



Health Equity Learning Series

Dog Whistle Politics: Race, Politics and Economic Inequality

Dedicated to Achieving Health Equity for All Coloradans

NED CALONGE: I'm Ned Calonge, President and CEO of The Colorado Trust. I'm here to welcome you to the fourth and final Health Equity Learning Series presentation of our 2016-2017 season. And I'm really thrilled to be with our speaker, and with all of you here today.

At The Colorado Trust, we believe that all Coloradans should have fair and equal opportunities to live healthy, productive lives, regardless of race, ethnicity, income or where we live, or any other differences that impact opportunity. The Trust has actually had a long history of supporting organizations that advocate for policy change. We believe that policy change is essential to addressing social, economic and environmental determinants that affect health. I also believe policy advocacy has become more challenging, more necessary in our rapidly changing and polarized political climate.

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So our talk today by professor Ian Haney López is, I think, particularly timely. He's going to talk on race and racism, economic inequality, political messaging and how all of these issues impact public policy. These are deep-rooted issues in the United States throughout our history. They've impacted generations of Americans, and not really in much of a straightforward manner. They're complicated. They're provocative topics and span generations, as Professor Ian López will show us today. And yet, they're essential to understanding, if you're working to change policies that improve people's lives.

I have a few housekeeping notes before I introduce Professor Haney López. We're going to email you all an evaluation survey after today's presentation. Please keep an eye out for it and please respond. We read all the responses and they help us shape our program going forward. So as we anticipate the next round of Health Equity Learning Series programs, it really helps us shape what we do. The materials from today will be presented on our website, including our presenter's slide deck and the complete video from today's event. It does take the video... It takes our friends a couple weeks to get that finalized and posted, and it will also be available with Spanish subtitles. We try to get the written materials up on the website sooner. We've got to ask that you silence your cell phones – there's a great reminder – if you haven't done so already.

HEALTH EQUITY LEARNING SERIES

2016-17 GRANTEES

- Aurora Mental Health Center
- Bright Futures
- Central Colorado Area Health Education Center
- Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
- Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy and Research Organization
- Cultivando
- Eagle County Health and Human Services
- El Centro AMISTAD
- El Paso County Public Health
- Hispanic Affairs Project
- Northwest Colorado Health
- Poudre Valley Health System Foundation (Vida Sana)
- Pueblo Triple Aim Corporation
- Rural Communities Resource Center
- Southeast Mental Health Services
- The Civic Canopy
- The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Community Center of Colorado
- Tri-County Health Network
- Warm Cookies of the Revolution
- Western Colorado Area Health Education Center



Dedicated to Achieving Health Equity for All Coloradans

And I want to start with acknowledging all of our grantees for the 2016-2017 Health Equity Learning Series. These organizations will once again be hosting viewings of today's event in communities across our great state. The presentation viewings will be accompanied by professionally facilitated discussions. If you'd like to find a viewing event near you and engage in deeper discussions, please visit the Health Equity Learning Series page on our website for links to all of our grantees' websites and contact information. These events will be taking place around the state in a few weeks.

HEALTH EQUITY LEARNING SERIES



Ian Haney López

Earl Warren Professor
of Public Law

University of California,
Berkeley



Dedicated to Achieving Health Equity for All Coloradans

Now I'm pleased to introduce you to Ian Haney López, the Earl Warren Professor of Public Law at the University of California, Berkeley, where he teaches in the areas of race and constitutional law. One of the nation's leading thinkers on racism's evolution in the United States since the Civil Rights era, Professor Haney López's current research emphasizes the connection between racial divisions and growing wealth inequality in the United States. His most recent book, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*, looks at how politicians have exploited racial pandering to convince many voters to support policies that ultimately favor the very wealthiest, while hurting everyone else. Professor Haney López is also the author of the books *White by Law* and *Racism on Trial*, both of which explore the legal construction of race. A constitutional law scholar, he has written extensively on how once-promising legal responses to racism have been turned into restrictions on efforts to promote integration. He has also been a visiting professor at Yale, Harvard and New York universities. He currently serves as a senior fellow at the public policy think tank Demos. And I hope you will help me in welcoming Professor Ian Haney López to the stage.

DOG WHISTLE POLITICS

RACE, POLITICS, AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Ian Haney López
Earl Warren Professor of Public Law
UC Berkeley

IAN HANEY LÓPEZ: Well thank you for that warm welcome, that warm introduction, and thank you all for being here on a spectacular afternoon, or midday. So Congress right now is supposed to be beginning its voting on whether to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and to replace it. We don't have a Congressional Budget Office evaluation of this current iteration of the repeal effort. The last one we knew would increase costs, while denying health insurance to millions over the next decade. This is a talk about race, and yet it's also a talk about what's happening in Congress right now.

DOG WHISTLE POLITICS

RACE, POLITICS, AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Ian Haney López
Earl Warren Professor of Public Law
UC Berkeley

I think virtually every conversation about race in the United States is a conversation about how racism hurts communities of color. And it does. But I actually want to push for a paradigm shift. I want us to begin to think about how racism hurts everybody. Or to be more pointed, how racism hurts whites, too. So I'm going to talk about dog whistle politics. Now, what is it? You think about terms like 'illegal alien,' 'thug,' 'welfare queen,' 'inner-city,' 'the poor'... Or you think about terms like 'middle-class,' 'rural,' 'the heartland,' 'real Americans,' 'the silent majority'... These are dog whistles. Okay, so a literal dog whistle is a whistle used to train dogs. It blows at such a high frequency that human ears can't hear it, but dogs can. And as a metaphor, it's pointing to a form of political speech which operates on two levels: silent on one level, but designed to produce sharp reactions on another.

DOG WHISTLE POLITICS

RACE, POLITICS, AND ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

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And so if you think about all the terms I ran through from ‘illegal alien’ to ‘silent majority,’ there’s no surface reference to race. And yet these terms are designed to provoke sharp racial reactions. So most people when they understand the term ‘dog whistle politics’ understand it as a way to use coded language to win votes from racially anxious whites. And it is that. But I want us to also see that there is an equally or perhaps a more important aspect of dog whistle politics. Dog whistling is not only about racial anxiety, it’s about changing people’s perspective about government. And it’s precisely because dog whistling changes people’s perspective about government that dog whistling helps explain the fight over health care, and more generally, it helps explain why we have levels of wealth inequality in our society that we haven’t seen in 100 years.

So this is really a story – yes, it’s a story about race. Yes, it’s a story about how dog whistling does tremendous damage to communities of color. You think about mass incarceration, mass deportation, disinvestment from our cities and our schools... All of that concentrated harm to communities of color – that’s rooted in dog whistle politics. But it’s also a story about how we’ve changed the views of many whites towards government, so that they are hostile to the idea that government should actually help people, and support politicians whose main allegiance is shifting control of government over to corporations and the very rich. That’s the uplifting story I’m going to tell.

DOG WHISTLE POLITICS

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To really grasp this story, we have to go back to 1964. And 1964 is both the pinnacle and the beginning of the end of our society's support for activist government. And so what I want to do... I want to play a campaign commercial from 1964. This is Lyndon Johnson. Watch what he has to say.



[Start of video clip]

JOHNSON: Poverty is not a trait of character. It is created anew in each generation, but not by heredity – by circumstances. Today, millions of American families are caught in circumstances beyond their control. Their children will be compelled to live lives of poverty, unless the cycle is broken. President Johnson's war on poverty has this one goal: to provide everyone a chance to grow and make his own way. A chance at education. A chance at training. A chance at the fruitful life. For the first time in the history of America, this can be done. Vote for President Johnson on November 3rd. The stakes are too high for you to stay home.

[End of video clip]

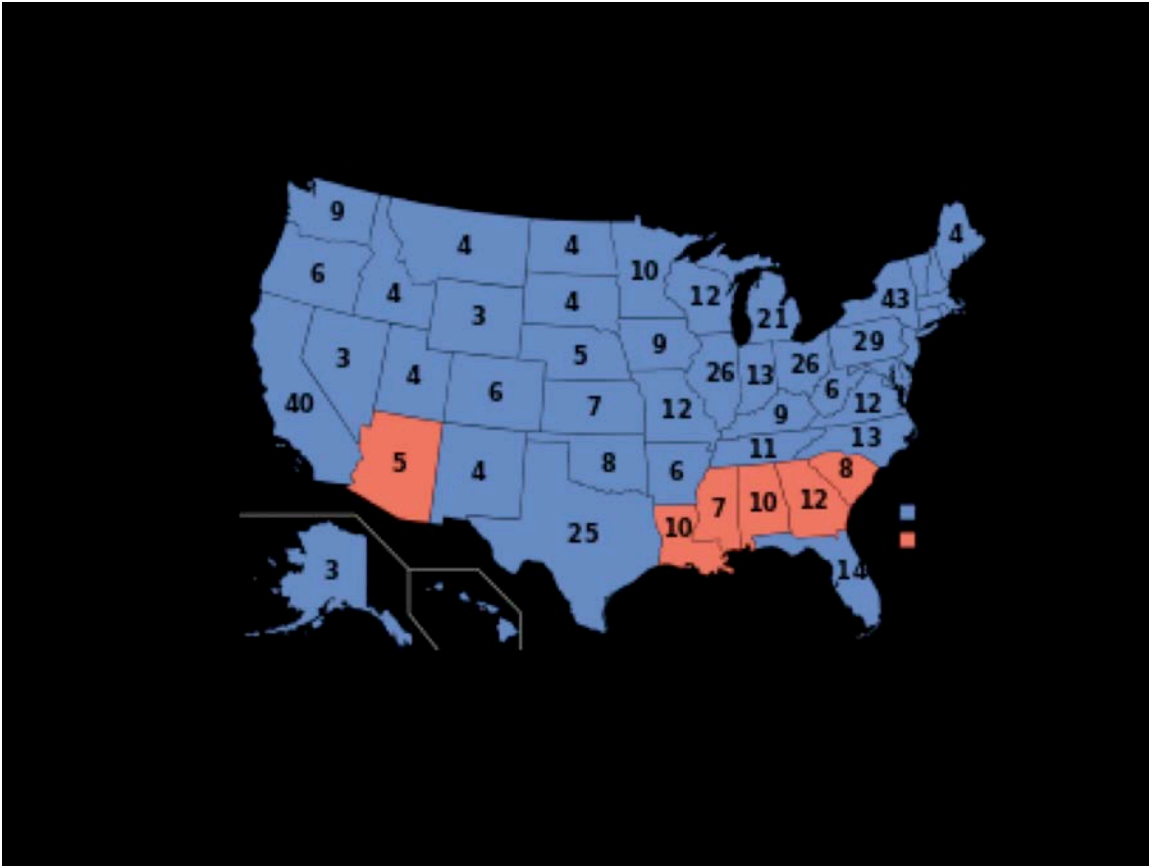
HANEY LÓPEZ: So, I don't know about you, but when I first saw this and then when I saw this for the 10th time, I mean every time I see this, I'm blown away by a couple of things. One, I'm blown away by the audacity of what President Johnson was proposing. He's campaigning for president and he's saying, 'We have to end poverty.' That poverty – it's not a function of character, it's not just people don't work hard, it's not a function of heredity, it's not like some people are born destined to be poor – it's a function of circumstance. And if it's a function of circumstance, in this the wealthiest country in the world, we have the moral obligation to fix it. And we have the ability and the will to do so. We can end poverty. And he wasn't just saying, 'End poverty sometime in the distant future.' He's saying, 'This is 1964. Twelve years from now it will be 1976, the bicentennial of this country. What better way to celebrate 200 years than to have eradicated poverty?' Just the audacity of that.

