

The Problem with Jon Stewart Podcast Episode 3 Transcript

Miguel Carrascal: We're ready whenever you guys are.

Jon Stewart: All right. We're here. This is episode — I don't know what episode this is. This is episode three? Three! How do you, how do you not know what episode is when it's only three?

[LAUGHS]

Jon: That's seemingly sad. Says something poorly about me.

[INTRO MUSIC]

Jon: All right, kids. Ugh we are here. It is the podcast. I've got Kay and Trey here, and we're going to talk a little bit during the whole show. Kay, you're a writer.

Kasaun Wilson: Yes.

Jon: Trey, you're an associate producer.

Trey Sherman: That's right.

Jon: A producer of associates. By the way, Kasaun's birthday. I don't know if that's, if that's an appropriate piece of information to put out on a podcast.

Kasaun: No, it's fine. Thank you, Jon.

Trey: Yeah. Happy birthday, Kausaun.

Kasaun: Yeah, it's nice.

Jon: We're going to talk. And then later on in the program I am talking to this guy was the head security officer at Facebook, Alex Stamos. And it's very, can I tell you this? Topical. But the Alex Stamos thing I think is interesting on the Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen. Did you watch any of her testimony about Facebook to Congress?

Kasaun: I haven't seen it yet.

Jon: She testified. She's like, she was on 60 Minutes, and she testified that Facebook harms people, sows division, undermines democracy, et cetera, et cetera. And she said that Facebook puts profits before people. And when I heard her say that, I thought, I'm pretty sure that's what companies do. Like, isn't that just, oh my God, wait till she finds out what Pepsi puts in its drink like? It's, that's I don't know what to say.

Kasaun: I don't think McDonald's is having a board meeting right now, "Guys, we need to talk about the people."

[JON LAUGHS]

Kasaun: No, they're like, "how many tweets can we get on the McRib today?"

Jon: That's exactly right. Here's what they're not saying. "I got to tell you, we got to really start pushing these salads, man."

[KASAUN LAUGHS]

Jon: "Because they're because the McRib is bringing this country down. And we've got to, we've got to start putting people before profits."

Kasaun: The frappes are not for the people.

Jon: That -- can I tell you something? Here's what they need to change, their little sign out front of the McDonald's, It's got to say, "billions helped."

[LAUGHS]

Jon: Not served -- helped.

Trey: McDonald's has hands down the best fries --

Jon: Of course.

Trey: -- I think of any fast food restaurant out there. Can we all agree?

Jon: No battle here.

Kasaun: No battle. Research is not here, so I feel very comfortable saying, Ronald Reagan is personally responsible for crack cocaine, mass incarceration, and the release of McDonald's fries in the black community.

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: That's how addictive those fries are. It's like, why am I, why am I scratching myself at 1:00 in the morning? Why am I out here? Why am I on Hollywood Boulevard?

Jon: And nothing has been able to? And you believe that was -- so Reagan, along with the CIA, is behind the fries?

Kasaun: Yes, I believe "just say no" was originally about a two piece.

Jon: About the fries?

Kasaun: Yes. A four piece nugget, a fry, and sweet and sour sauce.

Jon: Kasaun, what did you spend your birthday doing today, by the way?

Kasaun: Oh, I mean, so many things. I went online, and working on episodes, so I've been looking up things about reparations. So that's fun! I mean talk about leisurely and fun and low risk, high reward. Slavery and reparations.

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: I mean.

Jon: Happy birthday to you.

Kasaun: I just want everybody to know if you work on The Problem with Jon Stewart, the algorithm of your Google searches are, it's — the FBI would have a field day.

[JON LAUGHS]

Jon: I can't wait. You know what? We got a FOI, everybody on the show —

[KASAUN LAUGHS]

Jon: — Just to make sure that you guys are still okay. I'm very worried now that there's all kinds of files being compiled in the NSA and elsewhere. Now we did the freedom episode —

Kasaun: Yes.

Jon: — And we talked a lot about freedom and how it concerns masking and things like that and then we talked to some dissidents in other countries. So I ask you, Trey —

Trey: Mm hmm. Me.

Jon: — Kasaun, what is the state of freedom in America today and what was your feelings watching the episode? And tell me, like I'm an old white man.

Kasaun: I will say working on the episode, I never want to see the insurrection footage ever again.

Jon: Really. You don't like watching tourists on a tour of the Capitol, just taking pictures and walking in between the velvet rope?

Kasaun: I'm sorry, Jon Stewart. Is that, was that what happened?

Jon: Yeah, no, we just we were there. I mean, they were there. We... I've got to go.

Kasaun: The most advanced school trip of all time.

[JON LAUGHS]

Kasaun: Is just the worst episode of magic school bus that ever... Miss Frizzle went dark.

Jon: Don't don't even.

Kasaun: It gets dark. I will say watching the insurrection, I thought my overwhelming thought was that that was clearly a white people's first time ever protesting. Like white people, you guys suck at protesting. You guys are terrible. At least one Black people loot, we take things you can actually use like dishwashers.

[JON LAUGHS]

Jon: Are you saying people don't need a gavel?!

Kasaun: No!

Jon: People need a gavel. You don't know. Let's say you're in a meeting and it's you know, there's some murmuring, wouldn't you want to gavel that?

Kasaun: I don't know how much street value Mitch McConnell's letter opener has.

Jon: Trey, do you feel like masks and vaccines are the greatest threat to freedom in America today?

Trey: My take on masks and vaccines is that people are reacting to threats that don't really exist.

Jon: Yes.

Trey: Because we've always done vaccines.

Jon: Right.

Trey: And suddenly that's a threat to freedom. It's a freedom we've always been willing to give up for, you know, collective well-being.

Jon: Right. Kasuan, what, you know I think that's such an interesting point is we've created solutions to these threats that don't seem like they're threats. But there, there must be a purpose to why they're deemed threats.

Kasaun: Yeah, I think one thing, one challenge we had writing this episode is we — it may be the one episode, “Freedom” is such a huge umbrella, that everything we talked about felt like it was supposed to be its own episode.

Trey: Mm hmm.

Jon: That's interesting.

Kasaun: Vaccine, the history of vaccines: we could do a whole episode on that. We talked about women's rights, like the idea that people are protesting with “my body, my choice,” when it's like we kind of been saying that all this time. The audacity to say I can't breathe, which is like, “oh, you can!”

Jon: Boy, you can. Well, that was the thing. You know, I was I think I was talking to Chappelle about this and we were you know, we were discussing what was happening in Michigan. And he was just like, you know, “now they know what it feels like.” You know, Black people have felt this way for a long time. And you took away, you made one change to what they could do and they couldn't last two weeks without coming in and storming a capitol with guns.

