



**Episode 920: Discussion with YouTube Personality Sargon of Akkad on Libertarians (He's Not One) and Leftists (He's Definitely Not One)**

**Guest: Carl Benjamin**

**WOODS:** You've got a tremendously successful YouTube channel. You've been putting out tremendous content. You have a fantastic following. What is the number of YouTube subscribers you have as of this recording?

**BENJAMIN:** 623,000 on my main channel.

**WOODS:** That's astonishing, right?

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, I never expected to have anything like that.

**WOODS:** You never expected – yeah, that was my follow up. And so the number of downloads – YouTube is pretty good about analytics – in terms of the number of views, rather. Where is that?

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, I get about 7 million views a month on my main channel and another 7 million on my alternate channels.

**WOODS:** Wow. Now, I didn't know about the alternate channels; could you say a word about that?

**BENJAMIN:** Oh yeah, basically, because of the nature of YouTube copyright strikes, whether they're legitimate copyright strikes or not, the system automatically prevents you from doing live-streaming, so you can't have sort of like live, freeform conversations. And that's assuming – because it automatically assumes that the copyright strike has some validity, even if it doesn't. So I set up a second channel on which to do exclusively live-streaming –

**WOODS:** Oh, I see, okay.

**BENJAMIN:** – just in case for some reason – I mean, I've had copyright strikes from like Fox News and *The Guardian*, like major, major outlets who've found my channel and decided they didn't like what I was saying and decided that that 30-second clip I used –

**WOODS:** Right, right.

**BENJAMIN:** — which is obviously under fair use. They don't like it and they're going to try to get me to take it down. Thankfully, I've won every single copyright strike that's come my way with YouTube's arbitration system, which is good. But it takes a lot of time. It can take up to a month to get the thing cleared. And so I thought, well, if I just do any live-streams and conversations I have on my alternate channel — And I realized that sometimes I want to make sort of small, less well-produced videos to just make small points, and so I started a separate channel. And so that's called The Thinkery, which is just where I put rubbish up, really. I wouldn't recommend anyone subscribe to it, but I put smaller things on there that I don't want to make a whole, fully polished video about. I'm not making a grand point in those videos, just commenting on small things that come my way. And yeah, so in total on all of my channels, I get about 15 million views a month.

**WOODS:** That's really crazy. Now, in these live-streams, which I'm sorry to say I haven't seen, do you appear on the screen?

**BENJAMIN:** Sometimes.

**WOODS:** So people have seen you.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah.

**WOODS:** Oh, all right, okay.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, I get recognized on the street every now and again, and it's always difficult to handle, because I don't think of myself as being any kind of celebrity. I just see myself as a person with a microphone and connecting to the Internet. And like I try to foster that image of me [laughing], because I'm not like a star; I don't go on TV or anything like this, and so I don't want people treating me like I'm anything different to them.

**WOODS:** But it's funny; when they see you in the street, do they call you Sargon?

**BENJAMIN:** [laughing] Yeah, sometimes, yeah.

**WOODS:** Yeah, that'd be weird. If somebody were to call me Julius Caesar or something I would find that odd [laughing].

**BENJAMIN:** It is a bit odd, but it's a nod I've made for my own back. The name of my channel, I used to go on history forums a lot, and on history forums, everyone uses, you know, a pseudonym. He was just my favorite historical figure at the time, and I like the name. I thought it was a cool name. And so I was just using it on history forums. And I'd signed up to YouTube in 2010 so I could subscribe to channels, and I just used the same name without thinking about it. And then when I first came to actually making videos, I don't know why I didn't register a new channel. I didn't really think very hard about it, because I didn't see it going anywhere. It was just things that were on my mind that I wanted to put on the Internet for people to see if they wanted it. And I guess here we are now, you know? I kind of wish I had just started with my own name.

**WOODS:** Right, right, right, which is how Ian Anderson feels about Jethro Tull. All right, let's talk about the actual content that you produce. And in particular, you have tried to bill yourself as being non-ideological. And make sure I'm expressing your opinion correctly, but it seems to me your view is that ideology can actually, instead of being something that can clarify and help us see more clearly, it actually can be blinders on us because we wind up trying to force reality through the prism of the ideology, and sometimes it doesn't quite work. And so you are saying we have to look at things on a case-by-case basis apart from the demands of ideology. Is that right?

**BENJAMIN:** That's correct. Okay, so I'm going to get crucified if I say I'm not ideological, because I think to a certain degree, most people are. The question is which ideology and can you look outside of that. I've done a video called "The Ideological Lens," where I make the analogy that basically an ideology is like putting on a colored pair of sunglasses. So if you've got a clear pair of sunglasses, you're not looking through any specific ideology, but then there will be things you also don't see, whereas if you put on a different pair of glasses that are somehow refractive or something like that, they'll show you things that you couldn't previously see, but that also means they will hide things you could see before that.

So the question, it's not necessarily not being ideological, because that's a very difficult thing for people to achieve. The question is really, can you view the situation from a different ideology than the one you currently hold. And for most people, that's very, very difficult. Like you say, you try to force reality into the ideology that you have to make it fit the framework.