Now a lot of people kind of reacted to Bernie Sanders as if he, you know, Bernie Sanders says 'I'm the political revolution.' And proposed free college tuition. That's nothing! It turned out Bernie Sanders is this total arch-conservative compared to LBJ, who's saying, 'Free college tuition? Let's end poverty!' Right? It's unbelievable. Here's the other thing that blew me away... What color was the face of poverty? There was a white face. And and this is this is really important because Johnson is speaking at, sort of in the context of the New Deal. And the New Deal, which had... which saw activist government launch all sorts of programs to help people... the New Deal, which which generated the largest expansion of the middle class the world has ever seen... but the New Deal that was limited largely to helping whites. The New Deal, in order to get that legislation through Congress, depended on the support from the Southern Democrats. And the Southern Democrats were essentially a white supremacist party, and would only vote to support legislation if it was structured in a way that wouldn't help African Americans, and that wouldn't help Latinos, right?

WAR ON POVERTY

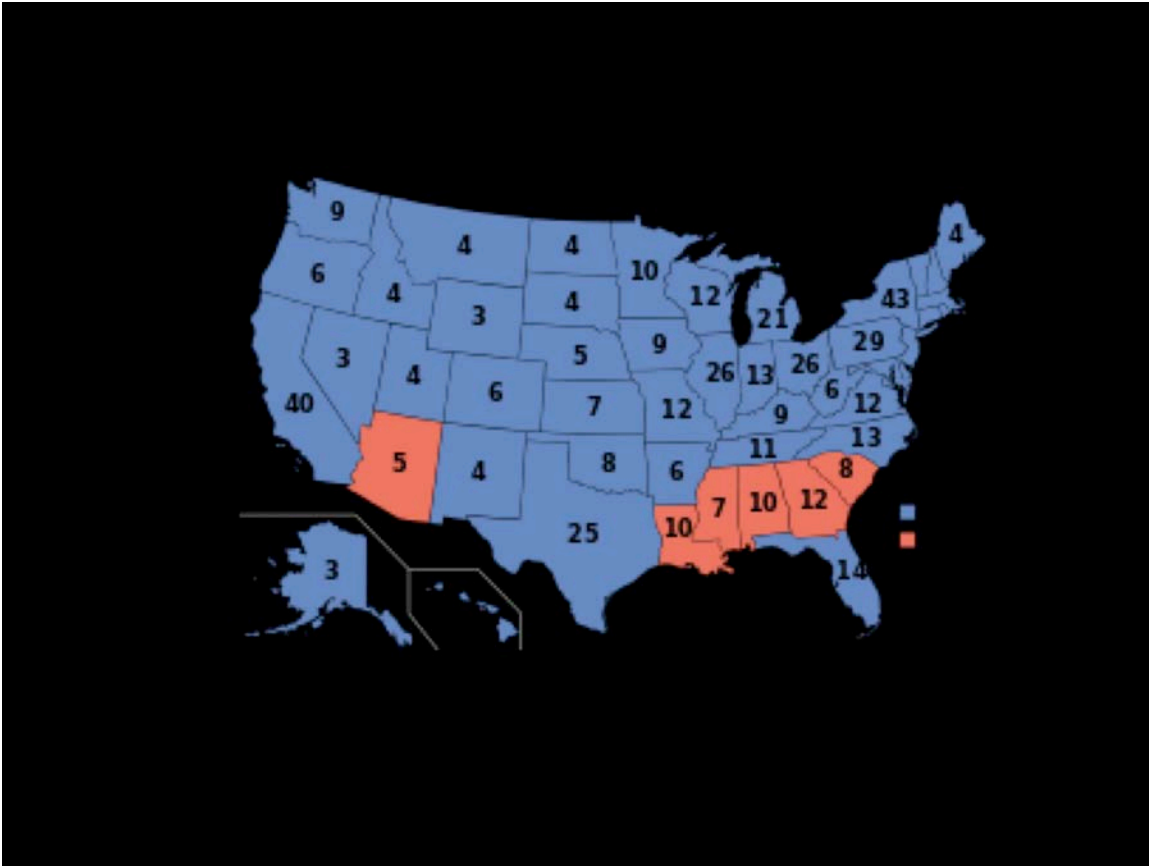
The image is a dark, grainy, black-and-white photograph of a map of the United States. The map is centered and occupies most of the frame. At the top, the words "WAR ON POVERTY" are written in a white, sans-serif, all-caps font. The map itself is very dark, with some lighter areas that might represent landmasses or specific regions, but the details are obscured by the low light and grain.

And so we're really sort of at the... We're in the midst of the New Deal. We're at the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement. Johnson's saying we can end poverty. Poverty still has a white face, although you see that there are a few African American faces too. And so now, here's the question: he's saying, 'This is too important. Vote to end poverty.' How would people vote?



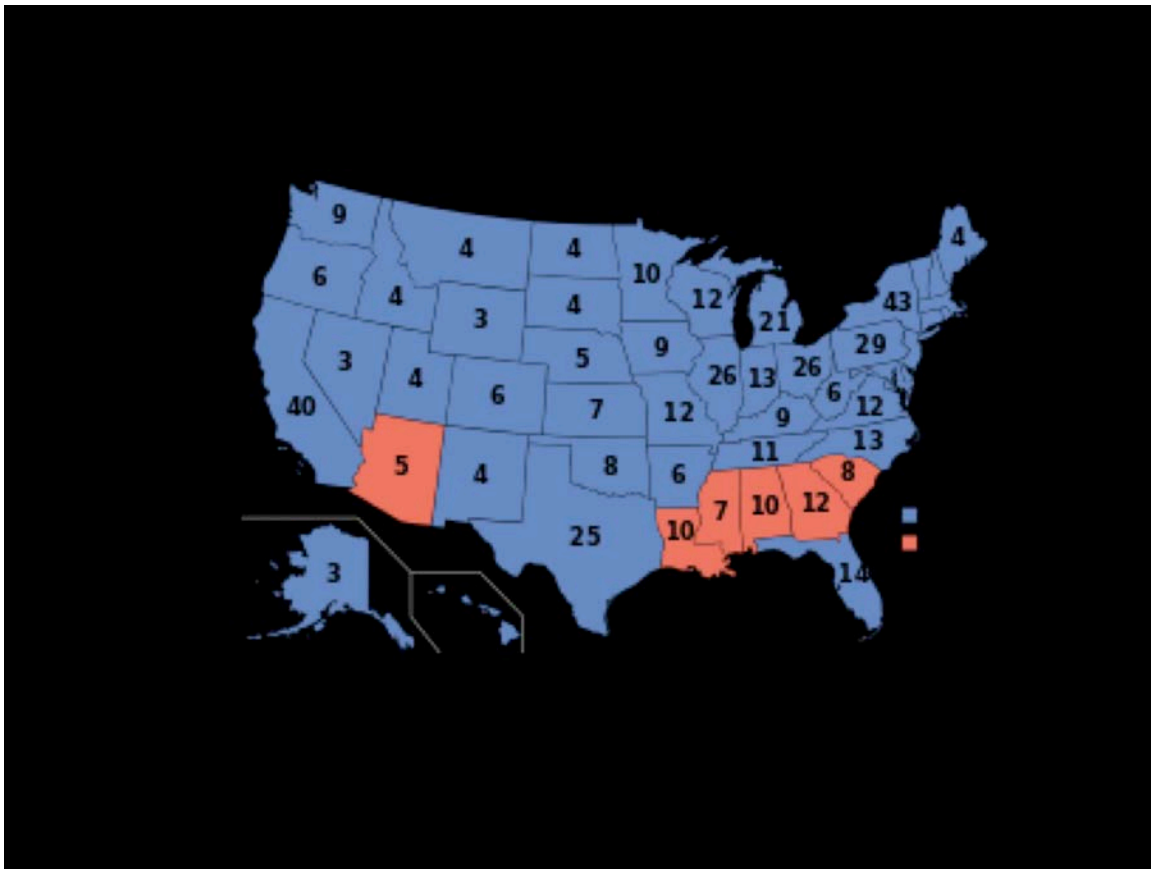
It was a landslide victory, an overwhelming victory for Lyndon Johnson. And all the pundits turned around and they said, 'That's it. We are fundamentally a liberal country. We are fundamentally a country that believes in the power and the responsibility of activist government to intervene, and to lift people out of poverty.' And when I say it was a consensus I didn't mean Democratic Party hegemony, I meant bipartisan consensus. After all it had been a Republican president, Dwight Eisenhower, who had started Social Security. There was a sense that both parties were firmly committed, that the country as a whole was firmly committed to the idea that government should help people.

And yet, there was a distant alarm bell in the night, and that's what you see with the red states. Now one of them is Arizona. We all now are close enough to Arizona that we understand that that was Arizona. Lyndon Johnson was running against Barry Goldwater. Barry Goldwater was a scion of a wealthy retail family in Arizona. So that was the sort of local boy type of vote. But much more perplexing were the votes across the Deep South. And they were perplexing for a couple of reasons: one, Barry Goldwater was a Republican. And I just said this is the Deep South, it's controlled by the Southern Democrats. This was the solid South, which is solidly Democratic, and white supremacist and deeply, deeply hostile to the Republican Party.



Why? Because they blame the Republican Party for the Civil War. But even more importantly, they blame the Republican Party for what it had done in enforcing integration in contemporary times. It was a Republican former governor, a former Republican governor, Earl Warren, who wrote the opinion in *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954 that said southern schools needed to start integrating. And it was the Republican President Dwight Eisenhower who first sent troops, federal troops, back into the South, the first time in modern history that federal troops were ordered back into the South to enforce integration. Southern Democrats hated the Republican Party. They just voted for one.