Kasaun: Yeah, I think one of the most important lines from the episode and I'm glad it's still in there is like, “if you define freedom as 100 percent of everything that you want, 95 percent, taking away five percent for the greater good is going to feel like oppression.”

Jon: Yes!

Kasaun: And even getting into like Hitler and slavery and all of those grand concepts that we've now drawn up over masks and vaccines, it's like your definition of freedom is going to also define your “Hitler,” based on if it's just complete convenience.

Jon: Right.

Kasaun: Then, yeah. If someone's taking away your convenience, it's going to feel like Hitler.

Trey: I do think that we have to acknowledge how ideas of white supremacy definitely still inform, like a lot of our institutions, it's in the minds of everyday Americans. And part of what I think these sort of criticisms about losing freedoms is that we don't want to lose white supremacy like white people don't wanna, nobody wants to give up their status.

Jon: Right. And people don't give it up willingly, certainly.

Trey: Right. And I really do think in part like that's what it's about when we talk about the masks and the vaccine it's like I need to have agency over my own decisions. No one wants to give that up.

Jon: Do you think some of it is a concern? Whether it be sort of primordial or subconscious or those kinds of things that if we no longer, meaning white people, have the supremacy, that we will somehow be treated the way that minorities have oftentimes been mistreated in this country. That to give that up means you are suddenly as vulnerable as we've made other populations in the country.

Kasaun: Absolutely, I do. And I think that's, I think that's why a lot of the fight among things like critical race theory, I think that's why those concepts have been hijacked in a way. And I think even some of the things we talk about in office, like freedom, even concepts like socialism, to a certain degree, those things get hijacked from what they actually are at the core, which is like critical race theory, like let's teach what actually happened in history. And it's not even an agenda or an intention, but literally just a legalistic view of history in a way that teaches history in a way that some schools just don't. That's what it is.

Jon: So you're a communist, is what you're saying.

Kasaun: Well, OK, Jon, that's how rumors start. Let's not.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: Isn't it so interesting, though, that in defense of it, critical race theory, a thing that most people do not understand, and if you were to ask them about it, they would give you ridiculous commentary on it. That that is seen as so insidious and dangerous, but a virus that is clearly invisible and killing people is dismissed. And what does that say about us that people in this country are more fearful of the truth about our history than a novel virus that seems to have no cure.

Trey: In large part, I think it comes down to the fact that a lot of us have lost, we've lost the freedom to think freely. We are sitting around waiting to be told what to believe by Twitter or people within our same ideological thinking.

Jon: Right.

Trey: And I was talking to my dad about this recently and he has a saying that, "what people believe is more powerful than what is true."

Jon: Dad's a wise man.

Trey: We should have him on.

Jon: Your dad, it could be the — What's your dad's name?

Trey: So this should be straightforward. I'm sorry it's not.

Jon: This should be pretty straight.

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: Nelson Mandela, like.

Jon: I got to tell you, it was, it was the pause right there I was like, "Oh, this is about to get good."

Trey: OK, well, I have —

Kasaun: You may have heard of him. His name is Barack Hussein Obama.

Trey: I have a confession to make.

Jon: All right. All right.

Trey: My name is not Trey at all.

Jon: Oh, Trey is because you're the third.

Trey: Oh, look at, look at the leaps you've made. You know how often I have to explain.

Jon: Trey is for the third.

Trey: Yes, I'm the third William.

Jon: William Sherman the third. So your dad is William Sherman, Jr. I really thought I was gonna be like, "My real name is Shadowman."

[LAUGHS]

Jon: It was I thought we were about to go into like a superhero reveal, like where Trey was going to be, like, "I've got a confession to make. I have electro-powers and my real name isn't Trey. It's Electroboy."

Kasaun: I felt so bad. I was like, just please don't say R. Kelly, please don't say R. Kelly.

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: Oh, whatever you do, please don't say R. Kelly.

Trey: Even if that was the truth, I wouldn't have said R. Kelly.

Jon: That's hilarious.

Kasaun: Speaking of freedom,

Jon: Segueway! Speaking of R. Kelly should be the way we get into any new subject. Speaking of R. Kelly, so freedom. So for when you see all this is there an eye roll in any way for a Black person living in America, when the big discussion now is about fear of this terrible future where the government mandates restrictions on your on your freedom and watching, like you say, white people freaking out about even the smallest of things that you would think you were doing for the betterment of the social good.

Kasaun: I have two answers for that.

Jon: Please.

Kasaun: One is yes, I think it's dismissive and hurtful and it does belittle the experience of a lot of people who view history through just very practical eyes to equate mask mandates or taking a vaccine or just saying like, hey, our job requires you to take a vaccine and saying, "I have the

freedom not to.” It's like, well, you have the freedom not to work at this job as well. Like you can't work in McDonald's and wear a Burger King shirt.

Jon: And maybe it's this, if the default setting of America is white, then there is an entitlement to that. You come with a set of expectations about what you are entitled to and even a little chipping away at that will feel like oppression and persecution.

Trey: I couldn't help but think about places across the world where there are front line workers who are desperate just to get their first vaccine –

Jon: Mm hmm.

Trey: Right. It's just the stark contrast to, like you said, it's the entitlement and the privilege to say you have a choice or think you have a choice when this is like some people's lifeline.

Jon: And also paint it as a virtue. The thing that I'm always interested in is, it's not, “This is my choice and if it hurts the public good...” It does. It's portrayed as virtuous that this is actually a stand for freedom for the people. It's this strange understanding of freedom as being exclusive.

Kasaun: Which leads to my second feeling on it, which is. People who are anti-mask or anti-vax aren't just white people, I know plenty of Black people, but I will say as a Black person, it is nice not to be the face of the anti maskers. We have thoroughly enjoyed sitting back and watching you guys take the brunt of all the anti-mask and anti-vaxx.

[JON LAUGHS]

Kasaun: Being Black in America is like being Scottie Pippen.

[JON LAUGHS]

Kasaun: Everybody knows how important we are to this team, but the ball goes through Mike, and that's –

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: – that's what, that's what this is. But it's nice to just have a play off where we can just in our group chat, laugh at white people who are threatening doctors at school board meetings. Like what kind of gangsta life do you think you're living at a third grade school board meeting? And so, yes. Am I offended? Yes, but it's also nice to be in the group chat and be like, “Yo, Tennessee's trippin' fam.”

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: Like that's when — if you notice, we've been very quiet.

Jon: It's also whether you're portraying it as a freedom initiative, as a virtue, as this thing that you're doing to stand up like the great patriots of this country. It's being portrayed now, like if you are not going to wear a mask in a Wendy's, you're akin to Paul Revere.