And this is the problem that a lot of the left has at the moment, is that it becomes a self-fulfilling source of – I don't know how to describe it. It becomes almost unfalsifiable. It is this thing, or it's this thing even more and you just deny it. And then you get into the realm of unfalsifiability where nothing is every outside of your ideology, and it's effectively become a conspiracy theory where everything is just somehow pinned back into this worldview. And if you can't distinguish what is and what isn't, then I think you're at a point where you can't really accurately represent reality.

**WOODS:** When you started making videos of the sort that I'm familiar with now, what was it you thought was missing out there? What gap are you filling?

**BENJAMIN:** I always consider myself left wing, but I'm certainly not a Marxist. I think that the problem the left has at the moment is that ideologies that are not necessarily Marxist in and of themselves, but derived from the Marxist view of class and materialism seem to have completely overrun the left. There is – I know in America you call the left liberals, but your left are not liberals by any definition of the word. Progressives are not liberals. The fundamental problem, the fundamental rift between them is at the very base of what they desire. A liberal wants equality of opportunity. A progressive wants equality of outcome.

These are mutually exclusive propositions, and there is no overlap whatsoever. You can't want the same thing, because equality of opportunity will always produce an unequal outcome because people are fundamentally different down to the individual. Each person is different, and so each person's life, if they're given the same

opportunity, they will use that opportunity differently. And I think that's a very positive thing, because then people get to have what they want, whereas if you want equality of outcome, that's inherently oppressive to people who are not, frankly, at the sort of base level that they're aiming for. So any blade of grass that rises above the rest will end up getting cut down. And I really don't like that. I think that's incredibly stifling and illiberal, frankly, and as a liberal, that's not what I like. But I can appreciate that if you are not a liberal and you want — I mean, if that's something that you desire, then I can understand why you would desire it. But I personally find that oppressive, so I don't like that alternative.

But the thing is, in a system where you have exclusively equality of opportunity, there are going to be some people who are — and I'm not trying to be offensive when I say this, but some people who are just not really very capable of achieving through — I mean, it could be any situation, any method. But you're always going to get some people on the spectrum who are at the bottom of the spectrum, and these people might not be very — I mean, if the grand test of life was how good at basketball are you, the people who are like 5 foot and below are not going to do very well. And so I can understand that there are innate physiological and intellectual barriers with a system like that. So I agree that there should be a minimum, but I also don't agree that we should limit the — well, not necessarily the maximum, but we shouldn't be placing limits on people unless there's a really good reason to do so, basically.

**WOODS:** Well, I think you're right, that sometimes we see this contrast between those who support equality of opportunity and those who support equality of outcome, but there's another way for the left to attack this, which is to forget about equality of outcome and say, Let's just talk about equality of opportunity. The fact is most people never get what we would call equal opportunity, so we don't even have to get to the equality of outcome problem. The problem really is how do we equalize the opportunities. And that itself can lead to large-scale social engineering even of itself, which is why I don't even use equality of opportunity anymore.

**BENJAMIN:** What do you use instead?

**WOODS:** Nothing. Good luck [laughing]. I mean, honestly, given that there's no — Look, I grew up in a blue-collar household, and basically pretty much nobody in my family had gone to college. But yet they both — both my mother and my father knew that this would be a good thing, and they encouraged me and they did what they could for me. But I didn't wallow in self-pity that I had one of the less attractive houses in the neighborhood or whatever. It just didn't ever occur to me. But the idea that I couldn't have succeeded until I got the three-car garage from — it's ridiculous. You do the best with what you have, but the idea that in order to give yourself equality of opportunity you need to take resources from others I think starts you off on a totally non-entrepreneurial footing, because that is not how an entrepreneur thinks.

**BENJAMIN:** I totally agree. I don't like using the phrase "politics of envy," but I don't really have a better way of describing it. I don't feel the need to tear other people down in order to build up my own success, and I think that there's a worrying trend on the left to want to do that. And I say this as someone who considered himself of the left. I don't like seeing that. And I agree with you that there are times, there are situations where opportunity is stifled by existing systems. This is undoubtedly true.

I mean, one of the most classic examples is the United Fruit Company in Guatemala, where the United Fruit Company essentially bought out the Guatemalan government through various bribes and what not, and they ended up owning something like 43% of all of the land in the country. And they just bought it out from all of the people who actually owned it through the corruption in the government. And they ended up owning all of the roads, the water, the electricity, all of that sort of thing, so that the locals called it the octopus because it just had its tentacles in everything.

And you can't reasonably say that the Guatemalans then had equality of opportunity. These people absolutely didn't. They effectively became serfs on land they had previously owned. And I can completely see the argument against that sort of predatory neoliberalism, and I totally agree with it. These people didn't have equality of opportunity, and capitalism – or at least neoliberalism, I think is a more accurate term – is responsible for that.