Here's a second reason: Barry Goldwater wasn't a typical Republican. He wasn't a Dwight Eisenhower Republican. He was actually a throwback to an earlier era. He represented the sort of person who actually strongly opposed the New Deal, and opposed the idea of government helping everybody. In fact, Barry Goldwater used to style himself as a rugged individual, right, and he used to like... you know, he'd kind of do this faux Western thing, and you know, he'd dress up with a cowboy hat and boots, and it was this sort of sartorial affectation, but even more, it was a political statement, and the statement was this: Nobody should depend upon or rely upon government.



We're all on our own. And if you succeed, more power to you, keep everything you've killed. But if you fail, you have no one to blame but yourself. Have the dignity to die quietly. Don't make a demand on society. Right. That was the political ideology of rugged individualism, and this was what Barry Goldwater was campaigning on.

And now, it's striking that he wins this support in the South because the South, they love the New Deal. The South had been economically devastated by the Great Depression even more than the rest of the country. Barry Goldwater was campaigning across the South saying he wanted to break up and sell off this public agency, the Tennessee Valley Authority, which had brought electricity to millions across the rural South. So here we have the five states in the Deep South with the largest African American population voting for a Republican when they hate Republicans. Voting for someone who promises to destroy the New Deal when they love the New Deal. What is happening? How did he win those votes? Goldwater knew that his policies were unpopular, so he and the Republican Party came up with a strategy.

Robert Novak, reporting on a 1963 meeting
of the Republican National Committee:

"A good many, perhaps a majority of
the party's leadership, envision
substantial political gold to be
mined in the racial crisis by
becoming in fact, though not in
name, the White Man's Party."

This is the only block text I'm gonna show you. Block text is boring. I wouldn't show it to you, except it's so darn important. In 1963 the Republican National Committee met here in Denver. And coming out of that, Robert Novak, a conservative journalist, reported that the leadership had decided to exploit the developing anxiety related to the Civil Rights Movement, by using that as a way to win votes.

And now a couple of points, and I want to make these points as clear as I can. Number one: this is not a story of Republican bigotry. This is not a story about one political party that hates Black people. Absolutely not. Remember, it was a Republican Dwight Eisenhower who'd ordered federal troops back into the South. Up until this point, up until 1963, both political parties were about equally – which is to say, not much, but sort of – about equally committed to Civil Rights. This is not bigotry. This is strategy. They look at what's happening with demands for equality for Blacks. There's increasing distress in some segments of the white community. And they look at that, and they say, 'We can take advantage of that. We can use race as a wedge issue to break up the New Deal coalition of progressive whites, African Americans and the white working class.' This is not bigotry; it's strategy.

Robert Novak, reporting on a 1963 meeting of the Republican National Committee:

"A good many, perhaps a majority of the party's leadership, envision substantial political gold to be mined in the racial crisis by becoming in fact, though not in name, the White Man's Party."

Second key point: this is going to be a strategy that takes place in code. They will become the white man's party in name... in fact, sorry, in fact. But not in name. Why? Well, because if there's a white man's party in name at this point, it's the Southern Democrats. But more fundamentally, precisely because the Civil Rights Movement is changing the national culture, changing the national moiré so that more and more people come to understand racism is immoral. White supremacy is a grave assault on human dignity. It is no longer possible, in 1963 and 1964, for any national politician to stand up and say, 'I represent the interests of the white man.' You can't say it explicitly. They've decided they're gonna say it implicitly. They're gonna say it in code. They're gonna dog whistle. And so Barry Goldwater campaigns throughout the South, and he says he's going to break up the TVA. Okay, unpopular, but he also says that he is campaigning for 'states' rights' and 'freedom of association.'

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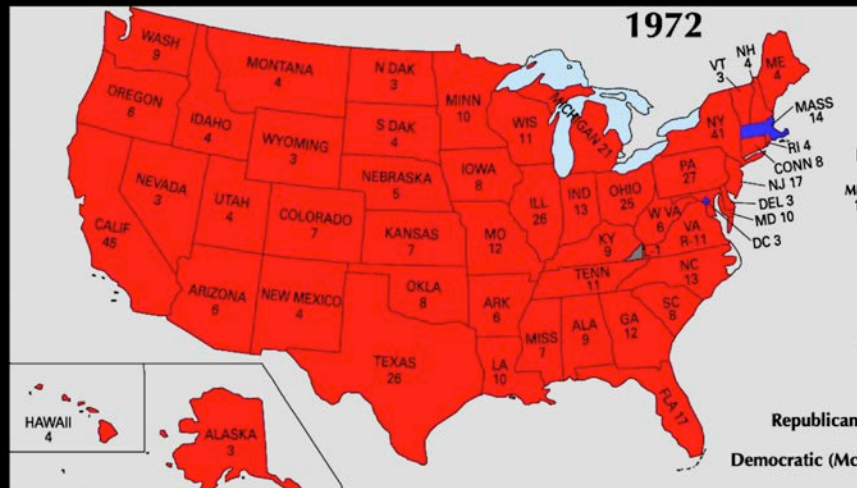
Now... So I teach constitutional law and we have to focus on 'states' rights,' which is about the state-federal relations and balance of power and I can't get my students through an hour of that without half of them going to sleep. A national campaign on state-federal relations? You've got to be kidding me! Except that everybody understood that 'state-federal relations' meant that the federal government should have no power to force the states to integrate their schools. And 'freedom of association,' like, free to pick your friends? That's your campaign? Except that 'freedom of association' really meant the right of white businesses to refuse to serve African Americans. The right of white homeowners to refuse to sell to Blacks or to rent to them. That is, Barry Goldwater campaigned in dog whistle terms. 'States' rights,' 'freedom of association.' And when you look at that red across the South, that was the alarm bell in the night. That a racial campaign, a campaign based on racial fear and resentment, might be so powerful that it could convince even the most diehard Democrats, even the most committed New Dealers, to vote for a Republican who promised to dismantle the New Deal. That was the alarm bell.



Which brings us to Richard Nixon in 1968. Goldwater had lost big. So Nixon was unsure whether to pursue dog whistling. He managed to barely win in '68, but the number crunchers, looking at the, looking at the results of the '68 election, came out and said, 'You know what, race can be used as a wedge issue nationally.' Kevin Phillips on the Republican side said this, but some Democrats realized it, too. And so in 1970, Richard Nixon pivots. And he begins to run a full dog-whistle campaign. And he talks about 'states' rights,' he talks about 'freedom of association,' he starts talking about 'forced busing,' as if the issue were putting schoolchildren on buses, rather than the integration the busing was designed to produce. Right. So 'forced busing' became the northern analog of 'states' rights,' a coded reference as a way to express opposition to integration. Nixon also starts talking about the 'silent majority,' starts talking about 'law and order,' with phrases that were resurrected in the Republican National Convention by Donald Trump, just this past summer, just last summer. Right?

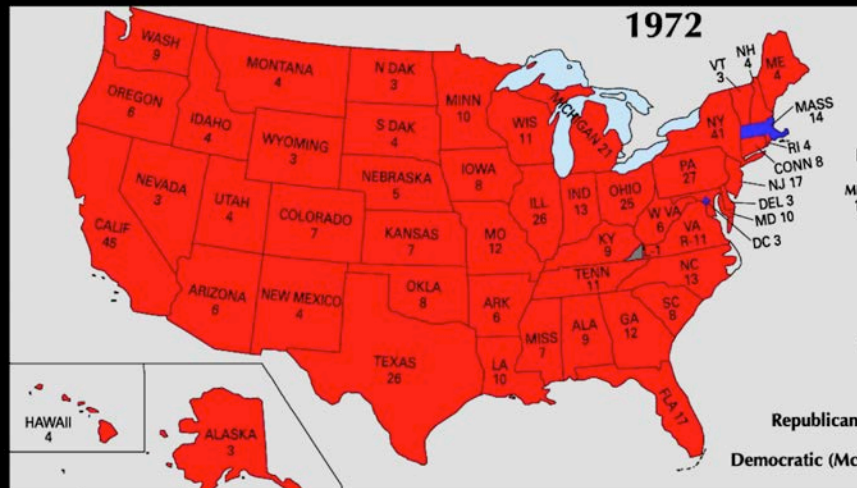


And now, when Nixon talked about 'law and order,' did he, was he really dog whistling? Was he really having it... well, could it not be just he meant law and order? Or was this really about race? Well, Nixon did us the tremendous favor of taping himself, and so we have him watching one of his own campaign commercials on 'law and order' and saying, 'Yes, that's it!' This is Richard Nixon saying, 'Yes, that's it. It's all about law and order, and those damn Negroes and Puerto Ricans.' He knew he was dog whistling. And some of his aides have come out and said, 'Nixon made the decision that he would go after the racist vote.' Would it work?



Oh, hell yeah. Right? This is eight years after Lyndon Johnson has won in a landslide and the pundits have all said, 'We are a liberal country.' Eight years later, Richard Nixon wins in an even bigger landslide.

A lot of people say, 'We're actually a basically conservative country that distrusts government.' I don't think that's right. And in fact when you look at a lot of contemporary polling, if it's expressed at a high enough level of generality – do you think government should promote full employment? Do you think government should ensure a decent education? Do you think government has a role in promoting basic health care? Sixty, 70, 80 percent support. It's when it becomes more targeted, that there's more opposition. And when I look at this map, what I see is not a country that is fundamentally conservative, I see a country that's fundamentally racially fearful. Right. And now, I understand that in 1972 there's the Vietnam War, there's protests, there's riots, there's assassination, there's a lot going on. This is not just race. But I wanna say nevertheless, this election in 1972 marks a sea change in American politics. No Democratic candidate for president has won a majority of the white vote since Lyndon Johnson in 1964.



Today's Republican Party draws roughly 90 percent of its support from white voters. Ninety eight percent of Republican elected officials are white. Let me just... by saying white it's as if... it's as if the issue is just being white, European descent, blonde... no. These are the most racially fearful whites. That is, it's not white as biology, it's white as a set of fears, as a way of understanding yourself and a way of understanding others. The Republican Party today is drawing upon the most racially fearful whites as a strategy. They went and did what they said they were gonna do.

Okay. That's not the most downbeat part of the talk. Now we get to the depressing part. Now we're gonna... So, so I hope you all are good because now we're gonna go down.



