

[00:05:34.12] There are a few studies that I talk about in the book where there are real biological evidence of group membership. People's levels of cortisol in their saliva increases when they feel a threat to their group. I mean, the idea that your body is responding to your group membership suggests that it's very hard for us to control that.

[00:05:58.17] You can't control the level of cortisol in your saliva. And so these are things that we shouldn't try to avoid, but instead learn how to work with and learn how to better understand

what's happening so that we can stop it from getting out of control. It's one of those things where understanding it is the first step to being able to manage it.

[00:06:20.47] - I think the fascinating part about this is that it's one thing to think about your own group and the pleasure or comfort you get from feeling part of something larger than yourself, which I think is a deeply human urge that we economists neglect-- simply, I think, because we don't have the tools to deal with it very well.

[00:06:39.63] But the other part of this-- that's the darker side-- is the desire to look down on the other, to look down on people who aren't in the group, people in the outgroup. And what kind of research-- what do we know about that phenomena? Obviously, the Robbers Cave Experiment, The Rattlers and The Eagles is an example of that. Whether it was increased through some decisions made by the experimenters, who knows? But there's definitely a human urge to not just feel part of your group, but to look down on the other people not in your group.

[00:07:15.73] - Right. So the one thing that we know is that there's in terms of the basic group membership, there's work by Marilyn Brewer, a social psychologist, that's found essentially that you don't actually-- being a member of a group doesn't make you necessarily hate the other group. It just makes you love your group the most. And it isn't until there's conflict between your ingroup and your outgroup that you start to despise the people in the outgroup.

[00:07:48.83] But the most basic nature of group membership is just loving your group the most, thinking they're the best. One of the things that we know is that when you are a member of a group, you tend to view the world in a way that makes your group seem better. So one of the examples from the Robbers Cave Experiment was that the boys were asked to pick up beans from the ground, and then they were counting the number of beans that each boy had collected. And the experimenters were actually putting the same exact handful of beans on the projector for the boys to count them every single time, but every single boy estimated that there were more beans when it was one of their ingroup members than when it was one of their outgroup members.

[00:08:37.59] We also know that partisans, for instance, think the economy is a lot better when their party is in power. And that literally can reverse overnight after election day, or after inauguration. And so there are just ways in which we see the world in a biased way that makes our group seem to be not just the best, but also the most beloved and the most powerful.

[00:09:03.27] - And I want to mention an essay I forgot to mention in my monologue episode which is by Scott Alexander at the blog Slate Star Codex. He wrote an essay that basically-- I'm close to the right title-- "I can tolerate everyone except the outgroup." So that the modern reverence that we have for tolerance breaks down when it's really somebody we're not supposed to like. And I think that's a huge challenge that all of us have.

[00:09:29.27] What do we know about what's happened to partisanship in recent decades? There's a debate in political science. [INAUDIBLE], my colleague here at the Hoover Institution, has been a guest. Talked about it, I'm pretty sure, in that episode I did with him a while back. I'm

going to link to that as well. But he's a skeptic. He doesn't think that things have gotten particularly more partisan.

[00:09:52.08] And yet, there's a lot of evidence, also, that perhaps it has. So talk about that dispute and why you believe it's gotten stronger-- partisanship has. Or the evidence that it has, then we'll talk about why that phenomenon is happening.

[00:10:05.11] - Right. So his work is actually one of the major reasons that I started this project, because he and another political scientist, Alan Abramowitz, were having this back and forth in multiple articles debating whether or not polarization was increasing in American politics, with [INAUDIBLE] saying that it was not, and Abramowitz saying that it was.

[00:10:29.03] And in reading this debate, what I started to think is, they're both talking about polarization and defining it as Americans are disagreeing with each other more about policy. And that is the traditional definition of polarization-- that Democrats and Republicans are becoming more liberal and more conservative, more extreme in their issue positions. So essentially, our attitudes are distributed across the spectrum from left to right in a bimodal distribution.

[00:11:04.55] But it wasn't matching what I was seeing in politics, because I was seeing a lot of anger and incivility, and people seem to be really riled up at each other, but not really connected perfectly to policy positions. And so I started looking into this and thinking, well, what if we think about partisanship as just any other group identity? And if we do that, then there's a wealth of literature and research on intergroup conflict, mostly looking at intergroup racial conflict.

[00:11:44.74] And if we can apply that research to the parties, then maybe we can understand what could motivate them to hate partisans, to hate each other, without necessarily disagreeing on policy positions, because most intergroup conflict is not rooted in policy debates. Most intergroup conflict is rooted in deep identities that people hold, and this sense of us versus them.

[00:12:08.33] So that was the beginning of this project, really, was trying to think about Democrats and Republicans not as simply purveyors of policies, but instead as really strong groups that people can identify with so powerfully that they might be willing to even change their policy positions in order to just have that group win.

[00:12:30.43] - I want to-- let's turn to that, but I just want to say, as a footnote, that an example would be there'd be an issue in the public debate, in the public sphere, that used to be a source of contention-- could be gay marriage. Could be, say, legalizing marijuana. That used to be extremely contentious, now people seem to be closer together.

[00:12:50.18] So there seems to be less polarization on many issues. And yet, as you point out, on the feeling of us versus them, that seems to be getting stronger. So what evidence do we have that that is stronger-- the us versus them, or my party identification separate from my policy positions or my ideology?

[00:13:13.03] - Right, so we have-- just in general, there are increasing numbers of people that are calling themselves strong partisans. On the scale that goes from independent to weak partisan to strong partisan, people are moving towards the strong partisan ends of the spectrum. Partisans are increasingly not wanting their party to compromise with the other side.

[00:13:34.62] They tend to rate the out-party as much more extreme than they used to, and tend to rate their own party as not at all extreme. Partisans are happier with their neighborhood if they are told that ingroup partisans live there, and they are less satisfied with their neighborhood if they're told that outgroup partisans live there. So we have a lot of information about partisans just feeling this sense of disdain and discomfort with the other side.

