

**The Problem with Jon Stewart Podcast**  
**Episode 11 Transcript**

Jon Stewart: It turns out, and I say this with great seriousness. Mark Cuban is a cannibal.

[LAUGHS]

Rob Christensen: Does he eat humans or businesses? Let's clarify.

Tocarra Mallard: That explains the teeth.

Jon: Then he eats them all, we're going to talk to him today on the podcast and he's a cannibal. So Newsweek, get on that. I've accused Mark Cuban of cannibalism [TOCARRA LAUGHS] and he has to answer for that.

Rob: And the show.

Jon: And I'm really hoping that the commentary –

Rob: The show supports cannibalism, just to be clear, we're 100% on board.

Jon: [LAUGHS] We do support it.

[INTRO MUSIC]

Jon: We are back, we are doing the podcast again. We had a lovely break. Lovely is probably overstating it. It was quarantine and a terrible, terrible pandemic –

Tocarra: That is correct.

Jon: – Wreaking havoc. We are here with Tocarra and Rob, writers on the show. Mark Cuban is going to be the guest on the podcast, of course, the owner of the Dallas Mavericks. Also, I guess he's first chair on "Shark Tank." He's almost always first chair, I think. I don't know if it's ranked like that, like an orchestra, but he is always first chair. And so very much looking forward to that. Are you "Shark Tank" fans?

Rob: Yes.

Jon: Are you Dallas Mavericks fans? Are you any of those things?

Tocarra: None of those things.

[ROB LAUGHS]

Jon: Tocarra!

Tocarra: I know Mark Cuban because I was in Indiana, and you know, he went to IU Kelley School of Business, and no IU person will let you forget it.

Jon: Really?

Tocarra: Yes.

Jon: He's like, he's the "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," he's the guy, like he's the prodigal son. He got out?

Tocarra: Absolutely. Like it's – roll out the red carpet any time he's near the state.

Jon: Really?

Tocarra: Yeah, absolutely. [LAUGHS]

Jon: And do you know if they trot him out in classes like, you know, a great business plan would be invent something, sell it for billions and buy a basketball team. I think everyone should try that.

Tocarra: Yes, if Mark Cuban can do it, you can do it.

Jon: If Mark Cuban can do it. You can do it –

[LAUGHS]

Jon: – Rob, what about you? Do you? Are you familiar?

Rob: I went to the Business School of "Shark Tank" –

[LAUGHS]

Rob: – So that's where I learned everything I know about business. So yeah, I'm a bit of a cube head.

Tocarra: A cube head?

Jon: I don't understand on that show because I watch it all the time where they start ripping people to shreds. Like, "how dare you stand before us unprepared to defend your valuation?" And I'm like, dude, you have producers those people didn't like. They're screened. Don't yell at them.

Rob: They're getting set up for failure then.

Jon: All they did is invent something to, you know, make sure that your crock pot functions properly. Like, come on. [ROB LAUGHS] But it's a good conversation. I think you'll be interested. Very engaging guy, by the way. I wasn't sure what I was going to get.

Tocarra: Have you met him before?

Jon: I met him – oh this is a terrible story.

Tocarra: Oh, I love terrible stories. I'm dialed in.

Jon: Do you want me –

Rob: Billionaire sex parties or is that where we're going?

Jon: – Do you want me to do about as name droppy a story, as I could possibly do?

Tocarra: I love that.

Rob: Of course.

Jon: All right. Be prepared.

Tocarra: Don't look sad about it.

Jon: It's sad. [TOCARRA LAUGHS] This gets ugly. I met him at the White House.

Tocarra: Jesus.

Jon: At an intimate dinner.

Tocarra: No.

Jon: With the Obamas.

Tocarra: Stop.

Jon: Mark Cuban.

Tocarra: Nope.

Jon: And Jeff Bezos.

Tocarra: I don't want to hear anymore.

Rob: Oh no. No, no, no.

Jon: I swear to God! [ROB LAUGHS] I swear to God! And a guy who like at the time was like the inventor of the Oculus. [TOCARRA LAUGHS] And so he, the guy who did that was like a venture capitalist, brought all the Oculuses out. And so he put the Oculuses on us, and it was like a movie where like, you're on a train track and the train is coming at you. And it was the first time that we'd ever experienced something like that in like VR. And my wife it has it on and she's freaking out. And so she has to take it off. And so someone goes to help her take it off and they take off her Oculus. And it's Michelle Obama helping her take off the Oculus.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: And she said to me later she goes, I wasn't sure in that moment if that was still like the movie.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: Like, I wasn't sure if part of the virtual reality –

Tocarra: This is so real.

Jon: – Of the movie was, I'm in the White House with Michelle. [LAUGHS]. It was a f\*\*\*ing most bonkers night. Like we walked out of there like, "That was insane."

Tocarra: Yeah. You lost me at "intimate dinner."

Jon: Right? It was like eight to 10 people. It was crazy.

Rob: I do like that they had the spectrum of billionaire there where [TOCARRA LAUGHS] you know you have Cuban on one end, who could be a nice guy. At least he could talk in public. And then on the other end, you have Lex Luthor, Jeff Bezos evil billionaire. You had it all there.

Jon: Can I tell you my greatest memory of that whole night was Jeff Bezos was describing, like the economy of the future. And it was all about like –

Tocarra: Oh God.

Jon: – "Billionaires are going to need services –"

Rob : Oh my God.