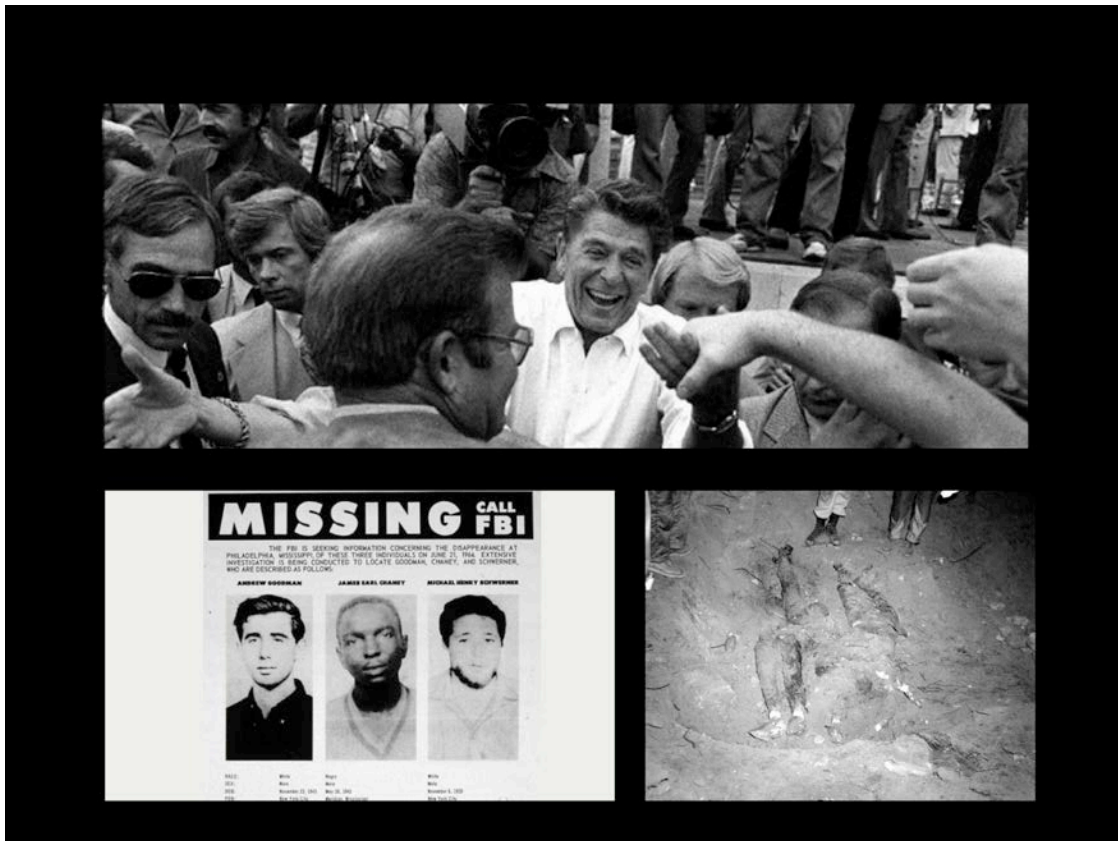
This is Ronald Reagan. Happy warrior, right? You look at that avuncular smile, super cheerful. Okay, so this is Ronald Reagan, and why wouldn't he look cheerful? He is introducing himself to the country. This is his first official campaign stop after he wins the Republican national... he becomes the official candidate of the Republican Party. He's introducing himself to the country. Super important. So he goes to Philadelphia, of course, because that's a huge audience, and lots of people in Pennsylvania, except that this is Philadelphia, Mississippi. Philadelphia, Mississippi to introduce himself to the country, and nobody knows anything about Philadelphia, Mississippi, except this:



In 1964, 16 years earlier, three civil rights workers had been kidnapped there, lynched, their bodies stuffed in an earthen dam and not found for months. And Ronald Reagan goes down to Neshoba County, Mississippi to announce himself as the official candidate for president of the Republican Party and he says to crowds of tens of thousands of cheering whites, 'I believe in states' rights.'



So this is Reagan taking a page from Nixon, taking a page from Barry Goldwater. And yet – and here's the pivot to what's really depressing – Nixon was what used to be known as a 'liberal Republican' a 'moderate Republican.' Ronald Reagan was a Goldwater Republican. He gets his start in politics as a spokesperson for Barry Goldwater. Like Goldwater, he believes in the rugged individual. He's hostile to liberal government. But what Reagan figures out is to how to connect dog whistle politics with a hostility towards government. And he does it through phrases like 'welfare queen.' Or more. Reagan would tell a story, he'd look out at his audiences, and he'd look at people and he'd say, 'I understand your frustration.' And let me just be clear, these audiences were overwhelmingly white, right. And in fact, Nancy Reagan, his wife, at one point talking to a – doing the warm-up for one of his audiences said, 'Look at all you beautiful white people.' But then obviously that was, 'She said 'white' and that's a problem,' so then she said, 'I mean you beautiful people.' Right, but okay so these are overwhelmingly white audiences, and Reagan would look out at these audiences and he'd say, 'I understand your frustration when you're waiting in line to buy a hamburger, and some young fella ahead of you is waiting to buy a T-bone steak with food stamps.'



Now, 'some young fellow.' Race? The first time he told that story, he didn't say 'some young fellow,' he said 'some young buck.' Southern term for strong Black man, usually one resistant to white authority or one who lusts after white women. He used a very racially charged term, and he was widely criticized for the racism in that statement. So he dropped 'some young buck' and kept the story as the one about 'some young fellow.' And this is dog whistling, because it didn't refer to race on the surface, but underneath it was widely understood as a story about Blacks. And what did it say about Blacks? It said they're lazy. They're strong, they're healthy, they could work – they prefer not to. And they're not just lazy – they're thieves. They're larcens. They could work, they prefer not to, they would rather rip off the system by taking welfare when they don't deserve it. This is who Blacks are – lazy, larcenous, thieving... living high off the hog, eating T-bone steak. And if it's a story about Blacks, it's a story about whites. Because that's the way race works. Races don't exist as biological groups. There is no such thing as a white, or a Black, or a Yellow or a Brown race as biology. We're all mixed. What there are, are groups that are socially constructed, social categories with meanings that we read on to, that we impose on physical features. And when we impose one set of meanings on one group, we're simultaneously creating meanings for another group.

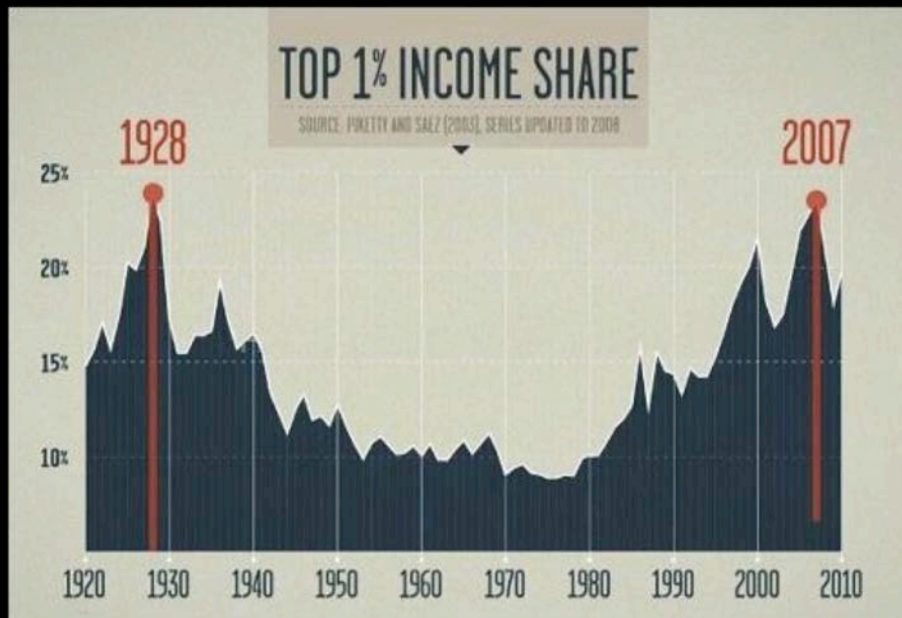


And so when we say, 'Blacks are lazy,' we imply whites are hard-working, or decent, or law-abiding, or belong or deserving. And so Reagan told a story that said 'Blacks are lazy, and larcenous and living high off the hog, and whites are decent, and hard-working, and play by the rules, and are law-abiding, and that's why they're struggling. Eating a hamburger.'

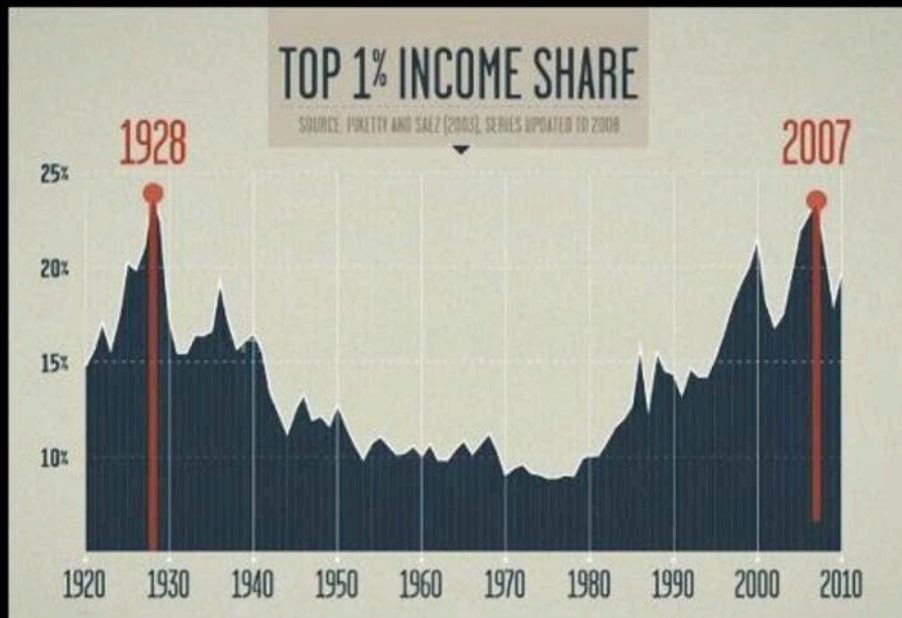
Who's the real culprit here? The real enemy? It's clearly not white folks. They're the hard-working, decent, law-abiding people who are struggling. If anything they're the victim. Who's the real enemy? It's government. It's not really Black folks – it's government. Why? Because it's government that is taking the hard-earned money of whites in the form of taxes, and wasting it on undeserving, lazy, thieving minorities, in the form of welfare payments. Or it's government that provides free health care for undeserving immigrants or minorities. Or it's government that refuses to control these dangerous criminal people through lax enforcement of criminal law. 'Crackdown on crime.' 'War on crime.' 'War on drugs.' Or in a modern version, it's government that refuses to control our borders and lets in these dangerous Brown people. Right?