Kasaun: Right.

Jon: Is there something also about being asked to sacrifice for a country that you feel has let you down or that hasn't fought very hard to remove the barriers that still remain in place.

Kasaun: My experience being Black, I can't speak for all Black people.

Jon: Unfortunately, that is today. Kasaun is about to speak. No. All Black people are about to be Kasaun.

Kasaun: You're about to get me shot! All right, so grits –

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: – Salt and butter. No, no no, that'll really get me shot.

Trey: Who starts a sentence with grits?

Jon: That is going to be a very sensitive topic.

Kasaun: Please cut that out, podcast. But being, my experience being a Black man in America has already been intrusive. So adding a mask and a vaccine doesn't feel that different to me. I've gone to a high school where I've had to take my bag off and walk through a metal detector and have my bag sifted through before I can go to homeroom. So the idea of wearing a mask for the greater good doesn't seem all of that different to me.

Jon: Was there, was there anything that that surprised you when you were going through the freedom episode in it's sort of audacity. Were there any of the clips where these people are losing their minds over... what would they do if they faced real oppression?

Kasaun: Yeah, I think it was the sum of a lot of "freedom ain't free" clips.

Jon: Right.

Kasaun: And I think the discussion at those clips sort of brought up was the idea of how we define freedom in public.

Jon: Mm hmm.

Kasaun: Defining freedom as the ability to decide whether or not you can wear a mask versus whether the pay scale for men and women are is better than it was in the 80s, 90s and 2000s, even 2010s.

Jon: Any issue that we look at, race, gender, socioeconomic class, they will all play really large roles in it because that's how our culture is stratified.

Trey & Kasaun: Mm hmm.

Jon: But I'm always surprised that — it's almost like in this country, we want to make sure that if you end up inventing Tesla, you'll get to keep all your billions. But we, I think we should spend more time making sure that the bar of entry to freedom is lower, to allow families to take chances without feeling like they lose a place to live or their kids don't eat or they don't get

health care. To me that's freedom and we're a rich enough country and prosperous enough country that we could do that.

Kasaun: We can talk about ideas, but how does it affect people?

Jon: Right.

Kasaun: How do our laws affect people? And, I think if our freedom doesn't affect people, then what are, what are we actually doing? I think if what we're doing is affecting people in the wrong way, it doesn't matter how moral we think it is, how great we think it is, like something has to change.

Trey: I've had conversations about the fact that most Americans and I would dare to say most people don't have what they need —

Jon: Right.

Trey: — in terms of the jobs that exist, the money they pay, whether or not they can get access to grocery stores or a good education or —there are so many areas that are preventing us from living up to the American dream that we're all sold. It's just funny to me that our conversation about freedom does not, you know, address any of those things.

Jon: Doesn't have to be purposeful, though?

Kasaun: I think one thing that I've always thought is, is, is the American system broken?

Jon: Mm hmm.

Kasaun: Or is it working the way it was intended? Is this what it was supposed to be all along? Because the idea of changing the course would have to acknowledge that this is not about interior decorating the House of America, it's working on the beams and maybe figuring out that what it was built on may not be as sound as we want to say it is.

Trey: We say we love our workers, we say we love our vets, we say we love freedom, and on the other side of the coin is like the reality. Right. I think that's kind of indicative of how America just is and has been like we proclaim one thing and then exercise the opposite in many cases.

Jon: Is there a greater gap between reality and rhetoric than “all men are created equal and I have slaves.” We started off —

Trey: Which is like the foundation, right?

Jon: — Right! That's the first move we made. “All men are created equal and we will fight the tyrants. By the way, I just want to mention very quickly —”

Kasaun: “Make me a sandwich!”

[TREY LAUGHS]

Jon: – That's a really important point because moving towards the freedom that you're talking about then feels like a loss. So now women want to vote. “So, okay, we can't have slaves anymore, but here's what we're going to do; we're going to make sure they don't have the political power or the economic power to really rival us. We can't let them get too strong because they cannot rival our power.”

Kasaun: Which is the issue with the race conversation, because when people say like, “Well, you aren't a slave and I wasn't, I'm not a slave owner, you're free.” It negates the fact that systems have consequences generationally.

Jon: Yes.

Trey: It goes back to what I was saying about what America set proclaims versus what it is. And I think white people for so long have gotten to believe in what it proclaims and then are now realizing that that is not freedom, that's not equality, that's not justice, that's not any of these things. And if I had been sold a lie my whole life —

Kasaun: I think if you went to a doctor's office and a doctor wanted to tell you you had lung cancer, the worst thing for that doctor to do is be like, “but here's your leg. It looks great.” And that's what conversations on race have been, which is there's a minority of my body that has been killing me and it can spread, but you're highlighting things that look like they're working fine.

Jon: Right. To absolve yourself of the responsibility of curing the disease.

Kasaun: Yes. If there is a police killing in my neighborhood, I don't need you to come and do the nay nay at my school.

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: I, I actually don't need that at all. I can do without your electric slide, Officer Green.

[JON LAUGHS]

Kasaun: I just need you to get the racist police officers out of the district.

[JON LAUGHS]

Kasaun: And that's and that's where it gets to be systemic. And that's the part that's so painful and hurtful.

Jon: Why is it so f***ing hard when that seems so obvious?

Kasaun: Because you have to open up a body that you want to put a Band-Aid on.

Jon: Right.

Kasaun: You have to do surgery in a place where you want to just go home and do an inpatient procedure. That's where it gets from — that's where it goes to systemic from just one bad apple. It's do I want to look at the apple or do I want to dissect the tree?

Jon: Right. I think there's there's always been this sense that there's a real America. And they speak it out loud now on news networks, which is "we're being replaced." This it used to be a very fringe theory that some powers that be, some deep state, is purposefully bringing in nonwhite people to replace white people and erase their culture. It feels like everything that is brought up with that kind of urgency is about what Trey was saying earlier. White supremacy being over. They wouldn't, I don't think they would call it that, but I think it's that idea of which America are — like when somebody says "Make America Great," I think if you were to say what makes America great, I don't know that we'd get any of the same answers.

Kasaun: And here's the thing, I think if there's anything that this showed about America to me is that if we needed to mobilize to create change, we have the ability to do it. To be able to scroll through social media countless times throughout the day and see, like, people protesting, people out, it's like if we just apply that to education, if we applied that to building a middle class, if we applied to all of these other things that are actually taking away people's actual freedom. If we did that with climate control, if we did that with taking care of animals, if we did that with women's rights and making equality for all, like these are efforts that we actually have the, this shows, that we actually have the ability to create a different world if we could all agree that that was what was taking away our freedom.