[00:14:14.09] - What's weird about that is that-- you know, my field-- I'm not a political scientist, but many of my friends are. I just want to say that right up front. So I talk to political scientists and read political science literature a little bit, and it was my impression, until fairly recently, that party identification was getting weaker in the 0-1 sense-- that more people were identifying as independent. So is the claim here that that trend is reversed, or is the claim here that the people who still identify as Republicans or Democrats are more intensely identifying as party members, as partisans?

[00:14:51.60] - Yeah, it's more the latter. You're right-- there are increasing numbers of people identifying as independent as well. And so basically, it's the people who call themselves weak partisans that there are fewer of. But it's important to note that the vast majority of people who call themselves independents vote as if they are partisans, very reliably.

[00:15:14.86] And there's a really great book called Independent Politics by Klar and Krupnikov that actually looks at why people are identifying as independent. And most of them, they say-- or a lot of them-- are just embarrassed partisans. They don't like what's happening. They don't like how nasty everything is, and so they just call themselves independents, even though they still reliably vote with one party.

[00:15:37.25] - So why has this intensity come along? A lot of people, I think, casually identify, I'd say, with the rise of the Trump presidency. I view the Trump presidency as a symptom, more than a cause. It's just an example-- it's just a dramatic example for how both sides can hate each other more intensely than they did before.

[00:15:57.57] And of course, I think I'm older than you-- pretty confident about that. This goes back for me, in my lifetime. I'm born in 1954, so I remember the 1960 election. I was in grade school. I was six-years-old. I remember we drew pictures of elephants and donkeys. That was politics in 1960 and in rural Washington state.

[00:16:30.11] But shortly after that-- I'd say '72, I'm 18 years old-- I remember how vicious politics was when Nixon was president, when Reagan was president, when Clinton was president, when Obama was President, and now when Trump is president. Both sides angry, disdainful, dismissive.

[00:16:51.76] And more than just my side's right and your side's wrong. It's my side's right and you're dangerous. It does feel like it's gotten stronger in the last 5 to 10 years, but it's not new. So what is new about it, in your view, and what do you think explains if there is something new about it?

[00:17:12.69] - Yeah, so this is a great point. I actually started this project in 2009. So it's definitely not about Trump. I had actually no inclination that Trump was coming.

[00:17:25.77] - Shame on you. You call yourself a political scientist.

[00:17:28.56] [LAUGHTER]

[00:17:28.69] - I should have known.

[00:17:31.18] - So yeah, so this clearly is a phenomenon that predates Trump. And I think that what you're pointing to is a really interesting historical view of what's been happening. And I want to predicate all of this on the idea that there should be party conflict. We don't want the parties to be exactly the same, and obviously partisans are going to want their team to win no matter what.

[00:18:01.91] And so it would be weird if we didn't have parties rooting for their own side and hating the other side to some degree, especially because elections are really just gigantic kind of games, right?

[00:18:16.02] - It's like the Super Bowl.

[00:18:17.01] [INTERPOSING VOICES]

[00:18:17.82] - Right.

[00:18:18.81] - I used to have a good friend in St. Louis when I was there who we got together for Super Bowl parties and election night parties and celebrated-- to the extent it was possible. Sometimes our team wasn't in the Super Bowl, and our team wasn't really in the election-- because for me, I'm never happy, generally, with either side. But it's still fun. You still root, and you get excited, and you might prefer one to the other. It's exciting.

[00:18:43.01] - And we watch it on TV. You know--

[00:18:45.21] - Commentary.

[00:18:46.53] - "The election results have come in" little music theme that each channel has.

[00:18:51.06] - [VOCALIZING MUSIC THEMES]

[00:18:52.68] - Yeah, it's fun. It's very exciting. So it's hard not to root for one side. The thing that has changed-- and this is really what the entire book is about-- is that we've always had a lot

of conflict in American politics, and we've always had a lot of conflict in American society. And just thinking about the 1960s, clearly there was a lot of social unrest that I think exceeds what we're looking at right now.

[00:19:21.66] - Absolutely.

[00:19:23.01] - The difference is that from the 1960s through, I would say, the 1990s, we essentially went through a period where our party identities became more closely associated with other social identities to the extent that in the 1960s, the social unrest wasn't entirely-- you couldn't say that the two sides that were fighting were all Democrats versus Republicans.

[00:19:51.03] There was a mixture of partisans on both sides. And so what we're seeing now is that the sides that are fighting are associated almost completely with either Democrats or Republicans. So the way that I explain it is it's essentially to say the Civil Rights Act-- the Civil Rights movement-- as that became a Democratic Party platform issue, the southern Conservative Democrats were very unhappy about that. But partisanship is very strong, so it takes a really long time to change your party. It's like converting to another religion.

[00:20:25.98] And so over a generation, they gradually became Republicans. And that process-- from the 1960s until the late '90s, there were still some people on both sides who were sympathetic to the desires of the other team. And I think that process really culminated in maybe the Clinton years, or possibly even later. But during that period, there were still some people who could say, no, I understand what the other side is thinking. They're not completely evil. Of course there are some people who did think the other side was evil, but there was some mixture within each party. And that is what I think has been disappearing.

[00:21:16.99] - Now that I think about it, the famous example from the '70s and '80s was Scoop Jackson was a Conservative Democrat. Nelson Rockefeller was a Liberal Republican. Now that I think about it, there are two semi-Liberal Republicans in the Senate-- [INAUDIBLE] and-- who am I thinking of from--

[00:21:42.79] - Murkowski.

[00:21:43.27] - Murkowski from Alaska. I can't think of a Conservative Democrat. There might be one. It just doesn't come to mind. But the point you're making-- which is obviously true-- is that so many votes, now, are party line votes. And you could say, well, that's just because in the Senate. You could say, well, that's just because they make sure that they get everybody roped in. They make compromises.