And so, we've just lived through, under the Obama administration, the largest sustained level of deportation this country has ever seen. And we also lived through a political campaign that said, 'build the wall,' 'distrust government, because government will not protect you from those marauding, dangerous people.' It's not the facts that matter, it's the narrative, it's the story. Let me summarize that story: fear people of color; hate government; trust instead the marketplace, the rich; that the real source of social stability and economic prosperity will come from the corporations and the rich. That's the story that Reagan started telling.

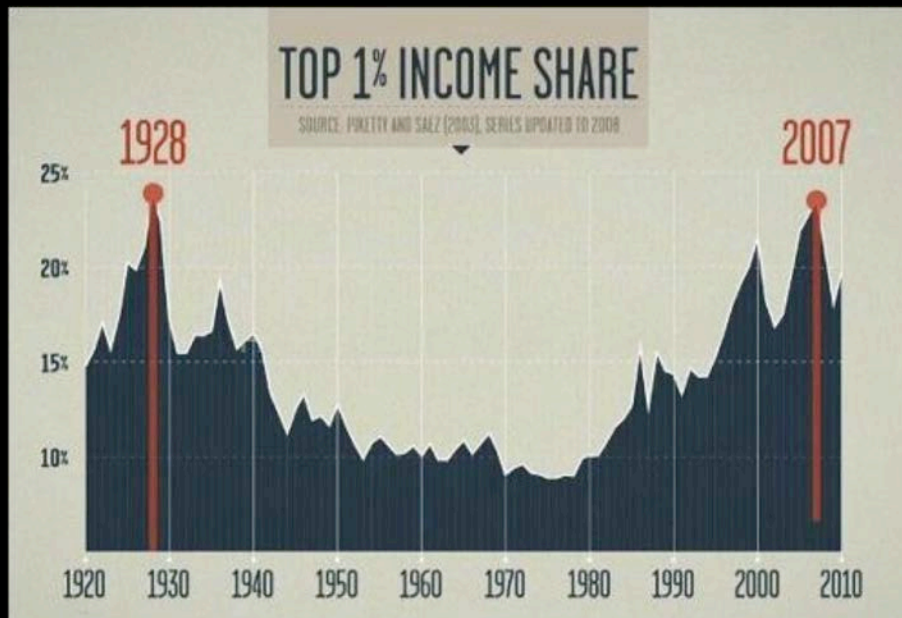


And this is the history that we've lived. Okay, so this is, this is... dense. This is... Robert – I liberated this from Robert Reich. Right? So, love Robert Reich. This is his video, *Inequality for All*. I love this, right? And what Robert Reich says is, 'Okay, here's a graph. This is the share of total income that's going to the top 1 percent. To be super clear about this, the more of the total income that goes to the top 1 percent, the less for the rest of us.' Bad, right? So, dropping numbers is good because that's greater income equality. More of us are sharing in the wealth of the country. And what you can see is that there's this sharp drop with the Great Depression, right? The stock market collapse wipes out a lot of wealth. But then a steady decline through the '40s, and the '50s and the '60s. That's government policy. That's the New Deal. And then it levels out around 1970, and then low around 1980 when Ronald Reagan is elected. Income inequality begins to go up. And Reich, and Krugman and lots of economists tell us why, we understand the policies. Let me describe them to you: cut social spending; let corporations write their own rules; cut taxes for the rich. Those are the policies. Here's the mystery: why is there so much popular support for those policies? Because Reagan said, 'Cut social services. That's just money being wasted on minorities.' 'Cut taxes because government's your enemy.'



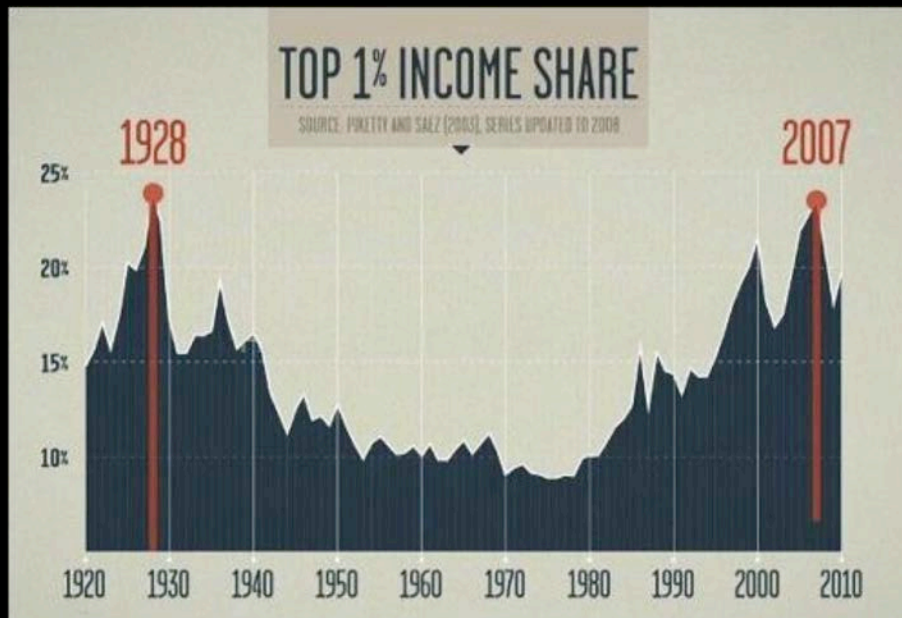
But when Reagan said 'cut taxes,' right, the 'starve the beast' kind of rhetoric, did those tax cuts go to average hard-working, struggling Americans? The Reagan tax cuts in the 1980s transferred over a trillion dollars in wealth to the top 1 percent. And we have never repealed those tax cuts. And every decade, a trillion and more from those tax cuts continues to go to the top 1 percent. And deregulation? That's 'trust the marketplace,' 'cause you can't trust government and you gotta worry about people of color. Right? That is, it's dog whistle politics that that generates popular support from lots of working people for policies that we can see clearly transfer wealth from all of us to the obscenely rich.

Okay, now let me just pause. Is this all race? Yes! No, okay. No, okay, obviously... I just wanted to go big, just once, just... obviously, this is not all race. There's lots of other stuff going on. First, to be really clear dog whistle politics – I center race because I think it's the principal rate – it's a social resentment that's exploited by politicians, but it's far from the only one. If you think about gender, family structure, abortion... all of those, this sort of 'culture war politics.' Sexuality, sexual identity, religion, ability, um, uh, this notion of a cultural fight between cultural elitists in the Northeast and at places like Berkeley, who supposedly look down on working people.



All of that's part of culture war politics, right? And the message of culture war politics is... 'fear these people who are demanding equality, and and who are taking away from your social position.' 'Distrust the government that forces you to associate with them, to integrate with them, to treat them equally.' 'Trust the market. Trust the rich.' Right? That's – okay, so, it's not just race, it's culture war politics generally.

Let's be clear: it's also big changes in terms of globalization – and much more important – in terms of technology. Huge technological changes from the '70s to the present that have nothing to do with race, nothing to do with culture war politics. And yet... the economy, technology, those things are always changing, and every society has to figure out, how will the benefits and the burdens of those changes be distributed? And if we have a government that says, 'We want to make sure that the average person is protected,' that will result in policies that interact with technological changes in a particular way. If instead, we have a government that says, 'We mainly serve the interest of the very rich,' we can predict that with technological change, the rich will get richer, and the rest of us will get poorer. Right?



So it's not all race, but race is one part of this larger culture war politics, which is really shaping our view of government, which is so important in the context of changes in technology, changes in the environment. Okay. I'm gonna bring us up to the present. I'm gonna to start, I'm gonna pick up the pace a little bit here.

CLINTON/GORE 1992



Big changes in dog whistle politics since the era of Reagan. Here's one:

[Start of video clip]

NARRATOR: They're a new generation of Democrats, Bill Clinton and Al Gore. And they don't think the way the old Democratic Party did. They've called for an end to welfare as we know it. So welfare can be a second chance, not a way of life. They've sent a strong signal to criminals by supporting the death penalty. And they've rejected the old tax-and-spend politics. Clinton's balanced 12 budgets, and they've proposed a new plan investing in people, detailing 140 billion dollars in spending cuts they'd make right now. Clinton-Gore: For people, for a change.

[End of video clip]

CLINTON/GORE 1992



HANEY LÓPEZ: That wasn't exactly the gesture I wanted to do, but... listen, I said in 1970, Democrats realize race could be used as a wedge issue. And they made a fateful decision. They said, 'We see that there's racism, we see that there's racial anxiety and racial resentment... ignore it. Don't talk about it. It's gonna burn out soon – at most within a generation.' So the Democrats largely stopped talking about race. By 1992, it's clear to Bill Clinton that race isn't gonna die out, it's not gonna go away on its own, and why not? Because it's such a potent weapon, that it's gonna be continually reinvented with new racial animosities stoked in the population. Democrats cannot stay silent. Failing strategy. So what do they do? They pick up the whistle themselves.

Welfare? We don't want welfare to be a way of life? Well whose way of life is it, supposedly? We're gonna crack down on crime? Well who are the criminals? We're gonna slash the federal budget? Why? Because government's the enemy? That is, starting in the '90s, the Democrats start to dog whistle, too. Not as aggressively, and at the same time, Clinton makes overtures to the Black community. He goes on the Arsenio Hall show and plays a saxophone. That proves a lot. Right? But starting in the 1990s, you get an active competition between the Republicans and the Democrats to appeal to racially resentful whites by this sort of upward bidding to prove which party is tougher on people of color.

CLINTON/GORE 1992



And so for example, if you think about mass incarceration, right? I mean we have 5 percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's prisoners. And with Richard Nixon starting to talk 'law and order' in 1970, we had 200,000 people in prisons, now we have 2.3 million. What drove this? Bigotry? No. Dog whistle politics, and aggressive competition between the Republicans and the Democrats to prove who was tougher on minorities by continually cracking down and ramping up the punishment they inflicted on Black and Brown communities. And by the way if you have not read Michelle Alexander's *New Jim Crow*, read that book. This is the story it's telling. This didn't just happen by accident. And let me just say, it didn't happen because our police forces are racist. A lot of the sort of objection to aggressive, violent policing kind of talks about racism of police forces. It's there, but it's the strategic competition led by our politicians that really drove it. Okay. Next big change.