Trey: And that's part of what my take away was from working on the episode, was that we talked about the ways that people think that their freedoms are at risk, but all the ways that Kasaun just named are the ways that, you know, freedom actually is at risk if we don't, you know, improve in a lot of those areas.

Jon: Right. On that note, we're gonna take a break. After these very sobering conversations, I think it's time for some levity —

Kasaun: I agree.

Jon: — That's my feeling. Now the writers, providers of levity. That is in Latin, I don't know if that's a Latin phrase or not, but it's you are the providers of levity. I'm sure there's a good Latin phrase for that. And in celebration of free speech, the writers will speak their hearts and minds. Were you a part of this, Kasaun?

Kasaun: I was absolutely.

Jon: And did you speak your heart and mind?

Kasaun: I said a lot of things that I regret.

Jon: Trey?

Trey: I wasn't in it, but I can't wait to hear.

[JON LAUGHS]

Jon: Done.

Writers Say Whatever They Want

[TRANSITION]

Robby Slowik: I'm Robby Slowik, and we're talking about freedom.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: Hell yes! From our episode, we found out that for a lot of people, freedom means saying and doing whatever the f*** they want, which inspired me and the other writers to say whatever the f*** we want for the podcast. Let's start with Rob.

Rob Christensen: Yo, every man on TikTok over the age of 35 needs to have the FBI in his laptop right now looking at his photos. This is a children's application, you weirdo! Why are you watching 16 year olds dance? What the fuck is wrong with you? Why are we normalizing this? Over 60 percent of the people on TikTok are under 24 years old. Over 60 percent of the people on TikTok are women. Why are you dancing for children, you fucking shady goof?! Oh, especially if you're a male stand up comedian and your, your material is appealing to 16 year old girls. It's not good! Calm the fuck down! Get off the internet! You fucking weirdos!

[MUSIC CUE]

[LAUGHS]

Robby: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. And everybody follow me on TikTok @RobbySlowik.

[LAUGHS]

Robby: If you get a chance. Maria?

Maria Randazzo: Raincoats are for losers! Are you scared of getting a little wet? You need some "Paddington Bear" ass looking jacket to keep you safe? The next time you see someone in a raincoat, push them into a puddle. Children included.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: Maria, advocating violence against children, that's real freedom, and we love to see it. Kasaun!

Kasaun: Most overrated movies of all time: "The Godfather," "Die Hard," "Pulp Fiction," "Goodfellas," "The Notebook," "Mulholland Drive," any Batman movie before "The Dark Knight," or "The Five Heartbeats," and I've also never seen any of those movies.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: Love that take. All good, love that take. Love that you decided to throw in one black movie at the end just in case people had assumptions.

Kasaun: Black Lives Matter.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: Tocarra, hit us with some freedom.

Tocarra Mallard: Okay, "Friends" was better when it was a little show on Fox called "Living Single," and the fact that we don't talk about this every day is capital R racism.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: I have to just accept that and say nothing.

Tocarra: That's right.

Robby: Chelsea, you're up.

Chelsea Devantez: Okay, anyone who makes fun of adult women with bangs is a pedophile.

[MUSIC CUE]

[LAUGHS]

Robby: Strong take and I absolutely can't say anything about it under the circumstances. Wait, that sounds like I'm a pedophile. Cut that immediately. Those aren't the circumstances, I meant. What I mean is you have bangs, I'm not a pedophile. Robby Slowik, not a pedophile. Follow me on TikTok @RobbySlowik.

[LAUGHS]

Robby: Henrik, break us off with some freedom.

Henrik: They told me not to say this, but toast is too hot.

[HENRIK LAUGHS]

Henrik: It comes out of the toaster too hot. And I don't mean it's too spicy. It's the perfect amount of spicy. It's too hot to touch. You want a hot take? Try taking the hot toast out of the toaster. I want breakfast! Not to burn my little fingies.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: Henrik loves all the movies from Kasaun's list, except "The Five Heartbeats."

[LAUGHS]

Robby: All right, Jay, you're up.

Jay Jurden: Kids should be able to steal anything without repercussions. Kids don't have jobs, they have tiny hands, they cannot carry that much. Food, toys, diamonds; a kid probably mined the diamonds anyway. Kids can steal, just not from me.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: Totally agree. And fuck bitch ass parents who make their kids bring back the stuff they stole. Kris, hit us.

Kris Acimovic: Nobody is hot anymore, and that's okay.

[MUSIC CUE]

Robby: Made eye contact with me while you said that, don't know why, but fair enough.

Kris: No, you were never hot, Robby. But it's a relief for everyone else.

Robby: Follow me on TikTok @RobbySlowik. Decide for yourself. All right. I got one more and I'm just going to say it, I'm coming out. I got the freedom. I think Kelly Rowland is better than Beyoncé.

[MUSIC CUE]

Henrik: Jesus Christ.

Jay: Say, do it again.

[MUMBLING]

Jay: Do Kelly Rowland. Do Kelly Rowland.

Tocarra: Did you say "Kelly Rauw-land!?"

Chelsea: No! No! No!

Robby: I have to own it. I have to own it.

Chelsea: He has to own it. Don't correct it. He said it. He said it.

Tocarra: Congratulations, you just ruined Twitter for all of us and I promise to say something nice at your funeral.

Robby: Thank you, Tocarra.

Kris: Your corpse will also not be hot.

[TRANSITION]

Jon: Next up we're going to talk to Alex Stamos. He worked at Facebook and apparently he can fix all of this.

Jon: Are you guys on Facebook? Is that a thing anymore for people of this? That, the face Trey made, you can't see it on the thing, but the face said to me, like, "I haven't given up on MySpace." That's where that's the face that I saw.

[KASAUN LAUGHS]

Trey: I don't know about that.

Jon: Clinging to an older version.

Trey: MySpace was, I think, a golden era.

[JON LAUGHS]

Trey: Before everything got tainted and turned into this problem we have today. But, no, Facebook is basically what I would have used to remember Kasaun's birthday today. That's about the extent to which I use Facebook.

Jon: Oh, really? So it it functions almost like your online mother, where it'll just every now and again, you'll get a notification like. "Trey, yt's Kasaun's birthday today." Or, "Trey, you've got an appointment at so-and-so."

Trey: Yeah, and ever since this whistleblower came out, people have been pointing things out about Facebook to me that I have started to notice. The fact that it tries to intentionally like incite anger or rage by showing you these types of things that you'll engage, you're more likely to engage with something that's going to like upset you. Right? And —

Jon: Oh see, I thought it was only like they would try and show you your interests. It really shows you things that are going to bother you.