So it's not that there aren't problems and issues with what I prefer, which is a market economy. I mean, I'm certainly not in favor of a planned economy. But we can definitely say that there are outcomes and situations where there is not equality of opportunity and it's because of an oppressive force that isn't necessarily coercive in the way that we think of coercive. It doesn't necessarily use state power to enforce it, although it certainly can do. The coercion can be done through much more subtle means, and you can essentially build up a system around people that imprisons them and removes their opportunity, and that's something that I'd like to avoid as well, rather than going down the route of just state planning where you end up with state socialism. And you can look at any socialist economy and see why that's a problem.

So it's one of those things that's just incredibly tough to say – I don't think there's a black-and-white answer to it, and it's something that bothers me, but I definitely don't think going down the route of a planned economy is wise. And I think Hayek is really on the money when he says that it's a system so unbelievably complex that would have to be so well monitored and so well controlled in order to get what we would consider to be a positive outcome from it, that what we can instead do is actually let the system operate on its own and mitigate the excesses of it and make sure that the people who have the money and power don't use that money and power against the people who don't.

And that's the situation we find ourselves in now, where you have – I mean, like any type of tax loophole, any kind of offshore accounts, all of that sort of thing, that is the consequence of people with phenomenal amounts of money influencing politicians and encouraging them and effectively bribing them through a legalized form of bribery to create a system that is entirely beneficial to the giant corporations and the people who run them at the expense of the opportunity of the people at the bottom who can't do that.

So it's not that we don't have problems. We have lots of problems. And it's not that capitalism can't become a problem. It can become a problem. But I'm really getting worried about the trend towards socialism that seems to be very popular, very popular at the moment. It disturbs me greatly. I mean, I live in Britain and the opposition party at the moment has a communist as their economics minister, which you can imagine makes me quite worried when they start going up in the polls [laughing]. I

don't think we should have communist economics ministers running the country, frankly.

**WOODS:** Well, let me ask you about your own background, because you said you considered yourself to be part of the left, and then I've heard you say that of all the various ideological systems we might be familiar with, libertarianism is the one you feel the most kinship with even if you might not describe yourself as a libertarian. So does this mean that you had some kind of philosophical evolution, and if so, how did that happen?

**BENJAMIN:** Oh, certainly. To be honest with you, I never really wanted to involve myself with politics at all. I had no real interest in it until politics got itself involved with me. I had no interest in – The problem I had was identity politics. But I had always considered myself a liberal in the more sort of classical sense, where you look to the individual freedom of each person and think, okay, that person should have the opportunity to do as they please, or at least to the reasonable extent that they should, and they should essentially be free to follow their own path. And there's a lot of that attitude with libertarianism, and I can fully appreciate the noble desire of it, the philosophy underpinning it. I do agree that would be ideal, but I think that the – I don't want to get into a consequentialist argument, but unfortunately, sometimes the outcomes are outcomes we don't want.

I mean, one of the main stumbling blocks that I have with libertarianism is honestly the way they argue. So as soon as we start talking about capitalism, a libertarian will jump to, Well, you've got an entrepreneur and he wants to start a business – They'll start from the ground up, which is obviously their position. But when you actually look at what's going on in the world, unfortunately it's not that level playing field that they're thinking about.

Like for example, I'll use the example of McDonald's. You are never going to outcompete McDonald's. You are just never going to do it. There is too much in their favor. Whatever you make – I mean, they could – say you invent a marvelous new burger recipe. They're going to come down and buy one of your burgers. Then they're going to take it to a laboratory, find out what's in it to the percentages and how to make it exactly themselves, and then they will just sell your burger, and you will be completely outcompeted, because they will sell it cheaper, they will sell it to more people, and you will effectively be crushed by the market because of the predatory business practices and unfair practices of someone else.

And so this is why I would never really consider myself a libertarian, even if I understand and agree with the ideals of it. I think reality kind of gets in the way. And one of the things that I think libertarians really need to think about is the role of government. This is something that – I think there are a lot of libertarians who are actually closet anarchocapitalists and they don't know it, because if you spend enough time not considering the necessary role of government in the market – and there absolutely is one – then you can end up delegitimizing government entirely.

And I can completely empathize with Americans on this, because if you look at your government, it looks like a runaway beast that you have absolutely no control over. I can completely understand why you would just be opposed to the concept

of government. But then you have to really think about, okay, why do we have government. Well, we have governments for pretty good reasons. I mean, the invisible hand of the market is not a moral actor. It's not a moral force. The invisible hand of the market will end up selling child sex slaves if you let it. We need regulatory power, and the only way to have that is through a hegemonic government, the state. You have to have this, or you don't have the basic standards in society that you probably want at the end of the day. So there are so many ideological groups that have all-encompassing worldviews, and I don't think any of them are correct [laughing].

**WOODS:** Well, yeah, I get that. I get that. On the McDonald's — First of all, I don't want to be obtuse. I know that you're using McDonald's not literally —

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, it was just an example off the top of my head.