So when we think about dog whistle politics, it really comes out of the South. And it comes out of a sort of a white-Black imagination. Already from its earliest days, you know Nixon was busy attacking the Puerto Ricans, so it had these other elements. But it really comes strongly out of a fear and a resentment towards African Americans. That changed... that has always played out differently, regionally. So here in the West, there's always been sort of anti-Latino dog whistling, but nationally, that really changes after 9/11. Right? And what happens with 9/11 is, essentially, a new racial boogeyman is created. And it's created in the language of religion, of Islam, of the Muslim terrorist. But the basic narrative is a racial one. And it's racial in this sense: these people are fundamentally different from us. Those differences are inherited, transmitted from parents to child. They don't respect life the way the way we do. They are increasingly a threat to us at home.



Okay, this is... again race is not biology. Race is how you treat a group. Notice the way, for example, Donald Trump said, 'We have to close the border on Syrian immigrants... refugees.' And somebody said, 'Even the children?' And he says, 'Yeah, even the children. Even the little babies. We don't know who they're gonna grow up to be.' That's a vision of a character type, which is fixed by nature and transmitted across generations. That's race, folks. Even if you say 'Muslim.' Even if you say 'Syrian.' That's race. Notice, it starts with a fear of what's happening in the Middle East. But what really gives it force is a rhetoric that says, 'Radical Islamic terrorism is penetrating our country.' And so this is Kansas passing a law that prohibits its judges from using Sharia – the Koran – to interpret Kansas law. Now apparently, this was a huge problem. And the legislature was slow, but it got there. Right? And it's like... the only way to understand this, is this fear that that that our domestic institutions are under threat. This isn't just Iraq, Iran or whatever those places are called, and whoever we just dropped a bomb on... it's here. And nobody better crystallized that sense of domestic treason than Barack Hussein Obama. Here was – it facilitated a rhetoric that said, 'Islam and secret loyalty to Islam operates at the very highest level of our government. It operates in the White House.' Right, and so this sort of anti-Islamic dog whistling becomes very, very powerful after 9/11.



ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Just looking for a better life.

Another big change: illegal immigrants, illegal aliens. Now, again, you know, California in the '90s was doing this with Pete Wilson, but in the 2000s and in the 20-teens, this really becomes national. It becomes national I think for a couple of reasons: one, just changing demographics. There are more and more Latinos. We're everywhere. Some of us have apparently taken the stage at the Mile High Station. I mean, you just... you don't know where Latinos are going to pop up. It's just, you know, you gotta... [And well, every once in a while they speak Spanish... You have to press 'one']... You know it's like, they're everywhere! And you've got to press 'one' if you want English. Right, so... so there's this, right? So there's demographic change, and Latinos are in more and more regions, but here's this other thing that's happening...

After 9/11, we developed this imagery of Brown 'others' with a deficient, a dangerous culture, who are sneaking across our borders and infiltrating our country. Now does it matter if they're Muslim or Mexican? Not really, 'cause they're Brown and both begin with 'm.' And so... right? And so, this... once you get this racial fear of a Brown 'other' with a dangerous culture that doesn't value human life, it's very easy to translate and make that national.



ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

Just looking for a better life.

So, the big changes: Democrats start dog whistling; the racial boogeymen expand – it's not that African Americans go away as a racial boogeymen, but they're supplemented by Muslims, and also by Latinos, nationally. I'd say a fourth big change is really the media, and I'm thinking in particular Fox News. Fox News is founded by a political advisor to Richard Nixon, who gave him advice on how to dog whistle. Roger Ailes, right? Recently dethroned sexual predator, right. But he starts in politics as an advisor about how to dog whistle. And then founds and runs Fox News. Or, doesn't found it, but he's like hired to run it, and he really builds it up. Right. These are the big changes.



And this is 2016. Overwhelmingly supported by racially anxious whites. And not just whites, right? Again, this is, when we – so, a couple of statistics. People talk about Obama-Trump voters. Okay, so of all the people that voted for Obama, roughly 90 percent went on to vote for Hillary Clinton, but 9 percent went on to vote for Donald Trump. What is the single biggest issue that divides the so-called Obama-Clinton voter from the Obama-Trump voter? Fear of immigrants. Fear of immigrants. And a lot of people have said, 'Well, the Obama-Trump voter proves that this can't be race, because obviously, they weren't prejudiced when they voted for Obama. So how could this be race now?' And it's like... what you're seeing is a further racial polarization of the political parties. Not in terms of absolute numbers, 'cause a lot of Republicans refused to vote for Donald Trump. But a lot of the new Trump voters are racially fearful – are among the most racially fearful. Okay, that's that's that's part of what's happening here.

I don't wanna dwell on that, I wanna pivot to health care. I wanna try and draw this together. I'm gonna show you... this is a clip from a video, from a documentary on Arizona. And Arizona, I mean talk about dog whistle politics, right? All about 'illegal aliens' and, okay, and it's the 'show me your papers' laws and all of that. So Carlos Sandoval, a great filmmaker, did this documentary on Arizona. And this is just a short clip from it.



[Start of video clip]

PROTESTERS:

- Do you think that the people in the Mayflower were illegals?
- Well I don't know what happened back then, but I know what's happening right now...
- Do you think that they were illegals? They didn't have...
- Listen, listen. I have this to say to you: My husband got really ill one night, so I took him to the hospital. I couldn't get into the hospital. You know why? There were so many illegal people in there, he couldn't get in! I had to take my husband to another hospital.
- I'm sorry.
- My husband could've died! Or whatever.
- I'm sorry that your husband has to pass through all that pain because there was not enough health care for everybody. I'm sorry.
- No, no, no. There were too... illegals do not deserve health care. And we're not racist. We are not racist.

[End of video clip]

HANEY LÓPEZ: Okay, “Illegals do not deserve health care”? And “I’m not racist.” And I really want to back up and unpack those. I think an important way... think about what this woman is saying. She is expressing the pain of thinking that her husband had had a heart attack, and rushing to get him medical care, and being turned away from one hospital, and going to another... I’m a little emocional [emotional] about it because you can just imagine the pain, the emotional stress of thinking your loved one might die. And you’re looking for care, and you can’t get it. That’s what she’s saying, right. This is her experience. And then to go from there to say, ‘But illegals, they don’t deserve health care. Let them experience that pain. Let them lose their loved ones. Let them be turned away from every hospital.’ How do we understand how those two go together? And I wanna say, this is dog whistle politics. And it’s dog whistle politics that really challenges us to think about how racism works. I don’t think – maybe I’m wrong – but I don’t think this woman’s a bigot. I don’t think she’s a Klan member. I think she’s genuine when she says, “I’m not a racist.” I think she really believes that.

So we need a different way of understanding racism that doesn’t always and exclusively equate racism with bigotry, or with Klan membership, with the self-conscious hatred of Brown, and Black, and Yellow and Red people. We need a different understanding of racism. And we need to see that racism can take another couple of forms, at least. And one is ‘strategic racism’ – the purposeful manipulation of racial anxiety in others for your own ends – to win votes, to change people’s orientation towards government, whatever it is, to drive down wages... right. Strategic racism. And I think this woman is a victim of strategic racism, in the sense that a lot of the people that she sees as political leaders have been telling her, ‘The reason you can’t get health care is ‘cause there’s too many damn illegals.’ And when she’s trying to figure out what explains this terrible fear, this terrible fright of trying to get her husband help, the story she comes up with is a story that people have strategically fed her. It’s Brown people who did this to you. That’s strategic racism.

Okay, and... and another sort of racism... I think we need to think hard about sort of a cultural racism, or an unconscious racism... I’m gonna give her the benefit of the doubt, and think she’s not lying when she says she’s not a racist. And what that means is, she doesn’t consciously think she’s a racist. But I think she’s drawing on fundamentally racist narratives. And one of the racist narratives that is so powerful today is that undocumented immigrants, not only are they criminal, they’re not even human. Right? And there’s been some terrific slash unbelievably depressing work done by a Princeton psychologist, who shows that when you show people images of undocumented immigrants, it activates the part of the brain – not the part of the brain that has to do with humans and relationships – but the part of the brain that has to do with inanimate objects, like chairs, and tables and buses. That is, people see undocumented immigrants and think of them as objects or tools, as threats, but not even as people. And that’s a form of racism, too. It’s not bigotry, but surely we have to label an inability to see other people as people, as a form of racism.

Okay? Now, how do we respond? How do we respond? I'm just so amazed by the poise of the activist who's talking to her, who says back to her, 'I'm sorry that your husband didn't have access to health care, but that's because there's not enough health care for all of us.' Right? And I love that basic message. That sort of, 'This is not zero-sum. We're all losing.' I would just sharpen it a little bit. And I would've said... well, I probably wouldn't have, because I wouldn't have been as composed, but... later, later afterwards, I would've wished I'd said... 'Your willingness to deny health care to undocumented immigrants is what's leading to a lack of health care for your husband. When you support politicians who vote to hurt undocumented immigrants, you vote to support politicians who hurt you.' That's what I would've said. Okay.

THIS IS THE BEST
OPPORTUNITY IN A GENERATION TO
CONVINCE PEOPLE THAT

**RACISM is A
DIVIDE AND CONQUER
WEAPON
THAT HURTS ALL OF US**

I'm gonna sum up, this is how I'm gonna close. People voting their racial fears are doing tremendous damage to themselves. And this is really the best opportunity, maybe in the history of this country, to really say to whites, 'You have more to lose than to gain through racism.' Racism is a divide-and-conquer weapon that hurts all of us. It's especially – it doesn't hurt us all the same. I'm not making an equivalence. You think about mass incarceration, mass deportation, you think about undocumented immigrants dying in the bor – in the desert... it doesn't hurt us all the same. But it does hurt all of us, right. Including whites. And this is our best opportunity to say this. Or as a friend of mine said in a more pithy formulation, 'Point the finger at the bad guy, not the Brown guy.' Right? Stop – it's a divide-and-conquer weapon – stop fearing other working people. Brown, Black, gay, disabled... stop fearing other people! We're actually all in this together. And so this is the positive version.

WE THE PEOPLE

It's 'we the people.' We are all in this together. And I wanna be clear, this is the animating spirit of the United States. This is the revolutionary spirit of the United States, that we the people, when we come together and govern ourselves for our own benefit, that's when we all do best. And I know, and you know, that we didn't quite do this. Far from it, right? That we the people, and the founding generation, was shackled by race, shackled by class, shackled by gender... and the history of our country is a history of breaking those shackles, and we are still deep in that history now. But that doesn't mean we can't claim the ideal – not yet realized – but out there as a beacon. Saying, 'This is the way forward. We the people.' And this is my last slide, I promise. It's not.