Trey: Right.

Jon: Oh, that's interesting.

Kasaun: I'm on Facebook strictly because I'm a comedian, and I just found out from my niece that it's all for old people, and I didn't believe her until I went on my Facebook and found out like I have like 40 mutual friends named Earl. And I was like, "Oh, okay."

Jon: You know, they stopped naming people "Earl" in I think it was 1966.

Kasaun: Yep.

[LAUGHS]

Trey: I heard that too.

Kasaun: I think once the last Earl stepped over from Selma to Montgomery.

[JON LAUGHS]

Kasaun: And that's how that worked. Once once the last, once the last guy in a three piece suit made it across.

Jon: If you don't write a short film called "The Last Earl."

[KASAUN LAUGHS]

Jon: I am never! I am never! So that's -- we are going to bring this up to Alex Stamos. He was the former chief security officer at Facebook. He is the current director of the Stanford Internet Observatory, which, to my mind, is they'll be the first ones to make contact with aliens. That's just what it sounds like. It sounds like somebody who has a kind of an in with an interplanetary intelligence.

Kasaun: Sounds about right.

Jon: Let's bring him in.

[TRANSITION]

Interview with Alex Stamos

Jon: Talking to Alex Stamos, you were at Facebook for how many years?

Alex Stamos: A little over three years. I was the chief security officer, so I supervised the security team. So most of my job was keeping people from breaking in and stealing stuff.

Jon: Stealing people's personal information.

Alex: Right, stealing personal information or breaking things and the like.

Jon: And that's because that's the kind of information that Zuckerberg and them wanted to sell to other people, so they didn't want people coming in and stealing it, because that would be.

Alex: Yeah, I mean, you'd hate for the Chinese government to be in competition with you.

Jon: That's exactly right. And then they came up with TikTok in the whole. It blew up the whole f***ing model. Now nobody knows what to do.

Alex: Right.

Jon: When you saw the woman who was testifying before Congress, Frances Hagen, did you know her at all?

Alex: No, she started after I left.

Jon: Okay.

Alex: So we did not overlap.

Jon: Did you follow at all what she was talking about with Congress?

Alex: I did. Yes, I watched and I, you know, I think she made a lot of accurate points. I think probably more important than her testimony is what's in the documents, because these are actually really complicated issues, and I'm really looking forward to seeing the actual things.

Jon: So you've not actually seen the documents, although I would imagine being the security guy there, you probably had seen the documents in the past.

Alex: Right. Well, so what happened, you know, after the 2016 election, like so like in 2017, our team was doing a lot of the work on Russian disinformation because it was Russia, right? So it was not really our job to handle disinformation. In fact, one of the problems at Facebook was it was nobody's job to handle disinformation.

Jon: Right.

Alex: There was a meeting where somebody actually said, "Russia? That sounds like Alex's problem." Because we had a team –

[JON LAUGHS]

Alex: – Whose job it was to track Russian hackers. Right? And because for a long time, you've had the Russian government, the Chinese government, the Vietnamese government, the Iranians, North Korea, lots of people trying to break into Facebook or to use Facebook or Google or any other platform to hack other people like their dissidents for surveillance and such.

Jon: Or just for schnicks. I imagine sophisticated teenagers who know how to handle themselves online are also making mischief and mayhem at times online.

Alex: That's right. Yeah, yeah, you have all kinds of like, we have this huge, crazy diversity of adversaries from uniformed members of the military who are who are showing up every day, and they're getting paid by their taxpayers to self-interested teenagers who are millionaires because they're stealing so much bitcoin. Right. So you have this huge range of folks.

Jon: Right.

Alex: And so our team are the only ones working on this. And then after kind of 2017 and that experience, Facebook started building a bunch of these integrity teams. Which integrity is the term Facebook uses for what the rest of industry calls "trust and safety," which is effectively preventing people from using your platform to do harmful things, but not the hacking side.

Jon: We're sort of singling out Facebook in a way that excuses all other forms of communication. You know, there was something that Miss Haugen said that struck me because it was the headline that got picked up by all the news organizations, which was "Facebook puts profits over people."

Alex: Right.

Jon: And that was kind of the headline. And I just wanted to say, "Oh my God, wait!! she finds out what Pepsi does. I don't know if you know this, but Mountain Dew doesn't actually make you healthy enough to ride a BMX bike over a waterfall."

Alex: Is that my problem, Jon —

[JON LAUGHS]

Alex: — Is that my BMI problem is I actually listen to the Mountain Dew ad? I appreciate it.

Jon: Mountain Dew, if their advertising was honest, they would just say, like, "Do you have diabetes? Would you like to have diabetes?"

Alex: And be up all night. You're diabetic and you're awake.

Jon: So I guess I'm trying to figure out what is it about Facebook that makes us want to make them be a force for good or a force for, you know, how do we, how do you do that?

Alex: So I think I mean, I think there's a couple of things going on here, right? Like, I absolutely believe that Facebook has a responsibility here, right? Like there is absolute responsibility for Facebook and then the other equivalent companies: you know, YouTube, Google, the Twitters and then the smaller companies, the TikToks and such who are kind of coming up behind. So I do think they have responsibility. I think the other reason —

Jon: Responsibility to what?

Alex: So I'd like to detach the control of other people's speech from the amplification of speech, right? So I think they have a responsibility to not make things worse should they make things better? That's, that's what I think is actually kind of scary here is the idea of like, we want a Facebook or Twitter to kind of improve the overall kind of political environment. I think that is a very scary impulse that a lot of people have right now. Do we want them to not make it worse through the way they design the products in the kind of incentive structure they build. I think that's actually a totally appropriate thing, and that was a big part of the testimony. To kind of back to your original question, I think one of the reasons people get mad at Facebook is everybody can find something on there that they really hate –

[JON LAUGHS]

Alex: – You know, there's the famous quote like, “Hell is other people” where Facebook is other people, right? Like, it's just the representation of the entire broad swath of humanity's output. And so if you want to be angry, you will absolutely be able to find something there that makes you angry. If you want to find people who just reinforce your political beliefs, you can find those people –

Jon: Right.

Alex: – And I think like this is the really hard part is to what extent is that the freedom of individuals to free associate and to also have their own speech among people who decide to hear it and in what cases is the, is the platform promoting it? And I think that's where if I was still at Facebook that I would really be pushing on the inside is that in all of the situations where Facebook is making an intentional decision of you're going to see this. So there's like recommendation pages, there is surfaces at which the company kind of decides to bring something up, there's advertising. I think advertising is also where you start because in those situations, people are paying money to have their speech amplified and that you have like the least kind of free expression concerning privacy concern and I think the most responsibility if you're taking people's money to go push their idea.