Jon: – We're going to need our heads polished. We're going to need – like it was all about the service economy and I was trying to explain to him like, you know, it's funny, but a lot of people, you know, want to feel proud of their work and want to feel like they're contributing in a way that like that society's not just about having. So it's not just running errands for people that have more than you. There's oftentimes there's a fulfillment aspect of it for them. I think he views everybody as like a part of a fulfillment center –

Rob: That's crazy.

Tocarra: Oh yeah.

Jon: – But not in the fulfillment of your soul and the fulfillment of like, I need cheese, bring me my cheese. And like, there's a whole industry of people that will be bringing them cheese. And so I said, like, I think that's a recipe for revolution.

Rob: Absolutely.

Jon: And then like kind of a hush falls over and then you hear Obama from across the couch go, "I agree with Jon."

[LAUGHS]

Jon: And again, I was just like, "What?" At that point, I want it to stand said the whole thing and just be like, "I'm out."

Rob: Yeah, that's all I need.

Jon: That's all I need. I'm done.

Tocarra: Thank you for this dinner.

Jon: Yeah, craziness.

Tocarra: Was the food good? I'm sorry we can move on. I just want to know.

Rob: Oh no let's talk about the food, please.

Jon: Oh, you know, it's interesting. It's just, I don't know if you know this, but when you're in that kind of company, it's just specially designed pellets that have all the nutrients and tastes that you need, and it makes you smarter for like three hours.

Tocarra: I f\*\*\*ing knew it.

Jon: And then you wake up in your underwear somewhere on K Street, and no one really knows what happened. [TOCARRA LAUGHS] You forget everything. I've just now have bits and memories of it, like a fever dream.

Tocarra: Are you sure you have all your organs?

Jon: [LAUGHS] Tocarra, I got to tell you something. I haven't had that for many, many years.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: All the organs have been gone. Well, now that we're so off the rails, let's just get to the Mark Cuban conversation because we don't talk about any of this with him and it's a completely different thing.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

### **Interview with Mark Cuban**

Jon: We are delighted and honored to have with us, Mark Cuban. What do you think about maybe – I hate to say this. You know, start off and we can talk about business. We can talk about ball, you know.

Mark Cuban: Whatever you want. Yeah, I'm game for anything.

Jon: Why don't you buy the Knicks, man?

Mark: They're good now, though. I mean, you know, we're both struggling a little bit. You know, I think it turned out okay for both. You guys got a good squad. We got a good squad.

Jon: All right.

Mark: See what happens.

Jon: Fair enough. Fair enough. When did you decide to buy the Mavericks?

Mark: So it was opening night of the 99-2000 season, and I was in the process of selling Broadcast.com at the time and I went, "You know, it's opening night. We're undefeated, I'm

excited. We've got Derrick, we got Steve Nash, we got Shawn Bradley, we got Michael Finley.”

Jon: Right.

Mark: And there's no energy in the building at all. You know, it's not, you know, there's just nothing there. And I remember looking around just thinking I could do a better job than this. And then realizing, “Oh s\*\*\*, I can put my money where my mouth is.” And so actually, I talked to Mark McGuire, who connected me with then owner Ross Perot Jr. and the rest is history. And so I came in nouveau riche, right? You know, I didn't even know how much money was money, right? It was like, “All right, I don't care. All I care about is winning.”

Jon: If you own a sports franchise and I'm asking for a friend, obviously, because I'm not going to [MARK LAUGHS] where does the money come? It's not in the day to day and in the games and in the concessions, is it? Is it in the overall valuation and this idea that if your investment was a billion, it's going to be three billion five years down the road? Or is it TV contract?

Mark: Well, there's a couple of pieces there, mostly from the TV contracts and you know, you know how much TV is changing.

Jon: Right.

Mark: So there's certainly some uncertainty there. But, you know, it really depends on who the owner is. And that's the big question. Like when I first came in, it was mostly individual owners. There were guys who had inherited the team, guys who had some industrial business that bought the team for 25 million dollars in 1963 or whatever it was. Now there's you know me, Ballmer – and Tillman and Houston. You know, Tillman and Ballmer were probably the last individual owners. Most of the rest of the new acquisitions have been big groups, right, or hedge funds or private equity groups? And so it's not just one guy writing a multibillion dollar check because it's hard to write a multibillion dollar check. I don't care who you are.

Jon: Right. Now, these guys, you know, when you get together, so it's you and then just like a representative from a conglomerate or a representative from.

Mark: No they pick a governor, right? So they pick whoever it is –

Jon: They call them a governor?

Mark: – Yeah, yeah. They call him the governor.

Jon: Oh my Lord.

Mark: Because you're not really an owner at that point, are you? You're one of the owners as opposed to the owner.

Jon: Right. You know, I was talking about this with Kerr the other day, and the driving force behind the league is the talent of almost entirely Black ballplayers. You know, when they talk about balancing the playing field, it always feels like a negotiation from a group white that's traditionally owned the country, negotiating with people of color for a piece of

something that they shouldn't. It shouldn't be a negotiation, in other words, while they're fighting for equality. White people are building equity, right?

Mark: You know, the context is everything, right? It's easy for me and you to look at the big picture and take notes and give commentary. But you know, we've both been in situations where it wasn't we weren't on Easy Street, right? And it wasn't so simple. And so really context matters. But given where we are, it's valuable to have those discussions. I've invested 50 plus million dollars in funds and companies of people of color, men and women because, you know, I think there is unique opportunity there. I like to invest where people aren't looking. And hopefully some of those deals will turn into something significant and someone can come along and say, "You know what, you old white guys, you missed the boat. Now it's mostly people of color who are in a position of power because you weren't looking when the demographics of the entire country changed and you were trying to mine what was already there." And so I think, you know, there's the opportunity for change now. We'll see what happens.