**WOODS:** Right. But nevertheless, there is still something to the McDonald's example, so I do want to say a word about it. The fact is — let's take your example of McDonald's. Now, I know plenty of mom-and-pop burger joints that peacefully coexist alongside McDonald's. They have no desire — they don't even have the desire — they wouldn't even know how to surpass McDonald's if they did get that much demand. But the thing is I actually don't observe McDonald's stealing their burgers. McDonald's, given their assembly-line style of making burgers and using frozen meat or whatever, they could never reproduce what the mom and pop is will to do.

**BENJAMIN:** I know. I wasn't trying to make accusations.

**WOODS:** No, no, I get that. But on the other hand, the other side of the coin when you're that big, when you're as big as McDonald's is, yes, it's true, you get a lot of money — although they've struggled in recent years. They are trying to change up their menu because people have changed their tastes. They don't want greasy burgers anymore. But the other side of the coin is you also get a lot of attention and scrutiny. So at this point, a lot of Americans have seen where the meat is coming from. It's like 1,000 cows are going into one burger, so if one of them's sick — you know? And also, like we found out that the chicken nuggets at one time were being made out of this pink goop that they don't use anymore. So on the one hand, right — I don't know what they do now, but they do not use the pink goop, so you can go back to eating McNuggets.

**BENJAMIN:** I was just trying to — I should really come up with a more up-to-date example, then. The reason I just pulled it out off the top of my head is because it's very hard to patent food. If it's something you can prepare and you have an expected result, in the U.S. it's very hard to patent it. That was just an example that —

**WOODS:** No, I get that, but even though it is just an example, my point is that it also shows that there is a flipside too to cases like this.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. It's not all one way. But what I mean is if you've got a new invention — or not even a new invention, but if you hit on something that is popular but it might be outside of the realm of being able to create a direct patent on

it, it can be a real problem. And it's going to be very hard to outcompete these already-existing things.

**WOODS:** But isn't it funny that you're making that argument, here you are a guy who — I don't mean to disparage you in any way because I very much respect what you do. But you're just a guy. You're a guy who started a YouTube channel, and somehow you have outcompeted almost everybody just by producing a unique product that people enjoy. Now, I know you're arguing that when you don't have a unique product it's a little trickier. Well, that's kind of why I like what Peter Thiel says, that you shouldn't be focused on how can I outcompete people; instead you should focus on how can I produce something nobody's producing. How can I be the guy who does it?

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, I totally agree with you. I totally agree. I'm not in any way trying to suggest that this isn't something we should be trying to do. I mean, obviously you should be trying to create something — you create the demand by creating a good product and people will come if they're interested, obviously. I was just trying to give an example of how, when you have a power disparity of the size of McDonald's compared to the size of someone with a burger van, even in what we would call a free market the power disparity itself can be a problem, and the corporations themselves can use predatory means that aren't illegal to essentially undermine and reduce and — I don't want to say "monopolize," because it's the wrong word, but to remove any competition before the competition becomes a threat to their own livelihood. And so instead of innovating on their own, the people who have innovated are actually losing out on the profit and the productivity of their own innovation because of giant predatory corporations. I'm not saying that this is a guarantee or anything like that; it's just I think we should be aware that this is something that can and does happen, that's all.

**WOODS:** Okay. I've done some writing on the subject; maybe I'll link to — By the way, I'll link to anything you want linked on the show notes page.

**BENJAMIN:** I'm certainly open to hearing any counterarguments.

**WOODS:** Well, I've done some stuff on predatory pricing, which is one of the usual things that big business is accused of doing, so I might link to stuff like that.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, yeah, I'd love to read it.

**WOODS:** Okay, so there's that. Geez, there's a lot more we could say on this, but I do want to get to kind of the reason I had you on [laughing].

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah.

**WOODS:** There was a particular video I had you on for, and here I am at the end and I haven't even talked about it [laughing]. But the thing that made me say, All right, I'm going to have him on, was you did a video, kind of like a documentary-style video really, on a group called — and in particular I think it was a West Coast branch of that group called By Any Means Necessary, and these are the people who are out there in the streets whose view is that fascism is right around the corner — I don't know if they

actually believe this. Maybe they do; maybe they don't. But fascism's right around the corner and we need to stop that by any means necessary. And that certainly means we are not going to abide by your bourgeois classical, liberal doctrine of free speech because that only incites violence, so we are going to stop these people before they can get us. And you made a video and you singled out a couple of people in particular, and you had video footage of one of them going right up to somebody and just starting to pound the person right in the middle of the street.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah. Right, so *By Any Means Necessary* is – and I'm not using this word in the colloquial sense. It is actually a cult. There's a book I would strongly recommend called *The Wrong Way Home* by Dr. Arthur Deikman. He's passed away now, but he was a Californian psychiatrist, I think it was, who wrote this book, and he basically had studied cults for about 30 years, and he found that there were essentially four behavioral characteristics that you see in cults that, once all four are present, then you can legitimately call this a cult.