WE THE PEOPLE

*** TRUST EACH OTHER**

*** FEAR CONCENTRATED
WEALTH**

*** DEMAND GOVERNMENT
SERVE ALL OF US**

We the people. And here's, I think, the basic story. We trust each other. Not tolerate, I'm not a 'tolerance' person. Right, tolerance is like, 'something's wrong with you, but I'll put up with it.' No, we trust each other. And by trust, I mean we see our shared humanity, we understand and trust that you want to take care of your loved ones, you want to take care of your community, and I do too. Now, trust – it's not blind trust – it has to be earned. It can be lost. But we start from a position of trust in each other. And we fear concentrated wealth, 'cause that's the history of human society. That concentrated wealth is dangerous. It erodes social bonds. It ends up using its power to take more and more wealth and power for itself, right. And every society has to figure out, how do you push power and wealth downwards and outwards? And we have to figure... we've been struggling with that, too. That's the biggest challenge in our lives. And the resolution is to demand that government serve all of us. That it serve all of us, in the sense that it create a foundation for a broad and shared economic prosperity. But also – and not just in an economic way – that it serve all of us, in the sense that it promotes human flourishing.

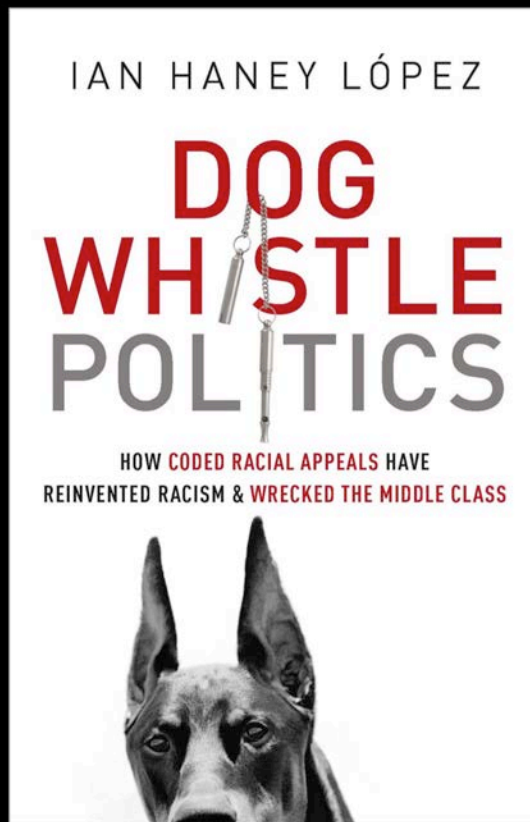
WE THE PEOPLE

*** TRUST EACH OTHER**

*** FEAR CONCENTRATED
WEALTH**

*** DEMAND GOVERNMENT
SERVE ALL OF US**

And that means health care. That means creating the space for people to express their true selves. That means creating the conditions that everybody has a chance at a good and decent life, right. This is, I think, our vision. And again, it starts with... it starts with this: we are all fundamentally people. And when we can see our shared humanity, then and only then, can we come together to fight the power of concentrated wealth, which is intentionally trying to divide us, and to recapture government, and to insist that government must serve people. Not corporations, not big money, but people. It must create a broad and shared prosperity, and it must promote human flourishing.



Last slide, just in case you want more. All right, thank you all very much. You've been really great. I really appreciate it.

CALONGE: So I don't want to cast a pall over the question and answer, but the ACHA [sic: AHCA] passed 20-17 to 20-13 [sic: 217 to 213]. So, it leads me into my first question, which I get to ask.

So, 'we the people,' and 'racism hurts us all,' and it's a... a very populist approach to a very divisive issue. I guess, I wonder, current voting, today's voting aside, have you seen, starting to get some traction with that message, in terms of policy makers and decisions? Is it starting to resonate with more people? I think, my take-home message is – that is the message and changing the narrative away from dog whistle politics to an inclusive narrative, is the direction we need to go. And I'm asking, do you see some legs? Do you see some resonance in today's political environment?

HANEY LÓPEZ: Uh, no. I don't. Um, continuing to the theme of being downbeat. In some ways, I'm more pessimistic now, 100-plus days in, than I was two days after after Trump's unexpected victory. I thought then that the power of race to divide us, and to elect a candidate whose main allegiance was clearly to himself and other billionaires, would be so evident that this shift to a language of racism as a divide-and-conquer weapon, that is tightly connected to giveaways to billionaires and to corporations, would simply be unstoppable. Ha. That's not what happened. And in fact, what I've seen is that there's been this distressing process, in which we have more and more people saying, 'Since it was race and other cultural issues, like transgender bathrooms, and gender, that were so divisive, those are precisely the issues we should stop talking about. And instead, we should focus only on economic populism.' And now I hear this message from a lot of people in the Clinton camp, but it's a lot of people in the Sanders camp, as well. Right, so this isn't like, centrist-radical, there is an emerging position that says, 'economic populism only.'

I, okay... counterpose to that, there's a developing message among people who talk about a rising American electorate, or a new American majority, composed of people of color, single women, millennials, and this group says, 'We are the demographic future of the country. We're certainly most of the energy in the streets. Focus on equality concerns. Love trumps hate. That's the way we should go.' Okay, now what I want to say about that is, obviously both groups are right – we need to focus on economics, because so much wealth has been shifted to the very rich, and because so many people are struggling. At the same time, love trumps hate and equality? What, I'm going to bail on that? Of course we need to do that. But these two groups increasingly repulse each other. And they repulse each other because, what we might call the class – the class faction – is saying, 'Don't talk about equality issues. That only drives away a lot of members of the white working class.' And the equality people are saying... I want to try and be polite about what they're saying... 'We're deeply offended by the idea that we should subordinate our core concerns. We're making equality demands, human rights at home. How dare you say to me, 'don't talk about that.' Especially so that you can win the votes of people who just voted for someone who promises to terrorize my community.'

Right, and so these two groups... we need to bring these two groups together. We actually need to bring, sort of, the American people together around this combined analysis, but I actually see us fragmenting further. What I think needs to happen is that there needs to be a more concerted effort at a grassroots level to say, 'We are going to talk about economic justice and equality at the same time. Right? We're gonna do them both.' Every time we say 'love trumps hate,' we're gonna add, 'and by focusing on equality and fighting social division, that's the way we create the broad social movement that can actually get government back on the side of people.' And every time we talk about economic populism, we're gonna say, 'and it's precisely because we care so much about what's happening to working people, that we're gonna get serious about addressing the divisions that have been used to turn us against each other.'

Right, no conversation should happen anymore, without us simultaneously combining both economic justice and equality concerns. We've got to bring them together, and that's not happening... it's not gonna happen from the politicians. They're fundamentally conservative. They're risk-averse. They're not gonna try out a new message. It's gonna come from you all. It's gonna come from the sort of activist community that says, 'We refuse to separate these issues. We need to talk about them together, and we're looking for leadership that sees how they go together, and that promises to move forward on both.' That's I think what's most promising.

CALONGE: Here's our first question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi there. Um. So you explained that we should demand that government serves the people. Um. I'm wondering, how do we do that in a place where, I feel like the First Amendment rights are being curbed, where in D.C. 300 people are being prosecuted for felonies because of a broken window in a Starbucks during the inauguration protests. Where, in some states, merely entering a fracking site is a felony? I think a lot of people are really afraid of getting felonies because of the socioeconomic consequences. So I'm wondering, pragmatically, what does change look like to you? What does direct action look like? Should we be infiltrating the system? As a millennial, that's what I'd like to know.

HANEY LÓPEZ: Yeah, great question. So, I think the... my basic answer is sort of, many paths to the mountaintop. And people are gonna take varied... some some people are gonna go the sort of civil disobedience, break the law, be prosecuted, serve time, approach. Some people will do that. Other people will try and infiltrate, and you know, monkey-wrench, or you know, some people are gonna read Saul Alinsky, and other people are gonna write editorials or op-eds. All good, 'cause it all has to happen, right? And I wouldn't presume to say any particular method. The danger that I see is that... look, the corporations, the wealthy family dynasties, the Koch brothers, what they want is for the American people as a whole to give up on government, to distrust government. 'Cause the

more, 'cause, listen... government, in a highly sort of complex society like ours, government is the sing – by far – the single most powerful force in our society. If people give up on it, then we're just fighting over crumbs, 'cause there is very little left, 'cause the whole society is then being run for the benefit of whoever controls government, okay.

So the way that has worked on the right is dog whistle politics – convince people that government is actually just helping undeserving minorities. The way it happens on the left is an experience of government that it's corrupt, that it's rigged, right? And a lot of people are like, 'It's rigged. I'm out.' Or, an experience of government as a source of oppression, which it undeniably is, right. And there's this new sort of oppression that you're talking about, you know, prosecuting people for political protest because a broken Starbucks window, that's called 'broken windows policing,' you know, or the sort of 'stop and frisk' that's been imposed on communities of color for decades, right? Well now, sort of, white liberals are gonna start to feel what, you know, have a sense of what that feels like. That oppression... don't let government as a source of oppression drive the conclusion that we should not make demands on government. That's the real risk, right? 'Cause a lot of people, when I talk about government, they're like, 'mass incarceration,' 'aggressive policing,' 'mass deportation,' 'I don't trust government, and I don't want anything to do with it.' And I've been in a lot of spaces where you have a whole conversation about this new society we're gonna build, and nobody says government. Good luck with your new society. It might work for a few of you on a farm someplace... but it's not gonna work... you're gonna abandon everybody else. Right, if we really want to take care of people, we need government. And so, that's the core message. Through whatever strategy, our core message has to be: government should not serve the corporations, government should not be a source of oppression in people's lives, government should serve people. And it should promote a fair and just economy, and it should promote human flourishing. If government isn't doing it now, and it's not – or I should say, in significant ways it's not, 'cause in significant ways it is – then all the more reason to stand up and criticize it. But not from a, 'reject it' – we're gonna do something, you know, a sort of utopian stance – but more of 'and this is what we demand.' Right. We have a vision for what government should do, yeah.

CALONGE: Here in front. Can you get a microphone? Oh, did you have a question? Arthur we'll get to you, thanks – oh.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you, professor, that was a very good way of giving us not only the words, but the pictures and the data that go along with the history. I want to take you to two places that I don't think you really mentioned – one is C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* from the 1950s. You talk about government, but Mills told us what government was going to look like, and it looks like that now. It looks like interlocking boards of directors, it looks like a military-industrial complex, it looks like exchanging people from one part of government to a corporation, to the military, and back. And so, how do you

disentangle all of those interlocking pieces, in order to get government to be what you say – and I agree with you – what you say it should be? So that's one part of the puzzle. And how do you...