Jon: You know, inertia kind of drives the status quo, right? You know, you sort of have this idea that things stay the way they are. Do you have that situation in your businesses that you don't realize that there are these unseen structural obstacles to getting the talent from different and by the way, not just racial diversity, I'm talking about, like we didn't have any veterans.

Mark: Well no it has to be front of mind, right? And so I'm not going to lie and say I've always had very diverse workforces. That's just not the case. But I think, you know, I try to be very disruptive in the businesses that I enter. And in order to be disruptive, you've got to be very cognizant of what's happening in the world and look for where those opportunities are. It took me a while to realize that if I hire people from the Indian community in Dallas, which is the sixth largest Indian community in the country, I'm going to sell a lot more to that community because they know the community. If I hire veterans, if I hire people of color, if I hire women of color, if I hire people that represent the LGBTQ community. You know, it just makes good business sense now.

Jon: But that's not the perspective that's had from, you know, the more traditionalists or what you would consider the nativists –

Mark: Of course.

Jon: – Or things like that.

Mark: Well, there's a reason why the word conservative is in conservative.

Jon: Right.

Mark: You know, there are always going to be people who don't want change, but just look at how much has changed among the things that we thought would never change from pot to, you know, gay weddings, to you name it, the list is long. You know, it's just it takes time. You know, when you look at anything at one given snapshot, it always looks really, really painful. But when you take a longer term horizon, you see progress. And, you know, father time is undefeated.

Jon: You know, it's interesting they always talk about the arc of the moral history is long, but it bends towards justice. But I think they never tell you like, but there's going to be a pretty substantial group that's trying to bend it back the other way.

Mark: Yeah, of course.

Jon: And it's going to be that push and pull that creates it. Why do you think the boardroom is so resistant to that kind – because man, if there is a Maginot line that's sort of standing sentinel in front of it, it's a boardroom because it seems to me like there are structural issues-

Mark: Of course, there's structural issues. It's very simple. Who wants to give up their spot.

Jon: Right.

Mark: Oh, by the way, Jon, you're on our board. You're getting hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in cash and stock. You want to quit now? So we can make room for somebody else?

Jon: Just to be on the board?

Mark: Yeah, just to be on the board and you know make a few phone calls and be there and show up via Zoom now. You don't have to go down to Las Vegas or Arizona for the meeting.

Jon: Mark, I'm honored that you asked me to be on the board. [MARK LAUGHS] I'm happy to do it. I'm delighted. What an exciting time –

Mark: Yeah no one wants to give up those spots. I mean, it really comes down to what is the makeup of the ownership group that's coming in because we can and should make that accommodation to make sure that, you know, we're expanding diversity because it's good business. It's not like, okay let's just make it look good out there. Let's just virtue signaling. Right?

Jon: You're not talking about making a moral decision. You're talking about making an efficiency decision –

Mark: – Yeah, a business decision.

Jon: A capital decision and a business decision.

Mark: Right. I mean, look, if people of color are going to be the majority in this country and we want our product to reach the majority of this country, you want people who have a stronger connection than somebody who looks like me.

Jon: Right.

Mark: Finding people who look like me is easy.

Jon: Oh no, I know that I see you everywhere. [MARK LAUGHS]

Mark: Yeah vice versa. [MARK LAUGHS]

Jon: I see you all over the place. Do you think you know it brings up an interesting point, though, because we're talking about such a skewed reality of like between billionaires and the people that support the teams, right? And it kind of brings up is part of the problem, maybe with the makeup of the American economy in general that we've gone too far to make sure that Facebook can keep their last 10 billion, but maybe what we should be doing is lowering the bar of entry and making softer landings for risk taking and entrepreneurship, in other words, rather than protecting success at its highest level –

Mark: Right.

Jon: – Right? Be more cognizant of entrepreneurial spirit and giving more agency to individuals. In other words, like when you start a business that's a big risk and the regulatory regime and all the other things that are a much bigger burden to small businesses. Why aren't we more concerned about lowering the ante –

Mark: There's a contradiction in there on the lower end in that being broke is the best time and best position to be in to start a business because you have nothing to lose.

Jon: Right.

Mark: And so the marginal cost for starting a business these days in tech is next to nothing if you have a phone, access to a laptop and access to broadband. You can start anything, particularly with the crypto revolution going on now. I mean –

Jon: But those businesses are accessible to a certain class, right?

Mark: No, no. You know, one of the reasons I do “Shark Tank” is because kids watch and start businesses and I try to be accessible and, you know, just using the laptop in their school to start something online and write software that they put on hopscotch or Roblox and make some money from that. Now, if I want to start a business and I'm in a, you know, a low income community where the friction lies isn't so much what you do if you fail, where the friction lies is they don't have access to lawyers and accountants to go through all the paperwork and understand how the banking system works. So we don't we have done a really poor job of educating kids in those situations on what a credit card is, what a bank account is, you know, how to deal with money at all. And they don't have that fundamental understanding. And so to me, it's not so much a safety net. If somebody fails, it's more, okay, what are the inhibitors in terms of licensing requirements? I don't know if it's still there, but there was a point in time where you had to have two thousand hours of shampooing and experience in Louisiana in order to be considered an assistant.

Jon: Right.

Mark: And you're not going to be able to start a salon before you go through all that bulls\*\*\*.

Jon: Well, let me tell you something. You don't want some motherf\*\*\*er with only a thousand hours of shampooing.

Mark: Right? [MARK LAUGHS]

Jon: You shampooing your hair.

Mark: Yeah you know, it's ridiculous.

Jon: They might not even know where your head is.