Let's see if I can remember them off the top of my head. So you've got dependence on the leader, you've got – oh God, now my mind's gone blank. So you've got dependence on the leader, devaluation of the outsider, corporation of the group, and suppression of dissent. And once you have all of those factors in place, you end up with an incredibly unhealthy environment for people to operate in.

And I mean, there are a few things that people have to remember with cults, is that they are not for crazy people. Crazy people cannot join cults. They are for people who are emotionally disturbed but not sort of wacko people who run around screaming that the sky's falling or something like that. They are for people who are emotionally fragile, and they need support and they need help, and if they find themselves falling into an ideological group that is led by people who are particularly domineering and predatory themselves, then they become trapped into this cult.

And *By Any Means Necessary* is absolutely one of these things. There's a website – oh God, I can't remember the name of it now. If you Google "By Any Means Necessary testimonies" or "cult escape" or something like that, you'll find various blogs of people who have escaped this cult, and they want people to know – like in one example, the founder – I think they were 14 when they first joined *By Any Means Necessary* or became involved with their activism. And by the time they were 16, 17, the group leaders of *By Any Means Necessary* had arranged their emancipation from their parents.

So this person then left, moved across the country into their own – they had their own houses that they had set up for people to go into. And they controlled their money, controlled their communications, controlled everything about their lives. And they essentially kind of put them to work going to protests and spreading propaganda about whatever the political message was to the point where once someone had realized that this was deeply unhealthy and they wanted to leave, they took measures to actively prevent them from leaving. And you know, they found their family, and the person got back in touch with their family, and the family was obviously thrilled to hear from them because that's one of the first things a cult does.

But yeah, so By Any Means Necessary, their political activism is very progressive. Very progressive. I mean hardline progressive. And they are just strongly opposed to any kind of restrictions on immigration, for example, or – I mean anything that's not toeing the extreme progressive party line. And they go to protests, and they make sure that they declare all of their opponents fascists. Now, by the way that these people talk, you would think that the Nazis had won the Second World War. They are convinced that there are fascists behind every blade of grass, absolutely packed to the gills in America, apparently.

But obviously what they're doing is just calling – I mean, most of the time they're calling people who you'd describe maybe as constitutionalists as fascists, which, I mean, I'm not an American, but I still find that an offensive thing to hear because anyone with cursory knowledge of classical liberalism and the liberal tradition, the sort of English liberal tradition, America really does almost kind of – it's almost the apotheosis of it. It's the polar opposite of a fascist system. It's really –

**WOODS:** Well, what I found interesting was, in your video you had a clip from Tucker Carlson, and Tucker asked – what's the name of the well known –

**BENJAMIN:** Yvette Felarca.

**WOODS:** Yeah, exactly. He asked Felarca, he said, "First of all, tell me what is a fascist." And she gave a definition that is from some other planet. And at the end of her definition, you said, "That is not what a fascist is." So they don't even know what the word means. They genuinely don't.

**BENJAMIN:** Absolutely. Absolutely. They redefine it, and that way, if they redefine it to be very broad and very shallow, then they can effectively call anyone a fascist.

**WOODS:** That's true. But on the other hand, her definition was arguing that ultimately a fascist is advocating policies that culminate in genocide, which I think most people would not think they are advocating genocide, and yet she probably thinks most people have fascist tendencies.

**BENJAMIN:** Well, that's a really interesting point, because she seems to be laboring under the delusion that practically anything will lead to genocide [laughing].

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**BENJAMIN:** So if you would say, "Look, I don't really like the bathroom question. I don't really want trans men to go into a women's bathroom." She would consider that a step on the road to genocide, which I mean, I think anyone with two brain cells to rub together would say that was ridiculous. Obviously having male and female bathrooms are maybe predicated on your genetics rather than your identification. That's not going to lead to a genocide. You would have to be mad to think that eventually we're going to start putting trans people in gas camps or something, you know. But this is the worldview they have. And it comes back to the ideological lens. Everything has to be funneled into this, squeezed into this ideology. And so yeah, she's literally making

fascists out of people who otherwise would have picked up a gun and gone and fought Hitler.

**WOODS:** Now, I know you can't get into their heads, but I'm wondering if they genuinely have come to a point where they really believe that they are under siege from people like this.

**BENJAMIN:** Yes, they really believe it. They absolutely believe what they're saying.

**WOODS:** And yet, when they go out in the street, they're obviously not worried if they can go right in front of TV cameras and freely say what they want to say and they —

**BENJAMIN:** That's why they can do it. That's why they can do it. They genuinely believe — I mean, there is no way I would go on TV and find a guy in an American flag and go, "That guy's a Nazi [laughing]."

**WOODS:** Right, right.

**BENJAMIN:** I would think other people would think I was an idiot [laughing].

**WOODS:** That's a good point. Yeah, the only way you would do this is if you seriously believed it, because otherwise you would realize how ridiculous it is and you look like an idiot.

**BENJAMIN:** Exactly. That's exactly it. You have to genuinely believe it, because otherwise you'd have some self-awareness about yourself.