[00:22:03.55] And of course, that's part of it. But a lot of it is what you write your books about-- is nobody wants to be seen voting with the bad guys. And that's just seems, to me, to be an unhealthy thing-- at least it strikes me as an unhealthy thing. And your point about the '60s-- I always, lately, make the point that this is getting close to the '60s, which was a very tumultuous time.

[00:22:23.80] The difference is that we're in the middle of a war where thousands of people were dying every year-- thousands of Americans-- that caused a lot of unrest. We had a draft, so people didn't want to be drafted into it. And then here we are, we are still somewhat at war, but most Americans aren't at risk of going to that war. Unemployment's 3.9% in the latest report.

[00:22:46.37] What would this be like if things weren't going well? I mean, it's very-- we'll talk later about whether this is just unpleasant or actually frightening. I'm heading toward frightening, but the point that you make in the book-- and I want to-- let's hone in on this, because you just mentioned it, but I want to now focus on it-- is the social aspect of our tribalism and our identity.

[00:23:11.35] So it's not just that my side in politics is right. It's my side's also-- all my other identities, all my other tribes, are also in the same party as I am. Let's talk about that and how that-- because I think that's really the deepest insight of the book, because that's plausibly something that has changed that would explain some of the vehemence with which people look at each other.

[00:23:40.12] - Yeah. And if you look at-- you have, you know, --the American--

[00:23:43.61] [INTERPOSING VOICES]

[00:23:44.54] - Right. The American National Election Studies is an election-based survey-- election year survey-- that has been done every election year since 1948. And so you can look at trends over time in this and actually find that this is happening, this has been happening. The parties are much more divided on race and on religiosity and on calling themselves Liberals and Conservatives-- which is a different issue, but we can talk about that later.

[00:24:17.06] And so one of the results of this is-- and this is what I call social sorting-- is that we're moving into the parties that are more socially like us. So the Republican Party is increasingly the party of white, Christian, increasingly rural, more men. And the Democratic Party is sort of everyone else.

[00:24:43.13] And we're getting very clear cues on which side we're supposed to be in, and so we're really moving completely into these two camps. And what that does is-- and there's social psychological research that demonstrates that-- when you have two identities that are well-aligned-- and by well-aligned, that means that most of the people in group a are also in group b.

[00:25:05.48] So the example that I use is, like, Irish Catholic. People who are Irish Catholic-- they know a lot of Irish people, and they know a lot of Catholic people. And maybe not as many non-Irish, non-Catholic people. And the more aligned your two identities are, actually the more intolerant people have been found to be of outsiders.

[00:25:26.48] And when you have two identities that are not well-aligned-- so if you're, like, Irish and Jewish-- then you're going to know a whole bunch of non-Irish people and a whole bunch of non-Jewish people. And so you tend to be more tolerant of outsiders, because you have this practice, every day, of going through your life knowing that these two parts of your identity are not well-matched in society.

[00:25:47.84] And that finding alone can explain a lot of the effect of this social sorting on our partisanship. Because our parties are now much more socially distinct, we don't have what we used to call cross-cutting identities where your next-door neighbor is maybe in a different party, but you guys go to church together, and so you have this cross-cutting identity that allows you to think of each other as normal human beings with good intentions.

[00:26:19.63] - Or you go hunting together, which would be imaginable for a large swath of Americans right now.

[00:26:26.10] - Yeah, yeah. Well, and increasingly, the parties are-- Republicans are are Christian, and Democrats are everything but. But increasingly, Democrats are the party of secularism.

[00:26:39.08] - Yes.

[00:26:39.29] - That's the main religious divide-- is religious or non-religious.

[00:26:41.83] - Yep.

[00:26:43.91] - So the outcome of all of these sorted identities is essentially to make the other side seem more unlike you, and more difficult to humanize. Because you don't come in contact with them, you don't think about them as part of your group. You don't think about needing to respect them or them having families and good intentions. That's the dangerous outcome of this-- is that it's a lot easier to dehumanize the other side when you have these really well-sorted social identities.

[00:27:24.32] - And so that's plausible to me. I don't know it's true, but it definitely seems plausible. It's related to a phenomenon that was only become aware of in the last couple of years, which is intersectionality-- this idea that if you're with me on this issue-- whatever it is-- you've got to be with me on every issue, or you're not on the right team.

[00:27:48.41] And I don't know whether that's a relatively new phenomenon, but it's consistent with what you're talking about-- that you and I, say, are consistent across the board in everything, and I think it certainly is plausible that that means we're going to have a tighter bond in feeling this group identity.

[00:28:09.95] And the people who aren't-- someone who's different from me on not just one thing-- a different political party-- but on different church, or doesn't go to church, or hunts or doesn't hunt, or likes sports or doesn't, or eats meat or doesn't-- it's a weird moment to me in human history where, again, we have this tolerance religion, to some extent. We're supposed to be tolerant of other people. And yet it gets harder and harder, because we've got all these boxes you have to check if you want to be on the right team.

[00:28:46.80] - Yeah, right. The other thing-- I mean, I would also say that the other effect of this is that because so many identities are now aligned with the party-- it used to be that when you watch election night coverage-- which is lots of fun-- if your party loses, then your party's one

part of your identity, but you still have all the other parts of your identity that are not losers in that moment.

[00:29:13.64] - It's like when the Red Sox would lose in the playoffs, I'd say, here comes football season. That would be a comfort to me. But yeah, it's--

[00:29:21.76] [LAUGHTER]

[00:29:22.22] - Sorry, go ahead.

[00:29:23.55] - Right, and it's the same sense-- that you're going to be OK, right? You, as an individual, are going to be OK, because you have all these other things that define you and that are part of your identity. But if your racial identity and your religious identity and your cultural identity and your geographical identity are all wrapped up with your party, then if the party loses, it hurts a lot more psychologically. And if your party wins, then every part of you has won.