Mark: You know, the few times I've talked to governors or politicians. That's always my number one thing. The licensing requirements are a joke. And you know, it's not only the biggest and the richest trying to protect their positioning. It's the people who are at the bottom that can look at people of color and realize they don't have the foundational business education and find ways to exclude them and those people don't even realize they're being excluded. It'll just be when they go to start a business –

Jon: Yeah.

Mark: – There's all these licensing and registration requirements. And because they don't feel comfortable with them and they can't afford to hire them. So the number one answer to your question is how can we stop that cycle, right and stop it and make it so you just go to a website anywhere, fill out a form and boom, you know you're ready to go to work.

Jon: We know when I talk about the bar of entry, I mean, like, everybody says, you need a college education, right? Well, college education in this country. So that means the ante to just get into the world is one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. You know, I was talking to Janet Yellen, right, secretary of treasury, and we were talking about different companies and how they operate. And I was saying, you know, Walmart pays such low wages that taxpayers subsidize their workforce. So I said to her, you know, and they're making billions in profits, but we're subsidizing that. Why can't we? Well, you know, the capitalist system, we don't want to force them to do certain things where you say, Well, then, but we're subsidizing their workforce. Why not just subsidize if you're going to subsidized social services, subsidize their wages?

Mark: Yo, I literally went through with the Mavs and the American Airlines Center, and I said, "Is it possible we can find out if any of our employees on government assistance?" Because to me it's the most embarrassing thing in the world that somebody that works for me, that I'm supposed to be paying enough can't live their own life, right? And can't and is required to go on government assistance just to live. The reality was employers didn't want to say, right, we couldn't find out for sure, but we gave raises to everybody. You know, this was a few years ago. We went to a minimum of 15 –

Jon: Mm hmm.

Mark: – And it's gone up since then. But you're right, you know, and I've seen that data on Walmart employees for some significant percentage –

Jon: That's right.

Mark: – Was on government assistance.

Jon: So I said, what do you do with that? And she said, "Well, you know, the important thing is to educate people so that they can get a different job." And I'm like, "No, no, no – "

Mark: Yes! Yes!

Jon: "-- You don't understand like, this is their job. They live there and they don't have the wherewithal, like to spend a year and they got two kids. They're trying to struggle with childcare." And that's what I mean by lowering the bar of risk taking. If you stay in a s\*\*\*ty job because of all these other things, why aren't we supporting childcare? Let me ask you a question about health insurance. Why the f\*\*\* is health insurance tied to your job? Isn't that one of the greatest limiters to freedom and liberty we have in this country? That you have to make a decision to stay in a s\*\*\*ty situation because –

Mark: Just to keep you health care.

Jon: – you're worried that your kids won't be able to go to the doctor.

Mark: I've been funding these studies, and I'll just give you a quick example where I said, look, Canada. If you go to a hospital in Toronto, the cost of real estate is the same as the hospital in New York, maybe even more expensive. Doctors, you pay the same wages, nurses you pay the same wages, you pay the same for Band-Aids, you pay the same for beds. Everything. Why is it that of the top 35 procedures done at a hospital in Toronto they can charge less than Medicare rates? And every hospital says, "You know what? We can't - We lose money on Medicare rates." Which is a lie. But they say it. And the reality is we don't look to see how we can make things better. I wanted to pay for another study that says, go and ask all the major hospital systems, just ask them what kind of accounting they use to determine their cost. None would respond. Not one single hospital would respond.

Jon: If you go to the hospital just a mile from my house and you get a procedure done and you go to a hospital, I don't know, 20 miles away, it's a completely different pricing system.

Mark: Of course, you know –

Jon: But nobody's comparison shopping, they're just going to whatever's closer.

Mark: – I do. Right. So I had to get a colonoscopy and I decided I wanted to get a CT colonoscopy, the digital version, right? So I called around and my insurance company price was like \$2,200 dollars. I got a price for \$600 bucks. Right. Now, not everybody can afford to write a check for \$600 dollars, but you know, most people have a deductible, so chances are it's costing you one way or the other.

Jon: Now, when you're a guy, would you have as much money as you have, are you like, give me five of them? [MARK LAUGHS] Give me five f\*\*\*ing digital colonoscopies.

Mark: Not directly. But yeah, they know I'm coming back now. They don't have a regular customer for a couple years.

Jon: Right. Right.

Mark: When I've got to get it done. But it sure beats the hell of someone sticking a stick up my a\*\*.

Jon: Right.

Mark: But –

Jon: I didn't even know you can do it. I've never even heard of a digital colonoscopy. And as you can tell by my age –

Mark: Yeah, we both know.

Jon: – I could use a couple. [MARK LAUGHS]

Mark: We both know. So I just wanted to explore my alternatives. But yeah, I mean, the point being that, you know, I was talking to a hospital yesterday and they were talking to me about these mental health solutions they're offering. And the first thing they said was they built a building to support all this. And then they asked, “okay, how did what do you think is the best way to market? I said, Well, the first thing you do is you sell the motherf\*\*ing building and you use that money to offer mental health services.”

Jon: Right.

Mark: You know, there's just – the incentives between the payers, which are the insurance companies and the providers. The hospitals are aligned, but they don't align with the patients because the way Medicare is set up with medical loss ratios and all this other bulls\*\*t, the higher they can charge you, the more money they both make to the bottom line. I could just go on for days.

Jon: It's incentivized for those outcomes. If we were to step out of it right and take a more macro view is part of the issue here – democracy is almost, by its nature, an analog system. You know, it started with quill and parchment and has really advanced much further than that.

Mark: Yeah.