Jon: Is what you're saying, their model — their business model, a byproduct of it — is this weaponization and polarization, and they're actually exacerbating and you're just saying they should really try and be more neutral?

Alex: Whether or not it is a reflection or it is driving, I think it is both, right? We have had political polarization in this country for when, before Mark Zuckerberg was born, right? Like most of the, I am not a real social scientist, right? But when you read the social science papers, they talk about a lot of these things starting like in the late 70s, early 80s and that we were just on the continuation of this path.

Jon: I understand. I mean, we also had a civil war.

Alex: Right. That's true.

Jon: Like 1860. And I think they had it was called face talk. And it was a thing where people would stand in front of each other and talk –

Alex: Right. Because people complained about like political ads are so bad.

Jon: – and then they shot each other.

Alex: It's like you have pamphlets saying my opponent had syphilis. Right?

Jon: Right, which by the way it's just a warning to other people. "This gentleman has syphilis, so you should really keep that careful." But I guess my, my point is, you know. I think of the way, like the information ecosystem functions now is the difference between taking a shower and standing in front of a fire hose. It's really about, in some ways just the volume of it is and the relentlessness of it is, I think, what drives some of this polarization and, and anger and all those kinds of things and I don't know how we back out of that.

Alex: Yeah, there's the amount and then just the diversity of voices, which is what cuts both ways. Right? Like, I try to think of what access to information did my dad have when he was my age, right?

Jon: You know what? I can actually answer that question for you, Alex.

Alex: Yeah?

Jon: I'm probably that age.

[LAUGHS]

Alex: No, you're not quite.

Jon: We didn't have much and when we didn't know things, we would just agree not to know them.

Alex: Yeah, right. My dad had the Sacramento Bee. He got every day and there were, you know, three or four broadcast news channels. You know, we probably like, I'm a teenager. We've just gotten our first cable. And so you got a bunch of other stuff and so you got cable news, you got your CNN and your Fox News all of a sudden, which I think we could probably come back to Fox and the other component of this whole thing. And then he had talk radio. And so I grew up in Sacramento, so I got to see a lot of the stuff up front because that's where Rush Limbaugh came from, right? Like, he got big in Sac before he went national. And my dad would listen and kind of hate listen like, it's now looking back. It's like it's a very people will hate read stuff on Facebook or Twitter all the time. And it's like, people hate listen to A.M. back then. And so you have those outlets, but like for those outlets to exist, each of those organizations had to have millions and millions of dollars and sometimes a license from the FCC. And now you have a effectively infinite number of people who can get that much amplification. And the problem is not that they don't have the money to amplify, it's that they have to try to build the audience. And so it's completely kind of changed from a corporation decides this is what we're going to make big to people having to earn it in the process of people, quote unquote. "earning an audience" is a really bad process I think is what we're seeing now, right? That there was there's both the upside of a bigger diversity of voices, but also then when you look at the diversity of voices on the side you don't agree with, that means that, that's you get angry. Like the John Birch people have always existed, but they just have a newsletter and now they have the ability to reach millions and millions of people. This is the really hard part is we want to be respectful of free association and freedom of expression, we also don't want the companies to make it worse.

Jon: I think the issue I'm trying to figure out is — like Cambridge Analytica. Let's talk about there, so. There's an organization that weaponized the algorithm and the information that was utilized on Facebook for a political purpose. Right? And how they misinformed and amplified messages very, very intentionally to create a political outcome, and you see this in the U.S. and you also see it abroad. Like what's clear to me is any technological advance that we make on information will soon be weaponized by somebody for a political purpose. And it's that intersection that feels like the most dangerous.

Alex: Right. Well, back to your historical analogies; the printing press is invented and Europe ends up in hundreds of years of war due to religious strife that's created. Was it better? Was the world better when the Catholic Church controlled, you know, a huge number of the people who were literate in the ability to amplify information? It's hard to argue that the world was a better place when the Catholic Church controlled kind of the dissemination of information, but also then the breaking of that monopoly or oligopoly ends up with all this strife. And so I mean, the nice thing about the historical analogies is that we have ended up adjusting, right? We've adjusted to the invention of radio and the populists and totalitarians who utilized radio so well in the early 20th century. We've adjusted to television to a certain extent. So I do think, you know, our society hopefully will come to some kind of steady state. It's just we have to reduce the amount of human suffering that happens between now and then because you're like, we're not going to put this genie back in the bottle. The cost of moving information around the world has gone to zero. Right? That is effectively the change here. It costs nothing to take shockingly large amounts of data, such as a person talking for an hour on video.

Jon: Mm-Hmm.

Alex: You know what, used to cost Viacom a huge amount of money to do for you for, for "The Daily Show," now anybody can do. Steve Bannon had his own live show covering the election. He even had like kind of a cut rate, Nate Silver. He had like a guy with that thick glasses that —

Jon: I think cut rate Nate Silver is Nate Silver.

Alex: — Ooh ouch, I'm not going to go there.

[JON LAUGHS]

Alex: But like he had, he and the production quality was like 50 percent of the production quality of CNN because the difference between what you can do for a couple for 10 grand or 20 grand in the house versus 100 people producing in CNN's headquarters is not that different anymore.

Jon: And the pandemic, I think, has, has probably locked that in even further because during the pandemic, people got accustomed to a certain lower production value because everybody was on Zoom and so now it really is about content is everywhere and the delineation of it, but then again, you know, when I think about the Green Revolution in Iran without Twitter, those people who were fighting for democracy never connect with each other. There's a lot of places where Facebook and Google and Twitter really can bring about a more democratic and a freer movement. But understand that that's a really powerful weapon that can also be used by your adversaries, like in Myanmar, where they used Facebook to find the dissidents. You know, they reverse engineered social platforms as a way of cracking down on dissidents.

Alex: Yeah.

Jon: And like you say, it'd be great if the world can come to some kind of homeostasis on that. But, man, that's going to take a while and it feels like these social platforms are causing more populist damage than democratic flourishing.

Alex: Yeah, there's both sides, but like you look back at the Arab Spring, right, which existed because of Twitter and Facebook and out of all the countries in the Middle East and North Africa that were involved, only one of them really ended up with a better government, Tunisia, and they're backsliding as well. What you ended up out of the Arab Spring was not a dozen democracies and, you know, constitutions and freedom of expression. What you ended up with was authoritarian governments that were much better at utilizing the internet to suppress their dissidents. It became like a very quick natural selection, so you end up with some of these guys being overthrown, some of them being executed, and then they're just replaced by a political rival who's much smarter about the internet. And so you had this like very quick evolution of an autocratic, autocracy in the Middle East in North Africa.