[00:29:51.06] And so one of the effects of this increased social sorting is that when elections occur, they're not just elections. They're not just competitions between the two parties. They become competitions between racial groups and religious groups, and that kind of thing is extremely dangerous.

[00:30:10.90] - Yeah, it's-- it's hard to put my finger on it. It does feel like-- it just, to me, sort of ramps up the intensity of the feeling. I'm not sure-- in theory, if I lose this election, I still have my religious identity. I still have my cultural identity.

[00:30:31.15] But we're all in the same boat, all of us who've lost this whatever it is-- this election, or whatever is the other-- could be other issues as well, of course. It could be a Supreme Court decision on some social issue that I share with a bunch of people. And I think the human urge-- Adam Smith says it in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

[00:31:01.32] I think it's deeply true. He says, we want the people around us to like what we like-- which is what we're talking about here to some extent, this idea of social sorting and a lack of cross-cutting identity. But then he says what we really care about, though, is that people, our friends, hate what we hate.

[00:31:23.68] So if I see a movie I like, I hope you'll like it, and if you don't I'm going to be disappointed. Why didn't you like it? But if there's a movie that I despised and you think it's wonderful, that's really hard for us to process. And I think that is the reason. This isn't, perhaps, why it's so dangerous, why it leads to this amplification.

[00:31:44.77] - Right. And if you think about just in terms of evolutionary psychology, which one is more important for you to pay attention to-- the thing that you really hate, or the thing that you really love? The thing you really love is probably going to be there tomorrow, and you can go after it again. The thing that you really hate is right in front of you, and you better deal with it immediately, because it's probably dangerous to you.

[00:32:05.02] So we're naturally inclined, as humans, to pay attention to the things that we dislike, because evolutionarily they're more dangerous. They're more important. They're immediate. And so that idea of hating the people who are on the other side-- not only does it make our polarization worse, but it also makes us pay more attention to politics-- and then hate each other more, and then pay more attention to politics. So it is sort of this vicious cycle.

[00:32:38.71] - Yeah. And I think the other part-- I talked about this in my piece on this. It's not always easy to admit, but we get pleasure from it. We get pleasure from disliking our opponents. We get pleasure-- the standard way people, I think, think about it is we look down on them, and it makes you feel better. It makes you feel better to lower someone because you feel higher.

[00:33:02.32] But it's worse than that, I think. I think there's a certain visceral-- I think it's clearly hardwired in us to exalt in-- it's schadenfreude-- writ large to exalt in the misery of our enemies. And political discourse on both left and right, Republicans and Democrats, is-- we have Trump talking about losers and we have Hillary talking about baskets of deplorables. It's just not a healthy situation.

[00:33:32.16] - No. And in fact, there's a study that demonstrated that you can actually see, in people's brain activity-- you put people in an fMRI machine and show them a member of their ingroup winning something, and the-- or, sorry, one member of their ingroup losing, and they have these sad, upset areas of their brain light up. And then you show them a member of their outgroup losing, and the pleasure parts of their brain light up. So it's really happening.

[00:33:59.74] - Yeah, yep. So what's to be done about this? Or, let me ask-- let me just make one more point, which is the role of the media, which I don't think you talked about in the book. What I argued in my piece is that the media's allowed us to customize our information flow, and thereby reinforce this, again, to a large degree.

[00:34:25.97] I don't have to watch the news channels or the commentators who are even-handed or who might disagree with me. I'm just going to continually confirm my bias by my Twitter feed and my Facebook feed and the social media I consume and cable stations I watch. Do you think that plays a role?

[00:34:47.73] - Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. But it works in concert with a couple of things that we're already doing. So the first thing that I would say is the-- one thing I haven't talked about yet that's an important part of the book is this minimal group paradigm experiment, which essentially-- very briefly, people were told that they were a member of a group that they had never heard of before.

[00:35:10.85] They're either overestimators or underestimators. And then they're asked to allocate money to people that they've never met, they're never going to meet. And they get the choice between, let's say, allocating \$5 to everybody in the whole experiment, or allocating \$4 to their own group and \$3 to the outgroup members.

[00:35:30.20] And the experimenter, when he was running this study, actually expected there to be no bias in this situation, because the groups were so meaningless. And in fact, what he found

was that people were concerned about their group winning, and willing to sacrifice money in order to get the win condition. So they were not choosing the greater good condition where everyone gets the most. They were choosing the condition where everyone gets less, but the outgroup gets even less.

[00:35:59.03] So there is a natural inclination for us to want our groups to win. And so one of the things that the media does is it tends to portray legislation, even, as Democrats or Republicans winning. And when every single thing the government does becomes a win for one side or the other, then government-- there will be no compromise.

[00:36:26.90] There's no reason for anyone to compromise, because if they lose, then the whole party has the sense of loss. Even if they did good legislation, even if they came up with a great compromise and a really good policy that solved a problem, that doesn't matter, because it's being portrayed as a loss for one side, and so that side's never going to agree to that policy.

[00:36:50.72] And we essentially are gamifying the important work the government does. And the media does this. Not only do they cover everything as a horse race, but they also cover health care as a win for one side or the other, which is damaging.

[00:37:06.21] - Yeah, no. You give the example of a government shutdown versus votes on Obamacare, and I feel like that's what also is happening right now with immigration. Neither side wants to give the other side a win, so they can't compromise and solve the problem. And now we have this issue with tariffs.

[00:37:25.91] We are ratcheting up a trade war with China, and you'd like to think, well, wiser heads will prevail. They'll compromise on some issue of intellectual property, or some issue of investment flows-- or whatever it turns out to be. But I'm not convinced that's going to happen.

[00:37:47.78] It's hard for me to imagine a little bit more about American politics than Chinese politics. They're both just a small amount in each case. But it's hard to imagine that Trump would, quote, "take a loss" on this. And I doubt the Chinese will either. I don't think they're eager to tell their people oh, yeah, the Americans pushed us around.