Jon: We live in a world now where agility, where the ability to respond in this digital environment, you know, if you think about microprocessors and you think about man, I remember f\*\*ing calculators that were a size of a desk and two years later, they were in a pen.

Mark: Yeah.

Jon: Then three years later –

Mark: Jon, you just have one of my favorite words: agility. If you talk to anybody, the companies that I invested. You see me on “Shark Tank” agility, agility, agility because s\*\*t changes –

Jon: Right.

Mark: – And if you don't change, it'll change you. Your loss. But we don't see that there's no government as a service. There's no integration of technology at a level that that allows people to look for it. S\*\*t, we got, you know, senior citizens to look. It's not like we're young, but we've got seniors, senior citizens –

Jon: Right.

Mark: – That are not technologically literate, trying to make determinations in a technologically literate world.

Jon: Right.

Mark: And you've got China who is more technologically literate. That is our competition. It's America Inc versus China Inc, and we are not doing all the things as a government to compete.

Jon: See I can't tell whether it's personnel or whether it's process, because when I look at the process –

Mark: It's both.

Jon: – They're prisoners of their silo that they live in.

Mark: Yeah.

Jon: Whenever. I spent time in Washington like, “Oh, you really have no idea what's going on outside of this?” They operate on a different currency. And so the things that they value and they think are important don't resonate outside of that. But so much of it is about process, not just personnel. We're going to fall behind. I mean, industry regulates itself because Congress people are f\*\*\*ing busy. And you can manipulate them then. You can just go in and hand them something and they go, Holy s\*\*\*, thank you. Let's put it on the floor. And that's how this all gets polluted.

Mark: Yeah, there's no question about it, right? And the reason they're busy is they're spending most of their time trying to raise money because they know they're not going to be there the next term if they don't do that. And so you have to change the process and once you change the process, then you open the door to different personnel.

Jon: Do you think the current system of capitalism then is sustainable in this form?

Mark: Yeah, I mean, but it's got to modify. I mean, you've got to evolve it so that businesses have a purpose and that's driven by customers. You know, you can legislate all you want, but if consumers don't want to consume what you're making, it doesn't matter. And so I think again, Gen Z is our driving force, but my hope is that Gen Z today sees all these things that we're talking about. And so when I talk to kids who are starting businesses that are 10, 12, 15, 21 years old, their perspective is completely different than that industrial complex thing. And, believe it or not, like when you look at surveys on Gen Z in particular, adopting crypto and new businesses being built like the investments I'm making now are not in traditional businesses. 80% of the investments I make that are non “Shark Tank” are in and around cryptocurrency.

Jon: I still don't understand what it is, but it, but it still doesn't sound like it's going to change the ethos into something sustainable. It feels –

Mark: Oh yeah it will.

Jon: – like people are looking for a quick hit.

Mark: No, not at all. So put aside all the speculation you read about with Bitcoin, Dogecoin, all that. Set that aside. That's just the gamesmanship that's played with stocks and everything. Right?

Jon: Mm hmm.

Mark: And means stock. You know, a decentralized autonomous organization basically says that there is no central organization. It's all decentralized and trustless. And what we mean by trustless is there's not a management group or a board of directors or a CEO making decisions.

Jon: There's no absolute power to corrupt absolutely because there's no absolute power.

Mark: Correct.

Jon: Okay.

Mark: And so everybody who owns the token in that application then has an equal, not always equal, but typically equal vote to set the direction of the whole right of the network. And that is changing decision making and that's really where I look to invest. And so when you see all this, all this stuff on NFT is just a proof of concept. They're not the end all, be all. They're just a proof of concept for these things called smart contracts, which enables decentralized decision making. I'll give you one example that goes back to health care.

Jon: Okay.

Mark: Right now, if you want to get approved for colonoscopy or pre-approved right, you go to your insurance company, you get the pre-approval. And if there's uncertainty, you ask to speak to the boss with the person doing and you work your way up and you hate every single step that you take.

Jon: That's right.

Mark: In a decentralized autonomous organization, a DAO, what would end up happening, you would have verifiers, right? And there would be thousands, if not a million people who set themselves up as verifiers and get trained on the decision making of approving or disapproving a claim, and then you would have challengers to have a role as well. And so the verifiers would then vote on your claim –

Jon: So you're talking about it's basically crowdsourcing.

Mark: – It's crowd decision making, but the rewards are different, right? So the rewards are set so that when I decided I wanted to be an insurance claim decision maker, I get paid to do that. But the challengers, if I violate the terms of my responsibility, the challengers get all my payments if I do it wrong. So that's just one small example –

Jon: Right.

Mark: – But it's just like the early days of the internet, like in 1995 of a 16-year-old high school kid could do a web page, we thought they were genius.

Jon: Right.

Mark: You know? You know, when we started streaming-.

Jon: By the way I still think they're a genius. [JON LAUGHS].

Mark: Now those kids are native or digital natives. We're growing crypto natives now. So all these new businesses are being formulated now that take this new approach and so are all business is going to be that way? Hell no, right?

Jon: Right.

Mark: But there are going to be businesses that pop up just like there were a 100 bookstores trying to compete with Amazon in 1995 and Amazon emerged. There will be these game changing businesses that come out of decentralized organizations and trustless organizations that just f\*\*\* up and disrupt all these trusted or vertically integrated. Look, banking is going to change. Insurance is going to change.

Jon: Mm hmm.

Mark: The book industry is going to change. I can give you example after example, so I'm really excited and that's driven more by Gen Z.

Jon: And how do you prevent it from becoming sort of a casino of societal prop bets? It feels a bit FanDuel-y.