**WOODS:** So I don't mean to make you predict the future, and I realize you're not an American, but we of course are both watching this with great interest and concern. How can — maybe this is even a rhetorical question, but how can this have a happy ending when you've got a chunk of people who are so delusional that they think the country is on the verge of fascism and concentration camps that they have to go out and engage in preemptive violence, which in turn is going to provoke other people to retaliatory violence? Where's the happy ending that comes out of that?

**BENJAMIN:** That's a really good question, and I don't think I have a good answer. The problem with these people is that they are the progenitors of this kind of — again, I don't want to use language that is excessively dramatic, but this is the roots of what causes a civil war. Because when Yvette Felarca and the rest of the BAMN protestors go out and actually do beat people — and they do organize to do this, as well. You can tell that she's quite enjoying the fact that she gets to hit people. And it's really rather lucky she's about 5 foot 2; otherwise, she might be quite dangerous.

But the problem is when these people — For example, there was a Berkeley — he wasn't a professor; he was an ex-lecturer, I think, at Berkeley University, who had dressed up in his Antifa costume. You know, wore sunglasses, mask over his face, and what not. And he put a bike lock inside a sock or something, so there's a chain and a bike lock. And then he'd smack a couple of people over the head with it until they — you know, there's raw footage of him doing it and you can hear the hits, and blood

starts coming out of the guy's head and everything. And he's recently been arrested. But that person, the person he hit was clearly not a Nazi. Honestly, it looked like some fat college kid who was just there, "I just want to talk," sort of thing. And you could see him sneak up and then lash out and hit the guy.

If that guy then becomes a bit more radicalized because of it, you can't tell him that he doesn't have a just cause. He was hit on the head by a communist for no reason. He absolutely has a just cause. And now, okay, he's going to do something to someone else. Probably not the same guy. And it might be that he does something to someone else who doesn't deserve it, but that person then has a just cause to do something to someone else, who then gains their own just cause. So it becomes a — it spirals out of control. And the worst part is almost everyone in the spiral is justified in some way, apart from the guy with the bike lock who originally slung the hits. That's the person who's effectively going to cause all of this.

And I don't know what can be done. I mean, we could be looking at some kind of inevitable historical force, that this is just essentially now in action, and I don't know if we can stop this. I mean, I would say that the first thing that has to happen is that the authorities have to come down on these people like a ton of bricks, but the problem is the mayor of Berkeley is pretty much one of them. I mean, he's a member of the Facebook group, the By Any Means Necessary Facebook group.

**WOODS:** Right.

**BENJAMIN:** He's connected to these people. And I strongly suspect — There have been posts on image forums like 4chan and stuff anonymously posted by people who claim to be frustrated police officers saying, Look, the mayor told us to stand down and let the rioters do what they want. We're not happy about it. I mean, I can't vouch for the validity of that, but the fact that the police were just letting these rioters, clad in black, run around and smash things up and beat people up and not intervene shows they must have been told to be stood down somewhere, because what kind of policeman isn't going to intervene? Why would they not unless they've had an order from higher up? And if you've got a mayor who is incredibly favorable to the ideology of the people who are doing this, I think it's entirely reasonable to think that he'd be incredibly sympathetic and might take action in their favor.

**WOODS:** No doubt, no doubt. And in fact, I just thought of a point just while you were talking. This could be because I'm slow that it took me this long to figure this out, but you know how a lot of times we'll hear socialists or communists say, Stalinist Russia, that's not real communism?

**BENJAMIN:** Oh yeah.

**WOODS:** Or such and such country is not real communism. Now, the parallel's not exact, because not everybody in the Antifa movement would come right out and describe themselves as a communist, but some of them are. Some of them are communists. And the fact is, what am I actually observing about these self-described communists? They're going after people, committing violence against them, for completely imaginary crimes. Well, you know what? That sounds like the way communism was carried out in practice. So don't tell me that was fake communism

when these people are acting in the streets this way, they're acting exactly the way the people they supposedly want to disassociate themselves from acted, which namely is to invent crimes against innocent people and punish people for those crimes. So if these people were ever in charge of a regime, it would be exactly like the regimes they say were supposedly not communist. No, apparently they were, as you are proving today.

**BENJAMIN:** Right, this is a very detailed subject, and you get into some advanced political theory with it, but you're absolutely right. If these people were to be able to enact a communist regime, they would be shooting people before dinner time. They would be absolutely as bad as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, any of the Soviet dictators. They would be exactly the same. The problem with the "it's not real communism thing" is that, technically speaking, it isn't real communism. The problem is, to get to real communism apparently always takes the same form, which appears to be purges and executions and oppression of the proletariat.

So the idea of real communism, the end state of communism, is to have a stateless, cashless, classless society, where the workers, which is now everyone, owns the means of production, because there are no people who are not in some way in ownership of a factory or anything that produces things, anything that produces things for society. Effectively, the only way to have this happen, in my opinion, is to have a post-scarcity society. I am of the opinion that this is simply not a plausible political system with the current level of technology that we have, which in my opinion is why every attempt to create an actual communist system has failed and ended tragically for the people involved. I mean, we are just not that developed yet.