[00:38:08.43] So I just-- so many issues today seem beyond compromise, and it's a winner-take-all where your guys get into power, and then you get to do what you want. And one of the deepest, most depressing things for me as a small government-type person-- classical Liberal-- is the idea that executive power keeps growing.

[00:38:32.66] I like to fantasize that that would encourage people to think that maybe we should limit executive power, because the guy who's in right now isn't my guy. Instead people say, oh, it's OK, because when my guy gets in, it'll be better. And I'll get mine, or we'll get ours-- or whatever it is.

[00:38:52.01] - We'll get everything.

[00:38:52.79] - Yeah. We'll be in charge. And that just seems like-- it's interesting, because that's-- a parliamentary system's a little more like that. Not totally, but a little more like that. America's always been less like that, and we're heading to being more like that, where if you can control things, that's where you get stuff done. And nothing gets done when there's gridlock-- when there's literally gridlock because the parties have mixed control of the different decisions, because they don't compromise.

[00:39:19.86] - Right, and the important thing this is the agreement part of the Uncivil Agreement title-- is that this is true on issues where the vast majority of the American public agrees. So it's just that you can't get legislation done, because it seems like a win or a loss. So one of the examples I give in the book is that after Sandy Hook, 90% of Americans agreed that we should have background checks for gun purchases, and like 86% of Republicans agreed to that.

[00:39:48.41] But then asked whether or not they wanted the Senate to pass a background checks bill, only 57% of Republicans agreed that there should be legislation passed to enact the thing that 87% of them thought was good. And that means that there is a disconnect between what the people actually want government to do and what they're willing to allow government to do in order to protect their sense of victory. And this is them sacrificing that dollar to get the victory over something that almost the entire country agrees would be beneficial.

[00:40:27.57] - We talk about the fact that-- and I have this romance, myself, to some extent-- though I think listeners would maybe think it's not the case. But there is this view that political outcomes are the aggregation of preferences of citizens. We spend a lot of time on this program talking about how there's a lot of slippage in that connection, and also the fact that we don't have a will of the people.

[00:40:51.16] There's often a great deal of disagreement. But your point is is that the correlation between policy preferences of citizens and political outcomes is being reduced because of this partisan intensity.

[00:41:08.86] - Right. When you have a zero sum type of competition between the parties, there's no place in the middle for compromise to occur. And compromise is the only way that legislation gets done and democracy functions. There's no other way for democracy to work if there is no compromise.

[00:41:25.15] - I think this is a quote. You say, "Democrats and Republicans are in a battle over health care, over abortion, over tax policy. The political fights in American politics are supposed to be about something. An abundance of evidence, however, contradicts this view." Which is crazy. What's the alternative, and how does this reality start to change what politicians-- how they behave and how they campaign?

[00:41:53.08] - Yeah, so this is a really dangerous part of it, is because once the need for victory surpasses the actual policy preferences of people, or even your party's position can actually change your policy position at this point. There's evidence that if your party switches position, then the majority of people will also switch their position on something.

[00:42:15.66] - Well, the Trump and trade example's just a perfect example that so many Republicans were, quote, "free traders" I'm a big free trader, so I kind of like the fact-- again, it's naive to think this, but I like imagining the possibility that because Trump is so protectionist, this will cause many people who used to be protectionist to become free traders.

[00:42:37.03] But certainly, many Republicans who were free traders have started to think, well, actually, it turns out-- and it's effortless. It's effortless. It's not like there's this long process by which they come to a different view. It's overnight.

[00:42:51.38] - Yeah. Yeah, and there's not a lot of reflection about, what happened when we changed our position? What were the reasons that we-- it's as if reality shifts and no one talks about it. So that--

[00:43:03.64] - I interrupted. Go ahead, sorry.

[00:43:05.10] - No, no, it's-- so the problem with this, though, is that if your party can change your policy positions, then your party can do almost anything without being held accountable for it. So if we really did care, if we really held these trade policies genuinely, then Trump would be held accountable for shifting the trade policies of the Republican Party. But that's not happening.

[00:43:32.60] So essentially, our elected officials can do really bad things and still be just as popular as they were before they did bad things, because we're so focused on winning-- partisan victory-- that we'll allow our elected officials to do almost anything. It's like that picture of those two guys that's going all around Twitter last couple days saying, I'd rather be a Russian than a Democrat.

[00:44:03.24] - Yeah, yeah. Was that-- yeah, that's what it was. Right, yeah.

[00:44:06.62] - But I mean, it's like, literally anything.

[00:44:08.59] - What the heck?

[00:44:08.81] - Yeah.

[00:44:09.19] [LAUGHTER]

[00:44:12.59] - Yeah--

[00:44:13.05] - That is perfect.

[00:44:13.71] - You'd prefer to be in another country.

[00:44:15.31] - Yeah. That used to be called treasonous, or un-American. Let's just leave it at that. I mean, it's a perfect description. It used to be considered un-American. Now it's not. It's bizarre.

[00:44:27.51] - Well, and this is actually something-- tying this back to the very beginning of the Republic when George Washington, in his farewell address, warned about this. He specifically warned about really intense partisanship. He said, if-- I can't remember the exact quote, but basically what he said was if partisanship becomes too intense, then outside, the foreign influences can start to take advantage of our divides and influence our government via party passions. So Washington--

[00:44:59.76] [INTERPOSING VOICES]

[00:45:00.09] - --something.

[00:45:01.64] - --figured this out, and he was worried about it. And of course, partisanship immediately started the very next election. But it's not an unfamiliar idea that extreme partisanship is dangerous. But we seem to just not care about it, because we're all so focused on our partisanship.

[00:45:22.02] - Yeah, well, the point about the media allowing-- in the current landscape of the internet, social media to allow us to tailor our own information flows to confirm our biases and make us feel good about ourselves and not so good about others-- that's a world where I'm talking about the honest media, meaning just the natural choices that people can make now are different for what they watch, or just three TV networks to watch the news which were all pretty much the same.