Mark: Yeah, it very much is, right?

Jon: Yeah.

Mark: And that's just like the early days, right? Look, and people like to s\*\*\* on it. But if you look at the stock market, there's the over-the-counter billet bulletin board stock market.

Jon: Right.

Mark: There are shares that trade trillions of shares that are bankrupt, right? And that aren't worth s\*\*\* –

Jon: Or that don't even exist. I mean, there's props and derivatives and all kinds of nonsense.

Mark: – They don't even exist. Yeah.

Jon: I mean that's definitely a casino.

Mark: Yeah and if you look at the early days of the internet, people are like one never give you a credit card to a company like Amazon, right? That's too much risk.

Jon: Right.

Mark: Two, you know, all these stocks that popped up, you know, open up a website, go public. There was all kind of speculation and the exact same thing is happening now. We're just – it's 1995 for cryptocurrencies.

Jon: That's a much more exciting prospect to me than the other vision of the future of the economy, which is more like what I considered kind of the Bezos vision, which is service economy. Everybody's going to, you know, it's all Uber and Uber Eats and everything else.

Mark: Yep.

Jon: And, you know, trying to explain to him that people want to feel relevant and they want to feel in control and they want to have agency and the idea of just taking care of the needs of a small cadre of elites like, that's not a f\*\*\*ing economy, that's a recipe for revolution.

Mark: No. I agree. I call that arbitrage on time, right?

Jon: Yeah.

Mark: People, you know the value of your time versus the value of my time. If it's worth it for me to pay you more and that saves me, you know how I value my time.

Jon: Right.

Mark: That's how the gig economy is going to go. And so I'm not saying that that'll disappear because they're not mutually exclusive and there certainly are going to be problems. When we started audio net back in 1994- '95 to start streaming. People laughed at us. It was just like, f\*\*\* streaming. Right? I'll turn on the radio or I'll turn on the TV. We don't need your s\*\*\*. And it was a hassle. You had to download this and that.

Jon: Right.

Mark: Cryptocurrencies the same way now. It's hard to understand and it's a hassle. But 10 years from now, these applications, there's going to be those that succeed that'll create its own economy. And it just like the internet days, you know, it'll be the younger generation that figures it out first and is innovative.

Jon: You know, your distillation of it, quite honestly, is the first time it's ever kind of made sense to me –

Mark: Well thanks.

Jon: – Because I always viewed it as a currency play.

Mark: No.

Jon: Not an economy player. It always felt like a solution to a problem that didn't exist because I always think, like, what's wrong with money like that still seems to work. But now that if you explain it as a technology and an economy that can run independently of that currency system, then it starts to make sense to me.

Mark: If you look at any medium or larger size city, what are the top three biggest buildings? They're all financial institutions. They're banks, right? And there's just so much. If you try to open up a bank account with \$200 dollars or less. Good luck to you.

Jon: Right.

Mark: Right. Because your fees are just going to torture you. And if you make a mistake and there's an overdraft, you're done right. And so crypto isn't more forgiving. It's less forgiving. But it's very straightforward and obvious and upfront. And here's the best way to understand it, if you're starting a new business, whatever it is 20 years ago, you'd buy a server and put it in your organization, right, and had your applications, then Amazon came along and Microsoft, and now they have cloud right, so instead of buying your own server, you put it all in the cloud now and that was cheaper than doing your own servers.

Jon: Right.

Mark: Now, it's getting cheaper to use what's called smart contracts on nodes that individuals use that set up because the blockchain actually subsidizes that.

Jon: This is the first time I've sort of heard it broken down in more practical terms. And I have to say, I think that model of and I look at it as crowdsourcing only because in the way that I see it and like the way that journalism has evolved, the way that so many different things, crime solving that there's power in the crowd. And, you know, obviously there's destructive power in the crowd as well. Like, you know, the internet is just villagers with pitchforks and with torches. And because you really want to step in it, make fun of BTS or make fun of Harry Styles, like every group has their mob and those mobs do violence.

Mark: And it's not to say there aren't a lot of problems, but at the same time, I try to look at things as I'm helping people start businesses. What are their roadblocks and how do they feel?

Jon: Speaking of roadblocks to starting businesses.

Mark: Yeah.

Jon: Why is Kevin O'Leary such a dick to people? [MARK LAUGHS].

Mark: That's just shtick right.

Jon: Is it his shtick? Is he nicer?

Mark: Yeah he's a good guy.

Jon: Because I see how he's – I watched the show all the time and these's poor – they come in and they start this business and they put, you know, they put everything into it, and then he sits there and goes, "You f\*\*\*ing idiot, what are you doing here? You don't know s\*\*\*." And you're like, "Don't take it up with them. Take it up with the producers. They brought him in there."

Mark: Yeah, no. That's just shtick. He's really a good guy,.

Jon: All right.

Mark: He really, really is.

Jon: All right. Well, then I'll, I'll stand down. [MARK LAUGHS] But I'll do it reluctantly. Mark, I can't thank you enough. I know you're busy, man, and I really appreciate your time.

Mark: Yeah, it was fun.

Jon: Really terrific. So thanks so much for joining us.

Mark: Thanks for having me, Jon. Any time at all.

[SFX EFFECT CUE]

Jon: So we talked to him a little bit about like business stuff, a little bit of b-ball little, a little bit of thing. But I found his conversation very, very compelling.

Tocarra: I'm really surprised, obviously don't know Mark Cuban, don't know any billionaires, but I was really surprised about how, honestly, he was so invested in workers rights.

Jon: Yeah.