But the thing is, at some point in the future of history, we will be that developed. We will have, you know, robot production lines that literally produce everything, and nobody actually has to work to eat, to be housed. But the interesting thing is that by the time that we are at that point, communism will just arrive naturally, because the need for all of the things that prevent communism from happening will just have evaporated. There will be no need for property rights when nobody goes without. There'll be no need to own something when you can just own anything. When anyone can own everything, it just won't be necessary.

But the thing is we're talking hundreds of years in the future that this might be possible, and that's assuming that we keep going on the trajectory up that we're constantly going on, or we have been recently in the past few hundred years. And again, it's so speculative. It's possible that eventually we'll end up in a place where machines are digging the resources out of the ground, they're processing them, they're putting them into whatever factory process it is to produce the goods that we want, and at the end of it, they're just for free because nobody's had to spend any money getting this stuff done. But I don't think that's going to happen anytime soon.

**WOODS:** Well, even in that situation, I'm inclined to think that you still have property rights. There are so many — no matter how many houses you can churn out, only so many of them are going to have an ocean view, and only so many of them are going to be in California.

**BENJAMIN:** I totally agree. I mean, this is the – it really is hypothetical, in my opinion. Really hypothetical. And so when the communists say, Well, the Soviet Union wasn't real communism, I mean, they're right. It was state socialism. It wasn't real communism. But they were never going to arrive at real communism, because they didn't have the means to do so. And so saying it's not real communism is really a lazy way of saying, Well, we were trying to make real communism and we failed because real communism isn't really possible with the level of technology that we have, and all of the deaths that were involved and all of the suffering and oppression and people going hungry and being poor, that's not something that we want to admit is part of the process of trying to make real communism when you're at this level of technology. And unfortunately, that is.

**WOODS:** Well, and by the way, a lot of these people who are saying such-and-such country is not real communism, they gush over Fidel Castro, and his system is exactly the same as these other countries. It's not in any way more authentic; it's exactly the same.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah.

**WOODS:** All right, let's direct people over to your YouTube channel. What's the easy way for them to get there? Other than by visiting [TomWoods.com/920](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC920), which is where I'll have a link to it, how can they get there directly?

**BENJAMIN:** Honestly, if you go to Google and just type in "Sargon of Akkad" or "Carl Benjamin," which is my name, my YouTube channel will be the first thing that will come up.

**WOODS:** Yeah, isn't that funny? Even higher than the actual Sargon of Akkad [laughing].

**BENJAMIN:** I know; I know. I actually feel genuinely guilty. I mean, he was a wonderful historical figure that you should read about if you're interested in history, and somehow some plebe like me has managed to supersede it in the Google rankings.

**WOODS:** But it's hilarious because I Googled it today, and not only are you the top, your face was on the screen [laughing].

**BENJAMIN:** [laughing] I know; I know.

**WOODS:** I'm pretty sure they didn't have photography in those days. It was quite startling. Okay, and you also have a fairly robust Twitter account, so I will link to that also at [TomWoods.com/920](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC920).

**BENJAMIN:** Thank you.

**WOODS:** All right, well obviously you and I could talk forever. It's great. Plenty of great content you're producing, and I would have stuff to say about all of it. I'm going to make sure and link in particular to the By Any Means Necessary video, simply because we talked about it today. And, well, thanks so much for your time.

**BENJAMIN:** Any time, thank you for having me.

**WOODS:** Oh, wait, wait, wait, wait. One last thing. Just for the geeks who are listening, just in case on the off chance I have any nerds listening to this show – on the off chance, I do want to ask you a quick thing about what happened with YouTube. I know I'm keeping you over time, but –

**BENJAMIN:** Oh, no, no, no –

**WOODS:** The YouTube demonetization thing that really hit a lot of people hard, you included.

**BENJAMIN:** Yes, right. So long story short, *The Wall Street Journal* effectively – and this I think has been part of a calculated plan by *the Wall Street Journal* and various other press outlets. Basically YouTube has always – I mean, it's always been a very much free-speech-focused platform, and it's been very permissive with what it allows. But it does have algorithms that generally do weed out things that I guess you would call it – I hate using the term "hate speech," because I don't like the fact that the term exists. I don't agree with the idea of hate speech. But they do.

So they'll say – so we've got, say, a Holocaust denial video. Generally, they demonetize it using the automated algorithms, because there are – I dread to think how many billions of hours of content are uploaded to YouTube every day, so obviously these things can't be done manually just given the size of the platform. And so the algorithms are usually pretty good at spotting something that's considered to be hate speech and demonetizing it. So YouTube usually are quite comfortable hosting it, but they tend to not monetize it.