[00:45:51.05] But of course, that doesn't take account of the potential for manipulation, either by partisan activists or foreigners, to influence our election. And I'm deeply worried about this. I don't have an easy solution. Are you worried about that?

[00:46:10.13] And by that, I mean the ability to inflame partisan intensity literally with fake news or lies. Just showing stuff that didn't happen, because people understand, through the data that they have on people's search habits and other things, to manipulate them in ways that people don't realize?

[00:46:38.25] - Yeah. Yeah, I mean, it's-- one of the things to remember about the Russian ad buys is that they were buying ads not just on behalf of Donald Trump-- like pro-Trump ads-- but they were also buying pro-Bernie ads and pro-Black Lives Matter ads in order to further inflame the Democratic Party-- so to divide the Democratic Party from itself-- and make both Democrats and Republicans focus on these racial differences that were there between the parties that are these very deep divides that we've always had in American politics.

[00:47:18.69] But making sure that we remembered that that was what we were voting about. And yeah, it's particularly because we will listen to almost anything our party says-- yeah, we're very vulnerable to any kind of influence, including our party's influence. And also-- this is the other distressing thing-- is that one thing that we know about the way that people process information is that not only do we look for information that we agree with and we try to avoid information that we disagree with, but also, if we see information that we don't like, we tend to counter-argue it in our heads.

[00:47:59.62] And the more political information we have, the better we are at it. So the people who are paying the most attention to politics are actually the ones that are best able to counter-argue any argument that they don't want to hear. And it's not necessarily that they have good information. They just have a lot of information.

[00:48:20.16] - That's fascinating.

[00:48:21.93] - So it's not like educating people or giving them tons of corrective information is going to solve anything, because the people who know the most, and therefore are the most active, usually are also the most biased in their processing of information.

[00:48:39.49] - I love that. So they're-- this is true in economics too, of course, and in social sciences generally-- the so-called experts, people like you and I, who have PhDs-- what we're really good at is telling a story and cherry-picking the data-- one of the things we're good at is cherry-picking data to show that we're still right.

[00:49:01.12] We can find that study, because we know about a lot of studies. So we can find the studies that confirm our ideological or methodological biases, and it flips on its head the idea that people who are uninformed, you kind of hope they don't vote much. But maybe they're the ones that are less vulnerable to this. But I think we're all vulnerable to it, obviously.

[00:49:22.32] It is so easy to dismiss the other side's arguments. If we can't think of the arguments or the studies, we'll just dismiss them, because they're just wrong anyway. We know that.

[00:49:33.72] - Well, this is actually-- it's sort of a controversial argument, but one of the earliest books about political behavior-- it's just called Voting-- the authors actually said we actually need the disinterested and cross-pressured voters. They may not have a lot of information, but they will respond to large, large things.

[00:49:56.08] And so if something gigantic happens and the government needs to be held accountable for it, those are the people who are going to create accountability. We actually need the people who don't know much to be in the electorate, because they're the only place where we have any room to hold elected officials accountable.

[00:50:15.59] - So one of the ways you'd think we could do something about this is to have a third party that was based on civility, based on tolerance, more centrist. And of course, people are out there saying, yeah, well, that's my party. That already exists.

[00:50:33.09] And it's amazing to me how often people write me and say-- and I'm sure you get this, too-- well, this is only true of one party, or one type of views. But of course, it's both sides. Both sides are vulnerable to these psychological phenomena.

[00:50:51.44] So you think, well, let's have a party that's not-- we need a third party. And of course, as you say, the Democratic Party was greatly challenged by the 2016 election-- as was the Republican Party. Either party could split very, very dramatically. The Populist wing of the

Republican Party, which was basically silent until very recently, now seems to be totally in charge-- what I'd call the Nationalist, Populist, Protectionist side.

[00:51:22.52] So there's room among Republicans, in theory, for a more economically-free market party or socially Liberal party to come along and peel off some Republicans who are uncomfortable with the direction that Trump has taken the party. And similarly, a lot of Democrats want to go much further to the left than, say, Hillary Clinton-- who was the last candidate-- in their next election.

[00:51:50.27] And that may not be sustainable. That may lead to a-- I think that's what's going to happen, and that could easily lead to the re-election of Trump, which is going to cause a lot of hair to be pulled out. So you'd think this is a time when a third or fourth party with some serious potential to have an impact could start, and yet it's very hard, in a two-party system, to get a third party that's effective. Do you have any thoughts on that?

[00:52:18.27] - Yeah. So Lee Drutman at New America Foundation has been writing a lot of really interesting stuff on how what we actually need to do is change to a parliamentary system, because until we have proportional representation, we will never have a third party. This is Duverger's law-- is that if you have a "first past the post," majority wins electoral system, then you will always have two parties.

[00:52:46.07] Because if we have a proportional representation system, then if there's a party that won 15% of the vote, they could get 15% of the seats. That would be great. Then you can actually have a viable--

[00:52:57.47] - You'd have to compromise. You'd have to get stuff done. You'd have to take them into account.

[00:53:01.26] - Right, and there would be coalitions, and therefore, the different parties would be sometimes working together and sometimes not. So that reduces the zero sum aspect of what we currently have.

[00:53:15.50] - Of course, if you go to a system that's parliamentary-- like, my favorite's Israel-- they all will tell you the only problem with the Israeli political system is it's parliamentary. But the grass is always greener.

[00:53:26.75] - The grass is always greener. But I think a more-- I don't think America's going to move to a proportional representation system. That's probably a step too far. Who knows, though? But a more realistic possibility would be something like what happened to the Southern Democrats in the 1960s, which is that a wing of one of the parties, or a substantial group of one of the parties, starts voting with the other side in a somewhat reliable way.