Jon: Do you see that — man, I hate to get dark here — but there's certainly a case to be made that in America, this 2016 election led to the problems of 2020. And what will replace it is a populist, authoritarian leader that's much smarter about how to utilize social media and those kinds of things. Are we in that same perilous place or am I hyperventilating for no reason like I do when I go on WebMD to find out what certain lumps are?

Alex: Yeah, no. I think, I think you're right. I think this lump actually is a tumor. This is not —

Jon: Oh, Alex. I was really hoping you weren't going to say that.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: I was really hoping you were going to be like, it's just a fatty cyst. It's nothing to worry about. It's lipoma.

[ALEX LAUGHS]

Alex: No, I am really afraid of that, I think. I mean, I think Trump was special in some ways as an individual showman, but he definitely reflects a movement that if other people can pick it up. To me the kind of lack of belief in democratic norms on, from one entire political party, is terrifying to me, right? Like democracy only works when the losers go away quietly and peacefully, like the I think, you know, over our lifetimes, we've totally underestimated those scenes where you have the new president elect walks up the stairs and the president — you know the current president shakes a hand in the first ladies hug. And there's a whole kind of thing in there sitting there and clapping like that peaceful transfer of power is one of these things we've been sleeping on is like, Oh, that's just like a normal. I'm going to go change the channel and watch something else.

Jon: That's a show I'm used to seeing.

Alex: Yeah, right? Like it turns out, that show is incredible. Right like, and that show has been protected by, by the blood of hundreds of thousands of Americans who have died for that right? And we have like we've taken for granted that I am really afraid that 2024 that what is happening in the states is really scary.

Jon: Yeah, I completely agree. And I think, if anything, 2020 just was kind of a hacker moment where somebody went into a system found the weak spots and now 2024. I think what they found was, the real vulnerability in our democracy is that there are certain electoral positions that are partisan but administrative.

Alex: Right.

Jon: And I think what they learned is if you replace this administrative partisan with an ideologue. Well, now nobody certifies the election. We throw the whole f***ing thing into chaos.

Alex: Right, like who's ever wanted to be like, "I'm super excited to be on the board of canvassers for my local county."

Jon: Yeah. And I would imagine that due to the information and polarization that they believe, they're actually, you know, when people talk about misinformation or fighting for freedom, they don't view their polarization as corrosive to democracy. If you listen to the language, it's all the virtue of freedom fighting.

Alex: That's right. Yeah.

Jon: They're all, they're fighting for freedom. What you're talking about is a crisis of conscience, but not in somebody who believes they're a minute man.

Alex: Right. Yeah. We've gotten to the point of where you could create a media environment where you live in a completely alternate world, and that is both through traditional media that you make the choices of what you consume as well as through your social media decisions. And certainly for people who are living within that, they could absolutely decide that they are the ones who are on the side of democracy because the whole thing has been stolen.

Jon: It's really a much broader issue than Facebook or Twitter, but in your mind, are those guardrails that can protect outcomes in election? Is the solution here for people like Zuckerberg to be those to help insulate those guardrails in a way that they have been loath to do.

Alex: Yeah, I mean, when it comes to Zuckerberg specifically, I think actually he's going to have to step down. One of the problems at Facebook is as a founder led company, it is very hard for them to make this real kind of cultural shift that has to happen where the preventing the downside impact of your product is more important than growth, right? Like when you have a CEO who one has never had another job in his life, so this is like all he's been doing since his dorm room, and his entire career there has been about, you know, "we're going to beat all these large competitors. We're going to make all these jumps." You know, people constantly predict Facebook is over. Facebook is over that, those stories have been written. The New York Times has written "Facebook is over", I think, 27 times, right, in the last 12 years, and he beats those people every single time. I think it creates this mindset that is very hard to shift into. "I have won. I now have to be incredibly responsible with what I have won here." So I think for him personally, we probably need Facebook to have a CEO who's not as emotionally attached to kind of the path that got them there to make these changes.

Jon: I can't imagine that any company's shareholders would allow somebody at the top to go, "Look, we're growing like wildfire and we're making s*** tons of money. But guys." I think they're going to have to realize that an authoritarian, permanent minority rule in America will be bad for

their profits. And if they don't think that... I don't, you know, I don't think they change, I don't think the incentives are there for them to change.

Alex: Yeah. I mean, you're right. It's hard. And I think it's, it's even harder in the international context, right? Because in the U.S., you know, none of those senators were saying Facebook is under-regulated in the U.S., right? Because there's very little regulation, a lot of that goes back to the First Amendment. In the global context, a lot of the problem is that Facebook and Twitter and YouTube and other platforms that are made for American audiences that are designed like in the context of we live in a democracy and we have a First Amendment are being massively used against people and that the companies are actually way too close to the current ruling parties. And so we have this actually crazy inversion of you know needing some kind of regulatory structure in the United States, whereas what you might call overregulation overseas, where the people who are currently in charge have incredible power to suppress the speech of their enemies. And and and I think that's one of the things that makes it incredibly hard to deal with because we've got to be really careful in the U.S. when we create levers of control that those levers one, are not used immediately overseas and two –

Jon: And you can't reverse engineer them.

Alex: – Yeah, exactly.

Jon: Intentional, you know, unintentional collateral damage. But isn't that the thing that I always look at in other countries like the Philippines or things like that where this journalist Maria Ressa is, you know, charged with cyber libel and all these other things. And they put her in jail and she's saying that the misinformation there is worse than almost anywhere else. Is that that authoritarians around the world, and I think people like Bannon and all those are a part of this, view those regimes as test kitchens for authoritarian principles. Who is it that, you know, where is it that we demonize a group that's most effective in terms of helping us consolidate our power? What are the best ways to polarize?

Alex: Yes, I would add Brazil and India –

Jon: Sure.

Alex: – Two countries there where you have democratically elected authoritarians. They're winning fair and square. And then they turn around and they utilize the popular support to suppress their enemies.

Jon: Right and they consolidate the judiciary and they consolidate the media and they consolidate all those levers that would function as a kind of opposition. And they consolidate all the administrative democratic levers and make them ideological.