HANEY LÓPEZ: That's a small part.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Correct –

HANEY LÓPEZ: Now for the big question.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Now for the big question. Now for the more depressing question, as you say. So you talked about dog whistling, but one part of the dog whistling that I didn't hear you talk about is the "Big S" and the "Big C." Socialism and communism. So, the comparison between those forms of government and the form of government we have here, also seem to get entangled, and we dog whistle about all of that, as well.

HANEY LÓPEZ: Yeah, great question. So, so... socialism and communism, we used to think that those were important, and certainly I think that there was a – look in the '50s, in the '40s and '50s, even the '60s, there's a lot of dog whistling about communism. I think it was a way to express opposition to activist government through a sort of a cultural reference to the Soviet Union that had some resonance, but even then, communism was also way to express opposition to civil rights. And race was always lurking in the background. So, in an interesting way, race was not much of the sort of national political conversation roughly from, I'd say, the 19-teens through the 1960s, and it's not because things were great, it was because they were so awful. Right? Like the oppression of minorities was so thorough, and so deep, and so taken for granted that race was not much of an issue. And so you get these debates that are occurring that that seem disconnected from race. But then once you start getting civil rights, they're immediately connected to race, right, you know 'Martin Luther King – he's a communist.' It's like yeah, right, okay. What happens now? Well if you look at 2017 – one, there was a huge surge of popularity for an avowed socialist, and two – a thorough-going and deep indifference on the part of the Republican Party to a candidate who seems to be, have been aided by a former KGB agent who now runs Russia. So, I don't think socialism and communism are actually doing that much work as terms that scare people, right, and in fact when you look at millennials, I'm not sure that millennials know what socialism is, but more of them support socialism than support our current government form, because they know the current form's not working, and they want something else.

Right? Okay, so, I'm not too worried about that. I want to go back to your C. Wright Mills question 'cause that's the really powerful one. So C. Wright Mills is taking a look at how government actually functions, and he's saying there's these interlocking connections between government officials, and corporations and the administrative state, and the more the administrative state develops, the

deeper these connections, and that's really where the locus of power is... Yeah, and to me what he's saying is, you never stop fighting to push power downward and outward, because as more people gain power they try – I'm gonna pause for that – okay, I like the applause alright! Yeah! That's just the reality, and it's not like if we start talking about 'we're all in this together,' 'dog whistle politics,' 'divide-and-conquer,' that you know, well then in 2020 we're in a nirvana, right. Power – you know there's Lord Acton's thing, 'power corrupts' – 'absolute power corrupts absolutely,' as people gain more and more power they shift, their sense of society, their shift of their obligations, their sense of their own virtue, and they decide that they're more virtuous than the rest of us and deserve more power, and they begin to structure and maneuver – so there's a constant push to say we've always got to – and, you know, I don't care what party's in power, you have to worry about how power is being used and its tendency to concentrate itself.

But it's also the case that when you look at the '50s and the '60s, we had in place a set of policies that did work to push power and wealth downward and outward to create a middle class. If you look at the aspiration of the 19 – if you look at Lyndon Johnson saying 'end poverty.' And also I think, Lyndon Johnson – part of ending poverty was providing health care. So as, like, related to this war on poverty was 1965, when he signs legislation that creates Medicare and Medicaid. Well, the legislation that just passed today, if it's anything like the previous version, threatens to eliminate 14 million people from Medicaid coverage over the next decade. Right? We're lo – What we're talking about is not impossible – we did it as a country. We believed in it as a people, and we're losing ground right now. We can get this back – and it's not like okay then, you know, power will be completely evenly distributed and everything will be good – we'll have to always fight for it. But we've already done it. We can do it again.

CALONGE: Question over here?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, um, so, in kind of your talk, it reminded me of a lot of conversations I've had with um... other people, a lot of times more libertarian people, um, and... so, first of all, a lot of people don't believe that there's inequalities, and so like we can use health care as a good example of that – which, I mean, that's a hard argument, because there's stats and if you're not going to listen to that, whatever, but – what I think is interesting is then, how to address inequality? So, say health care, and so say like, the Affordable Care Act and what it could have – what it could do, maybe if we don't lose it, for inequality in health care, but the hard thing – I feel like equality has been co-opted by people who are opposing those things, and saying 'Oh, but any sort of policy that addresses inequality is unequal, and so therefore, like all it does is create divides.' And I've heard that a lot in Black Lives Matter, with saying, 'all lives matter, blue lives matter.' And so, how do you address that? Because I think a big issue there is that people are uncomfortable with privilege.

HANEY LÓPEZ: Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You know, I'm not sure if that fits into the dog whistle politics so much, but you know, how to address that while, well we want equality, but in doing so, we're going to have to give up something, or maybe not give up something, but we're going to have to share.

HANEY LÓPEZ: It's a great question. I would put it differently. I would say people are doing their darndest to make sure they're ignorant about privilege and inequality. Right? Right, it's like, so, you know, I was talking to the son of a friend of mine, and he was talking about, he was a member of a fraternity and he would say they were so ignorant, they had a Cinco de Mayo party and dressed up like Mexicans, and it was so obviously offensive, but they all said it wasn't... and I was like, you know, you're at an elite school – those kids aren't ignorant. Those are smart kids. There's something else going on, and we need to really think about what that other thing going on is, and I think it's this – maybe consciously, but certainly unconsciously, you got a lot of people who feel that the current arrangement of power and worth in society favors them. And they are going to make sure that nothing troubles their sense that that is normal and legitimate and the way the world should be. And so, part of the reason I'm really pushing for this idea, this paradigm shift, that goes from talking about race as something that just hurts people of color, to talking about race as something that hurts everybody – whites included – is because I think we need to – this is like, deeply strategic – we can't make inroads with a majority of whites unless they come to see that racism hurts them. And we need to make that point.

Now I wanna – there's several caveats here that are super important. One, I think we need to have the racism as a divide-and-conquer weapon with communities of color, too, partly because of dynamics within and between communities of color. How are we gonna build solidarity within the Latino community, when half of our community thinks they're white. And how are we gonna build solidarity between Latinos and African Americans... right? And is it enough to say, 'Hey, we're all minorities.' Not according to a lot of folks. Right? So we need a sort of divide-and-conquer conversation.

It's also true that we need a lot of people saying, 'I got the divide-and-conquer stuff. That's not what I wanna focus on. I wanna focus especially on how racism harms communities of color, and I wanna focus on consciousness-raising, polarization' – I got that – so I'm all for that. But at the same time, we need a conversation that says to whites, 'racism is what is killing you and your children.' Now, some whites will get the antiracist message, rooted just in morality. And that'll get us to 20 percent, 30 percent? But if you – but to really have a governing majority that can bring government back on the side of people, you need to get to 55 or 60 percent. Right? Now, I'm not saying make a purely strategic or pragmatic argument, I actually think this is a values argument. It's a sort of 'this is divide-and-conquer, this is hurting all of us, this is recognizing our shared humanity,' right? It's a 'this is how you take care of your family, this is how you take care your children,' – these are deeply moral arguments.

All I'm saying is – and this is a challenge for a lot of people in the sort of 'race-left' – do not lead with the idea that whites need to feel guilty or responsible for centuries of racism. Don't lead with that. Because when you lead with that – yes, some people get it. But a lot of people are like... right, and then they invent all sorts of rhetorical devices to say, 'Well, you know, whenever you talk about slavery, that's racism against white people 'cause you're pretending that I'm responsible, and only because I'm white,' – and you get all that baloney. Don't get sucked into those baloney conversations 'cause that's not what really is going on – what's really going on is this deeper sense of... 'I don't really see how ending racism helps me.' And we actually need to be like, 'Well [ending] racism helps you because it helps take care of your future, it helps take care of your children, helps take care of your family, it's this moral demand that you recognize a shared humanity'... when you get people there, then you can turn around say, 'Hey, by the way, we've gotta talk about white privilege and slavery and a legacy of centuries of discrimination.' Right we'll get there. Right I'm not saying we're not going to have that conversation, I'm not – here's what I'm not saying, there's two things. To the – I think the weight – the common sense right now is 'don't ever talk to white people about race. Don't do it. You can't have a helpful conversation with whites about race. It just makes them upset, and makes them defensive, and they shut down.' And I'm rejecting that position.

There's another position that says, 'We need to talk to white people about 400 years of racism.' And I'm saying, not at first. Let's talk to whites about race, but let's talk to whites in a way that creates an opening for them to see themselves as victims, and as having a strong personal interest to end racism, to take care of their own family and their own children, and that will create the opening that will allow us to have this fuller conversation. Right? And so that's a – I think that's what needs to happen.

CALONGE: I think we're going to have to stop now. So I'd like you to join me in once again thanking Professor Ian Haney López.

HANEY LÓPEZ: Thank you all, I really appreciate it. Thank you.

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CALONGE: I know we're at the end of time, I have a few wrap-up comments. I saw a number of hands go up at the end, I apologize for that. But, if you're interested in hearing more from Professor Haney López, he'll be back in Denver on October 6th as a keynote speaker at the Colorado Center on Law and Policy's Pathway from Poverty breakfast. And their flyer is on the tables in the back, if you want to learn more about the event.

HANEY LÓPEZ: If I could just – let me just sort of interject right there. Right now I'm engaged in a project with a linguist and a D.C. policy think tank to try and figure out the best language to use to express this idea of divide-and-conquer politics, right, and to do poll testing and focus groups and whatnot – that's what I'm gonna talk about in the fall. So do come to the fall talk, it won't be this, it'll be like, okay what's the language that we use to actually move this out into the public. Seizing an opportunity for self-promotion – okay.

CALONGE: So, um... you know, it's difficult to have strong feelings and stand up in front and try to be not expressing strong feelings, and if I overstepped bounds by expressing a little dismay over the vote in the House of Representatives, I just want to tell you it's because I know that the translation of that current bill into law will impact Colorado.

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We now enjoy our lowest un-insurance rate ever – at less than seven percent – and that will change, and that will translate to shorter lives in Colorado. There's no way around that outcome. And yes, that makes me emotional. So, I apologize if I've overstepped a political line. I certainly respect the political process as it has to outlie, and I hope you'll forgive me.

We know we can't solve these issues alone. We have to partner with you, with other residents in the community. We have to engage in a dialogue that's inclusive and not separative, and so, I'm looking for that inclusive messaging.

The slides will be posted on our website next week – www.coloradotrust.org. We'll post the video in the next couple of weeks. Please fill out the survey. They really help us improve our events. And I can't let you go before I thank the team that put today together. The Colorado Trust staff, Maggie Frasure who oversaw so much of the event today, the staff here at Mile High Station and Open Media Foundation for everything they've all done to make today possible. And especially you, because you're really what makes today a success, thanks for coming.