[00:54:01.64] And that really changes the dynamic of the win-lose, zero sum part of it so that gradually, these Libertarian Republicans would vote with Democrats-- Centrist Democrats-- more and more. And maybe gradually, if the trampling of the Populists, and also somewhat white supremacist wing of the Republican Party is still there, that will turn away a lot of the more

Libertarian Republicans, and they might start voting with Democrats if it means they're voting against white supremacy, right? So that--

[00:54:45.53] - Yeah, the only pro-- Yeah, the only problem with that is that if Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, or someone-- Kamala Harris-- is the nominee, it's going to be really hard, I think, for those Republicans to hold their nose and vote for them, because it's-- and part of it, of course, is I just can't put on a Yankees hat. I'm sorry. It's just not happening. But it's really sunny out, and it's all I've got. I know. It's OK. I'll get sunstroke.

[00:55:14.78] - Let's do the sunburn.

[00:55:15.66] - Yeah. Yeah, well, so that's-- I think a really good example of this is the Alabama Senate race.

[00:55:22.72] - Oh, yeah.

[00:55:24.08] - Where it wasn't that a whole bunch of white Republicans voted for the Democrat-- although some did, but not a lot.

[00:55:31.91] - Yeah, some did.

[00:55:33.40] - But mostly, the most pro-Roy Moore districts in Alabama just had much lower turnout than normal. And so that is one way that this could go-- is that if there is such an extremism within the ascendant within the Republican Party, that might just turn off enough people that they're just going to stop voting. And if they don't vote, that swings the election.

[00:56:01.15] So that is what-- there should be some accountability maybe not in switching to voting for the other party, but in just not turning out. That would be the only way I can imagine accountability working.

[00:56:15.01] - Right. Well, unless the same thing can happen on the Democratic side. If they end up pushing way to the left, very few Democrats are going to vote for Trump, but they just won't vote. They just stay home.

[00:56:26.41] Well, we don't have a lot of time left-- which is good, because we're going to turn, now, to what we can do about this. And since it's a short list for me-- I have a few thoughts, but most of my listeners have heard mine. I have one to add.

[00:56:40.45] What are your thoughts? What can we do, as human beings, not necessarily as-- we're not giving consultant advice, now, to operatives within either party-- which is an interesting moral question, what you should do in that situation; how to manipulate people. But just as citizens, or as policy things that might change to make this better, what are you thinking?

[00:57:06.07] - So one thing is actually for the media to stop doing the horse race thing with legislation. I think that would be helpful.

[00:57:13.33] - Then they'll get fewer listeners and viewers--

[00:57:14.91] - Exactly.

[00:57:15.64] - --and that ain't going to happen.

[00:57:16.97] - It's boring. It's boring if you talk about the minutia of a bill. So that's unlikely. The thing we can do as individual people is, first of all, acknowledge that we are inclined to think this way. By understanding it, it's easier to counter-argue it in your own head, and to try not to do it so much.

[00:57:43.66] The other thing is to-- honestly, because politics is so fraught at this point, my recommendation's always just don't talk about-- go hang out with people who are not like you, but don't talk about politics with them. Do something else.

[00:57:59.50] Everybody go do some service together, or join a club with people who are in your outgroup party, and don't talk about politics. But find ways to connect with people that are--

[00:58:11.42] [INTERPOSING VOICES]

[00:58:12.34] - --as human beings.

[00:58:13.60] - Yeah. And then you can start thinking of them as people who have families, and when they come up with their-- when they're thinking about politics, they have thoughts in their head, and they're trying to work things through and they're trying to be good people-- sometimes. And so it's this idea of trying to reach out.

[00:58:33.07] The problem with this, though, is that the people who are the most likely to do that are also the people who are the least needing of it. So you have to be motivated to want to create less of a divide to do that, and the most divisive people don't want less of a divide. So it doesn't work, exactly. It doesn't work all that well, because the people who need it are not doing it.

[00:58:59.27] And in fact, I think maybe we should just enforce it somehow on a national level-- like, have some kind of national service. In the military, partisanship sort of disappears. So if there was some way to get Americans working together at some point to-- I'm not sure how, but working on some type of national service could bring people together in ways that are unlikely in their current lives. And yeah, other than that, it's just very hard to get people who don't want to do this, don't want to heal a divide, to heal it. You can't really force them to.

[00:59:42.46] - Yeah. I do think what we're doing right now-- to make people aware of it, I think, is a good thing. I think most people don't like the idea of being disdainful of others and switching their views to satisfy their party identity. I think most people, when confronted with that in the light of day, think, hey, I wouldn't do that. And if they're doing it, would go, yeah, maybe I shouldn't.

[01:00:04.24] So I think that helps something. I think we're doing something here. When you think about the media-- and I wasn't joking. Obviously, very much in the media's interest in a world that's extremely competitive and where there's been immense amount of disruption to desperately seek eyeballs and clicks, so I understand why they do what they do.

[01:00:23.60] But there are organizations like ProPublica that have been started by foundations that are not as driven by clicks and views, which I think has some potential. In my essay, and in my podcast on this episode, I suggested that people follow people on Twitter and Facebook who aren't like them. And yet, one of the problems there is that that actually can make it worse, because a lot of people aren't like me, who I follow on Twitter to increase my outrage, because they're so unfair. They're so wrong-- or whatever it is.

[01:00:57.95] So when I give that advice, now I add, and try to find the quieter, more thoughtful ones. There are some on the other side, no matter what-- side you are on. But the other advice that your book made me think of and I had just been actually writing about it a little-- was the idea of find some different groups to hang out in.

[01:01:15.60] Get outside your partisan group and-- my joke was if you're a Democrat, go to a NASCAR race. And if you're Republicans, do some yoga. And of course, there are Democrats who go to NASCAR races. There are Republicans that do yoga already. The problem there, again, is that if you pick the wrong group to try to humanize the other side, it could just make you madder to see that they're-- it just confirms your prejudices if you're not careful. So you need to find an activity that isn't likely to make it worse.

[01:01:49.78] - Well, and also, we don't want to recommend that, for instance, an African-American Democrat go by themselves to a NASCAR race. They're probably going to feel possibly threatened there.