But *The Wall Street Journal* found a few examples of this kind of content that apparently had gotten through the filters, and instead of just contacting YouTube and saying, Hey – or maybe like doing an expose about it or something, saying, Hey, YouTube needs to improve their algorithms, blah, blah, blah, they in fact went straight to the companies that were hosting it and they – was it *The Wall Street Journal*? Sorry, I might be getting the publications mixed up. But they went to the advertising companies and said, Look at this, your products are being advertised among white supremacy and Holocaust denial and all this sort of thing. And that caused a few of them at least to pull out, and this created a backlash effect to the content creators, because YouTube's monetization sharing is 55% of the ad revenue goes to the creator and 45% stays with YouTube.

When all of these advertising – large companies were pulling out to – You know, they do it because they don't want their brands associated with these things. But I don't think that people are generally associating the brands with the videos they were being shown on, because I'm pretty sure that everyone understands that it's automated via algorithms and there's not really a huge amount of flexibility either from the advertisers' point of view. You can target types of videos and categories, but it's not easy and it's not as fine tuned as it could be.

But basically, this led to advertisers pulling out billions of dollars from YouTube, and this was then transferred across to the content creators, but not to the people putting up the white supremacist stuff who don't usually have their content monetized; this was effectively transferred to people who talk about news, like myself, or philosophy or — I mean, to literally anything like video games, movies, beauty bloggers, children's toys. Every category of YouTuber and YouTube video that you can think of was affected by this. It was just an across-the-board ad revenue drop to the point where, at the moment, I'm working at about between a quarter and a third of the revenue that I had before, which has been a bit of a pain; I'm not going to lie.

And yeah, it seems to — it honestly looks like a calculated political maneuver on the part of publications that are, frankly, dying. The problem that these publications have is that the old media is being eroded by market forces. Young people tend to prefer things like YouTube because it's on-demand and it's exactly as you want it, when you want it, and there's no indication that they're ever going to change that. They don't tend to watch television anymore. Television is the domain of people around 40-something and older, and these people don't tend to go towards new media, and people below that don't tend to watch television. And so I think really they know that the writing's on the wall, and they're doing everything they can to try and scrape it back, but I think they're just going to have to accept the fact that they're going to have to change their business model.

**WOODS:** Well, that is quite astonishing. So you've got — but you do still have the Patreon account where people can donate to you, which is good.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, that's what's keeping me alive, to be honest [laughing].

**WOODS:** Yeah.

**BENJAMIN:** Because if it wasn't for people donating, then I don't know what I'd do.

**WOODS:** Yeah, it's amazing how something like this can just be pulled out right from underneath you. At the same time, how does this explain how — you were telling me before that even people who had maybe a beauty channel or something, even they were being demonetized. What possible offense could they be giving to anyone?

**BENJAMIN:** Absolutely none.

**WOODS:** So it makes the official explanation all the shakier, in other words.

**BENJAMIN:** Well, this is why I think this is actually more of a political and targeted attack on the platform itself rather than on content creators, because I don't know anyone who produces anything that would fall into the category of the wildly offensive. I mean, I'm not politically correct, but I don't — I'm certainly nothing like that. I'm just not a big fan of modulating my language to protect people's feelings. But you know, I'm concerned about what we can factually prove. And people like beauty bloggers and video gamers, those sort of people, they've done nothing wrong and they've seen a huge drop. So it appears to have been an assault on the platform itself rather than any one genre of video.

I've got a few videos on my channel that are about this, so if people are interested in learning more, all of the citations are on the description of the video, so you can go and see exactly what's been happening, because it's been a huge event. I mean, I've done like three videos on the subject. It's a massive, massive event that happened, for people on YouTube, anyway.

**WOODS:** Yeah, yeah, I heard that. And I've never monetized YouTube videos, so it doesn't hurt me. I don't have that big of a YouTube presence, so I was safe, but I'm sorry to hear it happened to you guys. But you still have the audience and you can still figure out other ways to monetize, but you shouldn't have to. It's annoying.

**BENJAMIN:** Yeah, I mean, it is really annoying, actually. And it's not so much about the money, I guess. Maybe I'm lucky because I'm in a position where even on a quarter revenue I can still pay my rent because my channel's large enough, and so maybe I'm talking from a position of privilege. I mean, for me it was more the — [laughing] I do honestly think there's a lot of professional jealousy going on from these platforms, because I'm getting about a third as many viewers per day as CNN will at primetime. And you know, I haven't overtaken them, but I'm just one man. There are dozens and dozens of political channels that have got hundreds of thousands of subscribers and they get hundreds of thousands of views a day, millions of views a month, and I think the media, the mainstream media are aware that we are eroding, where every day more people come to us and every day more of their viewership — and I don't mean to sound mean, but they get old and die. It's just — they're a legacy of the previous paradigm before the Internet, and now the Internet is here, they're not going away. And I think they are definitely reacting to that.

**WOODS:** Well, I'm glad we were able to get that on here also, because I want people to know about it. Anyway, definitely check out Sargon of Akkad. You can find him with a quick Google search, and you can find everything he's up to at [TomWoods.com/920](http://TomWoods.com/920). Thanks so much again. I appreciate it, Carl.

**BENJAMIN:** Thank you.