Alex: Yeah, and that's it. I mean, Maria is an incredibly brave person to stand up against an adversary who has control of the judiciary, who controls the local media and then has these thousands and thousands of people who will go push ideas against her online. And so I do think that is something that these companies have to think about. If you're going to operate in the Philippines, if you're going to operate in India, then you do have a basic responsibility to live up to some kind of guidepost other than we're just going to follow local law. I think that is one of those kind of the — it is really easy to say, "OK, we're just we're law abiding citizens, we're gonna follow the law", and that sounds great to everybody. It's also great to say we protect human rights, and it turns out you can't do both of those, right? And so from my perspective, I

would prefer the companies decide we're going to be, we're going to have an idea of what we think human rights are and even if that makes us a little bit colonialist, honestly, in some of these countries, our platform, because we are providing the product, we are providing the amplification, we will decide that we're going to stand up for human rights over the laws that are passed locally that we know are being used specifically to suppress people. And I think that has been a step the companies haven't done because that makes it very hard to operate in those countries.

Jon: Right. But what specifically, other than a theoretical standing up for a more ethical product, what is something specific and actionable that they could do?

Alex: So one, I would like to see on an international basis, especially, I'd like to see the tech companies starting with Facebook to split up the teams who decide what is allowed on the platform and the people who keep governments happy. So at Facebook, that's one big, unified team. I think that's actually a core of a lot of the international problems that —

Jon: They have a team that keeps governments happy?

Alex: – Yeah, government affairs, just like any other big corporation, you have lobbyists. So the lobbyists and the communications people also report to the same person. Now, Nick Clegg, you know, the ex-deputy prime minister of the UK.

Jon: Aye! Aye!

Alex: As the people who decide what is allowable speech, political speech in India. And so that is a bad place to be, we're like our ability to service all of these consumers in India is based upon the Hindu Nationalist Party being happy with us. That cannot help but leak over into what they prioritize. So I think that's one thing. I think there needs to be a massive investment in international content moderation, not necessarily in the political stuff. American companies need to decide "We have a point of view on human rights globally." Like they have to say, like, "this is our point of view and we are not going to be neutral here", right? And if that means that we're going to lose some money, we can do so. But like they can't they can't just pretend that they have neutrality.

Jon: So basically what you're saying is in the war for a free and fair democracy, companies, especially with platforms of that power and communication, have to take a side and that side has to be for equitable democracy, not misinformation.

Alex: That's totally right. I think there's a parallel here of kind of the media view from nowhere for kind of the elite journalistic circles. That people have decided that just saying, "Oh, the Republicans say this, the Democrats say this and then we're gonna balance it"

Jon: Editorial authority and it has to be expressed.

Alex: It's the parallel, I think, for online.

Jon: Alex, I'm with you, man. Hey, thank you so much. Does this get me college credits at Stanford? This conversation? Anyway, it doesn't have to be four credits if it's one credit.

Alex: So rich celebrities getting credit at Stanford turns out to be a thing that is a problem that people going to jail for.

[ALEX LAUGHS]

Jon: Really? What if I told you that I was on the rowing team?

Alex: Oh, you definitely. You have the physique, I think of an Olympic class rower, for sure. Welcome to Stanford. Go Cardinals!

[JON LAUGHS]

Jon: Yeah. All right, Alex. Hey, man, thank you so much. Really appreciate your time and the conversation. Man, I think it's going to be the battle lines of this century.

Alex: Yeah. Thank you, sir. I appreciate you doing this work.

Jon: Thanks, man.

[TRANSITION]

Jon: I found that very interesting and somewhat dispiriting because the guy who was in charge of security for Facebook, his solution for this feels like it's not necessarily on the table because it had to do with companies realizing that fighting for democracy and rights is in their self-interest, capitalistically, which feels like, maybe it won't happen.

Kasaun: I don't think the probability is that high.

[JON LAUGHS]

Trey: Is that, is that even true? Is it in their best interest from a financial standpoint?

Jon: Well, no, that's my my point, because what he was saying was, "If you're in India, in a place where the regime wants you to only use a certain kind of information and they're controlling the dissemination of that information in a much stronger way, that they're applying the levers in a much more authoritarian way than anywhere else. If you don't comply with that, they'll just go, 'Oh, you know who we should talk to, face template, face page. It's the new one that we just created and we'll use them.'" So I think their fear is they lose market share if they push back on what they think are authoritarian or misinformation or exploitative information. I mean, in Myanmar, they use Facebook to find the people who are going against the regime and they, then they, you know, imprison them, kill them. You know, Facebook is used as, a as a tool for the regime.

Kasaun: It's a wiretap.

Jon: Yes, that's exactly right. Before we go, Kasaun, I believe you may have a last treat for us. Would you like to introduce this piece?

Kasaun: Absolutely, Jon!

Jon: Thank you, Kasaun. Very enthusiastic!

Kasaun: So listen, if you've seen the Freedom episode, I actually wrote a sketch for the Queen Jenifer Lewis. And it's a piece where she's talking directly to people who compared mask mandates to slavery in a piece we called 'Oppression Mentor' because you might be new to oppression and you might need some help from black people who've been dealing with it for a really long time. So Jenifer Lewis, of course, killed it as only Jennifer Lewis can, and we wanted to share it with you. So here's the sketch! Take it away, auntie.

[SFX CUE]

[SKETCH CLIP]

Jenifer Lewis: Oh. Hello. I hear wearing a mask has made you oppressed. You might be new to being oppressed. Well, I have some advice to help you out. Tip one, have y'all lost your goddamn minds? Shut the f*** up. Shut the f*** up. Black people have been dealing with oppression for 400 years and y'all couldn't last ten months. They picked cotton. You just have to wear it. We're trying to sell you a mask. Not sell you. You stupid motherf***ers. You're not enslaved. You're uncomfortable and I'm so sorry. A**holes.

[MUSIC CUE]

Jenifer: You are not oppressed. You better put that s*** to rest.

[SFX CUE]

Jon: Final question. If black people are Scottie Pippen in this country, are Jews Steve Kerr?

[LAUGHS]

Jon: Because we have a role. We have a role! It's very prescribed, very small. People love him, some people hate him. But he does every now in a game boom! You know.

Kasaun: You know, in the joke, you'd be Jerry Colangelo.

[LAUGHS]

Kasaun: You're not even on the team really. It just — you put the whole team together and you get to sit in the dock.

Jon: You know what? At first I thought you were gonna say Krauss so I feel a little bit better. I get that.

Kasaun: I wouldn't give you Krauss, man. Not on your —

[JON LAUGHS]

Trey: Right, not on your own show.

Kasuan: Now that my name's out there.

Jon: Trey Sherman, thank you so much. Kasaun Wilson, thank you so much. All right. That is our program. Thank you so much for listening. For more information on the show, our freedom episode, head to the website. You can sign up for our newsletter. It's got all sorts of additional content. We will be back next week. Thank you. Good night.

[MUSIC]

Jon: The Problem with Jon Stewart podcast is an Apple TV+ podcast and a joint Busboy Productions.