Tocarra: I didn't think he would care so much, especially his conversation about health insurance and benefits and making sure that people are taken care of was really surprising to me.

Jon: The interesting thing to me about that, Tocarra, was it comes from a place, and I think this is an interesting thing for people to look out, of pragmatism. It wasn't even he wasn't even necessarily making a moral argument.

Tocarra: No, not at all.

Rob: Right, yeah.

Jon: He was making just a pragmatic argument.

Rob: And I think that's a better pitch for America. You know, the moral stuff usually fails. But if we're like, "Hey, you can make more money this way.".

Jon: Right

Rob: It may win.

Tocarra: So that's the same thing with his investing. He's like, I've got 50 million here. He's not because he's like, "These people need to be in the room." He's like, "There is an opportunity that is being missed." Very pragmatic.

Jon: Yeah, it does. It's an interesting way to look at it, which is if we do this right, there's actually more money in it.

Tocarra: Mm hmm.

Jon: And money that's going to be distributed when you distribute money better, you get better economic outcomes in the long term. Pragmatic.

Rob: That's the way to win. I also wanted to ask him about why he stopped playing the national anthem and specifically why nobody noticed that that happened. It just went on and he stopped playing it and no one cared for like months. [TOCARRA LAUGHS]

Jon: I didn't even realize that. When did that happen?

Rob: Beginning of the 2020/2021 season.

Jon: Do you think he did it after the Porzingis trade?

[LAUGHS]

Jon: He just felt like "I ripped off the Knicks. Now I got to lay low." Is that how it all came about?

Rob: See, I would have thought that not playing the national anthem is not laying low. [JON LAUGHS] I think that being very loud, especially in the times that we're in now. But nobody noticed until like one person noticed and then snitched to the media, and it was like a whole big thing where they forced him to play the national anthem again.

Jon: Does anyone know when that started playing the national anthem before games like, it's such a weird ritual?

Tocarra: That's a great question.

Rob: It is definitely a modern thing, and I don't think people realize that

Jon: You know, I've always thought about when Kaepernick took the knee and the whole thing was like, "You got to stand for the anthem." Like I was — now I imagine like in living rooms like guys are getting nachos ready and f\*\*\*ing the wings, and then the anthem comes on and they all just have to.

[Jon stands up] [ROB LAUGHS]

Tocarra: That's how you do it.

Jon: You know but like why is that that when the anthem comes on, you only have to stand if you're there. But the transitive principle through the television, if it's through the television, you can do whatever the f\*\*\* you want. You could take a s\*\*\* during the national anthem as a patriot.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: But if you're at the stadium, you — there's like a whole regimen that you have to go through.

Rob: It's for show and you better take that hat off because standing is not enough. You got to take the hat off too.

Jon: You where you're you're in the middle of the anthem. And then all of a sudden you're like, opp [undiscernible gurgling] [ROB LAUGHS]

Tocarra: Okay, question because I've been told two different things. Hand over your heart or no hand over your heart.

Jon: Wow.

Tocarra: What's appropriate?

Jon: You know, I got to say I've done hand over the heart, but I don't always. And a lot of times, Oh, you know what I've done a games? Hat in hand, hand over heart covering my heart with hat, which probably negates the heart. [TOCARRA LAUGHS]

Rob: So if I remember correctly from the Air Force, it's hat off. And then in the in the hand, you're holding the hat, the hand goes over the heart. So the hats on the shoulder area. I think those are the rules.

Tocarra: Ask the veteran

Jon: Tocarra, what's your go to on that? You go, you go hat off hand over heart. What do you what do you do?

Tocarra: I typically don't have hat so I'm standing –

Jon: Okay.

Tocarra: – And I do both hands over my heart like this.

Rob: Wow, you love America? Yeah.

Jon: What do you do if you're wearing a yarmulke, which is a religious or a kepa or something along those lines? Do you have to take that off and get over your heart? Does faith trump love of country

Rob: As far as the anthem? Yes.

Tocarra: Absolutely.

Jon: You get to stay with it?

Rob: Yeah. Mm-Hmm.

Jon: What if you really love the hat you have on?

Rob: You better take that thing off. Doesn't matter. [JON LAUGHS]

Tocarra: But what if it's part of the outfit like you lose the outfit without the hat.

Jon: So what Tocarra is asking is if it's an ensemble –

Rob: Tough.

Jon: – To disassemble the ensemble?

Tocarra: I'd say no.

Rob: I think it goes religion, country, ensemble.

Tocarra: Faith, fashion, country.

Jon: What if the hat you're wearing is jaunty [ROB LAUGHS] and it's and it gives you a jaunty look?

Rob: I think you could get away with it. You know, if you I think jaunty might be the one one way that you're going to get away with this.

Jon: Tight!

Rob: Since they didn't notice that Mark Cuban was playing the national anthem for so long, I'm thinking maybe that's not a memorable enough song. So we have some pitches. If maybe we want to change the national anthem to something a little better Tocarra, you want to go first?

Tocarra: Absolutely. I'm thinking right away, "Party in the U.S.A." by Miley Cyrus.

Rob: Mm-hmm. Can't beat it.

Jon: "Party in the U.S.A.." That's a solid nonpartisan choice. I think that works well. And it's, you know, she is a equal opportunity, you know, shout-outer, Jay-Z, Britney Spears. [TOCARRA LAUGHS] So I think she covers all the bases. I think it's I think it's an excellent choice, Tocarra.

Tocarra: It unites the country.