[01:02:04.01] - No, no. I'm not sure about that. I mean, I think that's a prejudice. I don't know if that's true. It's hard for me to say. I've never been to a NASCAR race.

[01:02:11.85] - Me neither.

[01:02:13.73] - But that's a fascinating question, right? Of how far you should go out of your comfort zone. If you're not a churchgoer, to go to church. If you're not a hunter, to go hunting-- I think that would be extremely difficult.

[01:02:27.99] It's true I think you'd find out that they're nice, normal people-- many of them. Maybe some of them aren't, of course. But I think that is a way-- I think exposure in general's good, so I'm all for that. I think the question is, there might be some challenges people have with their biases in processing those experiences that might be challenging. That's all.

[01:02:51.74] So let's close with a really cheerful question. Do you think we're at risk of civil war? I started to wonder whether that's a possibility. If we did get, say, 10% unemployment in this world that we're in now-- or worse, a terrorist event of some kind equivalent to 9/11-- which,

I think the aftermath of 9/11, most people would say, was pretty good for America. We did come together for at least a couple of days, maybe even a few weeks.

[01:03:22.47] But this time, maybe that would be the response. Maybe it'd be something worse, and different. So what are your thoughts on that? Do you think we're at a uniquely dangerous time here, or is this just where we are, and we're over-exaggerating?

[01:03:37.84] - I go back and forth on this. Partly because I don't want there to be a civil war, so I'm trying to find ways to suggest that there won't be one. There's work on-- like, in comparative politics, looking at other countries where scholars are-- they make models predicting the probability that a nation will descend into civil war. And there are certain things that are really good predictors of that.

[01:04:03.74] Racial and ethnic political divisions is one of them, or religious political divisions. We have both of those. Adverse regime change-- which I think some people would say is what Trump was-- well, Democrats would say is that what Trump was for them. And economic struggles.

[01:04:23.87] So the last one is the one that we don't have yet. And I don't want to say if we have a recession, then we're going to descend into civil war, because I think a lot of that is also in countries where democratic institutions are not as strong as, presumably, our. One of my concerns in 2016, actually, was that if Clinton did win, then we would have a legitimacy problem, where because Trump was already starting this the election is rigged type of language.

[01:05:03.96] And so my one concern is that if we have a close election, the amount of faith that voters have in the electoral system right now is probably not that great. And so any question about the validity of an electoral outcome-- that could be the type of thing, I think, that causes a really dangerous clash between Democrats and Republicans, because it puts partisanship right up front. It seems like an unfair thing that happened, and people are going to get very, very angry if that type of thing happens. So for me, that's my biggest concern.

[01:05:45.47] - I think we're already there, to some extent. I hear constantly, on my Twitter feed, from people on the Left that Trump is illegitimate because he only won the electoral college. That is the way we elect a president. You might not like it, but that is the way you're elected in America. And of course, it's the way people campaign-- at least, they're supposed to if they're smart.

[01:06:09.98] So I feel like it's just so easy to spread rumors of voter dishonesty, corrupt voting-- which is a real problem on both sides of the political divide-- the partisan divide. And we're not going to have-- I don't think we're going to have a non-close election for a while.

[01:06:32.96] - Yeah, that's very unlikely.

[01:06:33.53] - It seems that way. It's hard to say. But I think that is a good point. I think the feeling that an unfair result happened-- which is what, I think, people would use to justify violence-- is really scary.

[01:06:49.77] - Yeah. And we're not there yet in the sense of there isn't violence, right? We're not in a violent place yet. The question is if-- the difference between the left and the right is that the left is generally not armed--

[01:07:02.94] - Yes, exactly.

[01:07:03.48] - --as well.

[01:07:05.17] - That'll change, don't worry. You're right.

[01:07:09.27] - It might. But so the left does marches. And that's why I was concerned about the Clinton victory, was that I was concerned about there are hundreds of identified armed militia groups in the US, and they tend not to be Democrats or Liberals.

[01:07:30.13] - That's true, but I'm seeing how that will change. And historically, there's violence on both sides, so it's not--

[01:07:42.47] - Right. If violence begins, then--

[01:07:44.10] - Yeah, but you're right. Right now, it's-- at least that's our-- it seems to be the case that Republicans are more likely to own guns than Democrats. That's definitely true. Let's close on a slightly cheery note. Do you have anything positive, anything encouraging that makes you feel somewhat comfortable, comforted going forward?

[01:08:06.00] - I don't usually have a lot of comforting research, but I did just finish a project looking at providing information to voters about candidates' character and whether or not that can-- a, whether you can correct misinformation that they might hold, and b, whether that changes their approval of the candidate. And we found a little bit of evidence that if you explain-- the assumption in the story was Trump was sort of a self-made billionaire.

[01:08:40.66] And all we did was say, were you aware that Fred Trump, Donald Trump's father, was a successful businessman? He lent him millions of dollars. And just asking them the question introduced that information into the respondents' minds. And then after reading that, they rated Donald Trump as less empathetic and less good at business, and their approval ratings of him declined. Not a lot, but a little-- like 12 points or something.

[01:09:14.14] Yeah, that can be a lot if you're in the middle. So that, to me, was like, oh, we actually-- you can provide information in some contexts that can change people's opinions and correct misinformation that they may be holding. So that's one, tiny little bit of optimistic evidence.

[01:09:36.66] - My guest today has been Lilliana Mason. Her book is *Uncivil Agreement*. Lilliana, thanks for being part of EconTalk.

[01:09:42.81] - Thanks so much for inviting me.

[01:09:43.83] [MUSIC PLAYING]

[01:09:50.80] - This is EconTalk talk, part of The Library of Economics and Liberty. For more EconTalk, go to econtalk.org, or you can also comment on today's podcast and find links and readings related to today's conversation. The Sound Engineer for EconTalk is Rich Goyette. I'm your host, Russ Roberts. Thanks for listening. Talk to you on Monday.