Rob: And it's fitting because if "Party in the U.S.A." Is our new national anthem, the rule could be shirts off instead of hats. [TOCARRA LAUGHS]

Jon: I would gladly take my shirt off. Although I got to tell you, I did that on a USO tour. We were there with some UFC fighters, Max Holloway and Paige VanZant. [ROB LAUGHS] And so in the middle of it, I took off my shirt and I squared up with Max Holloway, and here's what I didn't realize. Apparently, grown men don't wear white underwear.

[LAUGHS]

Jon: And I had on his white underwear, and he just never let me forget the tighty whities, just drilled it in. You know, he's and he's a determined – I don't know if you know Max Holloway, but you can't get the better of him.

Rob: Yeah, I'm I'm a Max Holloway fan, and I feel bad for you in that situation.

Jon: What a lovely guy. Like, truly super funny. Great personality.

Tocarra: That's good to hear.

Jon: We had a, we had a ball. Paige VanZant, too.

Jon: I have something that's fitting for a new national anthem. I think we got to go with Guns n' Roses "Welcome to the Jungle." It's perfect. Can you see a president coming into a UN meeting just —

Jon: [Jon sings section of "Welcome to the Jungle"]

Rob: Just hands in the air? We don't salute hand over heart. We're hands in the air for them.

Jon: I like that.

Tocarra: Shirts can still come off.

Jon: Here's my only worry, it might be too hype. Like, it's very hard not to get in a fist fight in a situation like that after "Welcome to the Jungle." Like I'm just trying to imagine just won a gold medal? You're up on the podium. There's a certain graciousness that you have to display. F\*\*\*in' "Welcome to the Jungle" comes on [ROB LAUGHS] and you immediately turn to for lack of a better phrase, the Bulgarian next to you who came in second and you just f\*\*\*ing go right up to him and be like, "Why are you like me now?"

Rob: Why hide our nature? That's why I chose it. I think that we're playing games, and also we gotta be clear we love Bulgaria. You know, we don't want to get, be accused of being anti-Bulgarian with, you know, you have problems with that with Newsweek. [TOCARRA LAUGHS] So we've got to be sure.

Jon: Newsweek is gonna put out "Jon Stewart accuses Bulgaria"

Rob: And we did not accuse Max Holloway of being anti-tighty whities and —

Jon: I am accusing him of being anti-tighty whities.

Tocarra: That was very clear. [ROB LAUGHS]

Jon: Max was very anti-tighty whities

Tocarra: And he's stands by it.

Jon: He said — and I think he should stand by that. [TOCARRA LAUGHS] Before we go, we'd like to recognize those who are working with just their heads down, not being loud and not trying to get attention, not trying to be trolls. They're just put their heads down and they're just getting the work done. So here is Robby Slowik with "Shoutout to a Boring Motherf\*\*\*er."

[SFX EFFECT CUE]

**Shout Out to a Boring Motherf\*\*\*\*\***

Robby: This week, we're shouting out Representative Julia Brownley, the congresswoman from California's 26th District. You might not have heard of Congresswoman Brownlee because, unlike some of her colleagues who get more press, she's not knocking over constituents to get in front of news cameras to claim that schools are replacing math with critical race theory and now kids in algebra class have to solve for Malcolm X instead of just X or whatever else they pretend it means, since seemingly no one actually knows. And she's not in a campaign ad where she uses a gun to cook bacon. That's a real campaign ad, by the way, from someone I refuse to mention, but they're in office, which isn't a great sign for the state of our democracy or our culinary choices. But let me tell you what Congresswoman Brownlee is doing. She's sitting on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and introducing legislation to provide increased VA medical care for women veterans, including access to contraception with no co-pay, and working to get the VA to implement a women's specific pilot program to treat and rehabilitate veterans with drug and alcohol dependency. Actual important stuff. You can follow Representative Brownlee on Twitter @RepBrownlee, but I got to warn you she keeps her head down and does the work so her feed is boring. I'm talking the Snyder-cut of "Justice League" boring. Oh, this two hour long movie is bad. Let's double the length and make it black and white. That should fix it. And look, I know it came out six months ago, but I just finished it because that's how long it took me to get through it. Also, Batman, get out of there. You're fighting alongside superhero God emperors, and you're just a Fortune 500 CEO. But I guess if Jeff Bezos gets to be an astronaut, you get to fight crime because no one can stop billionaires, not even Superman. Anyway, shout out to Rep. Brownlee, a boring motherf\*\*\*er doing the work and helping our vets.

[TRANSITION MUSIC]

Jon: Rob and Tocarra, thank you so much for joining the program today. I hope to see you guys in the office soon.

Rob: So do I. I'm ready to get back.

Tocarra: Same. Same. Same.

Rob: Thanks for having us on.

Jon: At what Greek letter of variants do we just tap out? [ROB LAUGHS]

Rob: Well, according to the federal government, it's Omicron –

[LAUGHS]

Jon: – That's where they tap out.

Jon: That's when we're out. You know, if I'd known I was going to go this way, I would have studied the Greek alphabet better. I don't, I'm just not sure even where omicron stands in any of this. [ROB LAUGHS]. All right, guys. Thank you so much for listening. More content for "The Problem." Check out the newsletter. Subscribe to the website. By the way, we have a new website. It's a place that you can go on the web that we made. HT – What is it? HTML, I think, is how we made it. Lots of words. We've even figured out a way to embed pictures into it, which is I don't know if that's been done before, but we're certainly excited about it. It's the problem dot com. Obviously, Apple TV Plus show, and

there's going to be a link in the episode description. We will be back next week. Until then, goodbye.

[OUTRO MUSIC].

Jon: The problem of Jon Stewart podcast is an Apple TV Plus podcast and a joint busboy production.